

THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2024

Week Three – Money Talks...

“I like my money.” - ATL HC Raheem Morris when asked to comment on the officiating.

PROLOGUE

Hard to disagree with Morris, who didn't want to pay a fine to the NFL. The officiating in the first quarter of the NFL season has been horrible. And that is a disservice to the word 'horrible.' The zebras are picking up flags, missing calls, and generally turning the League into an entertainment product instead of a meritocracy.

Similarly, offenses have been fairly awful in Weeks 1-3. QBs are getting hit at a rate that will make 2023 look like a banner year, with 65 starters overall. Browns QB Deshaun (DSW) Watson has been hit 42 times and sacked sixteen. He wouldn't know what a clean pocket looked like if he saw one, and the O-line injuries in the Land are not promising. If only DSW could borrow a minute to throw or a pocket dirtier than *Debbie Does Dallas*, he could regain his lost form.

Commiss QB Jayden Daniels, on the other hand, had plenty of time to throw in Week Three. The Orange and Black had little pass rush unless they blitzed, and when they did, JD burned them deep. Joe (Cool) Burrow lost his cool, and nearly got mangled on multiple occasions. He had a coach-only meeting with Zac (Opie) Taylor immediately following the game, and you can bet they weren't discussing the stock market.

One the whole, however, QBs are starting to find a groove, and Aaron (Discount Double Check) Rodgers and Kirk (Kurt) Cousins both look better than they have a right to following Achilles surgery. Even Stillers QB Justin (Strawberry) Fields (Forever) looks decent, and Bo (Dukes of Hazard) Nix destroyed (Cake) Baker Mayfield and the Tampa Two.

Week Four looks huge, as September bleeds into October. Without further ado, the Week that Was:

LAGNIAPPE

The Hot Dog is the hot dog.

ATL owner Arthur Blank (Slate) was inducted into the Dirty Birds Ring of Honor last week and celebrated by buying hot dogs for all in attendance. Blank Slate bought over 100,000 tube steaks and chips in a stadium that already has the lowest food prices in the League.

If you haven't visited an NFL stadium lately, the food alone could run you over a hundy. Beers are \$20 minimum, and ticket prices are out of control. Perhaps the best thing would be to introduce private equity into ownership. Those guys are known for giving money away - - - not.

The Dirty Birds rewarded Blank with an unlikely 22-21 win over the Iggles, whose owner is now contemplating giving away free cheesesteaks next week at the Linq.

After the game, Blank mentioned that the Iggles talked smack after the last win over ATL, "I think we all know we got kind of did dirty in 2021, losing 32-6. So, I thought we would return the favor. We did them dirtier than hot dog water tonight with a last second win."

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Dirty Franks Blank?

ZEBRA OF THE WEEK

No ZOTW this week; too many candidates, and too many bad calls. The NFL zebras are nearly as awful as the NCAA at this point, so the award goes unclaimed.

THE LOOKAHEAD

The end of the first quarter of the 2024 season is upon us, and there are some interesting games. Cincy and J-Ville are winless, and Blitzburgh is undefeated. Worlds are colliding, Jerry.

Minnesota Hornheads at Green Bay Cheeseheads (-2.5/43.5)

Hornheads QB Sam Darnold has looked great to date but tweaked a knee in Week Three. He could be the Comeback Player of the Year if he can limp to the bye week. Irrespective, it is a redemption story of a guy who gets the right coaching and front office and parlays it into a resurrection.

Speaking of comeback stories, QB Malik Willis has played well in green and gold. Willis even handled a third down with a football that the center had just vomited on. It takes some poise to handle vomit, and this team has receivers and running backs to make noise in the NFC Norse.

Green Bay is mulling the idea of reinserting Jordan Love (Broker) into the lineup. Love Broker still has a knee, and it would be a mistake to start him against this fierce Minnesota D. Brian Flores has taken lemons and made lemonade with this defense, which is the real story in Minneapolis.

It is always tough to pick divisional games early, but the Look Man likes Green Bay by a FG. Go Pack, go.

Cincinnati Bengals at Carolina Black Cats (+4.5/42)

The Orange and Black is ticked off after losing to rookie QB Jayden Daniels on national TV, and their reward is to face former Bengal Andy (The Beige Water Pistol) Dalton. Carolina surprised Vegas last week, getting rid of the rock early and often en route to a 36-22 beatdown.

The Bengals got Tee (Magnum) Higgins back last week, and he looks 100%. WR Ja'Marr Chase is Ja'Marr Chase, but the Bengals problem is the run game. They don't have one.

The Revenge Factor is huge, as Carolina continues the Bengals' ignominious 2024 slide. Black Cats.

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"The power of Christ compels me to avenge my release!"

Cleveland Browns at Las Vegas Raiders (-2/37)

The Browns looked like crap in a Week Three home loss to Danny (Dismal) Jones and the Jynts. They travel to Vegas for a late game with the Raiders, who will be without DE Maxx (Triple X) Crosby and WR Davante Adams.

Raiders QB (Chauncey) Gardner Minshew is streaky but will have to feature rookie TE Brock Bowers this week. He would love to beat Cleveland, which pounded him into submission last season with the Ponies.

Browns, baby, Browns.

Crapchester Bisons at Baltimore Dumpster Ducks (-2.5/46.5) Football Night in America

The 1-2 Dumpster Ducks would like to climb back to .500, and they face a suddenly untouchable Bisons. Lamar (L-Jack City) Jackson and Derrick (Prince) Henry ran all over the Pokes in Week Three, and they hope to do the same on Football Night in America.

Who knew the Bisons would actually be better without WR Stephon Diggs? They have a solid running game, but their Number One wideout is Khalil (Gibran) Shakir, who is poetry in motion. The real story is QB Josh (Irwin) Allen, who is not making the idiot turnovers he made in 2023.

The Dumpster Ducks would like to run it like last week, but the Look Man doesn't see it happening. Josh Allen goes *Lost in Space* for the win. Bisons.

Seattle Seahawks at Detroit Cadillacs - Monday Night Football #2 (-3.5/46.5)

The Look Man is unsure about the strategy of two MNF games in consecutive weeks, but this one is big. Seattle beat the Cadillacs in OT last season, and this will be a grudge match. The matchups are not good for Detroit, and HC Dan Campbell ain't winning no MENSA awards. Still, look for the 12th Man in Detroit to rise up and help the Caddies. Cadillacs by 3.

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EPILOGUE

Things are leveling up in the NFL, and this week represents an inflection point. Teams that lose in September can turn it around, but 0-3 teams that make the playoffs are rare. Even more rare, 0-4 teams making the Tournament.

The bye weeks come into play soon, and there are plenty of injuries. The Browns need to win enough games to make Nick Chubb's return matter. The Look Man believes Cleveland should hold him out until the bye week, but who knows? If they can't win in October, it will be another Season on the Island of Misfit Teams.

Peace,

The Look Man