

## THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2023

### Week Sixteen – Archie Bell and the Drells

*"I was definitely disappointed about it. It was a process throughout the whole week, whole bye week. We just came off beating the Chiefs, played a pretty good game against the Chiefs, we just came off of that. So, I was excited obviously for us, fighting for the playoffs and getting on a hot streak." – Denver QB Russell Wilson following the announcement he will be benched for the balance of 2023.*

#### PROLOGUE

IN the summer of 1968, a Houston based music group issued a single called Tighten Up. The song sold over a million copies and was produced by the Philadelphia tandem of Gamble and Huff. It featured a nice rhythm guitar and some funky horns that didn't reappear until George Clinton and Funkadelic. In short, it was the drip.

The NFL 2023 season version is different. Teams needing wins in Week Sixteen failed to get them, creating a jumble in the middle of the pack. As a result, only a handful of teams have been eliminated from the postseason at this point of the season. The Look Man cannot remember a closer race to the finish or more possible playoff permutations involving tie breakers.

The big stories of the week were the Baltimore win over the seemingly invincible Niners, the Pokes losing at Miami at the buzzer, and a plucky Browns squad demolishing Houston at the Dawg Pound. There was also some noise out of KC involving the head coach and players losing their tempers, but that was secondary.

At its essence, winning in December is paramount to competing for a championship. And in order to do that, you need to run the football and defend the run. Simple, but when it doesn't happen, players and coaches get fired.

Without further ado, the week that was...

#### LAGNIAPPE

##### Let Russ Cook

Denver HC Sean (Secret Squirrel) Payton announced that he is benching (Dange)Russ Wilson for the balance of the season. Secret claims it has nothing to do with salary, and everything to do with winning. Apparently, a QB on pace for 30 TDs/10 picks is not good enough for a secret agent with a sidekick mole.



*Payton and Paton in happier times...*

Adding insult to injury, Payton made a show of yelling at Wilson on the sidelines. When asked about it in the postgame presser, Payton told the reporter what they discussed was "none of his business."

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“Look, I’ve saved the world numerous times and won a ring in New Orleans for Chrissake. Ask Yellow Pinkie, ask Atom Ant about me. And don’t ever ask me about my business, Kay.”

Wilson signed a market level contract for \$254 million two years ago, and he is earning his money. Donkeys’ senior management asked him to discard his injury clause, essentially a pay cut. When he refused, they threatened to cut him, largely because he also has a no-trade clause.

Peyton Manning and Tom Brady never got treated this way, and they didn’t have to deal with WRs like Jerry Jeudy and Courtland Sutton, who run poor routes and cannot catch the football.

Here is an interesting numbers comparison:

Head-to-Head		
0-2	<b>Reg Season</b>	<b>2-0</b>
<b>1-0</b>	<b>Playoffs</b>	0-1
Overall Stats		
<b>335</b>	<b>G</b>	188
<b>326</b>	<b>AV</b>	167
<b>251-82-0</b>	<b>QBrec</b>	115-72-1
64.3	<b>Cmp%</b>	<b>64.7</b>
<b>89214</b>	<b>Pass Yds</b>	43653
7.4	<b>Pass Y/A</b>	<b>7.7</b>
<b>266.3</b>	<b>Pass Y/G</b>	232.2
<b>649</b>	<b>Pass TD</b>	334
212	<b>Int</b>	<b>106</b>
97.2	<b>Rate</b>	<b>100.0</b>
693	<b>Rush Att</b>	<b>981</b>
1123	<b>Rush Yds</b>	<b>5307</b>
1.6	<b>Rush Y/A</b>	<b>5.4</b>
28	<b>Rush TD</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>5943.4</b>	<b>FantPt</b>	3541.0

Sure, it is considered heresy to compare anyone to Tom Terrific, but look at the green on this graphic. The Look Man dispensed with a similar comparison to Peyton, which showed Wilson has a higher completion percentage, Yards per Pass Attempt and fewer interceptions. He also blew Manning away on rushing yards and TDs.

The NFL has made a game plan of billionaire owners making fans dislike millionaire players. Unfortunately, fans expect John Elway to come out of retirement and win another ring. What they don’t understand is, Wilson was a first ballot Hall of Famer before a 2021 thumb injury in Seattle and a poor 2022 season in Denver. His numbers don’t look like a guy who is forcing Denver’s owners (the Walton

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Family of Walmart fame) to eat \$85 million over two years. Perhaps Secret Squirrel and GM George Paton are simply looking for a scapegoat?

#### **THE LOOKAHEAD**

Week Fifteen was an absolute blast, with incredible plays in Cincy, Cleveland and Crapchester. A few more quarterbacks bit the dust with concussions, setting up an odd stretch run. Cleveland is really banged up, with fourteen guys on IR. They need one or two more wins to lock a playoff spot, but it would be really nice to avoid a tie-breaker that goes down five or six levels.

Without further ado, the Lookahead to Week Seventeen.

#### ***Saturday Night Live***

##### ***Detroit Cadillacs at Dallas Cowpokes at (-5.5)***

The Pokes limp home, where they are undefeated in 2023. Apparently, the tacos in Dallas have mystical powers, because not only are the Pokes unbeatable at Jerrah World, they average a dozen more points at home than on the road.

Dak Prescott and CeeDee Lamb are the signature players on offense, but this defense is not chopped liver. The problem: Doomsday Lite is vulnerable to the run since losing MLB Leighton Vander Esch to his annual neck injury of the year. Teams are now running directly at DE Micah Parsons (Brown), taking advantage of his natural aggression and desire to marry couples when they are in town.

No QB likes to get hit, but Detroit QB Jared (Subway) Goff really dislikes it. When faced with a ferocious pass rush, Subway does not eat fresh, he simply throws the rock falling away. But there is something the Look Man likes about this plucky Detroit squad. The D-line is just good enough and the RB by Committee features the speedy and elusive Jamhyr Gibbs.

Bottom line: DL Isaiah Buggs (Bunny) and LB Alex Anzalone come up with some big plays to put Dak in a trick bag. The Pokes running game depends upon speed not power, and is not big enough to pound the rock.

If Goff can buck up, Detroit covers, forcing Dallas HC Mike McCarthy to use his wits. And that is not going to end well. Cadillacs.

##### ***Miami Marine Mammals at Baltimore (-3)***

Baltimore parlayed a 13-12 halftime lead into a laughter at Levi, largely on the strength of the presumptive MVP, Lamar (Action) Jackson. Action pulled several Houdini's, dropping dimes on the back end and running all over the vaunted Niners defense.

Lost in the destruction was the loss of fleet RB Keaton, who makes the Baltimore offense click with his devastating speed and solid hands. Keaton suffered a season-ending ACL, meaning Lamar is going to have to carry the rushing load. And that, my friends, is how MVPs get knocked out in the postseason.

Baltimore hasn't yet locked up the AFC Asgard or the home field, so they need this win badly. Miami may be looking ahead to the Bisons game in Week Eighteen, a game they need more than this one. The scuttlebutt has been that the Marine Mammals cannot win outside of Sea World, and so far, this has been true.

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HC Mike (Eminem) McDaniels is feeling the heat, dropping some NSFW chatter during pregame versus Dallas. Eminem poking the Miami Messiah, Dan Marino, delighted his squad, which is irreverent and speedy. The game winning FG sent Big D home with a 22-20 loss, but at a cost. WR Jaylen Waddle got a high ankle, and could miss significant time. Waddle will not be dancing on Sunday, much to the chagrin of owner Stephen Ross, who will have dance solo.

Baltimore has played a lot of back-to-back games against contenders lately. Tua Tagovailoa's Marine Mammals have uber WR Tyreek Hill and RB Devon Achane (the Night Train) with speed to burn. If they get up on you, they can turn this game into a track meet, even without Jaylen Waddle.

Look for Miami to attempt to shake their road woes and get a W for Eminem. Mammals.



*“Yeah, Dan Marino! F— your records, Dan! we’re coming for your records, Dan!”*

*Cincinnati Bengals at KC Baby Backs (-7)*

The Bengals’ playoff hopes are on life support, needing a defibrillator and a miracle. The only thing missing is Star Trek’s TOS Bones McCoy saying, “They’re dead, Jim.”

Enter the dysfunctional Baby Backs, who have gotten no love from the zebras, and are devolving into a dumpster fire. Taylor Swift and Birttany Mahomes are two of the most hated women in sports right now, and their men are showing signs of decompensation.

The Look Man has been impressed by Nati HC Zac (Andy) Taylor, who has navigated injuries and expectations. KC HC Andy (Kool Aid) Reid has struggled to beat the Sheriff of Mayberry in recent years, so this game has all the makings of a battle.

All of the noise has minimized one key fact: the KC defense is top six in the NFL in 2023. They are quietly second in yardage and third in first downs allowed. Nati backup hurler Jake Browning (Automatic Rifle) has been putting up Joe Flacco numbers with three bills passing per week, but Mike Tomlin and the Stillers exposed a hitch in his firing mechanism, resulting in some picks.

KC quiets the noise to secure a playoff berth and lock up the AFC West. Baby Backs.

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*Two horses walk into a bar...*

*Breen Gay Cheeseheads at Minnesota Hornheads (+1) Football Night in America*

This game looks like crap on paper, but could decide several playoff spots in the NFC. Neither QB excites the Look Man, but Jordan (the) Love (Doctor) has a little more than (Saint) Nick Mullens. Cheeseheads in a close contest.

**EPILOGUE**

The NFL struck it rich with the 2023 schedule makers. Every game in Week Seventeen save one (Arizona at Chicago) has playoff implications. And even that game could decide the draft sequence. The most amazing part might be the fact that the AFC is wide open, while the NFC is separated into tiers, with the Niners, Iggles, Cadillacs, and Pokes at the top, and the Rams and every team in the NFC Norse at Tier Two.

While the AFC is pretty clear cut, there are several teams that could end in six-way virtual tie, setting up the wildest tie-breakers since the 2007 season in which the Stillers, Flaming Thumbtacks and Browns all finished at 10-6. The Stillers won the AFC Asgard, Tennessee was a wild card, and the Cleveland Browns were eliminated by multiple tiebreakers.

Blitzburgh took the AFC Asgard Division crown based upon sweeping the Browns head-to-head. The tiebreaking procedure jumped to Wild Card tie break, which the Flaming Thumbtacks took based upon a 4-1 record against common opponents. Cleveland went 3-2 against Cincinnati, Houston, N. Y. Jets, and Oakland.

When the smoke cleared, QB Derek (DA) Anderson and the Browns got the shaft by losing to the Bengals in the penultimate week of the season. HC Romeo (the Bus Driver) Crennel and OC Rob Chudzinski decided to throw the ball 50 times in a 30 MPH wind at Pall Bearer Stadium. Anderson threw four picks and a win in Week Seventeen over the Niners became meaningless.

That Browns team included KR/PR/WR Joshua Cribbs, RB Jamal Lewis, S Eric Wright, LB D'Quell Jackson, (former Chowds) DT Willie McGinest, and backup QB Brady Quinn (Medicine Woman). The team was scrappy and tough, but couldn't overcome the mediocre coaching by Crennel and inconsistency by DA at quarterback. Anderson was just as likely to throw a pick as a TD, but he did light up the Bengals 51-45 in Week Two at Cleveland.

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The 2007 season was noteworthy for many other reasons, including the following:

- First international game in London, England between the Jynts and Marine Mammals in Wembley Stadium.
- Instant replay became permanent following annual renewals in previous years.
- Dallas went 13-3, tying the Cheeseheads, but clinching home field advantage based upon a head-to-head victory. The Pokes would later lose at home to the Eli (Elite) Manning and the G-Men in the NFC Divisional Playoff.
- And the number one reason: the New England Chowds went 18-1, and the 1 was the NY Football Jynts!

By the way, this slogan is printed on T-shirts and remains the coolest burn the Look Man has ever seen in print. The 2007 season ended with the Chowds losing to the Jynts courtesy of the David Tyree Helmet Catch and a Plexiglass Burrell TD with 35 ticks remaining. The Jynts got hot late in the regular season, and their winning streak was punctuated by a loss to New England. They entered the tournament as a Wild Card, got on a heater and rode it to the Lombardi. That season turned Eli Manning from a meme to a household name.

Fast forward to 2023, and the Browns have gotten hot down the stretch. Irrespective of the Cincinnati game outcome in Week Eighteen, they have a chance to enter the postseason hot and rested. (Cool) Joe Flacco has the most passing yards of any QB in the last five weeks, and the defense is at the top in multiple categories.

Stranger things have happened than the Browns winning the Lombardi. If you don't believe the Look Man, just look back to 2007.

Peace,

The Look Man