

THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2019

Week Four – C'est si bon!

"Well, I got to meet this guy, I got to meet Antonio. I never got to meet Khalil, so at least I got to meet a great player." – Raiders chief Jon (Chuck) Gruden about facing former Raider Khalil Mack in London.

PROLOGUE

The Look Man took a little sabbatical at the beginning of the season, spending some time overseas for the first week of NFL100. Nothing says "NFL" like poutine and red wine, but the Lyon bar filled with Americans as soon as the Look Man requested "football Americaine" on the tube. The camaraderie made watching the Browns get destroyed by the Flaming Thumbtacks a little more palatable.

Weeks One through Four have been a blast. Thirteen teams were 2-2 going into Week Five, so parity is still the operative word in the NFL. Of course, a lot of that has to do with QBs dropping like flies, lack of running games, and offenses lacking identity. The balance is attributable to defenses playing out of their minds like New England and Chicago.

When it is all said and done, the National...Football...League is still the bully on the block, and the 2019 season is fantastic. Rookie head coaches with ties to wunderkind Sean McVay abound, but so far, these young guns have taken a beating.

Without further adieu, the week that was.

LAGNIAPPE

Hawkeye Pierce Starting at QB

With (Big Dick) Nick Foles, Cool Brees, Big Ben Rapelessberger and Darnold all missing significant time, the NFL QB landscape looks like a MASH unit. Some of these guys are done for the year, and the ones who could return could find that their teams are already out of the playoff hunt.

The Aeronauticals immediately went out and signed the best bum available, picking up former Chicago QB David Fales. Apparently, they believe Fales is a better player than say, former Super Bowl participant Colin Kaepernick. At this point, it's clear that Kap has played his last down in the National...Football...League. A league that employs Nathan Peterman, David Fales and Geno Smith says that it has not blackballed Kap. Who's next off the free agent pile - - - Brandon Weeden??!!

This phenomenon affects everyone except New England, where the zebras protect Tom (Zoolander) Brady above all others. NFL Zebra Bill Vinovich told Marine Mammals LB Raekwon McMillan to "stay off Tom" following a legal hit in Week Two. The Chowds proceeded to fillet the Fish 43-0.

Even worse, the Marine Mammals are clearly tanking the season to draft a QB. They have stockpiled high draft picks by jettisoning talented players like DB Minkah Fitzpatrick, LT Laremy Tunsil and WR Kenny Stills and they are currently a 20+ underdog in Week Five to a team called "Bye."

Paging Dr. Mayfield, Dr. Caker Mayfield...

Cleveland Browns TE David Njoku was concussed and suffered a broken wrist against the Jets on the same play, when QB Cake Baker Mayfield threw him a medicine ball. Njoku went up for the ball, and came down with a headache when Jets CB Nate Hairston cheap shotted him.

"David is a good player, so definitely him being limited right now or whatever presents problems for us," said head coach Freddie Kitchens. "This game in the National Football League is about medical support,

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and you can never have too many doctors. Hell, Baker ain't even a doctor, and he put Njoku in the hospital."

The loss of Njoku forced the Browns to play TE Ricky Seals-Jones, who broke open the game against the Ravens with one deep ball and a TD. Njoku has not gone on IR, but has been seen on a milk carton for the last two seasons. The second-round pick has "bust" written all over him, and we aren't talking about the kind in Canton Ohio.

Godzilla?

Japanese officials are threatening to dump radioactive water used to cool nuclear cores at the Fukushima Daichi plant. The plant went critical following a tidal wave, and the cleanup requires storage space for thousands of tons of contaminated liquid. The liquid is stored in tanks at the site, but Tepco is running out of storage space and wants to dump the water into the Pacific.

"There are no other options," environment minister Yoshiaki Harada said of dumping the water into the sea. "It's like when Jon Gruden traded Khalil Mack. Sometimes you have to dump, especially when it begins to affect yo' money."

Neighboring South Korea is unhappy with this solution, as is the Japanese fishing industry. Radioactive pollution from Fukushima has been detected as far away as California, where the wine crop has absorbed man-made isotopes. The cleanup could take up to 40 years, at a cost of some \$50 billion, to say nothing of giant fire breathing monsters.



"Now where's that fishing village?"

ZEBRA OF THE WEEK

Down with OP(I)

The NFC Championship officiating gaffe spawned a new rule in 2019: offensive and defensive pass interference is now reviewable. This one-year trial was a bone thrown to the Saints after that ridiculous call gave the NFL exactly what it wanted in 2018: Rams at Chowds in Super Bowl LIII. The Look Man predicted this matchup as early as Week 10, when AFC frontrunners started getting bad calls left and right. Stillers at Raiders, Baltimore at Chargers and every KC game had awful calls to allow the Chowds

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to get a bye week. KC squandered the AFC home field advantage, and even that game ended in an overturned interception that allowed New England to convert a fourth down and win.

Enter NFL100, where offensive holding is the new rheostat for game fixing. There have been more bad holding calls this season than the previous two combined. The Zebras are fighting back with questionable (and numerous) holding calls that have nothing to do with the play. As soon as they see a big gain is possible, the laundry flies and offensive rhythm dies.

The Browns-Ravens game nearly tenured into a melee as the Zebras lost control on a warm afternoon. On one play, Ravens DB Marlon Humphrey choked out Odell Beckham Jr. with a zebra standing right next to him. No ejection resulted.

Making matters worse, the vast majority of OPI and DPI calls are not being overturned. This new rule is a waste of time, and the Zebras union just signed a new deal through 2023. Go figure.

Horse of a Different Color

The Look Man took in Week 5's epic Rams-Seahawks battle last night, and it was the most entertaining game he has seen in a while. The game had big plays, incredible improvisation, and solid defense, but perhaps it was most enjoyable for what it didn't have: bad officiating.

Rookie Zebra Scott Novak had an outstanding outing, overturning missed calls, explaining reviews efficiently and concisely and letting the game play out without interfering. There were questionable calls, including a roughing on Clay Matthews that extended a drive, a pick that was missed, and a possible score by Rams TE Everett. All of that was outweighed by incredible spot calls on out of bounds, toe tap swags, and ensuring that justice was served.

The Look Man is not enamored with the seven new head zebras in 2019, but Novak is a keeper. On the other hand, if you see Shawn Hochuli doing your game, get ready for pettiness, bad calls and a long afternoon.

Here is a look at Zebras 2019, with the worst in bold and rookies in highlight:

122	Brad (Peanut Head) Allen	6
66	Walt (Disney) Anderson	24
34	Clete Blakeman	12
23	Jerome (Captain) Boger(mill)	16
51	Carl Cheffers	20
99	Tony Corrente	25
29	Adrian Hill	10
83	Shawn Hochuli	6
35	John Hussey	18
55	Alex Kemp	6
19	Clay Martin	5
1	Scott Novak	6
126	Brad Rogers	3
14	Shawn Smith	5
62	Ronald (The Eighth Man) Torbert	20
52	Bill Vinovich	14
4	Craig Wrolstad	17

Good luck to these rookies and the fans that have to endure them. The Look Man never thought he would look back to the halcyon days of Terry (Bottlegate) MacAulay, but these guys stink.

THE LOOKAHEAD

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Week Five has some excellent matchups as we begin to separate contenders and pretenders. The Look Man scored last week with J-Ville, New Orleans and Stillers wins. This week features revenge, recriminations and regret. Notice how many times the number "3.5" appears in the spread. Hmmm....

The Week Ahead:

Chicago at Oakland (+5) [in London]

The early game features a matchup between a guy that got paid (QB Derek Carr) and one who really got paid, but only for leaving Oaktown (DE Khalil Mack). In the intervening time, Carr has not lived up to his five-year, \$125 million extension, and Mack has put up Defensive Player of the Year numbers in the Big Windy.

Jon (Hundred Million Dollar Man) Gruden traded the wrong guy, and this meeting is the first since the trade that brought Oakland two first round picks. Mack has 17 sacks and 10 forced fumbles since the trade, and the Raiders have 18 and 8 - - - as a team.

Look for Gruden to scheme for Mack, allowing the rest of Chicago's front seven to feast. Chicago wins big in the Return of the Mack (sort of). Bears.

Arizona at Cincinnati (-3.5)

Both rookie head coaches are winless, so someone has to win here. The Nati is struggling without WR AJ Green, who ruined his ankle in training camp. They also placed WR John (Betsy) Ross on IR this week, officially placing the speedster in the first round bust category. Ross is the great-great grandson of the American flag maker, and can tailor his own clothing. He's expected to start a men's haberdashery when his playing career is over next week.

The Deadbirds have skilled offensive players like RB David Johnson and HOF WR Larry Fitzgerald. AZ Grand Wizard Kliff K. Kingsbury has been tasked with turning diminutive Kyler Murray into a real NFL QB.

The Bengals have - - - Andy (the Beige Water Pistol) Dalton and Head Coach Zac Taylor, who like his more famous great-grandfather Zachary, could be known as "...not so much a failed head coach as a forgettable one..."

The Bengals could officially be in the Tanking for Tua (Tagovailoa) sweepstakes after Sunday. They follow that game with Rams at London, Ravens, and the suddenly resurgent Jacksonville Jags. After the bye week, they have Gruden's Raiders, da Burgh, the return of Darnold and the Jets, Cleveland and New England. The Look Man doesn't count many, if any wins in that stretch.

The penultimate match on 12/22/2019: at Miami, which is tanking on purpose. A 2-14 season is not out of the realm of possibility. Unfortunately, they might then have to settle on UGA QB Jake Fromm to replace Dalton if that happens. And Fromm is known as the Peach Schnapps Water Pistol.

Deadbirds win to fete recently deceased owner Bill Bidwill in a slight upset. Deadbirds.

Baltimore at Blitzburgh (+3.5)

The Browns provided the blueprint to beating the Ravens high flying offense last week, but Blitzburgh doesn't have the horses to execute it. WR JuJu Smith-Schuster, RB James Conner and TE Vance McDonald were all absent from practice this week, and though the first two are likely to play, that high school offense the Stillers trotted out for the Bengals won't. Ravens.

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Green Bay at Dallas (-3.5) – 4:25 EST

This NFC Game of the Week could be tarnished by the absence of Green Bay WR Davante Adams. Aaron (Discount Double Check) Rodgers has other weapons, and the way to beat the Pokes is by running the football. New Orleans parlayed four field goals into a win in the Superdome in Week Four, and Dak Prescott (Hall) was unable to mount enough offense to overcome them.

This game has history, with the matchups usually predicting playoff success. The Look Man watched a rerun of the 1995 NFC Championship, in which a skinny Hulk Hochuli officiated a slobberknocker that the saw the Pokes win 38-27 over a young Brett Favre and the Pack.

This time, the history is a little different, as Dak attempts to prove he's a \$35 million QB. The problem - - he isn't. This team belongs to RB Zeke Elliott, and if you put eight in the box and apply pass rush pressure on Dak, you have an excellent chance for a W. Pokes LT Tyron Smith is out with a high ankle sprain from Dak rolling him up in the Big Easy. That spells more pressure on Dak, who is facing a much more physical Green Bay defense this time around.

Look for Cheesehead RB Aaron Jones, TE Jimmy Graham (Cracker) and WR Geronimo(!) Allison to put up big numbers against Doomsday Lite, as DDC and the Pack rebound to claim their elite status in the NFC. Go, Pack, go.

Cleveland at Frisco (-3.5) - Monday Night Football

The Browns are fresh off dropping a 40 burger on the Dumpster Ducks last week, and the Niners return from a bye week. The Look Man had the opportunity to scout San Fran up close and personal against the Bengals, and believes that this 4-0 team is for real. They feature an O-line that is huge across the board, and QB Jimmy Garoppolo is psychically back from an ACL in 2018.

Enter the Browns, who are finding their offensive identity after attempting to validate the selection of (Cake) Baker Mayfield last season. HC Freddie Kitchens did the right thing in Week 4, forcing Cake under center and handing off to sensational RB Nick Chubb. Chubb hit an 88-yarder, and scored three TDs on the road. He is the real superstar in Cleveland, but only if the front office gets out of the way and quits trying to make Cake the story.

The Browns defense has been solid, with pass rusher Myles (Hawaii 5-0) Garrett racking up sacks and penalties. Kitchens added DT Devaroe Lawrence to the rotation to spell Larry Ogunjobi, and the result has helped the run defense. Cleveland will need it, because Niners RBs Matt Breida and Raheem Mostert (former Browns practice squad player) can really run the football.

The difference maker in this game will be 49ers TE George Kittle, who is a poor man's Travis Kelce. Kittle can put up huge numbers and supplants a pedestrian receiving staff. Rookie WR Deebo Samuels is noteworthy, and Jimmy G can sling it. This might be the actual Game of the Week.

The Look Man is no fan of Mayfield, but if Cleveland sticks to the run, this game is money. Former Browns OC Kyle Shanahan is running the show in Frisco now, partially after forcing his way out of C-Town over the Johnny Football fiasco.

Cleveland rocks, and the Browns roll to knock the Niners from the ranks of the undefeated. Browns, baby, Browns.

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EPILOGUE

A few head coaches are already on the hot seat in 2019, and many deserve it. Jon Gruden's brother Jay is white hot in DC, and he is threatening to immolate rookie QB Dwayne Haskins with him. Jay didn't want to draft Haskins, and basically refuses to develop the kid. He instead is choosing to ride and die with journeymen Case Keenum and Colt (My Little Pony) McCoy. Mostly die, it seems.

ESPN's Louis Riddick ripped the decision to play Haskins: "It reeks of an agenda, to me. I was talking with Kanye West last week, and Yeezy told me the Grudens are straight up racists. He said they even had dinner with George W. Bush last week, and if that is true, then you know what else is true."

The Look Man predicted the terminations of Browns HC Huger Action, Bingo Marvin Lewis, and Pokes chief Jason Garrett in 2018. He was right on the first two, and the last may still happen. Either way, guys like Jay and Jon, Quinn in Atlanta, and Doug Marrone in J-Ville seem overmatched. To say nothing of Browns HC Freddie Kitchens, who looks like a guy who comes out of a public restroom and makes unnecessary comments.



"This ride is CLOSED!"

It's only Week 5, but NFL stands for *Not for Long*, especially if you don't succeed quickly with a talented roster.

Peace,

The Look Man