

THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2019

Week Fifteen – Bad Beets

“I probably saw more middle fingers today than I have in my life. It was fun to ruin it for them,” – J-Ville QB Gardner Minshew, after he ruined the Oakland’s final home game with a 20-16 officiating-tainted win.

PROLOGUE

Week Fifteen was one of the greatest weeks the Look Man can remember. Not only did the Pokes rise up and punish the Rams, the overrated Jon Gruden and the Raiders got their just desserts, and the Iggles and Falcons found a way to blow up Vegas with two last second scores.

The Look Man is not fond of the vegetable, but the resultant ‘bad beats’ were tailor-made for Scott Van Pelt’s late night *SportsCenter* and threw the NFC seeding race into a maelstrom.

The officiating seems to have calmed, and the games are exciting if overly WWE. Still, NFL100 could become a decent year if only because of the NFL Network Best 100 series. If you haven’t seen Belichick, Collinsworth and Rich Eisen selecting the top players of all time, you are missing a treat. The show reveals a side of Belichick that is not often seen, and his encyclopedic knowledge of the game is on full display.

HBO also produced *Belichick & Saban: The Art of Coaching*, a show that delves into the relationship between two iconic coaches. Saban has an analytical mind that challenges even Belichick, and this one is definitely worth watching.

Without further reviews, the Week that was....

LAGNIAPPE

The Black Whole

Jon Gruden and the Raiders were treated to a bad beat when Minshew and the J-Squareds beat them in the final home game at Oakland Alameda Coliseum. The game was marred by Raider Fan throwing trash and booing QB Derek (You Can Drive My) Carr at the finish. Carr bravely shook hands in the Black Hole afterwards, taking his life in his hands.

One fan engaged in a full-on fistfight with Raiders Head Coach Jon (Chucky) Gruden. Gruden pulled out a switchblade and quickly dispatched the Black Hole denizen, Dr. Death, saying afterward, “HI, I’M CHUCKY! WANNA PLAY?” Gruden went to say, “You know, man, these fans, they think we’re friends till the end, hidey ho. We’re not friends and we’re not buddies. I got a hundy mill ridin’ on this thing, man. I ain’t tryna go out before we even make it to Vegas.”

Reporters interviewed Dr. Death in the hospital afterwards, asking why he attacked Gruden “Because he’s an abomination. An outrage against nature! He’s perverted everything we’ve taught him about the Raiders and used it for personal gain! And he has to be stopped! We got a QB who ain’t worth a quarter and Chucky is raking \$100 mill off the top.”

Asgardians, assemble!

The Asgardians, mythical extraterrestrial beings possessing a highly advanced civilization, are a brave and powerful warrior race. Their champion, Thor, the son of Odin, is one of Earth’s mightiest warriors, and a leader of the Avengers.

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The Look Man told you that story to tell you this one: The AFC Asgard Division could feature four QBs under 26 next season. The presumptive MVP, Lamar (L-Jack City) Jackson will be 23 on opening day; the likely top pick in the draft, Joe Burrow, 23, will be wearing stripes in Cincinnati; (Cake) Baker Mayfield 24, will be in Cleveland; and if Big Ben cannot come back from a bad wing, Devlin (Duck) Hodges, 24, will be quacking his way to a job in Blitzburgh.

The Browns and Bengals wasted a brilliant opportunity to take over the AFC Asgard in a year without Big Ben and with the Ravens rebuilding. Cleveland wasted free agent talent and both should be in the market for a new QB. After 27 career games, Jameis Winston and Cake are virtually tied:

Jameis Winston: 44 TDs, 26 INTs

(Cake) Baker Mayfield: 42 TD, 30 INTs

Those numbers are not inspiring, and one or both of these guys may be gone in a few years. At least Winston is starting to turn it around, with two 450 yard passing games in 2019. Cake, is opening a string of bakeries in Cleveland, but they only sell turnovers.

The NFL is quietly replacing the Old Guard (Rivers, Brees, Brady, Rodgers) with this New Wave, and it should be exciting. In addition to the AFC Asgard QBs, half of the starters are currently 25 or under. Kyler Murray, Sam Darnold, Dwayne Haskins, Josh Allen, Drew Lock, Patty Mahomes, Deshaun Watson and Jared (Subway) Goff lead the pack. And this list doesn't even include Dak Prescott, a fourth-round pick with an uncertain future.



"Put down the sword, Tessa. Mayfield isn't worth it..."

CELEBRITY OBIT OF THE WEEK

The Look Man failed to note some celebrity passings. Actor Robert Walker Jr., best known for star turn as a teenaged Charlie X on the Star Trek TOS episode two, passed away this month. Charlie X survived alone for fourteen years in space, and wreaked havoc when picked up by Kirk and the Enterprise. His

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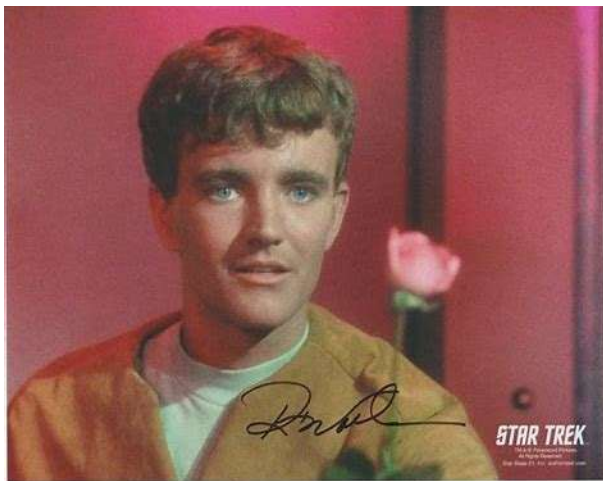
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mental powers allowed him to transmute matter, killing shipmates who refused to yield to his sexual proclivities, including the comely Yeoman Janice Rand.

The episode was written by D.C. Fontana, who also passed away this month. Dorothy Catherine Fontana is best known for her oriental writing for Star Trek, but also worked on *The Six Million Dollar Man*, and *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century*. Fontana was discovered by Star Trek creator Gene Roddenberry, but had difficulty finding work in the industry because she was a woman. In addition to "Charlie X", she developed several other scripts, including "Tomorrow Is Yesterday", "The Ultimate Computer", and the landmark rewrite of Harlan Ellison's "The City on the Edge of Forever." She also wrote additional episodes under the pseudonym Michael Richards.

Fontana eventually left the franchise, but was credited by Leonard (Spock) Nimoy for developing his character, fleshing out Dr. Leonard (Bones) McCoy's cantankerous nature, how the transporter worked, and writing believable female characters. Star Trek was essentially a space Western, but Fontana made it a special series with character driven dialogue.

DC Fontana was 80 years old.



"I wanna stay...stay...sta..."

THE LOOKAHEAD

Week Sixteen features Saturday tripleheader, and that ain't bad. The Look Man loves Saturday football, which transports him to those halcyon winter afternoons when Christmas is "in your bones" and the NFL on your television.

This week, we have a consequential Bisons at Chowds matchup, which could decide the AFC Least as well as playoff seeding. The Week Ahead:

Saturday Specials:

Houston at Tampa Bay (+3)

The Look Man normally likes three-point home dawgs, but Houston has been surging, and Tampa has no receivers available. Both Godwin and Mike Evans are out, and (Infamous) Jameis Winston has a bad

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thumb. Apparently, the thumb is so bad that Winston cannot even grope Uber drivers, so you know it's bad.

Romeo (The Bus Driver) Crennel and the defense rise up for an H-Town win, setting up a Week Seventeen rumble with the Flaming Thumbtacks for the AFC Souse crown. Houston.

Crapchester at New England (-6.5)

The Chowds rolled in Week Fifteen over the Nati. The exploded a 10-10 halftime tie with a pick six and defensive holding to dominate the Bengals receivers. Brady looked pedestrian, and Edelman's knee is a troubling development.

Enter Buffalo, fresh off a nice Sunday Night Football domination of the Still Curtain. QB Josh (Irwin) Allen is the king of sci-fi offense, with efficient passing and timely runs. The kid looks like he can develop into a star on a team that parlays a smothering, opportunistic defense and time of possession into wins.

No one believes the Bisons can beat the Chowds in Foxboro, but it has already been done in 2019 by KC. The Chowds are on a struggle bus, and this game would reopen the AFC home field, forcing Baltimore to use starters in Week Seventeen.

Make it so, as the Bisons pound the Chowds, setting up a barnburner race for the AFC One Seed. Bisons.

Rams at Frisco (-6.5)

Everyone is on the Frisco bandwagon, but the Niners are quietly hurting on defense. CB Richard Sherman is allegedly back from a hammy, but S Jaquiski Tartt and DE Dee Ford make this team go. You have only to look to the Week Fifteen loss to the dirty Birds to see the impact.

The Rams were looking ahead to this game when they got destroyed by the Pokes last week, and they rebound to cover this spread. The outcome looms large, setting up a Week Seventeen battle royale between the Niners and Seattle. Rams cover.

Sunday, Sunday, Sunday!

Pittsburgh at NY Jets (+3)

One of those pesky three-point home dawgs games, with a twist: RB Le'Veon Bell faces his former mates with a chance to knock them out of the playoff hunt. It's unclear whether WR JuJu Smith-Schuster can play, and QB Duck Devlin couldn't hit the clay targets last week versus the Bisons.

Devlin quacked four turnovers, and does it again to knock the Stillers from the legit playoff hunt. Too bad, because Tomlin has been so good this year, too. This one knocks the Stillers from the hunt. J-E-T-S.

Baltimore at Browns (+10)

The Ravens would like to avenge their 40-25 Week loss to the Browns, and QB Lamar (L-Jack City) Jackson is salivating for this one. Still, ten points is a lot in a division matchup. HC Freddie Kitchens hands the ball off to NFL rushing leader Nick Chubb 50 times, keeping QB (Cake) Baker Mayfield from blowing this one.

This game is shaping up as a ground and pound special, but Cleveland lacks the defensive speed to stop L-Jack City, the presumptive MVP. Browns lose, but cover. Browns and the points.

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New Orleans at Tennessee (+2.5)

QB Ryan Tannehill is quietly the most successful QB with completions above replacement. Number Two on the list: Drew (Cool) Brees. Brees set the NFL record for TD passes last week, and looks fresh after missing five games in 2019.

The Icons could land anywhere between the one and three seeds in the NFC, and need this game. The Flaming Thumbtacks may be without a fully healthy Derrick (John) Henry, but TE Jonnu Smith looked great last week.

Tough pick, but Sean Payton > Mike Vrabel, who looks like the dirty cop in a movie who cannot stay out of trouble. Big Trouble in Little Nashvegas as the Tacks look ahead to the Houston rematch in Week Seventeen. Icons.

Dallas at Philly (+1.5) – Game of the Week

Dallas regained their D last week as Doomsday Lite gave QB Jared (Subway) Goff an ouchie on his throwing hand. Unfortunately, Dak Prescott got one on his throwing shoulder courtesy of LB Clay Matthews, just in time for the biggest game of the season.

Everyone wondered whether Dak betting on himself in his last season of free agency was a good idea. One key injury, and he could lose out on a big payday. While Dak has been good in NFL100, the real story here is Zeke Elliott, who averages a hundy when facing the Iggles.

The Iggles are so banged up that they are starting quarterbacks at wideout. They really have no business winning, but something tells the Look Man that Dallas will pull a boner to blow this one.

No wideouts, no problem as the Iggles top 5 run defense punishes Zeke and TE Zach Ertz catches a dozen balls. Iggles.

KC at Chicago (+6) – Football Night in America Season Finale

The Monsters of the Furniture Mart are out of the postseason hunt, courtesy of QB (Sing Along With) Mitch Trubisky. The real issue is more likely the loss of DT Akeem Hicks, who came back from an elbow too soon last week.

KC has shown a propensity for cold weather offense, and has too many weapons. Baby Backs cover and win with a defense that is playing better than expected courtesy of S Tyrann (Honey Badger) Mathieu and newly acquired DE Terrell (T-Sizzle) Suggs. Baby Backs.

Green Bay at Minnesota (+6.5) - Monday Night Football Season Finale

Aaron (Discount Double Check) Rodgers is breaking the law with his newfound offense, and the defense is playing well enough to win. The dumb losses to the Chargers and Rams notwithstanding, the Pack is finding a way to win, and with RB Dalvin Cook out, Kirk (Curt) Cousins is in trouble. Tack on his Monday Night miasma history and you have a recipe for a Cheesehead win. Go Pack, go.

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EPILOGUE

A new trend is emerging in the NFL: defenses are building from the back to the front, using cornerbacks and safeties to mitigate weaknesses in the front seven. KC, New England, Frisco and Houston are doing this extremely well of late, and could use it to offset solid QB play in the tournament. New Orleans has issues in the D-line courtesy of injuries, but acquired CB Janoris Jenkins for the postseason run.

This trend defies historical dogma about building from the front seven out. Strength up the middle (NT, MLB and SS) has always been important, but defensive coordinators are now using safeties as rover back run stoppers. The blitz from these formations gives QBs less time to throw and if you have good tackling, the run can be stuffed as well.

The NFL is a league where innovation has always been important, and this is one to watch. It could reduce the effectiveness of teams like the Niners and Ravens; run-first teams that want to parlay double digit offensive drives into well-rested defenses and wins above replacement.

Any way you slice it, the tournament run is going to be special, and the cream will rise. The Look Man likes momentum, and Baltimore, KC and New Orleans are positioned to carpe some diem in NFL100.

Peace,

The Look Man