

## THE LOOK MAN REPORT 2018

### Week 19 – Nice Guys Finish Last

*“Well, you’ll have to bleep that one.” - Rams QB Jared Goff in a postgame interview after teammate Aqib Talib interrupted the on-field chat shouting, “He ain’t taking no f\*\*\*\*\* soul!” in an uncensored moment on Fox.*

#### PROLOGUE

The Look Man watched the Divisional Playoff weekend with rapt attention, realizing just a little too late that he had outsmarted himself. Teams with bye weeks enjoy an 82-30 winning percentage in the divisional round, and that trend continued.

Despite heralding the impact of Marty Ball and the wear and tear of physical games at Dallas and Baltimore, the Look Man went 2-2. Every bouncing or deflected ball found its way away from the underdogs, any one of which could have turned the blowouts into tight games. The moral of the story might be ‘never pick against New England.’ Even Chowds WR Julian Edelman is using the ‘underdog’ status this week to sell T-shirts begging folks to “Bet Against Us.” The real moral: never sleep on the bye week, which provides teams with fresh legs and weakened opposition.



*Edelman’s side business; it ain’t shoe sales...*

The Look Man would like to think rather that the Iggles magic disappeared at the worst moment, and the Bolts simply too banged up to modify the imaginative defense created to stop Baltimore. You can never show Belicheat the same look and expect that he won’t have game-planned around it. Before you say that Bolts’ head coach Anthony Lynn was outcoached by Belicheat, just realize that you cannot win with one healthy linebacker, especially with matchup issues created by Edelman and Gronk. It’s nearly impossible.

More likely, the underdogs in the Divisional round were simply too beat up to compete. Nearly every game was a blowout, and the Iggles likely win the Battle of New Orleans if Alshon Jeffrey catches that first down. To say nothing of the previous play in which a surefire TD pass whistled right by Agholor’s ear because he didn’t even look for the ball. If anything, Pederson was outcoached by rushing to snap it

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instead of waiting for the two-minute warning. The last thing any team should do is score a TD too quickly and put the ball back in the hands of Drew Brees and that offense.

We now head to the conference championships with predictable, if not fabricated, matchups. The top four offensive teams, Kansas City, the Rams, New Orleans and New England, compete for the right to the Lombardi. This week may merely reflect that the league wants another offensive explosion in the finale. While LA and New Orleans have solid defenses, none of these teams would turn Super Bowl LIII into a low scoring, unwatchable game.

We also have a number of coaching contrasts. Coaches who are liked by their players – so called “players’ coaches” – don’t get the brass ring. Imagine Belichick, Parcells and Walsh. They would beat their own mothers to win a title or cut/trade favorite players a year *before* their talent dictates a change.

The other side of the coin: Jason Garrett, Sean McVay and Andy Reid; coaches who are unlikely to win a Lombardi simply because they are not quite cutthroat enough. It’s why the Belichick and Jimmy Johnson coaching trees have been wildly unsuccessful; their coordinators either try too hard to be players coaches or imitate their mentors without the killer instinct.

Without further philosophical debates, the Week that Was:

#### **LAGNIAPPE**

##### *Super Blood Wolf Lunar Eclipse*

The Weather Channel is one of the Look Man’s favorites. They are predicting cold and brutal weather in KC and 72F in the Superdome. But the more important factor may be the first supermoon lunar eclipse in 19 years.

The supermoon eclipse will turn the moon red as sunlight reflects off the Andy Reid’s jacket. It could be one of the coldest games in Arrowhead history, and even colder in Hell, especially if Andy Reid makes it to Super Bowl LIII.

The eclipse, labeled as the Super Blood Wolf Moon because of the Earth and moon’s perigee, will begin around 9:30PM EST with a total eclipse just before midnight. Pink Floyd is slated to appear at halftime in KC, and they will perform their hit *Money* out of respect for the NFL League Office. No word on whether the event signals an alien invasion triggered by Belichick’s people coming for to carry him home.

#### **ZEBRA OF THE WEEK**

##### *Zebra of the Year?*

The Zebra for Super Bowl LIII in Atlanta has been announced. John Parry got his third nod to work a Super Bowl in 19 NFL seasons. Parry, who worked Pokes- Rams in Week 19, a game which featured a horrible in the grasp call with Dak Prescott. Dak was simultaneously in the grasp of a Rams defender and his own offensive lineman, a clear violation. Instead of an aiding the runner flag, he blew the play dead for a sack.

Parry is one of the new guard zebras who play fast and loose with the rule book. He is not a Look Man favorite, but given the retirement of Gene Steratore in 2018, that group has no current members. Carl

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Cheffers and Bill Vinovich will do the divisional round games, and neither has covered themselves in officiating glory.

*Kiwi Shoe Polish – The Official Shoe Polish of the Dallas Cowpokes*

Pokes owner Jerrah (the King of Pop) Jones complained about the footing at the coliseum last week, saying his linemen were slipping around out there. “Well you say, ‘That’s an excuse,’” Jones said. “It is not because not only physically but we had trouble digging in with just the effectiveness of our defense. And we did not stop them, and we did not stop the run.”

When Jones was elected to the Hall of Fame last year, a number of Jerrah’s stories came to light. The Look Man’s previous favorite was his expression, “it doesn’t take long to circumcise a mosquito”, referring to a measurement of time. Jones explained at a 2012 training camp that “I’ve been here when it was gloryhole days, and I’ve been here when it wasn’t. And so, having said that, I want me some gloryhole.”

Pokes spokesman Rich Dalrymple attempted to intervene by pointing out that “gloryhole is a commonly used expression in the oil and gas exploration business,” and Jones interrupted by saying, “That’s news to me.” Jerrah is known for being overserved, often getting inebriated at owners’ meetings. He once violated league orders for a super-secret NFL meeting by appearing unannounced at a bar outside of Chicago, and proceeded to make a spectacle of himself.

Another all-timer occurred within the confines of his party bus, during a visit with Big Game author Mark Leibovich. He and Jones imbibed excessive amounts of Johnnie Walker Blue while Leibovich recorded the proceedings. Jerrah must have forgotten he was being recorded, because he talked candidly about his past.

Jones regaled the author with a story from his shoe salesman days, and he mentioned “spending the afternoon masturbating over selling shoes. I’ve sold shoes, and I’ve masturbated in my shoes,” Jones said. Apparently, for Jones, sales isn’t about the product but about having fun while selling the product.

No word on whether Dalrymple, who was present, ever attempted to explain that “masturbated in my shoes” is a commonly used expression in the oil and gas exploration business.

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*“Nice pair of shoes there ma’am”*

**THE LOOKAHEAD**

Week 20 features the four top rated offenses in 2018. Somehow, the Look Man expects that these overs will go untouched in order to set up fireworks in Super Bowl LIII. The spreads have fallen slightly, meaning that these games will be decided by field goals. That way Vegas loses and the NFL drums up false support for the Big Game.

Without further conspiracy theories, the Lookahead for the Divisional Playoff Weekend:

**Saturday:**

*Chowds at Baby Backs (-3/57)*

This game will be colder than a witch’s thorax, with temps in the teens and a below zero wind chill. These conditions make the ball slick and tough to grab by both the QB and the receivers. Neither wind nor cold are enough to shut down an offense individually, but in tandem, they require the QB to throw tight spirals which are difficult to handle.

The Chowds are known for cold weather exploits, most notably the Tuck Rule Game in 2002. Brady can handle the rock with his large hands, and Edelman is a matchup problem. The Chowds run pick plays like a conductor in a symphony, usually resulting in long ball-controlled drives. The best way to beat KC is to limit their possessions and keep Patrick Mahomes on the pine.

While playoff games take longer because of increase television timeouts, the game is actually squeezed on the field. Teams gamble less, play more conservatively in the postseason in order to limit possessions. NFL teams may run 60-80 plays in the regular season, but 40-50 in the playoffs. This disparity means every possession is valuable and turnovers are anathema.

KC Head Coach Andy Reid may have gotten the Baby Back's playoff monkey off of his back, but this game will be a challenge. Reid is 2-8 against Belicheat, and that is not coincidence. Belicheat forces you to gamble, and if you don’t do it strategically, you can be blow out. Reid, like Pederson in Super Bowl LII, is

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going to have to pick his spots and dial up winning plays. Otherwise, his Hall of Fame credentials will be forfeited and his team will be fishing this time next week.

Indicators:

- New England is a bad road team. Only three NFL teams have gone on to the super Bowl after having a losing road record: 2005 Stillers, 2008 Cheeseheads and 2010 Jynts. This New England team won't be confused with any of those teams. They stunk on the road, losing to non-playoff teams in Detroit, Miami and Tennessee.
- QB Tom (Zoolander) Brady is an underdog for the first time in 68 starts (postseason included). Zoolander will be fired up for a loud Arrowhead crowd. Belicheat might have tempted Fate by continuing to throw after dominating the Bolts last week. Brady's record after throwing the rock more than 40 times has suffered as he has gotten longer in the tooth. Look for Zoolander to be wild and throw two picks on Sunday.

Both teams played good defense in Week 19, but the pass rush is the better indicator. KC does it without blitzing while New England employs a zero-blitz scheme to rattle the passer. If KC can get pressure up the gut, they will force Brady off his spot and win this game. Conversely, if the Chowds overuse that zero blitz, they will get burned by Mahomes, even in cold weather.

A win by New England makes them the third team ever to have three consecutive Super Bowl appearances. A win by KC sends them to their first Super Bowl since the iconic 1969 win over the Hornheads. Reid is not as charismatic and former Chiefs chief Hank Stram, but he keeps "matriculating the ball down the field" this week. Baby Backs cover and win.

#### Rams at Religious Icons (-3/57)

The Rams defense was uncharacteristically stout in the divisional round, stuffing the Pokes on short yardage runs and at the goal line. They won that battle the old-fashioned way: in the trenches. Apparently, the Rams' O-line didn't take to kindly to some Pokes defenders talked about snatching Jared Goff's soul. The offense put up a dominating 273 rushing yards and the game still came down to one possession.

Pokes QB Dak Prescott was productive and nearly crafted an amazing comeback despite missing favored target Cole Beasley. Number 11 had a bad wheel, and receivers Michael Gallup and Amari Cooper couldn't make up the difference.

Rams CB Aqib Talib held down his side, but Marcus (MC) Cooper gambled like a frat boy in Vegas weekend, blowing coverages left and right. MC was ticked about New Orleans HC Sean Payton's comments following their last meeting that the Saints liked the Marcus Cooper matchup – "...a lot." MC responded with a promise to compete harder and share a bowl of gumbo with Payton after a Rams win. More likely: Payton is goading the CB into even more gambling, which will result in wide open deep balls and lost wages for the Rams.

Cooper is a nut-job who was released by KC because of his penchant for gambling. He notably threw a zebra's flag into the stands and walked off the field after a DPI call in an overtime loss to the Raiders. His free-wheeling play doesn't work for a defense predicated on coverage and pass rush, and he nearly derailed the Rams win in the divisional round.

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Look for Brees and Michael (@CantGuardMike)Thomas to light up the Rams in key situations. While the pass rush of Aaron Donald and Ndamakong Suh is formidable, the Week Nine battle showed that the Saints can find a way if the back end doesn't reciprocate. Even RB Andres Peat's hand injury may not be enough for the surprisingly defensive Rams.

But the Look Man doesn't believe that Thomas will light up the Rams. Instead, RB Alvin (the Liberian Nightmare) Kamara and a trio of unheralded pass catchers like Tre'Quan Lewis, Kirkwood and Ted Ginn provide the yardage. Thomas will serve as a decoy and Kamara, a matchup nightmare. He's too strong for a CB and too fast for a linebacker.

The Look Man noticed one other tell in Week 19: there is truth to what DeMarcus Lawrence and the Pokes view about Jared (Subway) Goff. No QB wants to be hit, but some, like former Bengal Carson Palmer, will throw the ball up for grabs instead of stepping into a throw under duress. Goff left points on the field when Dallas blitzed, including a redzone TD miss to RB Todd Gurley.

While the D-coordinator Dennis Allen and the Saints don't routinely blitz a lot, look for them to strategically send the house and force Subway into mistakes. The noise and the pressure can cripple a young signal caller, and both are in good supply in the Superdome. New Orleans wins to secure a spot in Super Bowl LIII and gumbo is a dish best served hot. Icons.

#### EPILOGUE

The Look Man dares to bet against both the Chowds and Wunderkind Sean McVay in single weekend. The NFL has wanted New England-Rams since the start of 2018, and they are going to be denied. Not even the rarely seen Roger (Rabbit) Goodell is going to make this happen as the Saints and Chiefs is the better matchup.

This season has been a referendum on the Zebras, who became full time employees for the first time in the 99-year history of the NFL. The year started with a ridiculous number of overtime games, roughing penalties and bad calls. The middle of the season featured the NFL attempting to rig bye weeks and grease the skids for New England. Let's hope it ends with pure, unadulterated football, with the game decided on the field and not in the replay booth.

Peace,

The Look Man