

## THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2021 Week Eleven – Dodge-ball

*"I was frustrated among other things. I have never dodged any questions or hid away from that. So it's not about that. Just frustrated, removed emotions and all that from it. Just decided it was best to wait." - Cake Baker Mayfield after dodging questions postgame in a two interception "win" over Detroit.*

### PROLOGUE

The 2021 NFL season has been a roller coaster, but the overriding theme seems to be the packaging of the league as entertainment. As of Week Eleven, 23 games have been decided with a game-winning score on the final play – the most since the NFL and AFL merged in 1970.

In addition, there seems to be an unwritten rule that every primetime game has to be close. The Look Man cashed in his chips on the Stillers-Bolts with the game seemingly safely in hand and the Bolts leading by seventeen. The game ended up with a three point spread, largely due to zebras with seeing eye dogs.

The biggest winner so far has to be Arizona, which improved to a league-best 9-2 record despite three starts by QB2 Colt (My Little Pony) McCoy. The Deadbirds are winning ugly without Tyler Murray or WR DeAndre Hopkins, and now have a bye week.

The Bengals have rebounded, and Baltimore is winning with smoke and mirrors. The Chowds and Baby Backs returned to form, and the AFC race is wide open. All of this sets up a stretch run to the postseason just as the temperatures dip in December.

Without further ado, the Look Man Report 2021 for Week Eleven.

### LAGNIAPPE

#### Flaming Thumbtacks – Compromising Photos?

The Look Man has watched several Tennessee games, and in nearly every one, there is a call or a series of calls that propels them to victory. They had no business beating Seattle, Buffalo, Indy (2<sup>nd</sup> game), KC or New Orleans, yet they won each game. They also lost to the Jets, Bears and Houston, but beat the crap out of the Rams.

This team is a conundrum wrapped in a riddle, but the calls in each of the former games were cover your eyes ugly. The most recent phantom roughing the QB call was pivotal to the win, and frankly, one wonders if they have compromising photos of Roger Goodell.

#### Que Saleh, Saleh

The NY Aeronauticals have allowed the most ever yards in franchise history over a four-game stretch. During that stretch, they have also given up 175 points, second most by any team since the 1970 merger.

The Four Letter Network's Rex Ryan takes square aim on HC Robert Saleh, a defensive wizard. "Now they're going to use it 'Well, we never had our safety,' So what? Everybody else has a million injuries, let alone an above-average safety you're missing. I remember playing without five corners. It never looked like this," said Ryan.

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Saleh countered, "Clearly, it's not good enough. Ever since that bye week, we haven't been nearly as good as we have wanted to be. We have eight games left and from coaches to players, we have to find a way to get better every day. Otherwise, you're selling yourself short."

What Saleh isn't saying is that three and outs really tire out a defense. You cannot win if the other team doubles your Time of Possession. That is why the Browns are 5-5.

Ryan, whose Jets finished last in the division in 2014, was fired after the season, while Saleh's teams finished last twice in his four seasons in San Francisco. "He's going to be dead-last again, so he's used to that," Ryan said. "To me, I'm a little pissed off when I hear this guys' background is a lot like (mine). No it isn't. No it isn't."

That's right Rex; Saleh didn't post photos of his wife's feet the week before facing New England.

#### QB or not QB...

Teddy (Two Gloves) Bridgewater is getting killed over his decision to avoid contact following a pick on Sunday. Even his own HC, Vic Fangio, suggested he would have liked more effort at a tackle. Former Jets HC Rex Ryan went further, saying Denver should bench Teddy Bridgewater and start Drew Lock in Week Twelve.

"I would have liked to see Teddy at least make a play at the guy," Fangio said. Not sure why folks want to see a starting QB make a tackle after a turnover, but just ask (Cake) Baker Mayfield, who tore his labrum after an ill-fated attempt to tackle an intercepting defender. Or Odell Beckham Jr., who tore his ACL attempting to tackle a defender after a Cake pick. It doesn't pay, and you want your skill players to be available, not on the IR. The Look Man doesn't hear anyone saying that about Tom Brady, who never pursues the interceptor.

It reminds the Look Man of the Joe Pantoliano line from The Matrix: Cypher: "You see an agent, you do what I do. Run. Run your ass off." Just do what Tawmmy does: walk off the field.

#### Tough Week in Picks

The Look Man got destroyed in his Week 10 picks, but he wasn't alone. The 2021 season has seen a real big year for underdog picks. The Pokes destroyed Atlanta, and Buffalo looked great, but a lot of dogs covered.

The Look Man does claim victory for Washington covering over Tampa Bay, Detroit covering with the Stillers, and the Chowds beating Cleveland, but it was a Pyrrhic victory

There were six upsets of seven or more point favorites in Week Ten, and this season has been wild and unpredictable. And the season is only a little beyond the halfway mark. Buckle your seat belts; it is going to be a bumpy ride.

#### Mendelbaum! Mendelbaum!

During Tuesday's episode of *Get Up* on ESPN, former New York Jets general manager Mike Tannenbaum said it's time for the Browns to move on from Mayfield "right now."

"They have to move on from him right now. When you drive to the stadium on Sunday morning in Foxborough, no Kareem Hunt, no Nick Chubb, you say to yourself, 'This is an opportunity for Baker Mayfield to elevate the program.'"... Well, we now know he is not good enough by any standard."

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Not only did Tannenbaum suggest that the Browns move on from Mayfield, he also named some possible replacements: Aaron Rodgers, Russell Wilson, Deshaun Watson, Jimmy Garoppolo or Cam Newton.

“You can not win a championship with Baker Mayfield in the AFC,” Tannenbaum added. “Especially when you look at the ages of guys like Josh Allen, Lamar Jackson. “We learned a lot on Sunday, and the honest and sober analysis is, [the Browns] have to move on from [Mayfield].”

Well, the Look Man has been saying the same thing for a while. And though Tannie ain't exactly the greatest GM in the league, but he does have eyes.

#### THE LOOKAHEAD

##### Blitzburgh Stillers at Cincinnati Bengals (-3.5)

Joe (Goat Boy) Burrow escaped The Death Star Field in Vegas with a W despite looking pretty pedestrian. RB Joe Mixon earned his money with 130 rushing yards as the Ugly and Black destroyed a rudderless Raiders team.

The Bengals now face the Stillers on Sunday, looking to go 3-1 in the AFC Asgard. Big Ben reappeared last week, and promptly put up 31 points in a loss to the Bolts. The offense started clicking, in large part because of favorable officiating at Heinz Field West at Sofi. There were so many Terrible Towels, that the Look Man wondered if the game was secretly contested at Three Rivers.

DE TJ Watt, S Minkah Fitzpatrick and DB Joe Haden return to the lineup this week, and look to shut down the up-and-down Bengals offense. They would love to revenge an early season loss to the Bengals and climb back into the AFC playoff race.

The Official Grandson of the Look Man is going to this game, and the Look Man hopes to teach him a little about formations and coaching. If he learns about babushkas, so be it. Bengals.

##### Tennessee Flaming Thumbtacks at New England Chowds (-6.5)

The Flaming Thumbtacks laid a giant egg against the Houston Slim Shades in Week Eleven, and hope to rebound at the Blade. QB Ryan Tannehill looked lost, throwing two bad picks, and losing WR AJ Brown in the process. The Tacks have fallen on hard times since RB Derrick (King) Henry went down with a knee.

The Chowds are the new darlings of the NFL after QB Mac (the Knife) Jones slicing of the AFC of late. The Chowds have won five straight since losing to Dallas, and are now 7-4, in first place in the AFC Least and a three seed in the AFC.

Everyone is putting the streak on The Knife, who has turned the offense around, but the Look Man sees a defense that is suddenly good. Matthew Judon, Kyle van Noy, and JC Jackson are shutting down offenses, and timely first downs by the offense have helped. New England is assembling double digit offensive drives that take the starch out of opposing defenses, and suddenly Belicheat is a genius again.

HC Mike Vrabel is one of the few former Chowds who has defeated the Zen Master, and the Look Man attributes the Houston loss to the Lookahead Factor. While he never coached in New England, Belicheat hasn't forgotten how Vrabel outfoxed him in 2020, using an obscure rule that the clock winds on a penalty with more than five minutes left in the fourth quarter.

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The Tacks led 14-13 in the fourth quarter of the AFC Wild Card game, when they were forced to punt with a little under six minutes remaining in the game. Instead of punting, though, Tennessee intentionally took a delay of game penalty, which pushed them back five yards, but allowed them to drain an extra 45 seconds off the clock.

Tennessee lined up to punt twice more, and each time committed intentional penalties. By the time they actually punted, they had bled more than two minutes off the clock, ticking Belicheat into an egg searing diatribe against the zebras. Tom Terrific Brady sealed the win by throwing a pick six, but Vrabel clearly got into their heads.

Belicheat used the same move in a Monday Nighter at the Meadowlands in 2020. The Chowds were leading 33-0 when he bled several minutes off the clock. Afterwards, Belichick admitted his chicanery: "It was just the way the rules are set up. We were able to, you know, run quite a bit of time off the clock without really having to do anything. So ... it's probably a loophole that'll be closed. It probably should be closed. But right now it's open."

There is something odd going on in Nashville, but the Tacks cover and win in the Game of the Week.



*Young Mac the Knife as a child model*

#### *Cleveland Browns at Baltimore Dumpster (-3.5) Football Night in America*

The Browns come off a frustrating win over the hapless Detroit Cadillacs, and (Cake) Baker Mayfield refused to shake hands with his teammates and opponents afterward. Cake will be fined for missing the postgame presser, and should be summarily cut after an ugly performance on Sunday. He threw two picks and posted a desultory passing yardage despite a 22 for 130 performance by RB Nick Chubb.

The Look Man was hoping this fit of pique was in response to being told he would ride the bench for the Sunday Night tilt at STD-More, but no. Apparently, Cake will start despite having a torn labrum, broken humerus, knee and groin injuries.

Meanwhile, Dumpster Ducks' QB Lamar (Action) Jackson is back after another mystery illness. The Ducks won despite starting backup QB Tyler Huntley, but they were playing da Bears. Still, one has to wonder if Jackson needs hand-washing lessons after his third non-COVID illness of the season.

Look for Action to dominate this game. Cleveland couldn't beat Baltimore with a healthy Cake, and this version is a shell of his mediocre self. Ducks win and put the Browns slim playoff hopes on life support.

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#### **EPILOGUE**

The seventeen game season is beginning to affect outcomes, and these double digit spreads are laughable. Vegas is getting killed, and the officials are a big part of the outcomes. Anyone betting on this mess does so at their own peril.

It is still way too soon to tell who will rise in the NFL, but the ride is fun. The Look Man does know that Cleveland is on the outside looking in at this point. Instead of benching Baker after a Week Two torn labrum, the Browns brain trust chose to play him. As a result, the Browns would need to go 5-1, and beat all of their AFC opponents to secure a postseason spot. Instead, it is more likely they will play spoiler, proving Ivy League talent doesn't equate with knowing how to run a team.

Week Twelve could begin to tell the tale. Enjoy the holidays and embrace the beginning of a return to normalcy. We are not there yet, but be good to yourselves and each other.

Peace,

The Look Man