

THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2025

Week Minus One – Guardians of Morality Part One

“I tell you this much, what I heard from someone in the NFL is they told [teams] don’t draft him. We’re going to make an example out of him.” – HOF RB Eric (Dick Dog) Dickerson on Shedeur Sanders in the draft. Dick Dog further explained that the Browns only selected Sanders in the fifth round after receiving a call urging them to take him.

PROLOGUE

The Look Man just returned from a trip to Yellowstone National Park, an incredible ecosystem spanning nearly 3500 square miles in Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho. It was established in 1872, and features the largest herd of free-range bison in the world. Yellowstone also marks the largest megafauna location in the lower 48, and is inhabited by bears, cougars, wolves, elk, and coyotes. It has been called “the Serengeti of the United States.” One of its most interesting facets is how these animals live together in an ecosystem largely untouched and unchanged by human beings.

The National...Football...League is nearly the exact opposite of Yellowstone. Every part of the league is affected by human beings, from the offices in midtown Manhattan, to the meddling owners who believe they are the real show.

Hope springs eternal as the NFL embarks on its 106th season. Bad teams believe they can turn the tide in 2025, and good teams hope for a return to glory. The 2026 college draft is chock full of talent, which will likely lead to several teams tanking for the likes of a quarterback. Put it all together and you have a recipe for goulash.

The NFL dominates the news cycle, both in- and offseason. The Super Bowl is the most watched show in the world, and the collegiate draft takes over the imagination of NFL fans. As a result, one of the biggest stories was the draft slide of one Shedeur Sanders, the son of Hall of Fame CB Deion Sanders.

Shedeur fell from a possible second pick overall to the fifth round, and the NFL spun it as poor interviewing skills. Granted, Shedeur is not the most mature prospect ever, but the Look Man believes NFL chicanery was a bigger factor. If immaturity was a prerequisite for being drafted, the event would last about one hour, not three days. And Baker Mayfield would be making chicken, not \$30 million a year.

No one knows which candidates will excel and which will fail. But tanking the future of a particular player in a dick measuring contest is a bad look at best, and collusion at worst. We all remember Archie Manning and John Elway manipulating the draft, and look where it got them: four Super Bowl rings. If justice is poetic, Shedeur will get one someday.

LAGNIAPPE

Here are a series of Look Man musings relative to the 2025 season. Or, put another way, *Things He Thinks He Thinks*.

- The Bengals Joe Burrow’s historic 2024 season was not only wasted, it was malfeasance. Burrow is one of only three QBs to throw for 40 touchdowns and miss the postseason. Marino and

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Brees round out the competition, but both had nearly 20 picks. Burrow posted 43 scores with only nine picks.

The Bengals slow start burned them again, finishing 9-8 as they lost the tiebreaker to Denver. This despite beating Denver and the Stillers in Weeks 17 and 18, in two of 2024's best games. Perhaps worse, they were 4-7 in one score games, largely due to a defense that gave up yardage in bunches despite having the Defensive Player of the Year runner up in Trey Hendrickson.

The Look Man believes the Bengals will be the most entertaining NFL team in 2025. They will need to put up 40 per game and hope their defense can hold. It will be a throwback to Tony Romo in Dallas, who once lost 48-51.

Here is a snapshot of Joe Brrr's 2024:

	JOE BURROW QB - CIN - #9	2024 - 2025 SEASON		70.6	43	108.5
		4,918	289.3			
		Yds	Y/G	Comp Pct	TD	QBRat

The Bengals resigned Ja'Marr Chase, Tee Higgins, and Trey Hendrickson. If Burrow posts similar numbers and Cincinnati doesn't make it to the playoffs in 2025, they should tar and feather owner Mike Brown.

- Denver is riding high in the saddle in 2025, with the media predicting that they are a serious Super Bowl contender. The Donkeys went 1-6 in one score games, beating only the Jets in these contests. DPOY CB Patrick Surtain II had a great season, shutting down the NFL's best wideouts in the process. Surtain finished with four picks despite teams avoiding this side of the field. His prowess was sharpened by a vicious pass rush led by DE Nik Bonitto (Tuna), who recorded 11.5 sacks.
- The top Defensive Coordinators in the NFL right now are Vic Fangio (PHL), Brian Flores (MIN), Steve Spagnuolo (KC), and Vance Joseph (DEN), in no order. Robert (In)Saleh has returned to the Niners in 2025, and is likely to have success in the NFC West. The Look Man isn't buying the scapegoat routine Cincinnati attempted with (Sweet) Lou Anarumo, and former NCAA coach Al Golden cannot turn lemons into Five-Way Chili. The Look Man likes the Hornheads to turn some heads on defense, but QB JJ (Jameson) McCarthy doesn't scare anyone yet.

THE LOOKAHEAD

Week One is an event, and this season is no exception. There are several excellent matchups which make this "must see TV.

New York Football Jynnts at Washington Commies (-6.5/ 45.5)

The Commies won nine one score games in 2025 in a meteoric season for rookie QB Jayden Daniels. HC Dan (the Mighty) Quinn parlayed veterans and rookies into an incredible playoff run reminiscent of former HC George Allen.

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Meanwhile, in the financial center of the universe, the Jynts remade their roster with an emphasis on defense. The Big Blue defense features pipe swinging hardcases like Dexter Lawrence, Kayvon Thibodeaux, and Brian Burns to go with rookie Abdul (Cowboy) Carter. They have ejected QB Daniel Jones, replacing him with (Dange)Russ Wilson and (Famous) Jameis Winston to go along with first rounder Jaxson Dart.

The NFC East is going to be one of the best in the NFL, and it needs to be. Otherwise, HC Brian Daboll is going to be the next member of Jon (Chucky) Gruden's Fired Football Coaches Association (FFCA).

Commies win, Jynts cover in an entertaining contest. Commies.

Tampa Bay Expensive Corn Kings (-1.5) at Atlanta Dirty Birds (+1.5/48.5)

(Cake Baker) Mayfield and the Corn Kings went 9-8 and backed into a quick postseason exit in 2024. The record matched that of 2023, Cake's first season as the established gunslinger of the Gulf Coast raiders. Most of the Tailpipe Nation knows the Look Man's opinion of Cake, but for the uninitiated, it goes as follows:

Tom (Zoolander) Brady was able to dominate a weak AFC East with five or six division wins per season, garnishing several Lombardi's via AFC home field advantage. Mayfield, in a similarly weak NFC Souse, has eked into the postseason. Tampa acquired WR Emeka Egbuka in the draft from Wide Receiver University (OSU), and he will team with HOF WR Mike (Good Times) Evans and a top ten defense. Cake doesn't make the team around him better. His \$30 million salary doesn't compare well with the top echelon of QBs. If he can't go deep into the NFC Playoffs, he will be the reason.

ATL QB Michael (Big) Penix (Energy) goes deep early and often, and wins a one-score contest. Dirty Birds.



"Love that chicken from Popeyes..."

Cincinnati Bengals at Cleveland Browns – the Battle of Ohio (+5.5/44.5)

The NFL decided the Battle of Ohio couldn't wait for midseason, posting an interesting matchup in Week One. Bengals QB Joe (Brrr) Burrow and his embarrassment of offensive talent travel to the North Coast for a battle with the always tough Browns.

Cleveland reverted to Joe Flacco at QB despite the brief acquisition of Kenny (Two Gloves) Pickett, a veteran retread headed for Bust Town. They released RB Nick Chubb, replacing him with draft picks and

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unproven talent. Can the plucky Browns go toe-to-toe with a high scoring but slow starting Cincinnati squad?

Burrow has a penchant for early season picks, and his defense is now lead by former NCAA HC Al Golden (hair Surprise). Meet the new boss, same as the old boss as the Browns put up 40 on this recycled and undermanned defensive unit. Browns, baby, Browns.

Houston Slim Shadies at Los Angeles Rams (-3/45.5)

Slim Shadies QB CJ Stroud had a down year in 2024, largely due to losing nearly all his offensive weapons and having a line like wet toilet paper. Houston has shored up the latter, and their defense is going to be a problem again in 2025.

The LA Rams may have buyer's remorse after re-signing QB Matt Stafford, who has a bad back before the season even begins. That young, tough, and hungry LA defense nearly knocked off the Iggles in the playoffs, and will pose a threat in 2025. Unfortunately, it comes at the expense of losing WR Cooper Cupp, who will be replaced by Davante Adams.

But the Look Man predicted Houston would be a playoff threat for years to come after parlaying its three first rounders from the Deshaun Watson trade into star players. Edge Will Anderson is now complemented by DT Sheldon Rankins(-Bass), and SS CJ Garnder-Johnson (CJ-DJ).

Houston wins a war, spearheaded by former CLE RB Nick Chubb. Slim Shadies.

Baltimore Dumpster Ducks at Buffalo Bisons (-1.5/52.5) - Football Night in America

QB Lamar (Action) Jackson is a regular season wonder, posting two MVPs, and missing a third due to Josh (Irwin) Allen's incredible performance in 2024. Action is the tip of the spear for a Baltimore squad that is strong in all three areas.

This game will be a referendum on the AFC arms race featuring potential MVPs like Joe (Brrr) Burrows, Patrick Mahomes, and Aaron (Discount Double Check) Rodgers. The Look Man would add Justin (The Way to Eden) Herbert and Bo Nix to that mix, but frankly, neither has proven anything yet.

Allen goes sci-fi again, and the Bisons take an early lead in the Race for AFC Home Field. Bisons.

Minnny Hornheads at Chicago Monsters of the Furniture Mart (-1/45.5) - Monday Night Football

Many believe Hornheads HC Kevin O'Connell is a quarterback whisperer who could redeem even bums to be Hall of Famers. The Look Man likes O'Connell more than folks like Kevin Stefanski or Zak (Opie) Taylor because he played the game. But there is a limit, and the selection of JJ McCarthy may prove the theory.

The Hornheads redeemed Sam (Sixth Sense) Darnold in 2024, but even the stout defense coached by DC Brian Flores couldn't overcome Darnold's deficits. Look for the Monsters of the Furniture Mart to come out strong and narrowly defeat the new look Hornheads. Monsters.

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EPILOGUE

The Shedeur Sanders draft slide created media fodder but it is far from a complete story. The Browns suckered J-Ville into a first rounder in exchange for drafting two-way player Travis (Kraven the) Hunter at number two. This positions Cleveland to take one of the top college QBs in next season's QB-rich draft, but only if Sanders or Dillon Gabriel (Hornblower) do not pan out. It also keeps their salary cap in line with the \$50 million due Deshaun Watson in 2025.

The Browns hope to catch lightning in a bottle again with Joe (Cool) Flacco, but he throws too many picks for the Look Man. Flacco's 2023 magic in Cleveland was largely a shell game due to a Top Five defense, which erased his penchant for pick sixes. The Wild Card loss to Houston featured two deadly picks, and the Browns could not overcome them in the playoff format, which is much more conservative than the regular season.

The Cleveland draft was intelligent on its face; they essentially received a top tier DT in Mason (Moonlight) Graham plus OSU RB Quinshon Judkins as a replacement for Nick Chubb. Judkins has not signed due to a domestic violence beef, and is likely to face a four-game suspension if and when he does. The Look Man liked OSU's Treyveon Henderson more than Judkins. Henderson's explosion and soft hands seem like a better fit in the NFL, where speed is fungible.

More likely, the Browns will achieve five or six wins in 2025, positioning them in the middle of Round One. The Look Man doesn't think too much of Arch Manning or Cade Klubnik, but he doesn't know how college quarterback talent translates into the National...Football...League. He does know he likes 6'-3" guys who weigh in over 220 and can run. Only time will tell...



Sellers may be the next Josh Allen...or Anthony Richardson