

THE LOOK MAN REPORT 2018

Week 18 – The Kid’s Getting Boored

“We didn’t play well at all. They ran up the score. We wanted them again, we got them again. This time, hey, we coming. It’s definitely not going to be the same outcome.” Iggles LT Jason Peters on New Orleans’ Week 11 two additional scores while already leading by more than three scores in the fourth quarter.

PROLOGUE

The Look Man went 3-0-1 in Wild Card Weekend, and it would’ve been 4-0 if not for Brian Schottenheimer’s conservative play-calling at Dallas. Schottenheimer might have been the only guy who could keep (Dange)Russ Wilson from throwing for three bills in that game. Sure, you have to run the ball, but Doomsday Lite was shutting it down, and Wilson put up over two bills passing with only 27 attempts. Sheesh.

The signing of head coaches really ramped up following Week 18, almost as if all of the good coaches had been eliminated. The Look Man is not sure why talking hairdos like Matt LeFleur, Kliff Kingsbury and Adam Gase now have jobs. Apparently, simply talking on the phone with Rams HC Sean McVay is enough to garner a job in today’s NFL. Either that, or using copious amounts of hair gel.

The Wild Card Weekend was a fantastic appetizer, and the main course is about to ensue in the Conference Championships. This Divisional Playoff round in Week 19 is simply an amuse bouche for NFL fans. Still, it promises intrigue, especially regarding a potential changing of the guard at NFL quarterback.

While the aged Drew (Cool) Brees, Philip Rivers and Tom (Zoolander) Brady all have prominent roles, the balance of the QBs, Luck, Mahomes, Goff and Prescott, are all up and comers. Week 19 will either cement the legacy of the geriatric set or initiate one for the young guns.

Without further age discrimination, the Week that Was:

LAGNIAPPE

Coaching Hires

Now that NFL franchise values at or exceeding \$2 billion, owners can replace a \$20 million coaching staff as easily as changing their shoes. Residual contract expenses are fully guaranteed, but creating a new photogenic face of the franchise puts season ticket holders in seats. Owners, with TV money in the bank are not willing to win in two years; they want to win now.

Case in point: Browns owner Jimmy (Con Man) Haslam, who is paying Rob Chudzinski, Mike Pettine, Pat Shurmur, Hue Jackson, and Greg Williams not to coach. The Con Man goes through coaching staffs like shit through a goose, and that doesn’t even include executives like Sashi Brown, Ray Farmer, and Joe Banner. These guaranteed contract dollars are subject to offset, meaning the remaining balance is potentially reduced by income from other teams. Still, it’s a lot of money to throw away just because you don’t like a guy’s hair style.

Bad Move?

The Browns made a huge mistake by hiring Freddie Kitchens as head coach. The Look Man would have hired Bruce (BA) Arians or Vic Fangio. Either would put their stamp on the Browns franchise, but Haslam decided to go on the cheap after pissing away dollars on coaches and execs who are no longer in C-town.

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The history of these hires shows that coaches who are promoted from within last about two years. Here’s a list of some recent examples, and it is really a Hall of Shame. Notice the guys in red, a real Rogue’s Gallery of talent:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Team</i>	<i>Prev Role</i>	<i>Years as HC</i>
Wade Phillips	Bisons	DC	3
Pete Carroll	Jets	DC	2
Dave Shula	Bengals	WRs	3
Ray Handley	Jynts	RBs	1
Rich Kotite	Jets	OC	1
June Jones	Dirty Birds	OC	1
Richie Pettibon	Genocide Vics	DC	3
Dirk Koetter	Corn Kings	OC	3
Ben McAdoo	Jynts	OC	2
Mike Munchak	Thumbtacks	O-Line	3
Jim Mora Jr	Seahawks	Asst HC	1
Raheem Morris	Corn Kings	DBs	3
Dave Campo	Pokes	DC	3
Dave Wannstedt	Mammals	DC	5
Joe Bugel	Genocide Vics	OC	1
Mike White	Raiders	O-Line	2
Lindy Infante	Ponies	OC	2
Hue Jackson	Raiders	OC	1
Jim Tomsula	Niners	D-line	1
Bill Callahan	Raiders	OC	2
Al Groh	Jets	LBs	1
Gunther Cunningham	KC	DC	2
Jim Caldwell	Ponies	OC	3
Mike Martz	Rams	OC	6
Average			2.3

Cleveland needs a defensive presence to compete in the AFC given all of the outstanding arms in KC and B-More. The NFL is a copycat league, but Dorsey and Haslam are missing the point: defense wins championships. There is no need to jump simply because inexperienced idiots are being hired around the NFL.

The Browns and Kitchens may be back on the bottom of the AFC Asgard division in no time. (Cake) Baker Mayfield is not a savior, nor is he a guy to build the entire franchise around; if he were, the Browns would be in the playoffs right now. If you’re not improving, you’re going backwards.

The Alliance of American Football – the New AFL?

This week is the fiftieth anniversary of Super Bowl III, where Broadway Joe Namath and the Jets beat the old guard Baltimore Colts. The game provided instant credibility to the American Football League and forced a merger with the NFL. It is one of the top three games in NFL history.

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The Look Man told you that story to tell you another one: The Alliance of American Football (AAFL) season opens February 9th, right after the Super Bowl. The AAFL features a draft scheme to pull in regional college and pro talent, ensuring that regional favorites will have a large presence on the local teams. Imagine a team in Knoxville that included former University of Tennessee players and Peyton Manning as the commissioner.

AAFL teams are located in San Diego, Phoenix, San Antonio, Memphis, Atlanta, Orlando, Birmingham and Salt Lake City. (Iron) Mike Singletary, Dennis Erickson, the Old Ball Coach, Troy Polamalu and Hines Ward are involved as well as other former NFL administrators and players. Could we be looking at the next merger and expansion of the NFL? Stay tuned.

ZEBRA OF THE WEEK

Are You Sarah Connah?

The Divisional Round is an important assignment, and it features all-star zebra teams instead of their normal crews. As a result, these teams are unfamiliar with each other, and it can lead to questionable officiating.

One such all-star, Sarah (Connor) Thomas, will make history when she takes the field at The Blade for Bolts-Chowds. Thomas, uniform number 53 on your program, is a down judge who will become the first female to officiate a playoff game in NFL history. She was the first full-time female zebra hired by the league in 2015, and has served with distinction. Her best asset: unlike Hulk Hochuli, you don’t even notice she is on the field.

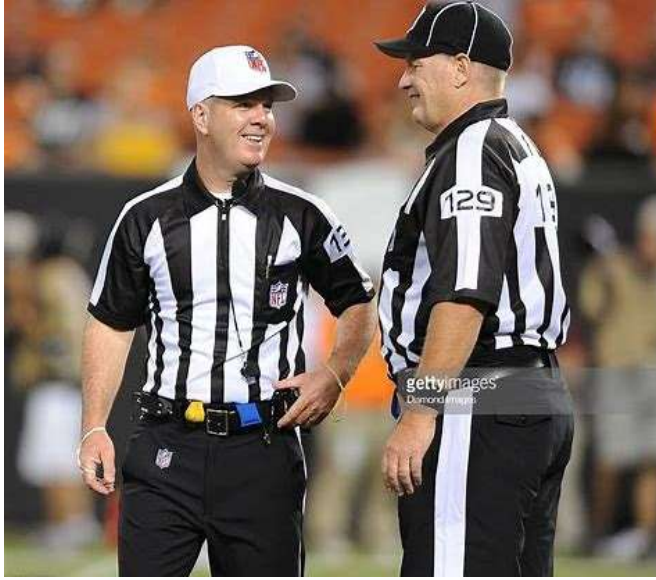
Thomas will be joined in history by Terri Valentini, the NFL’s first female instant replay official, working Ponies-Baby Backs on Saturday. Let’s hope neither one of them opens the door to a large cyborg asking questions prior to the game.

The Onside Kick is Gone

The onside kick is officially dead after last week’s Seattle dud, which sealed a push wager for the Look Man instead of a big parlay payoff. NFL teams have attempted 50 onside kicks and recovered just four of them in 2018. That eight percent success rate pales to the 21 percent from 2017, before the NFL Rules Committee made onside kicks extinct. It is now illegal to actually block anyone in the neutral zone between the kicking and receiving teams.

Kickoff and punt returns are also down, largely because the NFL didn’t want to pay quarterback money to guys like Devin Hester and Josh Cribbs. Once those guys got \$10 million deals, you began to see flags fly as soon as the ball was caught. Why would the league want to legislate excitement out of its game and make legitimate comebacks more difficult? Follow the money.

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“I put a nickel on the under in this game...you?”

The Rest of the Story

Here are the official assignments for the Divisional Round:

- Ron Torbert (attorney) – Bolts-Chowds: Torbert throws way too much laundry, calling everything and disrupting the flow of the game. He may be behind only Jerome Boger(mill) as the worst zebra in the NFL.
- John Hussey (sales representative for a retail logistics group) - Colts-Chiefs: Hussey is undistinguished, but served under Hulk Hochuli as a line judge. The best zebras come from the Umpire slot, but Hussey seems adequate.
- John Parry (financial advisor) - Pokes-Rams: led the NFL in roughing the passer calls, which may keep Ndamakong Suh from stepping on Dak Prescott’s ankles.
- Carl Cheffers (sales manager) – Iggles-Icons: Cheffers was the referee for Super Bowl LI between New England and Atlanta, the first and only Super Bowl to be decided in overtime. He missed more calls in that second half 25-point comeback than most zebras ever make in a career. Dude stinks.

On balance, the Look Man can’t endorse any of these guys. The only good news might be that the best zebras are slated for the Conference Championship and Super Bowl weeks.

Still, you have to be nervous that Walt Coleman could be in the mix for any playoff games. Coleman, of Tuck Rule fame, received an award from the Chowds in Week 16 and is retiring at season’s conclusion. For security reasons, he has never done a Raiders game in Oakland since that January 2002 debacle.

THE LOOKAHEAD

Last week’s Wild Card Weekend underdog sweeps lead to some outstanding matchups. The hidden numbers behind the numbers are tough to read, and the zebras and weather are also at play. The Divisional Playoff weekend is one of the toughest for picks, with or without the spread.

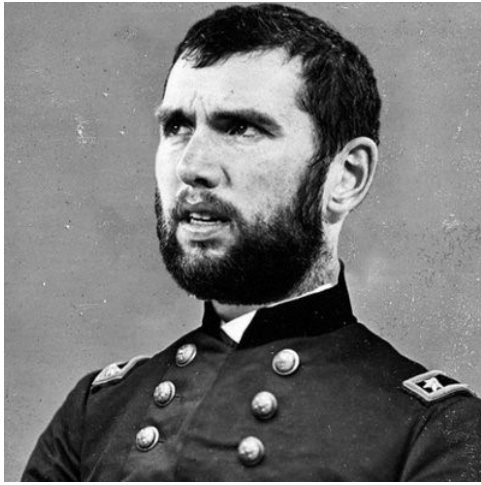
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Without further rationalization, the Lookahead for the Divisional Playoff Weekend:

Saturday:

Ponies at Baby Backs (-5.5/57) 4:35 PM kickoff on Football Night in America (sort of..)

(Captain) Andrew Luck, the Comeback Player of the Year with 39 TD passes, arrives with his platoon coming off a rousing win at Houston. Luck himself orchestrated a wild 45-44 comeback in the 2013 wild card game in Arrowhead. It was the second-greatest comeback in NFL postseason history, right behind his head coach Frank Reich’s 32-point comeback over Houston in 1992.



Dearest mother —

Our victory frolicking has ceased. We must now begin our march to Kansas City to battle a unit of such great stature, every member has been granted the title of Chief. Their leader is a sumo wrestler; their captain, a large froggishly voiced brave with a high headdress and freakish arm, is formidable. One of their scouts has been given the appellation of “cheetah” for his unusual speed. Our path has been long and winding, but I have never seen the men’s spirits higher.

— Capt. Andrew Luck

Former Ponies QB Jim Harbaugh kept his khakis packed in the 1995 divisional round which began the ongoing six-game postseason drought at Arrowhead, so the Baby Backs badly need to get this monkey off of their backs.

This game has all the earmarks of a barn burner, with the top two touchdown producing QBs in the NFL going head to head. The Ponies are playing the best ball in the AFC right now, and put up 200 rushing yards at Houston last week. This factoid is particularly relevant in light of the KC defense, which is rated 27th against the run.

KC Head Coach Andy Reid's playoff struggles are well-chronicled, but his teams are 20-4 all-time (regular season and playoffs) coming off a bye. This game has it all: a history of Ponies wins over KC, the return of former KC Assistant GM Chris Ballard, and contrary betting indicators. Who could want more?

Here are the Look Man’s indicators:

- There will be snow in KC as Winter Storm Gia blankets the Midwest. Look for the better running team to take advantage of the weather. That would be the Ponies, with RB Marlon

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Mack, who established a new team playoff record 148 rushing last week in Houston. Kansas City allowed a buck thirty-two per game in the regular season.

- Reid is always tough following a bye week, but his clock management style showed up last week in Chicago when his disciple Matt Nagy mismanaged the clock in a nail-biting loss. Reid coaches like he eats, and his legendary clock mismanagement cost him at New England and in Indy. He cannot help himself.

Luck and the Ponies just feel like a team of destiny. They are the 2018 version of the underdog Iggles and KC hasn’t been the same since RB Kareem Hunt was shown the door. Chiefs go down like free beer - Ponies and the under in a close one.

Pokes at Rams (-7/49.5) 8:15PM kickoff on Fox

The Look Man has been looking for this game all season. The Pokes are one of the few playoff teams that the Rams did not play, and this matchup looks to be epic. The Look Man wouldn’t be surprised for Fox analyst Troy (Boy) Aikman to show up high as a kite - - - again. Ever notice how red Troy’s eyes are before a broadcast? The Look Man kept adjusting his color TV to ensure it wasn’t a glitch.

Doomsday Lite shut down the best running team in the NFL last week in Big D. Their reward is facing the multiple Rams, who, if RB Todd Gurley is healthy, can merely be contained, never stopped. The Rams lost their only playoff game last season, and the bye week allowed them to rest up and get ready for Zeke Elliott and Doomsday Lite.

The Look Man has been tough on Pokes QB Dak Prescott in 2018, so he did a little research on the 4th round pick. It turns out that Rayne Dakota "Dak" Prescott has nine fourth-quarter comebacks and fifteen game-winning drives in his three pro seasons. Dak’s predecessor, Tony Romo (the Place for Ribs), had only 25 and 30, respectively.

It gets better: Prescott leads the NFL in passer rating when tied or trailing by eight points or fewer in the fourth quarter or overtime, posting a 109.7 career passer rating in that situation. No other qualifying QB has a passer rating above 100 in that situation, including (Capt.) Andrew Luck (97.7), Romo (95.4), Russell Wilson (93.8), Big Ben (93.3) and Drew (Cool) Brees (92.4).

The Look Man always says, “pick the better QB in a close matchup.” Not this time; Rams have too much defense and too much Todd Gurley. If the Rams jump out to a big lead, it’s over. If it’s close, CBs Aquib Talib, Marcus Peters, the Rams secondary and the Zebras save the day. The NFL needs an LA team in Super Bowl LIII, and they don’t want it to be the nomadic Bolts. Pokes cover, Rams win to advance to the NFC Conference Championship. Rams.

SUNDAY

Bolts at Chowds (-4/47)

The weather forecast is for 30F at Fucksborough, falling to 16F by final gun. Winter Storm Gia doesn’t make it to Beantown, but the cold weather should make it tough for any typical SoCal squad. The problem is, the Bolts are not just any SoCal team.

The defense that Defensive Coordinator Gus Bradley trotted out in Baltimore last week was ‘Belichickian.’ Bradley played seven DBs and one linebacker, shutting down the Baltimore veer offense and QB Lamar Jackson’s rushing lanes with a spy. They dominated the Dumpster Ducks on the road and

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in a hostile environment. The Look Man hasn’t seen anything that innovative defensively since 1994, when then Browns HC Bill Belichick installed the 3-4 defense in one week and nearly beat the Stillers. Like Bradley, Belicheat lacked players to staff positions and used innovation to bridge the gap. It is practical genius at work and one of only two times the Browns have gone to the postseason since.

This is a tough spot for the Bolts following a physical Week 18 contest. The term “Marty Ball” was coined for former Browns and KC Head Coach Marty Schottenheimer teams, which would lose to teams in close physical games. Those teams never won the following week, largely due to the physical toll Marty Ball took on them.

The Look Man betting tips:

- Back to back road games – pick the home team
- Marty Ball impact – pick the team that didn’t have to face the physical D
- Chowds are 6-0 in the postseason at Fucksborough

Seems like an open and shut win for Tom (Zoolander) Brady and the Chowds, right. Wrong.

Bolts defenders Joey Bosa and Melvin Ingram had to chase all over the field last week with Lamar Jackson. This week, they can rush to a spot where Zoolander is rooted, a tremendous advantage for a pass rusher. Further, the Bolts get back DT (and noted fire hydrant) Brandon Mebane following the loss of his infant daughter. Mebane will plug up the middle, forcing Brady to pass into a secondary that has two Pro Bowl DBs.

After seeing the Baltimore defense twice in three weeks, the Chowds D is going to look like Swiss cheese to Rivers. He will carve them up with Mike Williams and Keenan Allen, with a good helping of Old Man Antonio Gates. The zebras have been so bad that LT Russell Okung opined that “...Goodell doesn’t want to see the Bolts advance...” And the Look Man agrees.

The Bolts beat the Chowds AND the Zebras to continue to write their own story with a win at the Blade, keeping Rivers’ Super Bowl hopes alive. Bolts, baby, Bolts.

Iggles at Religious Icons (-8/51)

In college, Nick Foles got the nickname ‘Big Dick’ Nick due to his call demeanor under pressure and his penchant for winning big games at Arizona. Foles is 6’6” with big hands, so there may be other reasons for the nickname. Suffice it to say that some coeds at ‘Zona were afraid to go out with Foles.

Betting tip number 31: When a team faces a team which blew them out during the course of the season, it is very likely that the inverse will occur.

That is not saying (Big Dick) Nick Foles and the Iggles will win on Sunday night, but the Religious Icons have looked mortal near the end of the season. Brees stumbled and fumbled away the MVP with three subpar weeks of picks, and the Week 17 start by Teddy Bridgewater (Radials) was awful.

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Granted, New Orleans had nothing to play for, but it has been a while since this offense has hit on all cylinders. They have the otherworldly Michael Thomas at WR, but the rest of the receiving corps is young and unproven.

Iggles LT Jason Peters wasn’t the only Philly player who was irritated in Week 11. Former Icons and current Iggles S Malcolm Jenkins flipped Sean Payton the bird following one of the late scores. That Week 11 loss galvanized the then 4-6 Iggles. They went on to beat to beat the Jynts, Genocide Victims, Rams and Texans, squeaking into the playoffs with a Week 17 loss by Minnesota. The Iggles only loss after the New Orleans game was a questionably officiated OT loss in Dallas.

The emergence of Big Dick Nick is incredible. The Iggles and Foles himself know that every game could be Nick’s last in Iggles green. He will command a \$20 million salary for some team in 2019, but his contributions in Philly put him on the Mount Rushmore of Philadelphia athletes with Mike Schmidt, Ron Jaworski and Dr. J. It just feels like magic, and even Drew (Cool) Brees, Sean Payton’s mind jobs, and a formidable New Orleans home field advantage may not be enough to stop this train.

New Orleans unproven receivers fold under the playoff intensity, giving the Iggles a rematch with the Rams in Week 19. Iggles.



BDN and friend. Who knew?

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EPILOGUE

STD-More QB Lamar Jackson and Bears K Cody Parkey got boosed in their home stadia last week, and the Official Wife of the Look Man said, “the kids are getting boosed.” Both kids are good, young talented players who deserve more respect than they received.

Jackson was being denigrated for executing the bare bones offensive game plan that was given him. The Bolts stymied Baltimore with an exotic defense and badly outcoached John Harbaugh and company.

In the case of Parkey, bad clock management by rookie HC Matt Nagy forced a longer FG attempt than necessary. The resultant block and double-doink was predictable.

In fact, calling timeouts earlier would almost certainly have given the Bears a chance for a TD to seal the win instead of a FG from a kicker whose specialty is hitting the goal posts. Parkey is like a carnival performer; he doesn’t belong on a football field, he belongs in a circus, right next to the Dog Faced Boy.



From Bears Fan J-Jax

Both athletes acquitted themselves, answering every locker room question following a heartbreaking loss. It seems wrong that fans can’t appreciate the pressure packed nature of the postseason. The finality of win or go home is what makes the NFL great. The fans need to understand that teams need to learn how to win, and that takes time.

Baltimore and Chicago will be back in the postseason, probably sooner rather than later. And when they return, two players will have gained valuable knowledge about comportsment under pressure. The Look Man wishes his Browns squad could say the same.

Peace,

The Look Man