

THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2014

Week Four – Year of the Blowout

"I'm 35 yards old. I just ran around those guys like they were schoolyard boys."– Dumpster Ducks WR Steve (Jacob Jingleheimer)Smith Sr. following his single-handed dismantling of the Carolina secondary in Week Four

PROLOGUE

The NFL 2014 season reached the quarter pole, and one of the best games of the week featured a two-TD performance by former Carolina wideout Steve (Jacob Jingleheimer) Smith Sr. “Whenever I go out, the people always shout”, said Smith, who went on to intone the quotation above. It was further proof of the Look Man’s theory about players and coaches gaining revenge on their former teams.

Week Four concluded with two unbeatens: the Zona Deadbirds in the NFC, and the surprising Bengals in the AFC. Both teams were relegated to bye weeks in Week Four, as well as Denver, Seattle and other must see teams. The balance of the contests were not must-see TV, but they were adequate.

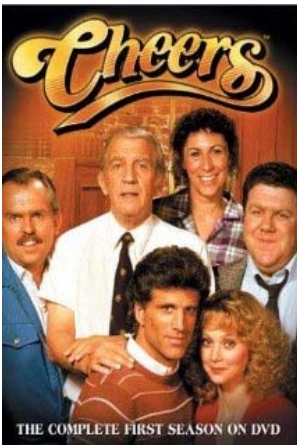
Without further ado, the Week that Was...

LAGNIAPPE

Thursday Night Football – (Dis)Appointment TV

The NFL is promoting Thursday games on CBS and NFL Network, despite poor ratings and even poorer performances. The average margin of TNF victory this year has been 29 points, including the Cheesehead 42-10 whipping of Minnesota. Just one week prior, the G-Men destroyed Washington Redskins by 31 points, while Atlanta Falcons won by 42 points in Week 3 on Thursday night.

The Look Man would recommend you bet big on the home team, which has won 72 percent of the time since 2010. Only the G-Men and Bolts have pulled off road upsets in recent memory, largely due to division opponents who required minimal preparation. The truth of the matter is that the coaches and players cannot adequately prepare for a game in only three days. The outcomes are indicative, and All Stars like Geno Atkins and Brandon Marshall have been injured in these Thursday contests.



Where everybody knows your game?

The Look Man dislikes bad football, and TNF is exactly that. The league wants to destroy college football’s stranglehold on Thursday, and the results are pretty poor.

Play of the Week/Month/Year

Alshon Jeffrey in Bears-Packers, went into motion in the red zone, drawing the man coverage from the CB. Jeffrey pivoted at the QB, and ran a flat route that ended up as a TD. The beauty of this play: the motion showed Cutler that Green Bay was in man coverage in the red zone, which Jay the Knife used to run a choice route. It was almost like schoolyard football.

This TD pass to Jeffrey is a one-off, but Head Coach Marc (the Man with no Eyebrows) Trestman's sophisticated offensive system is so QB friendly that even Josh McCown looked good in 2013. Great play.

ZEBRA OF THE WEEK

Shalom Aleichem

When Kansas City DB Husain Abdullah dropped to his knees for a Muslim prayer following a pick six, John Parry's crew threw laundry on the field for a celebration foul. Abdullah was putting the capper on a can of whoopass and the celebration was brief and tasteful.

The NFL was quick to rebut the zebra's call, stating prayer is an allowed celebration. The Look Man believes the whole penalty foul is bogus in the No Fun League. If a player does not create an unfair advantage for himself or his team and does not delay the game, no flag should be thrown.

Not only was the flag politically incorrect, it was asinine. The zebra union is now in line with everyone else ticked off with the NFL front office, stating that if a player goes to his knees in celebration, it's a flag. Unless he's Tim Tebow.



"Allah akbar"

THE LOOK AHEAD

Cleveland at Tennessee (-1.5)

The 2014 Browns ought to be 3-0 and undefeated. They lost Week One at the gun, won the home opener at the buzzer, and lost Week Three at triple zeros. Each time, the Browns had the game in the bag, and either nussed up, or buckled under. The common theme is a great running game and timely passing. Each loss has occurred due to awful paly calling down the stretch, resulting in punting the ball back to the opponent with just enough clock to lose the game.

Here at the quarter pole, one week after the bye, QB Brian Hoyer has solidified his hold on the starting job, and Johnny Football has been relegated to being Johnny Clipboard. RB Ben Tate is back healthy, and we are four weeks closer to the return of Josh Gordon. The Browns have established an offensive personality of a strong running game and timely passing.

This week will be a test, owing to the following:

- 1) The Browns face former D-Coordinator Ray Horton, who has a strong revenge motive;
- 2) Flaming Thumbtacks QB Jake Locker is on his last chance to keep his job;
- 3) Head Coach Ken Whisenhunt interviewed for the Browns job – twice.
- 4) Browns Owner and known racketeer Jimmy Haslam is well known in Nashville. His brother Bill, is the governor, and the Haslam family is prominent University of Tennessee boosters.

Learning how to win for a young team is tough, but the Browns need on the job training. They face bunch of cupcakes over the next few weeks, with a combined 9-16 record to date. Win now, and the return of Josh Gordon means something. Lose to these tomato cans, and it will be another season on the Island of Misfit Teams. Browns, baby, Browns.

Jets at San Diego (-6.5)

The Look Man likes the Bolts and gunslinger Phillip Rivers this season. Rivers is playing at an MVP level, and he is parlaying his young receiving corps into a serious threat in the AFC West. Rivers is the kind of gun slinging QB that can give the Aeronauticals plenty of trouble, especially when they blitz.

Old Man Rivers is burning the blitz package, as evidenced by wins over Seattle, Jacksonville and Buffalo. Rivers has finally gotten over losing Darren Sproles, by spreading it to TE Antonio Gates, and WRs Malcolm Floyd and Eddie Royal. The Bolts replaced RB Ryan Mathews with Colts castoff Donald Brown, and they haven't looked back. The only blemish on their schedule is the undefeated Arizona Deadbirds.

The Jets are struggling, largely due to young QB Geno('s Pizza) Smith. Smith is baking up turnover pies at a prolific pace in 2014, leading the league in pick-sixes and dropping F bombs on fans. Head Coach (Sexy) Rex Ryan is fighting for his job, and he would like to bring in Mike (Ron Mexico) Vick at QB.

The Lookahead Factor might be an issue as the Jets welcome Denver next week. Unfortunately, if Geno can't manufacture points on Sunday, he may not start next week. I still believe the spread is ridiculous in light of Bolts injuries and the Jets desperation.

Look for the Jets to assemble a decent game plan and stay within the point spread. Jets and the points.

Arizona at Denver (-6.5)

Two teams coming off of bye weeks meet at Investigation Field this week. Arizona has surprised folks, leading to the Bruce Arians quote. Denver is expected to return to the championship, and they are paying at a high level in 2014.

This Desert Storm defense is a lot better than folks think. When you see them live, you're going to wonder how they stayed unknown for so long. The trouble is, QB (Johnny) Carson Palmer is injured again, and backup Mike Stanton is somewhat pedestrian. Stanton is one of four former Michigan State Spartans QBs making good in the NFL.

Throw in a solid running game, excellent receiving corps, and a solid defense and what do you have? The only undefeated team in the NFC, even after Week Five. 'zona and the points in a Pepto Bismol special.

Houston at Dallas (-6.5)

This one is always a rivalry for state supremacy, but Dallas heads to Seattle next week. The Lookahead Factor favors the Slim Shadies, so take Houston and the points in this one. Houston

KC at San Francisco (-6.5)

The Look Man has a few betting rules, and one of them has to do with double digit spreads against a division opponent. Kansas City got housed by a physical Hornheads team in Week One, but don't expect them to simply lay down for a division team like Denver.

Andy (The Walrus) Reid is too good a coach to allow his team to wallow. Take the Baby Backs and the points. KC.

Cincinnati at New England (+1): Football Night in America

The Bengals are feeling pretty good after defeating the Baltimore in Week One. Their reward is facing Matty (Ice) Ryan and the high flying Atlanta Dirty Birds at home on Sunday. Matty (Ice) Ryan put up 448 passing yards against New Orleans as part of a 568 yard offensive seplosion.

The Look Man is looking for a track meet on Sunday in Falcon-Bengals. LB Vontaze Burfict (Storm) suffered a concussion last week at B-More, and may not see action. In addition, the Bengals D-backfield is slightly nicked up and E Tyler Eifert (Tower) is out with a dislocated elbow and unlikely to see action until Week Six at the earliest.

The media is throwing dirt on Belicheat and the Chowds after last week's poor performance at Arrowhead. The Chowds were on the wrong end of a 41-14 beatdown, with Tom (Zoolander) Brady averaging five yards per reception. Zoolander's numbers have been declining steadily over the last three years in direct proportion to the number of times he has been hit and sacked.

This game looks like a great matchup for the Ugly and Black, which has good middle push on the D-line. Brady hates middle pressure, and if his pocket is dirty, he is usually pedestrian. Outside pressure doesn't faze Zoolander, and if the Bengals can be forced to blitz, they could pay the price.

ILB Vontaze Burfict is doubtful, but the balance of the Toothless Tigers defense is solid, especially at LB. Adrian Lemur, Vinnie Rey and Jayson DiManche are all free agent acquisitions, and each is long, quick and fast. Any one of them is capable of covering a healthy Gronkowski in space, and Gronk is anything but healthy right now. He is a shadow of his former self.

Take the Chowds to bounce back after a big loss. Belicheat isn't one to take this abuse lying down. Chowds.

Chicago at Carolina (-3.5):

The Look Man prediction of da Bears struggle in 2014 was buoyed by an egg laid by Jay (the Knife) Cutler in Week Four. Aaron (Discount) Double Check Rodgers blew them out courtesy of several Cutler turnovers.

To be fair, Cutler's receiving corps and O-line continues to be banged up. And Jay likes a clean pocket more than most.

That spells disaster this week as the Black Cats were embarrassed in Week Four by Baltimore and former Black Cat Steve (Jacob Jingleheimer) Smith. Cam Newton and the Panthers want to make a statement this week, and a conference win over a chic playoff pick would be just the ticket. The Black Cats run and pass all over the Monsters o the Furniture Mart. Carolina.

Seattle at Washington (+6.5): Monday Night Football:

A ridiculous spread for the Blue Man Group, which plays much better at home and on turf than the road and on grass. After predictions that the Super Bowl champions would not repeat, The Blue Man Group started 2014 off with a bang,

blasting Green Bay, and relegating Aaron (Discount Double Check) Rodgers to a pedestrian game. The talking hairdos immediately proclaimed that Seattle is the best team evah, and will go undefeated in 2014.

While (James T) Kirk Cousins was exposed last Thursday at home against the G-Men, look for him to rebound in this one. Seattle could still win, but don't pass up the points. Washington.

EPILOGUE

The NFL has reached the quarter pole of the season. At this point, teams are in a do or die situation relative to QB selection, offensive personality and run game. As the weather cools, the running games will increase in importance. Similarly, offenses need to be able to run the two and four minute drills effectively.

The Two Minute Drill is well chronicled, but the Four Minute Drill might be more important. The FMD is a situation where a team has possession and would like to eat clock to close out the game. Instead of getting out of bounds to stop the clock, players need to focus on staying in bounds to keep the clock moving. The clock stops with each incomplete pass inside of five minutes of the half and game, so short, effective passes are the rule. If a team perfects the FMD, it can salt away 2-3 games per season, and that can be the difference between the playoffs and a fishing trip.

One other item of note: the zebras are calling pass interference and illegal contact at alarming rates this season. Not only are these calls patently unfair to the defense, they are becoming part of the offensive coordinator playbook. Calling a deep ball now adds the likelihood of a flag and a key first down if your receiver is a competent actor.

The NFL wants offensive fireworks, even if they have to manufacture them. The result is a whole lot of blowout games, and nearly unwatchable football.

Peace,

The Look Man