

## THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2024

### Week One – Sharp as a marble...

*“If it isn’t from the horse’s mouth it’s probably bullshit” – Raiders WR Davante Adams on rumors that he is unhappy in Vegas.*

#### PROLOGUE

The Look Man had a buddy who used to characterize the intellectually challenged with the term, “...sharp as a marble...” Barney (The Main Barn) would routinely utter this phrase when surrounded by incompetence (or incompetents), and it became a catch phrase among the group. Whenever someone said something completely idiotic, you could count on ball-busting to ensue.

That self-same phrase was the response when the Look Man intimated that he was taking New England and the 8.5 points at Cincinnati. The Nati was a prohibitive favorite, and Charlie replied in the text chain that the Look Man was not the sharpest marble in the pouch.

The outcome of that contest shocked many, but is emblematic of the 105<sup>th</sup> season of the National Football League. NFL Week One featured potential playoff matchups like Baltimore and KC in the Kickoff Classic. The NFL is light on public relations but strategy is a strong suit. This game did not disappoint, coming down to a toe on the end zone back line as the margin of victory for KC.

The Chowds-Bengals outcome also underscores how hope springs eternal in the League, as every fan believes “this is the year” in Week One. Some, like Tennessee or Cincinnati, see a rather large egg laid. Others, like Frisco and Tampa Bay, become giddy after seeing their teams dismantle the opposition.

The Look Man is firmly in the middle. He believes that defenses are ahead of offenses in the first quarter of the NFL season. It might be due to limited preseason play, hot weather, or just kismet, but any way you slice it, few teams start out strong offensively.

Cases in point:

- 1) Matthew Stafford of the LA Rams, and Tua Tagovailoa of the Miami Marine Mammals were the only two QBs surpassing three bills passing in Week One. Of course, the mitigating factor is that seven starters had zero to two years of experience; many were playing on Saturday last season.
- 2) Defensive scoring was through the roof, and Chicago and Dallas put up points on the defensive side of the pig.
- 3) Rushing yards were historically high, with Joe (Richard Milhous) Mixon (Houston), JK Dobbins (Bolts), and some kid named Jordan Mason (Niners). Smart teams run the football, especially when defenses are winded early in the September heat.

Put it all together and you have one hell of a 2024 season start. Without further ado, the Week That Was...

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## Week One – Sharp as a marble...

### LAGNIAPPE

#### Elementary...

Houston attorney Tony Buzbee identified yet another plaintiff who claims she was strong armed into sex with Browns QB Deshaun Watson in 2022. DSW allegedly assaulted her after she invited him over to her apartment for a spot of tea.

Buzbee has threatened to present corroborating video to the NFL office if DSW won't pay up. Apparently, this ambulance chaser wants to bleed Watson dry, and this episode is conveniently trotted out just in time.

Many believe that this is a ploy by the Browns front office to get out of the \$230 million guarantee to Watson. Not so fast, my friends, as the Browns would still take the largest cap hit in NFL history if they part ways with Watson.

The Look Man does not find this new allegation remotely credible, but Watson does need to step his game up. He was not ready for prime time, but he was hit seventeen times and sacked six as he fumbled and threw two picks. His protection was shaky at best, and his father passed away three days prior to the game.

Even so, here is the tale of the tape:

Dak Prescott		Deshaun Watson	
DAL - QB		CLE - QB	
<b>WEEK V. DAL</b>			
59.4	Pct	53.3	
179	Yds	169	
1	TD	1	
0	Int	2	
85.3	QBRat	51.1	

You don't expose a franchise QB to double digit hits in his first game back from shoulder surgery. You start the backup, especially with two starting offensive tackles out. It was a stupid move by a club that cannot get out of its own way.

Nothing will come of these allegations, but DSW is going to have to play better. And that starts with coaching.

## THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2024

### Week One – Sharp as a marble...

#### Taylor Made

ESPN's Adam Schefter broke the story that fellow ESPN broadcaster Joe Buck shattered the ankle of his wife, Michelle Beisner-Buck by accidentally driving a golf ball into it. Beisner-Buck underwent surgery to repair the ankle last week following the mishap.

When asked how this could happen, Joe made up some goofy story about how Michelle walked in front of his drive just before he cut loose. He failed to make mention of the fact that Michelle had previously been hitting on his broadcast partner Troy Aikman.

“I mean, she’s giving Troy all these looks, and bending over to retrieve his balls. I finally got ticked and let her have one. I was aiming for her kisser, but I’m not very good with the driver”, said Buck.

“Here I am, stoned out of my gourd, waiting for Joe to tee off on seven. He drills one right into her and then acted like it was a mistake”, said Aikman, whose eyes were at least two shades redder than usual that day. “She dropped like she had been hit by Reggie White.”

Schefter expects Beisner-Buck to go to the PUP list for several weeks before returning as a sideline reporter.



*“The sea was very angry that day my friends...”*



*“...like an old man trying to send soup back at the deli...”*

## THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2024

### Week One – Sharp as a marble...

#### *A dark desert highway with the warm smell of colitas?*

Arizona Deadbirds QB Kyler (Cake) Murray was non-committal when asked why he didn't target rookie WR Mavin Harrison Jr. (MHJ) in the loss to Buffalo. Harrison's highly anticipated NFL debut landed with a thud, as he finished with one catch for four yards in a 34-28 loss.

Murray told reporters he was simply going through his reads, not looking for one receiver. "I wouldn't say [the Bills] were taking [Harrison] away, As a quarterback, obviously you're going through your reads. Sometimes the ball goes to him. That's not my job.", said Murray. "Besides, I'm only four feet tall. All I could see was helmets and shoulder pads. I wasn't looking for no giant 6'5" wideout with a Hall of Fame father."

Deadbirds TE Trey McBride and WR Greg Dortch were targeted seventeen times, but the fourth overall pick in the 2024 NFL Draft couldn't buy a look. McBride and Dortch have been featured both in the Arizona offense and the sides of milk cartons all over the Southwest. These guys are not even household names in their own households.

Perhaps the most damning thing was that Harrison Jr. was uncovered for a game-tying TD late in the game. Murray either didn't see him running free, or didn't want to share the spotlight, and Buffalo got a win after being down 17 points early. Murray threw for a pedestrian 162 yards in the game, adding 57 rushing yards in the loss.

Arizona is the place careers go to die. One can only hope for a trade if Harrison Jr. is to meet his potential. MHJ is actually better than his dad, who will be in the Hall of Fame someday soon.

#### **ZEBRA OF THE WEEK**

The Look Man pretty much suspended the Zebra of the Week in 2023, owing to the fact the officiating was so putrid. Holding and defensive pass interference calls were rampant, and coincidentally timed in some key games. Naming a winner of the weekly award amounted to pulling the wings off flies.

The 2024 season has barely started, and already there is griping about the zebras. The Kickoff Classic featured a point of emphasis on offensive tackles aligning in the backfield. Baltimore's LT was called 174 times for misaligning, which is a new record since the Dumpster Ducks only ran 64 plays.

But the ultimate pimp smack had to be Clete Blakeman, who officiated the Pokes at Browns. Clete called penalties on the Browns early and often, erasing nearly every offensive play of consequence. He called illegal formation and offensive holding that led to six consecutive three-and-outs for Cleveland, while allowing the Pokes wingback to move prior to the snap. Browns DE Myles Garrett even pointed to the offending player, but only because he was receiving Columbian neckties on every pass rush.

By the end of the Clete Blakeman Show, the game included a whopping 22 penalties (accepted only), split evenly between Dallas and Cleveland. But in the first half, with the game still in reach, the Browns were flagged seven times, with each being a backbreaker.

The Browns can't buy a call in the Deshaun Watson era, and it is getting ridiculous. Watson was tackled by his facemask twice in Stillers games in the last two seasons, neither receiving a flag. It stinks on ice, and the makeup calls don't help once the game is out of reach.

## THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2024

### Week One – Sharp as a marble...

Pokes QB Rayne Dakota Prescott finished under two bills passing in a blowout win, and Deshaun Watson couldn't hit the ocean from a boat. It was a battle of attrition on a hot day in the Land.

The Look Man is not saying this game was decided by the zebras; he is saying that home teams should receive at least tacit home cooking. The Browns got demoralized by the basic inequity in officiating.

Clete Blakeman, you are the Look Man ***Zebra of the Week!***

### THE LOOKAHEAD

Week Two promises fireworks, because few teams have ever come back from 0-2 to make the postseason. And 0-2 is just a whisper shy of 0-3, where Fewer still come back to make the Tournament. Here's the Lookahead:

#### *New Orleans Religious Icons at Dallas Pokes (6.5/46.5)*

The Pokes are riding high following the dismantlement of the Browns in Cleveland last week. This game 2 matchup will be more challenging, as the Icons feature a strong running game, and the freakish Taysom Hill at weapon.

The Look Man wasn't overly impressed with the Pokes. Granted, Micah Parsons (Brown) went off, but the offense was mediocre at best. Prescott plays better at home than on the road, but something tells the Look Man this is a New Orleans cover ready to happen. Icons.

#### *Tampa Bay Expensive Corn Kings at Detroit Cadillacs (-7.5/41)*

(Cake) Baker Mayfield posted a 137 QBR and four touchdowns in Week One, something he never did in a Browns uni. To make matters worse, he did it against a good Commanders defense, dropping at least two dimes to HOF WR Mike Evans. This was a masterpiece that was not lost on Browns Fan, who had to endure a Deshaun Watson performance that was subpar.

The Look Man will admit when he's wrong, but only when he is wrong. Cake comes back to earth in this game, throwing two picks and perpetuating The Baker Cycle. Cadillacs.

#### *Cleveland Browns at Jacksonville J-Squareds (-3/41.5)*

To the fans that are killing Cleveland for the Deshaun Watson trade, give me a break. The Browns threw Watson out there in Week One against a ferocious Dallas D absent two starting offensive tackles. The result was predictable; he was running for his life and got sacked five times and hit twelve more. For God's sake, the man's father passed away two days prior to the game, and he was clearly not ready to play.

That is no way to treat your franchise QB, and for those Browns Fans (like the official Youngest Brother of the Look Man) who proposed benching Watson, the Look Man says "baloney." While the Look Man would've protected Watson by indicating his shoulder wasn't ready, you just cannot replace him at QB. It sends a bad message to the team and the to the NFL, which is hell-bent on ensuring Watson fails. Instead, you go out and find some o-linemen who don't show up for payday with a gun and a mask, and you sign them.

## **THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2024**

### **Week One – Sharp as a marble...**

Second, while Jameis Winston can be an effective backup, the front office is nervous that he will outshine Watson and create a QB controversy. The Look Man says fine; the NFL is the ultimate meritocracy, and if Watson cannot keep his job, it's too damn bad. Suck it up, Buttercup.

This said, the Look Man believes the Browns turn the corner in Week Two, beating up on Trevor (Vicki) Lawrence and the J-Squareds in their own house, and squaring their record at 1-1. Browns, baby, Browns.

#### *Cincinnati Bengals at KC Baby Backs (-5.5/48)*

The Orange and Black went Orange and Orange last week in their home opener, and looked awful in more ways than one. The alternative uniforms were garish, and the offense was pathetic. Burrow finished under two bills passing, and that tiger won't hunt.

The Look Man doesn't understand why they won't pay WR Ja'Marr Chase, and the QB Joe (Cool) Burrow looked putrid. Pay the man, and let's move on.

Burrow's wrist is a story, and the lack of preseason play was evident. WR2 Tee Higgins has a hammy, and those take more than one week to heal. The Bengals biggest loss was DT DJ Reader, who is now in Detroit, and the defense can be run on. The Chowds ran all over them, and KC will also.

Bengals CB Cam Taylor-Britt doesn't believe KC rookie sensation Xavier (X-Man) Worthy adds much to the KC offense. "Speed, that's about it. He can run straight -- run jet sweeps and just run straight. He can't do too much else, so that's about it. I, on the other hand, make a mean chicken cordon bleu," said CTB.

The Look Man begs to differ and believes Taylor-Britt is borrowing trouble. X-Man, who was drafted 28<sup>th</sup> overall after running a 4.21 forty, is going to make the Bengals pay, with a little help from HC Andy (Kool Aid) Reid and Patrick (Kermit the Frog) Mahomes.

Fans believe the Nati is the only team that can consistently beat KC, and with good reason. Not only do the numbers support it, but the matchups are bad for KC. Still, the Look Man cannot go against Kelce and Kermit the Frog. KC covers and wins to go 2-0.

#### *Chicago Monsters of the Furniture Mart at Houston Slim Shadies (-6.5/45.5)*

Houston is the Look Man's dark horse in the AFC, and they are going to be a problem. Bears QB (Me 'n) Caleb Williams is not yet ready for prime time as the Slim Shadies cover and win. Houston.

### **EPILOGUE**

The Look Man was in sheer hell in Week One. The Pokes went up 20-3 en route to a win that was nowhere near as close as the final score. The Fox crew consisted of Kevin Burkhardt and some guy named Tom Brady.

Brady's whiny voice and lack of substantive assessments of play calling or strategy was awful. Worse yet, his voice goes up several octaves during hot takes. Imagine Edith Bunker in the booth doing color commentary.

Brady is in the GOAT conversation as a player and the goat conversation as a broadcaster. He has signed a ridiculous ten-year \$375 large contract, and he stinks. His breakdown of Prescott and

**THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2024**  
**Week One – Sharp as a marble...**

Watson was ho-hum, and instead of assigning him to the Seattle-New England game on Sunday, Fox placed him on New Orleans-Dallas.

Perhaps they think he will get better if he sees the same team multiple times. Or they were worried his hometown fans would see just how bad he is in the booth...



*Zoolander is in the booth now...but he's no Greg Olsen*

As for the rest of the Week Two slate, there are some excellent games. Good coaches liken the NFL season to a four-quarter game. You need win each of the four quarters, but you have to finish strong to reach the Tournament. Let's hope the balance of the first quarter of the season is as good as Week One.

Peace,

The Look Man