

THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2020

Week Thirteen – You Are What Your Record Says You Are

"In their beginning years, they're like a fart in a skillet. They're just bouncing around everywhere, like popcorn." —Stillers OC Randy Fichtner on his youthful receiving corps. There is definitely something stinky in Blitzburgh; after a number of dropped balls the last two weeks, they lead the league in that category.

PROLOGUE

NFL101 has been a weird season, with no preseason games, and no clear front runners through the first three quarters of the season. If you ask three guys in a bar to identify the best teams in the NFL you will get six different answers. Parcells was right: "You are what your record says you are."

The season has been entertaining. The Zebras have largely swallowed the whistles, and the offensive explosion predictable. The usual number of coaches are on the hot seat for underachieving teams, and the rookies have looked great. At least three teams are tanking in order to draft quarterbacks, but on balance, the season is a success story.

The Look Man decided to come out for the stretch run like Punxsutawney Phil on Groundhog Day. Without further ado, the Week that Was:

LAGNIAPPE

"The Standard is the Standard"

Mike (Omar Epps) Tomlin could've won Coach of the Year in 2019, when he lost Big Ben and Mason Rudolph (the Redneck QB) and thrived, putting the Stillers in position for a wild card berth. He follows that up with going 11-0 before the Zebras stole one in Week Thirteen.

Tomlin has faced his own issues in 2020, losing key players like C Mo Pouncey, RB James (Sarah) Conner, and a boatload of linebackers. No problem: Tomlin installs the next man up, and finds wideouts Chase Claypool, Diontae Johnson, and Ray-Ray McCloud. The slowest guy runs a 4.5 forty.

Tomlin gets a lot of grief, largely because of his secondary role on the hit TV show *House*. His .649 winning percentage surpasses that of Sean Payton, Pete Carroll, John Harbaugh, and Mike McCarthy, and is the best of any active coach not named Belichick or Andy Reid.

Tomlin has never compiled a losing record during his 14 seasons with the Steelers, leading them to eight playoff runs, six division titles, three American Football Conference championship games, two Super Bowl appearances, two Emmys, and one title in Super Bowl XLIII. At age 36, he is the youngest head coach to win the Super Bowl.

And he's never won Coach of the Year.

Bring Back Flo, Please!

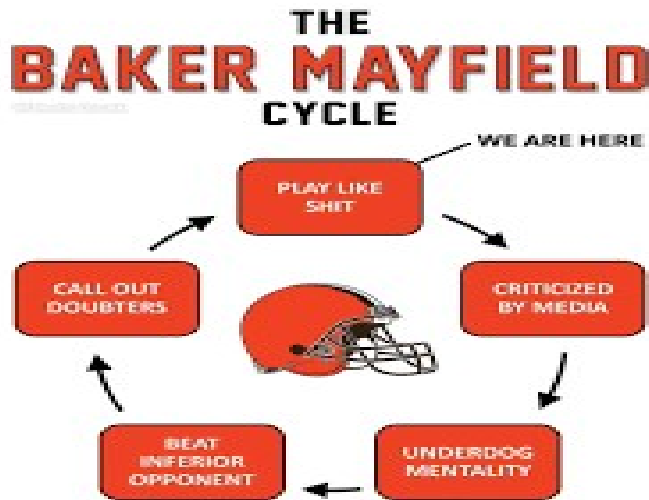
The Look Man dies a little inside every time one of those *Baker Mayfield at Home Progressive TV* commercials appear. It is almost like Iggles Fan who hates Carson Wentz, but bleeds green.

Mayfield excels in the shotgun, but the Browns' strength is running from under center. His poor footwork creates overthrows to wide open receivers. He cannot read defenses. His microscopic mitts

THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2020
Week Thirteen – You Are What Your Record Says You Are

are ill-suited for bad weather games on the lakefront, resulting in turnovers by the bushel. And his wife is not that cute for a guy drafted first overall.

Cake's troubles are well documented in the Baker Mayfield Cycle, with the 'We Are Here' designation placed prior to the latest winning streak.



The Look Man will go into Cake's fifth year option at a later date, but let's just say he would trade Mayfield for five pounds of meat. The championship talent window is closing...

Stop Making Sense

Bolts HC Anthony Lynn when asked why he left his promising rookie QB in a game that was effectively over: "I firmly believe in teaching my players how to play through adversity, and there is no bigger adversity than a potentially career-altering injury. Also, he asked me to let him stay in, I swear. *Now stop asking me questions that make me look bad.*" Final score: Chowds 45, Bolts 0.

ZEBRA OF THE WEEK

With just seconds remaining in the half and Washington out of timeouts, QB Alex (the Terminator) Smith was tackled inbounds. As Washington's field goal team raced onto the field, Smith ran off while still carrying the ball.

John Hussey's crew could not spot the football, and the umpire stopped the clock with eight seconds remaining. The K-ball was introduced in 2011 following a situation in which New England's Adam (the Winemaker) Vinatieri used superheated footballs to kick FGs in frigid conditions. One of those kicks sent the Chowds to their first Super Bowl in the Tom Brady Tuck Rule Game. Apparently Vinatieri learned Boyle's Law while in winemaking school. Heated balls travel farther than cold balls.

Hussey indicated the clock stoppage was due to an inability to obtain a K-ball, allowing Washington to score their only points of the half in a 14-0 game. Take away the halftime FG from a botched clock, and the Stillers are still undefeated. And that loss came on the heels of a short week after a thrice delayed Wednesday Afternoon Special with a divisional foe.

John Hussey, you are the Look Man's **Zebra of the Week**.

THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2020
Week Thirteen – You Are What Your Record Says You Are

THE LOOKAHEAD

Week Fourteen is ahead, and the wheat and chaff are about to be violently separated as the playoff stretch begins:

The Week Ahead:

Michigan at Ohio State (-29.5) – Rivalry Week Bonus Game

The ink in the spread hadn't even dried when Jim (Jake from State Farm) Harbaugh notified his AD that Michigan would be canceling this contest. Michigan has 19 players and coaches affected by COVID-19, and Jake from State Farm has never beaten Ohio State since taking over the program. Oh, and by the way, Ohio State needed this win to qualify for the Big Ten Championship game. Harbaugh is a petulant child, and he will be released at season's end.

The Buckeyes may be the best team in college football and deserve to compete for the Mythical National Championship. The Look Man sees a conspiracy to Make Notre Dame Great Again, especially after questionable calls in the Clemson game at South Bend.

No puzzle, the Big Ten changed the rules and went for the dough. Good luck on the next head coach to That Team Up North... O-H!

Minny at Tampa (-6.5)

The Hornheads have looked pedestrian since the injury to RB Dalvin Cook, who carries the offense on his wheels. QB Kirk (Kurt) Cousins is struggling again despite the emergence of rookie wideout Justin (Thomas) Jefferson. The real issue is their lack of TE depth, as Kyle Rudolph is on the side of a milk carton.

The Expensive Corn Kings are 1-3 since acquiring WR Antonio Brown, and team chemistry is at its nadir. Patrick Mahomes carved them up two weeks ago, effectively seizing the torch from Tom (Zoolander) Brady as the game's most dangerous passer.

The NFL is still in the Tom Brady business, and this game may decide whether Zoolander makes the postseason. Tampa is coming off of a late bye week for a playoff run with a guy who has six Lombardi's, four Super Bowl MVP rings, and three NFL MVP awards. Tampa.



"Tawmmy, a Teddy Bear broke into yaw house in Brookline again."

THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2020
Week Thirteen – You Are What Your Record Says You Are

Baby Backs at Marine Mammals (+7.5)

This game is going to be closer than everyone thinks. KC needs to put some room between them and Vegas in the AFC West, and they will be looking ahead. Tau is not good yet, but the Mammals secondary is underrated, with a turnover in eight straight games.

This one makes the Look Man nervous, especially since it is a back-to-back Florida roadie for KC. Still, watch Andy (Kool-Aid) Reid pull out a cheeseburger to set up for a Week Fifteen interconference tilt at the Big Easy. KC wins, Miami covers.

Indy at Las Vegas (+3)

The Ponies are the smoke-and-mirrors playoff team in 2020, doing it with defense and a QB who looks like a Vulcan on the high side of a hundy. Vegas, on the other hand, is like Sherlock Holmes in Book of Shadows: you never know which team is going to show up.

The defense in Indy is the real story, with LB Darius (Sugar Ray) Leonard teaming with DE/OLB Justin Houston and DT DeForest (Bones) Buckner stuffing the run. We don't even have to mention CB (Dr. Charles) Xavier Rhodes, or Rock Ya-Sin, the CB with the best linebacker name in the NFL. If you haven't seen these guys play, you are missing the *Legion of Boom – Midwest Chapter*.

WR TY Hilton is a free agent after the season, and the Ponies have made no overtures to retain him. QB Phil (Old Man) Rivers has found new toys with Running-Back-by-Committee Nyheim Hines, Jordan Wilkins and Jonathan Taylor. Good thing, too, because the 39-year-old Rivers 'has a foot' and will require surgery following the season.

This matchup is going to mean a long day for Derek (DC) Carr, who needed a 200-yard day by TE Darren Waller to squeak by the lowly Jets last week. It was almost like the DC Comics team up featuring The Flash racing Superman. You know who *should* win, but there is always some reason it ends in a draw, usually because one or the other participant decided to tank in order to draft Clemson QB (William) Trevor Lawrence.

The Raiders are desperate, but something is amiss in Vegas. RB Josh Jacob (Jingle Heimer Schmidt) has a knee, placing the load on DC. Jon (Chucky) Gruden allowed his team to take the Jets too lightly in a look-ahead to Indy.

Either way, *Spider Two Y Banana* won't get it done on Sunday. Ponies win this one to set up a nice stretch run for the AFC Souse Division title run with Tennessee. Ponies cover on a defensive score.

Blitzburgh at Crapchester (-2) - Football Night in America [Game of the Week]

The Stillers' Devin Bush and Bud Dupree are down for the year; Vince Williams is out with COVID-19 and they are running out of linebackers.

The Bisons are playing solid ball, with a balanced offensive attack and a pursuing defense that is no joke. The acquisition of former Minnesota WR Stephon Diggs was genius, and slot receiver Cole Beasley is a poor man's Julian Edelman. Josh (Irwin) Allen is becoming an android, throwing on the run, running the football and catching passes out of the backfield.

THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2020

Week Thirteen – You Are What Your Record Says You Are

HC Mike (Omar Epps) Tomlin is ticked off, and with good reason. The Stillers clinch the playoffs with a win, but could fall from undefeated AFC One Seed to Wild Card tie-breaker in the coming weeks. Here's how: (1) lose to the Bisons, falling to 11-2; (2) Browns win out and get to 12-3, setting up a Week 17 finale in Cleveland; (3) Browns beat a depleted Stillers team, ending at 13-3 and an AFC Asgard crown.

The first domino falls Sunday night. Bisons in a slobber-knocker.

Dumpster Ducks at Browns (+2) – Monday Night Football

Baltimore has underachieved, largely because 20+ folks in the organization came down with COVID-19. Their Week Twelve game with the Stillers was postponed three times, and it now appears that their full complement, minus newly acquired Dez Bryant, will be ready for their close-up on MNF.

QB Lamar (L-Jack City) Jackson is back from the 'Rona, and destroyed the Pokes in Week Twelve. L-Jack City rarely throws outside the numbers, largely because he doesn't have to, but TE Mark Andrews is out now. If B-More cannot run the ball, he will have to throw outside the numbers in the wind off Lake Erie.

The Browns are an odd dichotomy: they average five yards per carry rushing, third best in the NFL, and Cake Baker is throwing the ball about 20 times per game. Two of their three losses were blowouts to divisional opponents, but they have scored 40 or more points twice. Their QB is the first pick overall, who acts as a game manager, and sometimes explodes for three or four TD passes in a single game.

Expect another typical Cleveland bad weather game; a wintry mix with temps in the 30s. Baltimore is the best rushing team in the NFL, but it's bound to be a slow track. If one team gets up early, it could get ugly.

The Look Man is guessing it won't. The Browns want to avenge the 38-6 bludgeoning in Week One, and the Dumpster Ducks are desperate. One more loss, especially a division loss, could spell the end of their playoff hopes.

By the way, Browns HC Kevin Stefanski is a legitimate Coach of the Year candidate. He has turned Cake, a possible bust, into a reasonable QB. He has assembled a defense with bailing wire and chewing gum, and he is teaching these kids to win. His work is not yet done, but the Browns are 9-3 for the first time since a young Bill Belichick parlayed Vinnie Testaverde into a playoff contender. Not bad for a two time All Ivy League safety at Penn.

The Browns avenge the Week One loss with a win, setting up an unlikely stretch run for the division. Browns, baby, Browns.

EPILOGUE

The postseason race is in full swing as separation begins to occur. Football Night in America has even engaged MSNBC's Steve Kornacki for an election style analysis.

The Look Man questions whether the playoffs will even result in a champion. The NBA was able to pull it off employing a bubble in Orlando, but the NFL could never make that work. There are too many players and too much drama to descend upon a town for the required duration.

THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2020
Week Thirteen – You Are What Your Record Says You Are

It's amazing the NFL has even gotten this far without a catastrophe. The COVID-19 protocols have resulted in over \$1 million in fines to date, and Denver had to play in Week Twelve using a practice squad wideout at QB.

Florida is leading the league in COVID-19, and masks are nowhere in evidence. The vaccine is months away for the rank and file. Even Florida Man thinks Super Bowl LV in Tampa in February 2021 is whack.

We should know a lot more in the next two weeks, but if the 'Rona breakouts in Baltimore are any indication, it's going to be a bumpy ride.

Peace,

The Look Man