

## THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2021

### Week Twenty – Fear the Reaper

*“When it’s grim, be the Grim Reaper and go get it,” – KC Head Coach Andy (Kool Aid) Reid to Mahomes before Mahomes’ drive to send the game to overtime.*

#### PROLOGUE

Mike McCarthy should take coaching lessons from Reid, who scored a game tying FG with only 13 seconds remaining in regulation. That Buffalo-KC game was the best finish in NFL history, and both coach and QB were masterful.

In point of fact, Buffalo QB Josh Allen was spectacular as well, and if not for a coaching decision to eschew the squib kick, he might be playing at home this weekend against the Bengals.

The other divisional playoff battles were also inspiring, as the Rams, Niners and Bengals all came off the canvas to knock out their opposition and advance. This was an incredible display and the TV ratings were reflective. The 800-pound gorilla that is the NFL has once again vanquished the competition, and the Lombardi round is still two weeks away.

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

#### LAGNIAPPE

*HRH Tawmmy?*

Tampa QB Tom Brady claimed he doesn’t get special treatment when it comes to roughing calls. His contention found support on Sunday, when he took a helmet to the chin from Rams DE Von Miller.

Shawn (Hulk Jr.) Hochuli missed the call, following with the first unsportsmanlike conduct foul of Brady’s career. Brady’s reaction to the no-call drew an unsportsmanlike penalty from referee Hulk Junior, who explained, “He got in my face in an aggressive manner and used abusive language. As for the hit, we did not think that it rose to the level of roughing the passer.”

The Look Man is reluctant to get too upset over the omission given Brady’s history, which includes Hulk Senior exclaiming, “Leave Tom alone!” after one defender’s hit. If Brady had ever been hit as hard as Joe Burrow in the Bengals-Flaming Thumbtacks game, some defender would be serving a life sentence right now.



*Brady may have had a point about the roughing call...*

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Brady is now on retirement watch, but it has more to do with the drama in Tampa than the officiating. He has to be ticked about the lack of discipline, including some of the defenders missing a zero-blitz call just prior to the game winning pass to Rams WR Cooper Kupp. You simply cannot single cover Kupp unless you are sure to get home on the QB.

Bruce (BA) Arians is running a bit of a clown show following a Lombardi win last season, and the year was a disappointment. Frankly, it is amazing to the Look Man that they were even competitive with all of the injuries sustained. Of all the NFL abilities, availability remains the most important.

#### Players of the Week

The Divisional Playoffs were outstanding, but a few players really stood out. The Look Man would like to focus on some unheralded players in consideration of **The All Look Man Team** in Week Nineteen:

#### Bengals at Flaming Thumbtacks:

DT **Jeffery Simmons** of Tennessee has been balling out since he was drafted two years back. Simmons had three of the Tacks nine sacks of (Jackpot) Joe Burrow, and two additional takedowns were disallowed due to timeouts. Simmons pressured Burrow four additional times, and was nearly a game wrecker. Simmons has 13.5 sacks in 45 career games, and the nine sacks were the most in a postseason game since 1994.

**D.J. Reader** was not to be outdone on the other sideline. The 6-3, 347-pound (allegedly) DT stuffed RB Derrick Henry for no gain or a tackle for loss on five occasions. Henry was held to 30 yards per half, and his inability to explode stymied the Tacks offense. As a result, they were forced to put the game into the hands of Ryan (Tentative) Tannehill, who turned it over three times. The last turnover set up the unlikely game winner for Burrow and the Bengals. Reader dominated the game, and also wiped out the H5N1 bird flu by eating more chicken wings than any living human.

The game hinged on Nati PK **Evan (KickPherson) McPherson**, who was the only kicker selected in the 2021 draft. KickPherson, as named by Julian Edelman, scored all of Cincinnati's points in the first half, with kicks of 38, 45, and 54 yards. The rookie then booted the game-winner from 52 at the final gun. He now has the most field goals from 50 yards or longer this season, 11, including clutch playoff wins over the Raiders and Flaming Thumbtacks. KickPherson has made all eight field-goal tries in the Tournament.

The Look Man could add others to the list, but it would be too long. The Buffalo-KC game could take up the entire LMR by itself. In a week of games this good, these players epitomized going the extra mile, or at a minimum, refusal to fall for "a banana in a tailpipe." Good job, all, because these players are not household names even in their own households.

#### Rooney Rule?

The Look Man has watched the NFL coaching carousel spin this week, and all year. The Jynts and Denver Donkeys have made their selections, and Chicago and Jacksonville seem to be close. The selections are

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a bit of a head scratcher, with Brian Daboll in New York and Nathaniel Hackett in Denver. The smart money has these two in position to acquire free agents from their previous teams, including the possible Denver signing of Aaron Rodgers. While these two are not retreads, they are clearly inferior to OCs Byron Leftwich and Eric (Sleeping with) Bieniemy.

Leftwich's coaching career began as QB coach in Arizona in 2017, before becoming the team's interim OC. All he has done is coach quarterback (Infamous) Jameis Winston to a career-best season in Tampa, and win Super Bowl LV with Tom Brady and the Corn Kings. Bieniemy's only qualification is taking QB Patrick Mahomes to four AFC Championship games and a Super Bowl win in only five years.

Both are two of the hottest OCs in the NFL, and neither is getting a fair shake. They represent Super Bowl winning teams over the last two seasons, but apparently neither ever had a cup of coffee with NFL owner's darling Sean McVay. McVay's assistants now helm the Bolts and Bengals, and both may deserve to be terminated for coaching malfeasance. When you have Justin Herbert and (Jackpot) Joe Burrow, you should be expected to win.

Pundits are saying that "there is no superstar coaching candidate out there." The Look Man disagrees, and the selections of Daboll and Hackett are proof. Even retreads like Dan Quinn and Brian Flores are getting more love, and it absolutely stinks. In a league that allowed Matt Nagy and Freddie Kitchens a job, there has to be room for Leftwich and Bieniemy. The jury is still out on Bengals HC Zac Taylor, who was on the verge of being terminated before Joe Burrow started wining in spite of, not because of him.

Stillers HC Mike (Omar Epps) Tomlin made the postseason with a QB playing on one leg and no quality RBs and wide receivers. Tomlin has never had a losing season in Blitzburgh, but still has zero Coach of the Year trophies.

*Black head coaches, NFL, Jan. 24, 2018: 7.*

*Black head coaches, NFL, Jan. 24, 2022: 1.*

The Look Man isn't saying something is amiss with NFL coaching hires...oh wait, yes, he is.



*This man helms America's Team????*

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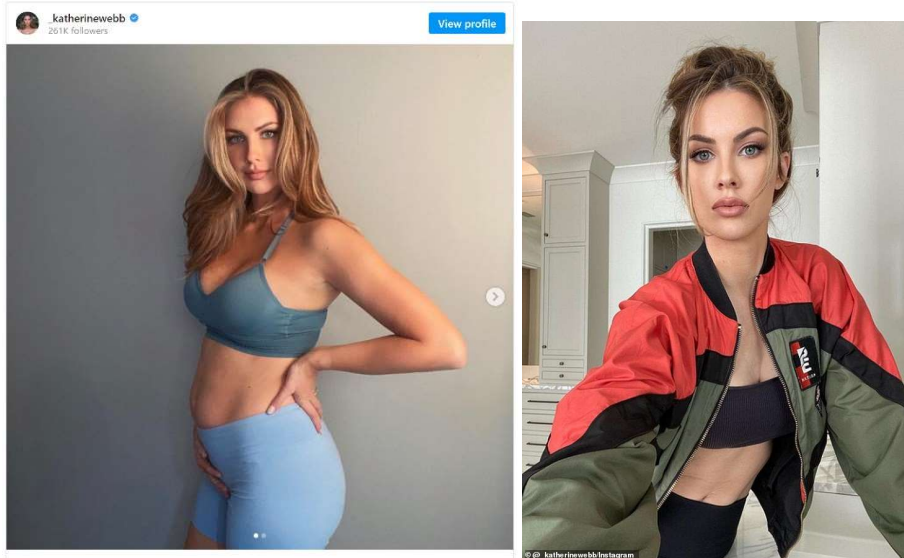
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#### Wallopin' Webb-snappers

Katherine Webb McCarron, the former Miss Alabama who married NFL QB AJ McCarron is ticked off this week by body shamers. Apparently, K-Webb is carrying a few extra lbs. after delivering the couple's third child, and internet enthusiasts are voicing their opinion.

"Listen, haters, I've given birth to three whole kids in the last five years. Stop sending me nasty DMs about my weight and my stomach. My weight is fine. Do I wanna lose some? Yes. But it doesn't have to be ASAP. Have you seen DJ Reeder lately? Dude has harpoon marks all over his back!", said Mrs. McCarron.

The Look Man doesn't know how much weight you need to be to carry a kid to term, but he and Brent Musberger agree: K-Webb is doing aight.



*"For all of you young quarterbacks out there..."*

#### THE LOOKAHEAD

This Conference Championship Playoff round continues the trend of fantastic QBs play, and this week we have (Jackpot) Joe Burrow vs. Patrick Mahomes, and Jimmy (G) Garoppolo vs. Matt Stafford. Before you remind the Look Man that those last two are not great, remember that we are talking about a league that employed (Cake) Baker Mayfield for seventeen weeks.

The Mahomes and Allen matchup was nothing short of a virtuoso performance in a huge game. It was so great that fans wrong-headedly want to change OT rules from pure gluttony. Sometimes, you take what you can get, and there is nothing wrong with Sudden Death OT. After witnessing a nine-OT yawner in the NCAA, many of you may concur that "if it ain't broke, don't fix it. "

#### No. 4 Cincinnati Bengals at No. 2 KC Baby Backs (-7.5) / Total Points: 54.5

Mahomes and Josh Allen were gunslingers at Arrowhead last week, and there is no reason to think it won't be the same in the AFC Conference Championship. KC and the Nati came down to the wire in the last meeting in Week Seventeen, and Ron Torbert and the zebra crew pulled it out for the Nati.

Perhaps (Jackpot) Joe Burrow had something to do with the outcome, throwing for 446 and 4 TDs. He and Ja'Marr Chase torched the Baby Backs D, mounting a stunning second half comeback.

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But the real story of the game was penalties and turnovers and penalties. There were zero turnovers in the game, but the Nati got six first downs by penalty to the Baby Backs one. Torbert dominated the ending, allowing the Bengals six shots inside the five-yard line before the game winning FG from KickPherson. The last penalty provided a first down that allowed the Nati to run the clock, and we have all seen what Mahomes can do with only 13 seconds remaining.

The Look Man told you that story to tell you this one: the Bengals are the feel-good story of the 2021 NFL season. They have won despite awful red zone playcalling, horrible O-line play, and a pedestrian defensive secondary.



*Chris Jones knows Joe, and appreciates his talent...*

This KC crowd is top two when it comes to noise level, and the Bengals attempts to simulate the noise in practice will not work. The Look Man has been to Arrowhead and Seattle Century Link, and it is a toss-up as to which is louder. You cannot hear yourself think in KC, and it is unnerving. Jackpot Joe Burrow thinks SEC road games will prepare him for the volume, but he is wrong.

The Bengals are clearly capable of beating the Baby Backs, especially if KC is still celebrating that incredible win over Buffalo. Andy (Kool Aid) Reid told them that the loss was no fluke, and they had better listen, because Burrow and the Bengals are no joke. They represent a bad matchup for the KC secondary, and can score from anywhere on the field.

The Look Man is guessing that Tony Corrente is going to swallow the whistle this week, and if so, there won't be nine more sacks of Burrow. That extra time created by this O-line holding the KC front seven could put points on the board and catches in the hands of TE TJ Uzomah, Tyler Boyd, Tee Higgins and Chase. These guys have the deepest receiving corps in the NFL. Imagine if they get an O-line that gives up fewer than nine sacks...

On the defensive side, the Bengals front seven must keep pressure on Mahomes, and away from CB Eli Apple and Chidobe (means 'toast' in Swahili) Awuzie. Safeties Von Bell and Jessie Bates are decent, but they cannot match up with the team speed in KC.

The Cinderella ride was fun, but it ends on Sunday. KC covers and wins en route to their third consecutive Super Bowl. Baby Backs.

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*No. 6 San Francisco 49ers at No. 3 [Insert City Name Here] Rams (-3.5) | Total Points: 45.5*

There is a lot of ink about how the Niners have beaten the Rams six consecutive times. So much ink, that the Rams defense is getting pretty irritable about it. The Look Man has a theory about these things: sometimes a team just owns you, like Aaron (Discount Double Check) Rodgers owns da Bears, or Big Ben Roethlisberger owns the Browns. It. Just. Happens.

The details are not that important, but in this case, it comes down to head coaches. Kyle Shanahan is just a better in-game coach than Sean McVay. While both head coaches script their first 20 plays, Shannie simply figures out a way to change the dynamic based upon game situations. Case in point: the Rams were up 17 points in one of the two losses to Frisco in 2021 - - - and lost.

The other key is personnel matchups. Like the Bengals and KC matchup between secondary and receivers, the Niners enjoy an X-factor in the form of Deebo Samuel. There is no way to match CB Jalen Ramsey with Samuel because Shanny lines him up at RB, flanker and receiver.

When Deebo goes in motion, it completely ruins the Rams matchup cover two defense. Deebo had a rushing, receiving and passing touchdown in a single Rams game in 2021. *No player in NFL history had ever topped 1,400 receiving yards and 300 rushing yards in a season until Deebo.* He does things that no one else can.

Both teams have incredible front seven talent, with DE Nick Bosa, Arik Armstead and Fred Warner standing out for Frisco, while the Rams counter with former *Defensive Player of the Year* Aaron Donald and DE Von Miller.

QB Jimmy Garoppolo is a game manager, while Rams QB Matt Stafford is a gunslinger. When you match a game manager and a gunslinger, the latter usually wins. In this case, the Look Man hates Stafford's propensity for stupid picks, and the Rams turnovers in the Tampa Bay game nearly cost them the win.

The Rams could win this game if they run the ball, and if RB Cam Akers doesn't turn it over. Unfortunately, Akers is a turnover machine, and McVay is to McVain to run it. Shanahan, on the other side, will run it early and often, mixing in Deebo for spice. The QB matchup may favor the Rams, but the coaching clearly favors Frisco.

Call it intuition, call it kismet, call it Fate. The Rams lose with 65% of the crowd rooting for the Niners. Niners cover and win, playing Super Bowl LVI in Levi's South Stadium at SoFi. Niners.

### EPILOGUE

The Divisional Playoff round was the best postseason experience the NFL has ever offered. The games were all tight, and though not necessarily masterpieces, they ended on the final possession. The NFL could ask for nothing more than this in a year that saw viewership skyrocket.

The Look Man hopes the league does not attempt to manufacture this lightning strike in the Conference Championships. The zebras do not need to be a part of these games, and in fairness, they have done a decent job of swallowing the whistles in the postseason.

One can only hope that approach continues as we determine Super Bowl competitors.



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The preliminary news is good, with Carl Cheffers and Bill (the Winemaker) Vinovich doing the officiating. Both zebras have a history of big games, and Vinovich is considered one of the best. Bengals-Baby Backs represents his 16th postseason assignment, including two Lombardi's and six conference championships. The Winemaker's crew threw only nine flags per game in 2021, which is considerably less than Cheffers' fourteen. The Bengals are 1-5 in games he has officiated, including 1-2 this season.

As for Cheffers, the Rams are 2-1 overall when he calls the game, and 1-0 in 2021. His record for the Niners is 4-3 overall, and 2-1 in 2021. Cheffers tendency to throw laundry could keep the game under control as these division matchups in the conference finals can get testy. Cheffie will need to keep tempers from flaring, especially for Jalen Ramsey, who is known for taking swings at his own teammates during games.



*The Old Guard calls the Conference Finals this week*

Corrente has already announced his retirement, and these two senior zebras may be close behind. After all, it is getting harder and harder to make some of these pro gambling calls with a straight face.

The bad news: Ron Torbert has already been selected for Super Bowl LVI at SoFi. Ugh.

Peace,

The Look Man