

THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2018

Week One – Big Money Walkin’

“Since the 2000 season, NFL teams with a turnover margin of +5 or better in a game are 132-4-1. The Browns are responsible for two of those losses and the tie.” – Bill Barnwell on Twitter on the Week 1 tie between the Browns and Stillers.

PROLOGUE

Week 1 saw incredible fireworks and the talking heads positing that the recent big money contracts are paying dividends. Aaron (Discount Double Check) Rodgers, Kirk (K-Cuz) Cousins, Khalil (Return of the) Mack, Joe Flacco and Alex (Captain Checkdown) Smith all excelled, earning their paychecks in Week One. On the other hand, Matt Stafford, Eli Manning, Derek Carr, Jimmy Garoppolo, and Matt Ryan have all been indicted for grand larceny simply by cashing their paychecks.

NFL quarterbacks earn about \$1.3 million per outing, but guys like Stillers RB Le’Veon Bell get killed when asking for similar compensation. Bell contributes nearly 200 combined yards of offense per contest. The chances of him throwing a pick six are slim and none, and Slim has his coat on.

It is too early to determine whether QBs are worth the compensation, but it is clear that the owners are pocketing about \$300 million in TV monies per season. And that number does not include side deals for parking, concessions or other compensation. Before we destroy a player for not honoring a contract, let’s take a look at the owners, who are printing their own currency while guaranteeing salary primarily to folks who don’t participate in full contact practice.

Without further pontification, the week that was.

LAGNIAPPE

WWE Raw?

The Look Man received several nice emails last week following the first LMR of the 2018 season. Longtime Tailpipe K-Gunn Dunn had an eloquent rebuttal to the Look Man’s Week Minus One Epilogue:

The drop in the NFL ratings may have to do with politics, social values, price of barley or many other things. My personal disinterest is fueled by the transition away from an actual competitive sport where one team tries to score and the opponent is actually encouraged to try to stop them. The game we watch now is going the way of the NBA, where high scores and flashy plays are the primary goals (as demonstrated by your opening statement on SB LII, “which featured the most total yards in a single game in NFL history. Not just Super Bowl history. Not just postseason history. The most total yards in any game in the history of the NFL, a record that has stood for nearly seventy years.”)

In short, the game has changed into a sports entertainment product. Welcome to the NFL/NBA/WWF where anything can happen as long as it fits the script.

The Look Man likes the NBA, but Golden State’s super-team has dulled some of the luster. Good stuff Kevin.

Kaepernick, Kizer or Peterman?

When DeShone Kizer (Söze) enters the Red Zone, the Marlboro Theme song starts to play in his head, and, next thing you know, the ball is in the opponent’s hands and headed for the opposite end zone. He threw 22 interceptions with six pick sixes in 2017, and his incredible 9.5% red zone turnover rate far exceeded the NFL average of 1.3%.

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Green Bay HC Mike McCarthy said after the game, “Favre always said, “I don't believe in God, but I'm afraid of him.” Well I believe in God, and the only thing that scares me is Kizer Söze. Not only is he a sexual predator, but he single-handedly destroyed the movie *Baby Driver*.”

McCarthy continued, “Söze could turn over the soap in the shower if it was too close to the end zone. We tried to cut him, but he threatened to kill all 52 guys if we did, so we made him our Number Two. God help us if Discount Double Check is really injured. “

The Look Man ain’t going for no banana in the tail pipe. Are you seriously trying to say that Kizer Söze or Crapchester QB Nate Peterman are better than Colin Kaepernick? Kap could win his collusion lawsuit simply by showing film of these two bozos.

Contender or Pretender?

Week 1 featured some nice wins by unlikely teams. It is too early to start using the P word, but two performances stand out to the Look Man:

KC at LA Chargers: Baby Backs WR Tyreek (The Cheetah) Hill assaulted the NFL record book with not one, but first quarter two 50-yard touchdowns in this one. Speed kills and the Cheetah did everything but sell popcorn at halftime. The Bolts nearly came back after conservative KC playcalling in the second half, but no team is safe as long as Hill patrols the NFL Serengeti.

Aeronauticals at Cadillacs: Rookie Jets QB Sam Darnold followed a first NFL pass pick six with four TD passes in a rout of Detroit on Monday Night Football. The Look Man wondered how in the world Cleveland could pass on this kid OR Saquon (means ‘show me the money’ in Aramaic) Barkley in the first four picks. The Cadillacs opener was a lead balloon, and former Chowds DC Matt Patricia looked as if he ate a bad gyro in Greektown.

OC Jim Bob Cooter (not a nickname!) needs to get the offense fixed, or he may be next on the menu. Cooter is the only coaching staff holdover, and Stafford requested that he be retained for continuity. As far as the Look Man can tell, the only continuity is that the Lions have one playoff victory in 61 years, a pattern that is likely to continue into next season.

ZEBRA OF THE WEEK

The catch rule was rewritten to eliminate obvious catches being overturned when the receiver loses the rock after going to the ground. The new rule states, “... a catch will be ruled good if a player possesses the ball with two feet down and makes a defined football move, such as taking a step forward after possession.”

The Look Man saw three horrible catch calls in Week 1:

Houston at New England: Rob Gronkowski’s 4th quarter no-catch was horrible and figured large in the 27-20 win over Houston. Houston skipper Bill O’Brien should’ve called a timeout since he couldn’t challenge inside two minutes, but he wanted to preserve times out in a close game.

Jets at Lions: the Quincy Enunwa catch on MNF was also garbage. Detroit HC Matt (Zig Zag) Patricia challenged the call, but got no love on what was clearly a ground-aided grab. Apparently, the officiating magic leaves when you leave Beantown, eh Zig Zag?

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Patricia keeps rolling...

Seahawks at Denver: Denver WR Demaryius Thomas did some fancy footwork, tapping the same foot twice to buy a TD at Mile High at Investigation Field. It worked, and the Donkey Defense did the rest.

As expected, the rookie zebras were awful in Week 1. The Stillers-Browns game featured Exhibit A, Shawn Smith in a driving rainstorm. Predictably, the game ended in an overtime tie, the first in Week 1 since 1971, before the new overtime rules.

The contest featured at least six questionable calls, but when you have 23 accepted penalties, you're going to miss a few. Cases in point:

1. Stillers CB Joe Haden jumped on Browns WR Flash Gordon's shoulder to stop him from high pointing a pass in the end zone. The resulting incompleteness changed the course of the contest.
2. Roughing the passer and block in the back calls on Browns DE Myles Garrett that the NFL confirmed as bad calls. The former resulted in a first down on the play preceding a TD and the latter would've placed the ball at the two-yard line in OT.
3. A missed holding call on one of Ben's scrambles. Stillers WR Juju Smith-Schuster looked as if he was square dancing with the Browns DE, who narrowly missed blasting Ben on the sideline.
4. Replay failed to overturn a bad call on a punt which clearly nicked a Browns player.
5. The Stillers lined up offsides on the game ending blocked FG, but the kick was so low we can throw that one out.

While no one play determines the outcome of a game, these key plays directly resulted in the tie. The Browns have not gotten a call at home since Bottlegate in 2002, and unless that changes, it's going to be another season on the Island of Misfit Teams in Cleveland.

Shawn Smith worked on of Terry (Bottlegate) McAulay's crew and was promoted this year. He also worked on Jeff (Beanbag) Triplette's crew for his two seasons, and worked last season under Ed (the Hulk) Hochuli.

That's right: Smith worked with three of the four retirees in 2017, two of whom were directly engaged in illegally reviewing a play following a legal snap and putting a man's eye out with a beanbag, respectively. Both plays happened in Cleveland, and both resulted in melees. The Hulk is still wanted in connection with the disappearance of a SHIELD hoverjet and may be hiding out in Ragnarök.

Shawn Smith, you are the Look Man **Zebra of the Week!**

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Shawn Smith
Referee – #14



Terry McAulay
Referee – #77

Smith and Bottlegate in happier times...

THE LOOKAHEAD

Divisional foes always make for nice matchups, and Week Two has some doozies. The Look Man held serve in Week One, going 2-2 against the spread. He did, however, get a nice cover and under pick with the Stillers-Browns. Here’s the drill:

Dumpster Ducks at Binqos – Thursday Night Football on NFLN (PK / 44):

Andy (The Red Water Pistol) Dalton looked solid in Week One. Then again, it wasn’t a nationally televised game, so Good Andy was in full effect. This week, the Red Water Pistol has a Thursday Night tilt with B-More, which cruised to a 47-3 shellacking of the Crapchester Bisons.

STD-more has retooled the offense, adding free agent WRs Willie Snead IV (Saints), Michael (Crabbie) Crabtree (Grayders) and John Brown (Cardinals). Since Aqib Talib won’t be around to snatch Crabbie’s chain off, look for him to light up the Orange and Black defense. LB Vontaze Burfict (Storm) is serving his annual four game suspension, but will be back to face the Stillers so he can get suspended yet again.

The Look Man’s number one rule of gambling is to pick the best QB in a tight game. Joe Flaccid is in a contract year and fighting off stiff competition in the form of Lamar (Action) Jackson their first round pick from Louisville. Flaccid’s gamebook against Crapchester was nasty: 25-34, 236 and three TDs. He posted a QB rating over 120 for the first time since his last contract year.

Look for Bad Andy to return in force and for Flaccid to be fully engaged as the Ducks defeat the Nati to go 2-0. Ducks.

Writing these lines on Baltimore’s QB reminded me of a great scene in the film Bad Boys II. Will Smith and Martin Lawrence are talking on closed circuit in a television store with hilarious results. Catch it on demand if you can; it’s one of director Michael Bay’s best efforts.

Cleveland at Religious Icons (-9)

Drew (Cool) Brees put up a forty burger in Week 1 - - - and lost. For the Look Man’s money, Cool Brees is one of the greatest evah. He is one of four NFL QBs ever to throw for four bills, four TDs and zero

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picks in Week One. The rest of the list is pretty auspicious as well: Peyton Manning, Phil Simms and (just last week) Ryan (The Great Gazoo) Fitzpatrick.

On the Browns side, you have turmoil. OC Todd Haley’s (Comet) play calling is more likely to get HC Huge Action fired than to win many games. Haley’s Comet is biding his time with the hopes that Huge will end up with a version of the home game so that he can inherit the head job. Case in point: he started Josh (Flash) Gordon in a monsoon last week knowing full well that Flash had a bad hammy. One false step and Gordon would’ve been facing Ming the Merciless without his ray gun.

Look for QB Tyrod Taylor to rebound in this one, which will be played on a dry field in the Dome. Gordon carves up the Icons’ secondary, but only after Huge demands the Brown run the football. RBs (The) Duke Johnson and Carlos (Jekyll and) Hyde can then proceed to soften up the defense with punishing runs.

New Orleans also has the Lookahead Factor, facing divisional foe the ATL next week. Browns win outright and look for back-to-back wins when Sam Darnold and the Jets come to C-Town in Week 3. Browns.



“I once threw six TDs in a game. Veritas, baby, veritas. “

Black Cats at Dirty Birds (-5.5)

Matty (Ice) Ryan showed his true colors again last week by puking in the Red Zone against the Iggles. Atlanta lost that game 18-12 because Matty Ice choked acted as if (Me and) Julio Jones was the only receiver. This loss was almost a mirror image of the NFC playoff loss to Philly in 2017.

The Black Cats got bad news with the Week 1 loss of TE Greg Olsen and OT Darryl Williams. Olsen is Cam Newton’s security blanket, but the addition of several new offensive weapons like (Sister) Christian McCaffrey should mitigate that loss. What cannot be mitigated is the poor offensive line play, and the Falcons defense is tough at home.

Here’s the issue: the ATL lost two key defensive starters for the year in Deion Jones and Keanu Neal. These tweeners are responsible for making the defense work, using speed to overcome their lack of size. Look for Carolina to play bully ball and cover this spread. Carolina.

Hornheads at Cheeseheads (+1):

Aaron (Discount Double Check) Rodgers pulled off his best Paul Pierce in Week 1, returning from an MCL injury to erase a 17-0 halftime deficit and beat the new-look Bears. The Monsters of the Furniture Mart actually looked they might regain their original name in the first half with a 17-0 lead. DeShone Kizer

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(Söze) returned to 2017 form with two picks, including a pick six. Söze was on pace to throw another two dozen picks this season when the Real Söze returned in the third stanza.

Discount Double Check quickly posted two TDs to get the game back in reach, and he did it on one leg. DDC finished up with a sweet 75-yard TD to Randall (Corn) Cobb, who zig zagged to the House as if it was a punt return.

Kirk (Curt) Cousins looks good in purple, and has serious receivers in Adam Thielen and Stefon Diggs, but the Pack’s are better. Cobb, Davonte Adams, and Geronimo Allison are so talented that they released Look Man favorite Jordy Nelson, and added TE Jimmy (Smitty) Smith from Seattle. This team will dominate when Smitty and Rodgers get on the same page.

Minnesota is playing excellent defense, and their pass rush is fierce. They have six or seven legitimate defensive stars and it might be a good idea to sit DDC this week to ensure his health for the balance of the 2018 season. That won’t happen for two reasons: (1) HC Mike McCarthy is gutless, and (2) this is the anniversary of Rodgers’ collarbone injury courtesy of the Hornheads in 2017. Go, Pack, go. Cheeseheads.

Jynts at Pokes (-3) – Football Night in America

The Pokes are in trouble and everyone is killing Eli(te) Manning in NY. Dak Prescott is guilty of #doingtoomuch in Big D, throwing the ball a ridiculous 50 times. What did the Pokes expect when they lost Witten and Dez? Those two combined for 1600 catches, and the Pokes receiving corps are not household names in their own households. Allen Hurns is damaged goods, Terrence Williams is inconsistent, Michael Gallup is a rookie, and Cole Beasley is a poor man’s Edelman.

Dak’s O-line is all banged up with All-Pro guard Zack Martin, All-Pro center Travis Frederick, and right tackle La’el Collins all hurting. They need to run the football, but it’s tough with a M*A*S*H unit. When Dak does throw, he does so under duress to receivers who may not be in the correct spot.

Eli is feeling the heat in the Big Apple, but the Look Man believes he will be fine. Saquon Barkley is a solid blocker and ripped off a 68-yard TD run in Week 1. Odell Beckham (Old Dirty Bastard) Jr. is happy with his new contract. The Jynts offensive line is retooled with Ereck Flowers playing matador on the right side, but they acquired Chowds LT Nate Solder in free agency. This unit needs to gel, and the Pokes are coming along at the right time.

The Pokes are 11-11 since the 11-game win streak in 2016 and the natives are restless. They look like a 7-9 team in the tough NFC East. Eli will piece together a win and sign his name on the wall in the visitor’s locker room again. Jynts.

EPILOGUE

Seven coaches made their debuts with their new teams in 2018. Those new head coaches are now 0-7. First year head coaches have historically been pretty good in Week 1 since 2013, going 20-15 combined. Ten of those coaches ended up in the postseason, but none of them were named Jon (Chucky) Gruden.

The Look Man is not sanguine about this current crop of FNGs. Ex-Chowds Patricia and Vrabel are both overrated, hoping to re-create the New England mystique. Gruden and Jynts HC Pat Shurmur are uninspiring, and Chicago’s Matt Nagy’s playcalling resulted in two blown 20 point leads in his last two

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jobs. Gruden’s Grayders had 10 penalties for a buck forty-five, a number that eclipsed any 2017 Oakland game. Commitment to Excellence, indeed.

The Look Man doesn’t embrace changing head coaches lightly, but these guys may be back on the unemployment line sooner rather than later. And Browns HC Huge Action, Bingo Marvin (Jerry) Lewis and Pokes chief Jason Garrett will be in the waiting room.



FFCA, here I come again!

It’s only Week 1, but in the words of Yogi Berra, “It gets late early around here.”

Peace,

The Look Man