

**THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2016**  
**Week Nineteen – Forty-Six Ronin**

*"Ref No. 51 [Cheffers] shouldn't even be able to wear a zebra jersey ever again. He shouldn't even be able to work at f---ing Foot Locker. "-- KC Baby Backs TE Travis Kelce after Carl Cheffers called holding on a 2-point conversion which would likely have forced overtime.*

**PROLOGUE**

The Look Man struggled early during the Divisional Playoff weekend, going down 0-2 on Saturday, before rallying to finish at 2-2 on the week. The Houston offense never really got off the plane, but the defense pressured Tom (Zoolander) Brady into two picks, with RB Dion Lewis putting one on the ground. You never see the Chowds turn the ball over three times, and a second Lewis fumble was nearly recovered by Houston. If not for Slim Shady QB Sock Brockweiler being cover-your-eyes ugly, Houston could've won that game. They do indeed have a problem in 2017.

All of that preamble means little this week, as four of the baddest QBs ever to spin a football face off in the Conference Championship round. Ryan is likely the MVP. Rodgers is hotter than the face of Mercury. Ben has the Band of Bs back together, and Brady is putting pressure on to become the first player to miss four games and still win the MVP. Awesome.

**ZEBRA OF THE WEEK**

*The Rules of Engagement*

The Look Man tends to agree with Travis Kelce: that call directly insinuated the zebras into the outcome of the game in which Blitzburgh became the first NFL team to win a playoff game without scoring a TD. Just to prove it, the NFL only fined Kelce \$12.5 large. As a repeat offender, including his hilarious flag-throw-at-the-ref routine in Week Nine, it should've been a lot worse.

Don't get the Look Man wrong; that play was clearly a hold as defined by the rules. But the Look Man has certain rules regarding any flag that decides the outcome of game.

To wit:

1. You don't call holding on a Pro Bowl O-lineman unless it is really egregious. In the case of the Kelce call, RT Eric Fisher had pinned DE James Harrison, and stood between he and Alex (Capt. Checkdown) Smith. There was no way Harrison was going to make that play before Smith got rid of the football. It is physically impossible to move a 300+-pound man who has pro bowl talent. Yeah, it was holding, but it had no impact on the conversion.
2. If the play is away from the ball and has no impact on the outcome. Case in point, Devin Hester's 80-yard kick return in Atlanta was called back because of a hold on the defensive line of scrimmage. Really? Seattle couldn't buy a break from Mean Gene Steratore's crew. Goodell was clearly looking for a different matchup, perhaps a team that cannot beat the New England Chowds?
3. Each zebra owns an area of the field. The back judge covers deep passes; the umpire has holding; the head linesman has illegal procedure/offsidess. Each guy owns an area, just like a zone defense. Whenever you see a flag thrown from 20 yards away, making a parabolic arc, you know the call is bad.

Officiating has been at an all-time nadir this season, and much of it falls to the zebra crews. Let 'em play.

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Mail Bag

The Look Man received the following email from notable Tailpipe GB Shaw after last week's Pokes loss:

*Hey, Look Man,*

*Thanks for the consolation e-mail. I was, indeed, in the depths of despair, made more bitter by the following:*

- *Personal foul for too many in the huddle? (a) never heard of it before, and I'm pretty sure I'll never hear of it again, and (2) they hadn't begun to huddle up. That effin' zebra was waiting for any articulation to occur so he could throw that obscure flag.*
- *The Pack's first drive was kept alive by a hands-to-the-face on DB Byron Jones. Iso showed it didn't happen.*
- *The Pack's second drive was kept alive by a flag for interference on SS Barry Church. Iso showed it didn't happen.*
- *A second quarter drive-killer penalty saw RT Doug Free engaged with a D-back. The D-back simply turned his back on Free, and the laundry came flying.*
- *Conversely, on the penultimate play, Rogers had a lot of time to roll out. There was a reason for that – DE David Irving had been looped around the neck and tackled to the ground. No flag, of course.*

*So, my original e-mail was prescient. The zebras didn't wait to overturn a late 4th-quarter catch – they went ahead and kept all 1st quarter Green Bay drives alive, killed all Dallas drives, and then watched those rookies struggle to catch up. As you pointed out, they still almost pulled it out.*

*I laughed when I saw the story of how the NFL, along with MLB and the NBA, is trying to shorten games in order to keep from losing viewers. Hey, guys --- that's not your problem. Your problem is that the effing zebras have gone from influencing the outcome of games to determining the winners and losers from the get-go, and the fan base is catching on. It's not a sporting event – it's freakin' kabuki theater on a massive stage.*

*Do I still sound bitter? There's a reason for that.*

The Look Man agrees with a lot of this content (with the notable exception of DE David Irving; he went inside and got destroyed on the 35 yard Rodgers pass). Of course, it was written during the standard three week cooling off period following a 12-4 regular season record going down the toilet. But the Look Man believes the Pokes cannot blame Zebra Tony Corrente; they could've and should've won this football game if not for one person: Head Coach Jason Garrett.

Garrett's blown call to spike on first down late in the game, and his failure to run the football on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 3 allowed Green Bay enough time to win. Take out those two calls, and this game goes to overtime, where Aaron (Discount Double Check) Rodgers would have won anyway. After all, he is the hottest QB on the planet.

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*The NFL Board of Governors*

Dallas may believe that this loss shows professional growth, and it does. But let's not forget that the Carolina Black Cats were 15-1 in 2015, and they failed to make the playoffs this year. The Look Man believes Dallas is going to draft defensive speed and length, leveraging that with ex-Domer LB Jaylon Smith. They will be back in 2017. And by "they" I mean all but Tony Romo. He's toast.

Without further ado, on to the Conference Championships.

**THE LOOKAHEAD**

**Green Bay (+ 5.5) at Atlanta**

Aaron (Discount Double Check) Rodgers drew up the penultimate play in the dirt, and his win over Dallas belongs in the Pantheon. He now has the flu, is unlikely to have WRs Jordy Nelson, Davante Adams and the surprising Geronimo Allison. If anyone else were at QB, the spread would be a dozen, but DDC is unbelievable.

Atlanta would again like to get out fast and forcing the Pack to be one dimensional. Unfortunately, a one-dimensional Pack can kick yowass. These two played an outstanding game early in the year, well before DDC decided to run the table and make the postseason.

The Dirty Bird offense is also smoking, with 13 different receivers catching TD passes from Matty (Ice) Ryan. OC Kyle Shanahan is parlaying a top five offensive line into a big payday as a head coach somewhere. Even with a defense ranked low in the bottom third, the Dirty Birds destroyed the NFC South under former Seattle D-Co Dan (the Mighty) Quinn.

The Mighty Quinn has eschewed the standard Cover Three that made him great in Seattle in favor of man coverage in recent games. He is leveraging the speed of his edge rushers and secondary to shut down offenses.

The Cheeseheads D cannot stop Atlanta; no one can. The goal here is simply to get two or three stops/turnovers and hope Discount Double Check still has enough magic left to win it. Vegas says this one is likely to be a shootout, with the over coming in at a whopping 60.5 points.

While the smart money is going to come in on Atlanta, the Look Man is not betting against Rodgers. The NFL's greed will want them to have a recognizable opponent in Super Bowl LI. By game's end Rodgers will be yelling into the ATL crowd:" Somebody call the fire department. This Dome's on fire!" while WR Cobb sprays the crowd with a fire hose. Pack covers and wins.

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*Is that Peachtree Plaza up ahead?*

**Pittsburgh (+6) at New England**

Head Coach Mike (Omar Epps) Tomlin was outed last week when WR Antonio Brown decided to post the locker room postgame speech. Omar called the Chowds “a-holes” and asked the Stillers to take a low-profile approach heading into Patriots week. AB couldn’t hear what Tomlin was saying, because he was too busy acting a fool.

Bill Belicheat made fun of the situation, mispronouncing the social media platform name, but make no mistake: this was bulletin board material, and the Chowds are ticked. Not that anyone needs extra incentive for the conference championship, but hey.

Tom (Zoolander) Brady and Belicheat have owned the Stillers at Foxborough in the regular and post season. Tomlin’s last game at the was a Thursday night matchup to open the 2015 season in which Stillers coaches could hear only the Patriots’ radio broadcast of the game in their headsets. Blitzburgh lost, 28-21, and a visibly irritated Tomlin said: “That’s always the case here. That’s why we don’t care about the nameless gray faces until we get here. You’ve heard of man vs. man, man vs. nature. Well, this is man versus the supernatural – Belicheat himself.”

Fast forward to Sunday night, and the Still Curtain expects a very hostile New England crowd, similar to what they faced in KC. And by similar, the Look Man means about three times as drunk. These Chowds can really put it away, and a 6:40 kickoff means the fans will be well lubricated.

New England may counter with former Stillers RB LaGarrette Blount, who is, well, like a blunt instrument. The Look Man believes Belicheat will limit the touches of RB Dion Lewis, who put the rock on the ground twice last week. Lewis is fast, but it doesn’t help against a ball-hawking defense which can turn you over.

Big Ben is healthy enough, and this will be the first time the Chowds face the Three Bs at full strength. Look for RB Le’Veon Bell to tote the rock early and often. His slow-motion style could be extremely effective against New England. Even the threat of his running sets Ben up for solid play action, and the Stillers now have speed at receiver with WR Eli Rogers, Darius (Hyphen Name) Bey and Sammy Coates (of Many Colors). TE Jesse James shot off his guns last week in KC, and oft-injured Ladarius Green could get off the side of the milk carton.

Zoolander is still Zoolander, and he made WR Julian Edelman(’s Bakery) look like a superstar last week, and WR Chris Hogan is the real deal. The key is, Zoolander is better against the zone than he is against

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man coverage. The case in point is the Houston game, where Zoolander threw two picks. He hasn't thrown a pick against the Stillers zone blitz in a very long time.

Look for D-Co Keith Butler to mix up the coverages just enough to keep the Chowds off balance. The Blitzburgh D will fly to the ball, hitting anything that moves - - - hard. There will be plenty of flags, but the Stillers will remove the heart from New England, imprinting their will on the opposition. And isn't that what NFL football is all about? Stillers cover and win.



*"I will still have my offseason marketing job!"*

#### EPILOGUE

The Look Man could be dead wrong on the picks this week, but he wagers with his heart and his head. If you want to bet chalk, do it, but where's the fun in that? The Look Man is betting that the underdog can out-scheme and out-perform Goliath. And that, my friend, is why he watches football. It's 46 ronin on gameday, all with blood in their eyes and makeup on their faces.

Over in the NFC, Green Bay has been a regular contestant in the world championship tournament, but Atlanta is an unknown. Does the NFL want fresh blood in the finals, or will they want to see two well-known teams fight it out?

More important, the Theater of the Absurd is in play, as Commissioner Roger Goodell may have to choose between awarding the trophy to New England following his ridiculous Deflategate suspension and reduced ratings. The Stillers are always a big draw, and they would be in their ninth championship game.

Irrespective of the combatants, the league can hardly lose. It's like the final line from the 1960 original film *The Magnificent Seven*. After an epic battle, the Yul Brynner character says, "The old man was right. Only the farmers won. We lost. We always lose." Then, he and Steve McQueen ride off into the sunset.

The Look Man has not seen *The Magnificent Seven* remake, but some things don't need to be repeated. The Look Man guesses the Seattle-New England Super Bowl was one of those.

Peace,

The Look Man