

THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2014

Week Five – On to Cincinnati

"Really, sad day for the NFL. It's another case of the 99 percent good things that are happening being overshadowed by 1 percent bad. Again, people aren't talking about our product, they're talking about a negative incident." – Former Colts head coach Tony Dungy on Spygate in 2007

PROLOGUE

That statement from Tony (Skeletor) Dungy never rang truer than now, as he highlighted a major misstep by New England. The Week Six rebound by the Chowds was indicative of how badly the media reads the NFL, questioning whether the Chowds dynasty was over, and writing Belicheat's epitaph before his body was cold.

That episode presaged the hubris of Roger (Rabbit) Goodell, who destroyed the Spygate tapes before anyone could see them. Chowds owner Robert Kraft and Belicheat got off with a slap on the wrist, courtesy of Goodell, and Kraft remains one of the Commissioner's staunchest supporters. Rabbit's reign of non-transparent terror began then and it continues today.

Still, the Look Man was in the position of rooting for the Chowds last week, if only to shut up the media and expose the Bengals. In the words of Sun Tzu, the enemy of my enemy is my friend. In the words of Bill Belicheat, "On to Cincinnati."

Without further ado, the Week that Was.

LAGNIAPPE

A Crucial Crock

The NFL is in the midst of its annual Breast Cancer Awareness Month campaign, and on its face, the program seems positive. It pales, however, when looking at the league's history on domestic violence and their awful charity record.

The NFL is a nine billion dollar per year non-profit, and annually donates far less than 1% of its revenues to charity. If you do the math, \$90 million would be a drop in the bucket for this giant.

In point of fact, a good portion of the charitable contributions come from the fines levied against defensive players. Stillers LB James Harrison alone donated \$100 large for "illegal hits."

The Look Man would favor topless cheerleaders over the garish pink gear. He's a big fan of breasts, and would love to see an end to this awful disease. After all, a healthy set of lungs beats pink flags any day!



The Flight Crew is on board...

The NFL has fined Niners QB Colin Kaepernick for wearing non-sanctioned earphones. Kap sported his Beats by Dre headphones at a press conference following the game, clearly creating problems for Bose, the Official Headphones of the NFL. You may have noticed the coaches wearing the Bose headsets while using the Surface tablets. It's a virtual commercial every week on the sidelines, making the NFL look like NASCAR.

The fine follows a pattern which included ten large for Carolina QB Cam Newton for wearing miniscule Under Armour clips on his helmet visor. The NFL considers alternate vendor logos to be a violation of its equipment policy, stating "no visible identification of a manufacturer's name or logo on the exterior of a helmet or on any attachment to a helmet is permitted unless provided for under a commercial arrangement between the League and manufacturer." Since the NFL has a contract with Nike, the Under Armour logo constituted a violation.

The real issue is that players have contracts with vendors that are in direct conflict with the NFL's interest. Kap and Cam get paid to wear gear, and the NFL doesn't want their own paydays usurped. You would think there's enough money to go around when you make nine billion annually and are on your way to twenty five bill.

Hawks CB Richard Sherman had better be careful. He can expect a letter from the league office if he gets caught eating Oberto beef jerky on the sidelines. You simply can't listen to The Little Voice in your Stomach.

ZEBRA OF THE WEEK

Browns at Flaming Thumbtacks – (Mean) Gene Steratore: Steratore and crew officiated the largest road comeback of all time, but they likely caused it with horrible first half flags. One of the worst was pass interference on Browns CB Joe Haden on a ball that nearly landed in the stands. This just in: uncatchable balls should not warrant PI flags.

Steratore redeemed himself in the second half with several good calls, including overturning an awful first down spot for Tennessee. He remains the best in the business with the retirement of Mike (Dancin' with the Stars) Carey.

THE LOOK AHEAD

Blitzburgh at Cleveland (-2):

The Browns are coming off of an historic comeback win at Tennessee, and the offense is clicking after five weeks. The already strong running game was bolstered by the return of Ben Tate, who missed two games with a knee. QB Brian Hoyer has solidified his hold on the starting job with great a 4th quarter QBR and stunning hurry up acumen. This Browns team is getting some press despite having the 31st ranked defense in the league.

Meanwhile in Blitzburgh, the Squealers are winning ugly when they're not losing. Parcells loved to opine that "You are what your record says you are." At 3-2, Blitzburgh is a competent team with defensive holes. Injuries have decimated their defense to the point of recruiting LB James Harrison from the retirement home.

This game is huge in the AFC Asgard Division, since a win positions either team for a mid-season run. The Look Man likes the Browns to secure the "W", moving to 3-2 and a virtual division tie in Week Seven. Browns, baby, Browns.

Carolina at Cincy (-6.5)

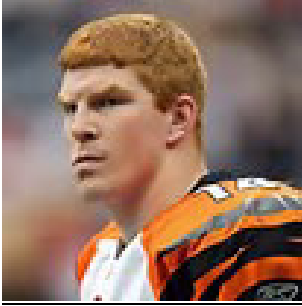
Meanwhile, in Chili Town USA, the Bengals are coming off a serious ass-kicking courtesy of New England on Football Night in America. The Ugly and Black is reeling, a team that cannot win in the big spotlight. Last season, the Look Man said: "As soon as they read the headlines about how good they are, they begin to believe their own bowel movements don't stink. The results, it seems, are self-evident. "

The Carolina Black Cats are in the midst of a three game road trip from Hell. They beat the Monsters of the Furniture Mart in Chicago last week, and the second week on the road is always treacherous. Worse yet, the running game is missing DeAngelo Williams and Jonathan Stewart. The Black Cats may actually start rookie Darrin Reaves Sunday at Pall Bearer Stadium. It's so bad that former Browns RBs Chris (OB) Ogbonnaya and Fozzy Whitaker should see time.

The Bengals are giving 6.5 to Carolina, which seems excessive in light of the likely absence of WR AJ Green. Green is Andy (The Red BB Gun) Dalton's safety blanket, and without him, the offense bogs down. The Red BB Gun looks like an extra from the Star Trek movie *Into Darkness*.

The problem: Cam Newton can't read defenses pre-snap, according to former Panther Steve (Jacob Jingleheimer) Smith, causing him to free-lance and take hits. Cam does have rookie WR Kelvin Benjamin, a big body who will give the Nati secondary fits.

Carolina gets the upset, pushing the Ugly and Black to 3-2, and causing the city to flip over as folks jump off of the bandwagon. Black Cats beat Orange Cats.



1st Vulcan QB?

Chicago at Atlanta (-3)

Jay (The Knife) Cutler is surrounded by offensive talent, has a QB friendly system under Marc (The Man with no Eyebrows) Trestman, and still can't produce. Granted, the O-line has not given The Knife time to throw, but with his running game, the question is why would he be throwing anyway?

WR Brandon Marshall is playing hurt, and the gutsy Bears defense is missing some key components as well. The percentage move is to run the football and win ugly, but Chicago can't get out of its own way. Cutler hates getting hit, so he's throwing picks at his previously prodigious rate. Trestman's offense is predicated on ball security, not ball frivolity.

Look for the tough-at-home Dirty Birds to cover and win this one against a beat up Bears team, plunging them into a scrum in the NFC Norse. Atlanta.

Detroit at Minnesota (+1.5)

Detroit has been hit or miss without Calvin (Megatron) Johnson, TE Joseph Fauria, and RB Reggie Bush (41). The three-headed monster offense has been turned into Matt Stafford gutting out tough, physical wins, no small feat in Etroit (no "D").

The Hornheads running game evaporated with the loss of rookie QB Teddy Bridge(over troubled)water. Last week, with Garfunkel sidelined, and (Sister) Christian Ponder at the helm, the offense sputtered.

O-coordinator Norv Turner is getting the most out of his rookie with a simplified passing game, timely scrambles, and adequate running. The Look Man hated to lose Turner in C-town, who was able to get nearly 1700 receiving yards out of WR Josh Gordon with three QBs named Moe.

The Look Man likes the Vikes here, if only because he expects Hornheads rookie head coach Mike Zimmer's defense to confuse the Cadillacs. Etroit needs to outscore folks to win and they are really banged up on offense. Hornheads.

Denver at Jets (+9.5):

Peyton (The Sheriff) Manning is going off, and the Aeronauticals are trying to get HC (Sexy) Rex Ryan fired again. The latest Jets controversy revolves around the QB controversy between Mike (Ron Mexico) Vick and Geno(s Pizza) Smith. Ron Mexico stated he wasn't ready to play last week when he was forced into action by the horrific quarterbacking of the pizza king. Smith is baking up turnovers like pies at a Brooklyn pizzeria.

The talking heads are all crowning the Donkeys, but the Look Man sees them as the same overrated mess they have always been. The running game is nearly non-existent with the loss of Knowshon Moreno, and Manning is throwing too often. By season's end, The Sheriff may be singing the Nationwide insurance jingle on the sidelines with his arm attached by a rubber band.

Irrespective, the point spread here is too large, especially given the Week Seven lookahead of Frisco at Denver. Jets cover, Donkeys win.



Rex as a spokesman for Geno's pizza?

Dallas at Seattle (-8.5)

The Pokes are a bit of a mirage at 4-1. They are outstanding running the football, RT Doug Free is road grading folks, and Notre Dame rookie RG Zack Martin from Notre Dame is a keeper. The Pokes drafted Z-Mart instead of Johnny Football, and he is a punisher.

Dallas RB DeMarco Murray is on pace to tote the rock 416 times in 2014, a pace that is sure to land him on the IR if not corrected. El Chefe Jason Garrett has promised to reduce the workload, but needs offensive balance this week at a minimum. Here's the problem: no one runs on Seattle at home. No one.

Look for the Pokes to attempt to run until the score dictates otherwise, and then eschew the run for the pass. Romo is going to struggle against the Legion of Boom, which is tailor-made for big receivers like Dez Bryant and Jason Witten. Terrence Williams might get off, but the Look Man sees a two pick performance looming for Tony Romo (the Place for Ribs). And by the way, Romo tweaked his back in the Houston game while avoiding all-world DE JJ Watt.

On the other hand, the eight point spread is a slap in the face that Dallas won't take lightly. The Pokes will play hard in the noise at Seattle, but the loss of ILB Rolando McClain could spell doom for Doomsday Extra Lite.

On the other side, (Danger) Russ Wilson is incredible. Dude runs the rock and never gets clocked, throws with efficiency, and generally looks spectacular. Danger Russ is living the Entourage lifestyle with Johnny Drama and four of his buddies in Coffee Town courtesy of his divorce. Apparently, former Hawks WR Golden Tate was sleeping with Mrs. Danger Russ, who will now miss out on Wilson's big payday. There are a lot of good looking women lining up to fill her spot, and Wilson is beginning to round into a modern day Joe Montana.

Seattle wins, and the Pokes looking ahead to a Week Seven Five NFC Beast game against the surprising G-Men. We may even see former Browns QB Brandon Weeden's Pokes debut. Seattle.



Selfie for Tinder?

Frisco at St. Louis (+3.5) Monday Night Football

Niners QB Colin Kaepernick must be injured, because his numbers are awful. TE Vernon Davis is likely out, but the re-acquisition of WR Brandon Lloyd is back to his old glue-fingered tricks. Dude is unbelievable, making circus catches look routine. The real question is why nobody saw fit to sign Lloyd in 2013, but the Look Man digresses.

Niners struggle, but cover and win, while looking ahead to a Week Seven game at Denver. Niners.

EPILOGUE

The Browns have become perhaps the most wildly entertaining team in the NFL through five weeks. Each of their games has been decided by three or fewer points, and their halftime adjustments are yielding points in bunches. If the Browns can hang on until WR Josh Gordon's return in Week Eleven, they have a chance to raise some Cain.

Week Six includes a number of key divisional and conference games that set the tone for the balance of the season. It's unbelievable that no team remains undefeated through five weeks, the earliest that the '72 Marine Mammals have popped their corks in years. The power rankings are ridiculous with the possible exceptions of Seattle and Indy, which are both proving their mettle on the field of play. Andrew Luck and Philip Rivers are putting up MVP numbers, and Peyton is still Peyton.

But the real anomaly is the completion percentages being posted around the league. The Look Man knew that the defensive holding point of emphasis would have impact, but nearly half the QBs in the league are completing the ball at over 60%. Rivers is on pace to exceed 70%, a feat that has only been performed by Drew Brees in the championship year. At this pace, we can expect serious competition for the Pro Bowl and the MVP, in this, the Year of the Blowout.

Peace,

The Look Man