

THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2019

Week Nine – Catspaw

“This is like losing to the Washington Generals.” — former Jets and Ravens LB Bart Scott, on the Jets losing to the previously winless Dolphins

PROLOGUE

There is a point in every NFL season in which the pretenders and contenders are separated, leading to a clear playoff picture. Before you jump to conclusions, Week Nine was not that week. The Chowds took it on the chin from a plucky and physical Dumpster Ducks squad. The Pack was treated to an ignominious ass-kicking at the hands of Phillip Rivers and the Bolts. And the Marine Mammals emerged from the ranks of the defeated and punished a woefully coached NY Jets team.

Only the Niners were able to rise above the fray and remain undefeated and untarnished. Oh, and the Bengals didn't lose another game, but only because they had a bye week. HC Zac (Efron) Taylor took that opportunity to announce that rookie QB Ryan Finley will be the new starter, ostensibly so the Ugly and Lack can find out whether they have a QB or need to continue in the Tank for Tua Sweepstakes.

Since the Bengals play the Jets and Marine Mammals down the stretch, like any good actor Taylor would like to know - - - to tank, or not to tank, that is the question. It's like Final Jeopardy; you have to know the math before you get the clue, otherwise you could blow the lead and end up looking sheepishly at Alex Trebek.



“It's a New Dey in Cincinnati!” “Trebek, your mother is a whore!”

Meanwhile, around the League, the Expensive Corn Kings and Seahawks played an OT thriller, the Browns got dumped by their Denver nemesis, and the Raiders, Stillers and Bolts showed signs of playoff life.

Week Eight was a statistical anomaly in another fashion: every home team won, with the exception of the Jynts, who got outscored 34-7 following the appearance of a black cat at midfield in the second quarter. The Jynts were up 9-3 and looking good prior to the appearance of BC. The cat eventually ran to and threw the endzone, something the G-Men had trouble with, but the spectacle and resultant bad omen was too much.

Without further superstition, the Week that Was:

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LAGNIAPPE

Bolts and Bobbies?

The Athletic announced last week that the NFL was contemplating moving the LA Chargers to London. The Bolts, who play in a bandbox in Carson City Cali, have not been able to garner interest in SoCal, where the Lakers, Dodgers, Rams, Trojans, Clippers and Kings all outdraw them. The Bolts are supposed to take up residence in Stan Kroenke's new Hollywood Park facility in 2020, and were stunned to hear to this news.

Owner Alex Spanos went on a profanity laced tirade in a follow-up presser, saying that the Bolts would "...be in LA for a long, long, f***ing time." The Bolts were actually born in the City of Angels, with a coaching staff headed up by the legendary offensive wizard Sid Gillman. Gillman created the receivers route tree commonly used by all NFL teams today, and his staff included a couple of mooks named Al Davis and Chuck Noll. Together, they crafted the original 'Air Raid Offense.'

The NFL did the Raiders dirty by stealing their relocation plans and sharing them with Stan Kroenke of the then St. Louis Rams. The Raiders' genius plan for permit acceleration was handed to Kroenke, who then offered to sublease his new stadium to the Bolts and Raiders. Raiders owner told Kroenke to commit an anatomically impossible act, but Spanos accepted when the City of San Diego refused to negotiate. Now Spanos is in trouble, and Kroenke quadrupled the value of his team.

Could the Bolts move to London? Not likely. It would take two NFL teams to make the London game work, if only to limit travel for opponents. The Jacksonville J-Squareds would relocate in a heartbeat, but no other NFL franchise wants any part of this foolishness. The 70% tax bracket in Great Britain is prohibitive to players and owners. Imagine the CBA negotiating separate salaries for UK teams.

The NFL used London for years as a bargaining chip to get municipalities to pay for new stadia. Once they actually place a team in London, the leverage is gone and so are the profits.

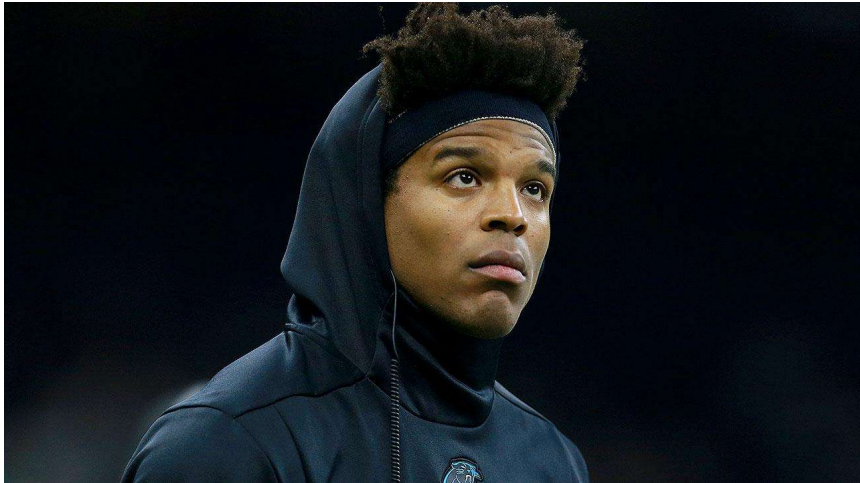
Black Cat Bounce

The Look Man incorrectly picked the Jynts to cover on Monday Night against the Pokes, who consider the G-Men a wholly owned subsidiary at this point. Things were going according to Hoyle, with a New York pick on the first play from scrimmage. The Jynts held a 9-3 lead until Panthers Fan strolled onto the field, disrupting play for over five minutes. The Kevin Harlan radio call of the delay was hilarious, including some word play about the cat being in the *Coca-Cola Red Zone* and crossing the goal line. Sponsors loved it, and so did the fans.

The black cat has not been located, leading to fears that he may make another unscheduled appearance. The Look Man doesn't think so. He's about to be released in Carolina.

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"I was nowhere near the Meadowlands...I was getting my foot looked at in Wisconsin."

Shuttup, fool!

The Expensive Corn Kings and Seahawks OT thriller in Coffeetown was amazing, if only because only Tampa QB (Infamous) Jameis Winston didn't turn the ball over. He eventually lost to the presumptive MVP, (Dange)Russ Wilson. Wilson was again amazing, responsible for five more TDs without a pick, including an OT TD to leave no doubt.

Infamous Winston is locked in a pitched battle with Baker Mayfield for the uncoveted *Jay Cutler Award*, given to the QB with the most turnovers in a season. He is also taking wagers on whether he can single-handedly kill his head coach, Bruce (BA) Arians. Arians is either going to retire or die this year, and Winston could be brought up on charges for the latter. Murder Two is on the table if BA dies, and the NFL will put its best detective on the case.

ABC Mystery Movie

ABC created a rotating series of shows for an '80s Sunday spotlight called Mystery Movie. The series featured Rock Hudson in McMillian and Wife, Dennis Weaver in McCloud, and a show about a police detective in a wrinkle raincoat called Columbo. The star of the latter series ended up as the biggest celebrity, largely for duping the criminals into self-incrimination.

That actor did a cameo following the Browns-Donkeys game in Denver last week, and the Twitterverse went crazy. Here's a snapshot, with just a few of the best one-liners:

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"I've been undercover too long, Chief. You gotta get me out."

"Just one more thing...did you cripple your TE on purpose, or was that just a bad throw?"

"I'm afraid I'm going to have to book you for Murder One after that throw."

"You know, my wife is always getting on me about doing too many commercials. And she always wants a straw...you know, that woman has more straws than a hayride."

THE LOOKAHEAD

The Look Man nearly got well in Week Nine, going 5-4 despite the Colts throwing the game with a laces in" FG hold at crunch time. Instead of kicking the game-winning 43 yarder, Old Man Vinatieri yanked it wide left, and Vegas got paid.

Hard to be too ticked, especially after the Chowds went down like free beer, and the Browns lost one due to the worst coaching since Rich Kotite in the 70s. If it were up to the Look Man, Freddie Kitchens would have been relieved upon arrival at Cleveland Hopkins International Airport. He stinks on ice.

The Week Ahead:

NCAA Special – LSU at 'Bama (-6) – The World's Largest Redneck Party

The Look Man got excited after a correct pick of last week's Florida–Georgia game, so here goes. But first, let the Look Man state for the record how awful the Selection Committee is. They wait until this late in the season, only to pick Ohio State number one overall, and drop Clemson out of the top four.

This action is not only intellectually dishonest, it's actionable. The target is now on Ohio State's back, and this inspires 'Bama and Clemson to destroy any team in its path. The worst part is that this will all be resolved between this weekend's LSU-Bama game and the subsequent SEC Championship.

Ohio State still has Penn State and the Big Ten Championship game, and inevitably gets SEC or PAC12 zebras with an ax to grind assigned in a trap game. The Look Man will never forget the sign on the South Cackalacki Bojangles marquee which read: "Illinois 28, Ohio State 21." It was ugly because: (a) the game

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pivoted on a horrible no-call on an Illini fumble, and (b) no one in Greenville SC had a dog in that fight, so you knew it was pure SEC hate.

Anyhoo, LSU wins this one, because they are a better football team. Roll, Ti-gers!

Crapchester at Cleveland (-3)

The Browns are an NFL dumpster fire with accelerant, and HC Freddie Kitchens needs to be gone. Enter the Bisons, with a solid Wild Card record, and a chance at the AFC Least Division if New England stumbles. This point spread is very questionable, especially when Kitchens cannot coach his way out of a wet paper bag.

Worse yet, the Browns could be caught looking ahead to the Stillers game on Thursday Night football, another chance to feature the 32nd ranked QB in the league on a national stage. Bisons QB Josh Allen is still smarting over being passed on by Cleveland, and RB Frank (Al) Gore has a chance to pass Barry Sanders on the all-time rushing list. It adds up to a Bisons win and a firing squad for Kitchens.

Crapchester, baby, Crapchester.

Rams at Blitzburgh (+3.5)

The Stillers have quietly gotten back to .500 after losing both Big Ben and Mason Rudolph to injury. Mike Tomlin could get a Coach of the Year nominee for this Herculean effort in which he has parlayed the acquisitions of Minkah Fitzpatrick and Devin Bush into a top ten defense.

The Rams are still up and down, with QB Jared (Subway) Goff sandwiching his way to a middling season. The Look Man might be dreaming, but something seems amiss in the City of Angels. The Fearsome Onesome D-line still has Aaron Donald, who returns to his Yinzerville birthplace for this tilt, but it has ejected CBs Marcus Peters and Aqib Talib. The Rams are not good enough offensively to sustain the NFC Conference title. Look for Tomlin to steal another late game win to set up the Turnpike Bowl on TNF. Stillers cover and win.

Minnesota at Dallas (-3) – Football Night in America

Dak Prescott is quietly leading the NFL in QBR, showing amazing accuracy and patience with an offensive line that has had its injury woes. The return of tackles Tyron Smith and La’el Collins has solidified the offense, but C Travis Fredericks is still struggling.

Enter Kirk (Kurt) Cousins, who cooled a little in KC after lighting it up following his Kirk-pology. He lost his best receiver in Adam Thielen, but the real key to this offense is RB Dalvin Cook.

This game is huge in the NFC, especially with the Monsters of the Furniture Mart struggling, and Green Bay dropping back to the Pack after an ugly loss at the Bolts. The winner here gets into the driver’s seat for the conference, especially with the Pokes at Detroit and New England in successive weeks. The Cheeseheads, Hornheads and Seahawks have bye weeks in Weeks 11 and 12, the sweet spot of the schedule before the stretch run.

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The Look Man has lost a lot of ducats betting against the Pokes, and he believes they will be the NFL choice for Super Bowl LIV. Owner Jerrah Jones ain't getting younger, and Goodell owes him after suspending Zeke last season.

The Hornheads are 5-2 in the NFC, just slightly ahead of the Pokes 4-2, and Iggles 3-4. Minnesota needs this win, and get it thanks to the injury to LB Leighton Van der Esch. Jaylon Smith can't cover the whole field and Sean Lee suffers his season-ending injury of the year. Cook burns Doomsday Lite, and the Hornheads get on a little roll this week in Big D. Hornheads.

Seattle at Frisco (-6): Monday Night Football

The Look Man simply loves DangeRuss, who is on pace for a Nick Foles-esque TD to INT ratio in 2019. Wilson has done this without a number one WR, a defense that is barely adequate, and an RB who know one can name outside of Coffeetown.

The Niners on the other hand, are parlaying a lights out front four and solid secondary into a top ten defense. Jimmy G is flirting with reporters on national TV when he's not dropping dimes. CB Richard Sherman is talking so fast that he had to spontaneously report to drug testing. These guys are big, ferocious and well coached.

Both Shanahan and Pete Carroll are staring down the barrel of Coach of the Year nominations, and both are outstanding. This game comes down to gut feel, and the Look Man likes an undermanned Seattle squad to cover and win when Jimmy G uncharacteristically begins turning the ball over. The Niners haven't played anyone, and the Seahawks have won scuffles against the Bungals and Tampa. Seahawks in a thriller.

EPILOGUE

Crunch time is right around the corner, and NFL teams need to sharpen their run games for cold weather. You cannot throw the rock 40 times in the wind and cold, you have to practice run blocking now. Halloween is behind us, and November is a time to tighten up deficiencies in clock management and execution.

More teams lose with bad clock management in a game where player talent is roughly equal. The Look Man is not simply talking about Two Minute Drills; the Four Minute Offense is a more important tool, because a team needs to be able to possess the ball for long periods at closing time. If you fail, you end up with also rans and become a member of the Gruden's Fired Football Coaches of America.

Between the two conferences, the NFC is clearly the more competitive, and the AFC is the place where no one wants to be dominant. By the time NFL100 is over, four or five clubhouse leaders will appear and disappear. In the words of Highlander's Sean Connery character: "There can be only One!"

Peace,

The Look Man