

THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2023
Week Ten: Lightning Never Strikes Twice...

"I overcorrected on that extra point, on the wrong way, on the wrong direction. And so then from that miss, I was able to adjust a little bit and make the next one. I feel a bit like an arsonist that put out his own fire and then gets a pat on the back," – Browns K Dustin (D-Hop Jr.) Hopkins, who kicked a game winning FG as time expired to beat Baltimore.

PROLOGUE

The Look Man requested a return to exciting, flag free football, and he damn near got it in Week Ten. Five games ended on a last second score for the first time in the history of the NFL. The Look Man was at the bar watching the Browns-Baltimore and Houston-Cincinnati, and both games came down to the wire.

That is not to say the officiating didn't enter into the picture. The Browns stuffed Baltimore eight straight plays inside the ten-yard line after the Zebras made two D-holding calls that were outrageous at best. The Look Man was nearly tossed for yelling, "YOU GET NOTHING!" following a red zone pick that was overruled in that stretch. Folks were jerking their heads around trying to figure out what the yelling was about.

In short, perhaps we have turned a metaphorical corner, but the Look Man remains dubious. Adrian Hill and his crew set the league back 40 years with phantom DPI and offensive holding calls in Bengals-Ravens. It seemed clear that he and his crew had bet the under in this game. Unfortunately, so did everyone else after seeing Burrow deplane the day before the game with a cast on his wrist. Burrow was not on the injury list and the Nati is going to receive a letter from Park Avenue in Manhattan.

As we head into a glut of thanksgiving games, we have much to be thankful for - - - unless we are Browns Fan. The loss of Watson is the only thing that removed the smile from the Look Man's face, and it was days after the win.

True NFL fans know the feeling when your team overcomes all odds for an improbable win. The food tastes better, the wine is sweeter, and life is good, if only for a few days.

Without further ado, the week that was.



"You get some dark meat, a little gravy and BOOM!"

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LAGNIAPPE

Culture Club

The sky is falling for the media, who claim the Browns' playoff hopes are gone now that Deshaun Watson is on the shelf for the year. The Look Man is in the *Not So Fast, My Friend* club on this one, which should be no surprise to the Tailpipe Nation.

The Browns rightly realized that (cake) Baker Mayfield was never going to take them where they wanted to go. They traded for Watson in a true LA Rams "F-them picks" move to grab the brass ring.

Watson has not produced due in part to the arbitrary eleven game suspension, and partially because the game has changed. The advent of the Tampa Two and zone blitzing defensive schemes mean that QBs have to deliver the ball in under three seconds. Watson likes to look it over and deliver deep shots downfield, which typically lands you in the hospital or the IR in today's NFL.

But the Browns did not choke by jettisoning Josh (Passtronaut) Dobbs in the preseason. They acquired Dorian Thompson-Robinson (DTR) in the fifth round, and like his upside. DTR was a four-year starter at UCLA, and he is accurate, gutsy and talented. The Passtronaut has several years of NFL experience, but when the smoke clears, DTR is going to have the better career.

The Browns front office did something else smart: they got rid of QBs whose games did not resemble Watson's. You simply cannot have one QB who is a pocket passer and a backup who requires an entirely different playbook. DTR and Watson are similar enough to have a single playbook, keeping fantasy owners from spouting off about who should be starting or sitting based upon a ridiculous point system. These guys make the Look Man sick; they think they know football when they are really just Stat Boys.

Thomas Jefferson called the newspaper "a rough draft of history." Writers are killing Cleveland for letting Dobbs go and the karmic justice associated with Watson's injury. The Cleveland front office took the high road by giving the talented Dobbs a chance to start elsewhere and may yet get the last laugh on Watson, DTR and the top five defense it built.

It is too soon to say how it will turn out, and a deep playoff run next season would vindicate their decisions. Fantasy Football owners only think they know football. These guys actually do.

An Offensive Brute...

The other side of the coin might be the Bengals, who may have run out of nine lives with a loss at Baltimore. By ponying up for Joe (Cool) Burrow, the Bengals gave away the heart of their football team, safeties Vonn Bell and Jesse Bates. Those guys provided run support and deep ball savvy that just doesn't exist on this team. As a result, the defense is near the bottom in run stuffing and points allowed, having given up 1000 yards and 64 points in the last two games alone.

Burrow is now injured again (a wrist), owing to a patchwork free agent offensive line that is getting him killed. He is on pace for as many sacks as David Carr, who got knocked out of the league after showing early promise.

Burrow's O-line is not great, and after 2023, he will be missing RB Joe (Richard Milhous) Mixon, Tyler Boyd, and perhaps Tee Higgins. Not a great recipe for staying healthy, and he may need the 275 large to keep himself warm at night in the hospital.

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Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom

Marine Mammals WR Tyreek (the Cheetah) Hill has never run on the Serengeti, but he is chasing long odds to win the MVP. Hill is on pace to break Calvin (Megatron) Johnson's 2012 record of 1,964 receiving yards in a single season. That receiving record didn't win Megatron the MVP, and it has been a long while since anyone not playing QB has done so.

Lawrence (LT) Taylor won it in 1986 after revolutionizing the linebacker position, marking only the second time a defensive player had won the award. Even Jerry Rice never secured the regular season trophy.

The Cheetah is averaging 119.6 yards per game, just ahead of the Iggles AJ Brown at 117. Megatron averaged 122 YPG when he set the modern-day receiving record, a tribute to his dominance.

The Look Man doesn't believe the Cheetah will hit the mark, as the Marine Mammals only put up big numbers inside the friendly confines of Pro Player Stadium in Miami. Outside of their home field, the Mammals are eminently beatable, and Hill has pedestrian numbers.

Defensive backs on the road are playing off Hill, employing zone and Tampa Two to limit his deep threat. It's like co-host Jim Fowler used to tell Marlon Perkins: "Watch out Marlin, those teeth are raaazzor sharp."



Bite versus bark argument for Hill...

THE LOOKAHEAD

The Look Man got healthy last week, and so did you if you bet the Pepto Bismol Upset Pick of the week. Houston looked good in beating that Bengal tail at Pall Bearer Stadium, and it was a heck of an afternoon around the league.

Without further ado, the Lookahead to Week Eleven:

Blitzburgh Stillers at Cleveland Browns (-1)

Deshaun Watson pulled off the second biggest underdog win in Cleveland in the last four years. He is now looking at season-ending surgery for a shoulder broken during the game. Remarkably, Watson

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guttured through the pain, going 14 of 14 in the second half, and winning the game. That is not the work of a guy who doesn't want to play and just wants the money.

Enter Dorian Thompson-Robinson, who the Browns threw under the bus in the last Baltimore contest. DTR could be joined by rookie RT Dawand (Man Mountain) Jones, who returns his four hundred pounds to combat taco aficionado TJ Watt.

It amazes the Look Man that the Stillers possess a 6-3 record despite being outgained in every game this year. QB Kenny (Two Gloves) Pickett is on the verge of being benched, and WR George (Slim) Pickens is starring in his own version of Dr. Strangelove.

The answer is easy: Mike Freakin Tomlin, who has never had a losing season or a Coach of the Year award.

Look for the Browns defense to rise up and return the favor to the Stillers, who knocked Nick Chubb out with a cheap shot. Minka Fitzpatrick had better have his head on a swivel, because the Browns WR might knock it off.

DTR and the defense begin to solidify a march to the postseason with a huge division win. Browns, baby Browns.



"The Browns own the Stillers, and now you know that...Taco Boy"

Dallas Cowpokes at Carolina Black Cats (+10.5)

The Pokes destroyed the hapless Jynts last week eliminating the bad taste from the Iggles loss. Big D routinely beats up on the bums, and loses the big games. And Carolina is a bum, pure and simple.

But hold on a cotton-picking minute. "Don't the Pokes always lose the week before the Turkey Day game in Big D", you ask? The Look Man has predicted many a *Pepto Bismol Upset Pick* featuring the Pokes, but this is Carolina.

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Pokes win, Black Cats cover as the Pokes look ahead to a Turkey Day matchup with the Commies.

Arizona Deadbirds at Houston Slim Shadies (-5)

Deadbirds QB Kyler Murray apparently found his playbook, and the dream of tanking for a high draft pick are as dead as the bird on their helmets. Arizona jettisoned the Passtronaut for winning too much, and now Kyler is saving his own job.

If you haven't seen Houston's CJ Stroud this year, you are missing the presumptive Rookie of the Year. Stroud is killing it with receivers you have never heard of unless you are a fantasy geek.

Look for a battle in what could be the Game of the Week. Slim Shadies.



"We tryna lose, not win. We had to let Dobbs go and now Kyler is killing us." – J. Gannon

Tampa Expensive Corn Kings at Frisco Niners (-12)

The Niners got back on track last week, largely courtesy of Factor Back Deebo Samuel. QB Brock (Mark) Purdy dealt some dimes, but RB Chirstian (Run CMC) McCaffery failed to set an NFL record for consecutive games with a TD score (18).

(Cake) Baker Mayfield and a middling Tampa squad show up at Levi for a tune-up. Two men enter, one man leaves. And that man isn't the owner of a string of bakeries that only sell turnovers. Niners.

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The Salty in Tampa is a big Baker Backer

Minneapolis Hornheads at Denver Donkeys (-2.5) Football Night in America

Denver QB (Dange)Russ Wilson is quietly a top ten NFL QB again, and he will not take kindly to Josh Dobbs raining meteors on his parade. Perhaps more importantly, this Denver defense has improved weekly since giving up 70 at Miami.

The amazing part of this is that WRs Courtland Sutton and Jerry Jeudy absolutely cannot catch. (Dange)Russ is cooking haute cuisine with bear skins and stone knives, and it tastes delicious!

Wilson gets the Donkeys back to .500 and the Passtronaut returns to Earth like a David Bowie song. Denver.

Philly Iggles at KC Baby Backs (-2.5) Monday Night Football

Andy (Kool-Aid) Reid has an 87%-win rate following a bye week dating back to his days in Philly. Kool-Aid is an NFL historic best 20-3 in that period, owing to his superior film study and coaching.

This just in: KC is coming off a bye week, and Iggles QB Jalen (Hulu has live sports) Hurts has a knee. Baby Backs cover and win on Monday Night, beating an overrated 8-1 Iggles team.

EPILOGUE

The NFC is absolute trash, with Philly, Detroit and Detroit at the top, Frisco, Dallas and Seattle in the middle and everybody else fighting to stay out of the basement.

The AFC Asgard is the cream of the AFC, with all four teams over .500, and superior defense throughout the division. Baltimore has three losses, each of which happened by blowing a fourth quarter lead.

KC owns the AFC West, the East is dominated by Miami, and the AFC Souse is a mess. Jacksonville leads the division, but no one wants to play Houston and Indy.

Injuries could separate the wheat and chaff, as we saw on Thursday Night Football, when players were dropping like flies. Joe Burrow, Mark Andrews, Lamar Jackson and Odell Beckham Jr. were hurt, and three of those courtesy of Bengals LB Logan Wilson, who isn't a doctor but can put you in the hospital courtesy of one his hip drop tackles.

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That tackle will be made illegal in the future, because the NFL cannot afford to lose star players to cheap hits. Baltimore's playoff chances took a big hit with Andrews possibly out for the year, and Lamar is bound to miss time if he keeps running the football.

The NFL is adding a Black Friday game to the Turkey Day slate, and it should be exciting. Nothing says football like Detroit, Dallas and turkey and gravy. Unless it is the John Madden patch being worn by every player on Thursday.

Peace,

The Look Man