

THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2024

Week Four – Road Trip

“RAAAIIIIIDDDDDDEEEERRRRRS!” – Vegas war cry at Allegiant Stadium, featuring former Raiders CB Charles Woodson on video with a cigar and whiskey.

PROLOGUE

The Look Man went road last week with a trip to Allegiant in Vegas to see the Browns-Raiders. There is nothing like a roadie to spice up the NFL season, and Vegas is always epic.

The Look Man hooked up with Crew Maui as well as the Phoenix contingent of Browns Backers. Ryan, Brian, Kaden and Kanje were in full effect along with thirty or forty thousand additional Browns Fans. The city was vibrant, with music everywhere and the typical wildness associated with Lost Wages. The only downside was the 104F heatwave that enveloped the town for the last three months. But it was a ‘dry heat.’

The stadium was a glittering edifice rising out of the desert sand adjacent to the Strip. Ryan the Rain Man was an excellent driver, finding parking within a stone’s throw from the venue. The stadium was a little stuffy at 78F, but what do you want with triple digit temps outside?

Inside, the Browns struggled again on offense, and the Raiders scored just enough to post a win. Ironically, the Black and Silver ran the same five plays with astonishing execution, and made the 20 points stand up with aggressive ball-hawking defense and players in black and white striped uniforms.

Week Four featured a few more interesting storylines as KC and Minnesota stayed perfect, and the Stillers lost at Indy to our old friend Joe Flacco. (Cake) Baker Mayfield led Tampa to a nice win over Philly, and Baltimore destroyed Buffalo. Even Team Bengal got their first win of the season against hapless Carolina.

Without further ado, the Week that Was:

LAGNIAPPE

Five Things the Look Man Thinks

1. (Cake) Baker Mayfield has assembled a heckuva 2024 season to date, with solid wins over the Iggles and Dirty Birds. Cake threw for 347 yards and two TDs over the Iggles, and if he keeps this up the Expensive Corn Kings will be a force to be reckoned with and one of the best teams in the NFC. Like Rudolph, Cake may have finally grown up, but he needs to keep Tom (Terrific) Brady’s name out of his mouth.
2. The Browns Deshaun Watson has turned a physical corner. It was amazing to see him live throwing vapor trail passes in Vegas, one of which bounced off WR Amari Cooper’s chest for a pick. “I haven’t seen that kind of arm strength all season, and the Look Man believes Watson’s shoulder is finally healed. Now, if he can just avoid being sacked at a David Carr rate, he might make it all the way back. If the Zebras allow it...that 82-yard TD to Coop later in the game was NOT holding.
3. Minnesota and Washington are for real. These two teams are playing solid defense and big play offense, a rare tandem. The QBs are a stark contrast, with Sam (I see ghosts) Darnold and Jayden Daniels on opposite ends of the spectrum. No one wanted Darnold, and Daniels at Number Two overall is playing better than Caleb Williams in the Chi.

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- Achilles had a tragic flaw, but Kirk (Curt) Cousins and Aaron (Discount double Check) Rodgers are fine. These elder statesmen return after missing a year and both look solid. This injury ended the career of Dan Marino, but despite not planting on his back foot, Cousins has beaten New Orleans, Philly and Tampa. Discount Double Check got caught up in a revenge game for the reputation of O-Coordinator Nathaniel Hackett vs. Denver. Donkeys HC Sean (Secret Squirrel) Payton was having none of it, and the only guy who can keep Rodgers under 30 points is on his own bench.



It's NOT the cadence, stupid...

- It may be a little early, but expect to see a lot of new teams in the postseason. Minnesota, Washington, and Houston have impressed, and Joe Flacco may have some magic left in Indy. Enver has reclaimed its "D" courtesy of D-Co (Courtney B) Vance Joseph enters his fourth season with Denver after being fired previously as head coach. Dude has no ego, but a Helluva defensive mind.

The Look Man is intrigued by the NFL back stories, and will continue to monitor the sitch. Quarter One of the season is officially over, so buckle your seat belts. Very few one-win teams make it to January, while 3-1 teams are nearly a lock.

THE LOOKAHEAD

The Look Man will overlook Brad (Peanut Head) Allen and Ron (The Eighth Man) Torbert's virtuoso **Zebra of the Week** performances in Week Four, but the slate of games this week begs for less officiating. London is calling for the Hornheads-Aeronauticals, and the bye weeks are just in time for several teams, especially the Iggles.

Here are just a few good matchups.

Baltimore Dumpster Ducks at Cincinnati Bengals (+2.5)

Joe (Cool) Burrow and the Bengals are known Baltimore killers, and have beaten their division rivals more than most AFC teams. The Orange and Black are 4-4 since 2021 and road or home seems to make little difference.

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Burrow and his receiving crew are back in synch, with Ja'Marr Chase and Tee (Magnum) Higgins putting up numbers. The problem: the Bengals cannot stop the run without DT DJ Reader (free agency) and BJ Hill (free agency). Lou Anarumo and Company have been pathetic against good running teams in 2024.

The Look Man would love a scenario in which the Nati wins this game to tighten up the AFC Asgard Division. After all, a win here and a Stillers loss in Big D would help both Cincy and Cleveland. Unfortunately, the only path to victory involves a Geno Stone revenge motif, and that simply is not enough.

Ducks run, run, and run some more to post a W in the Nati. Ducks.

Buffalo Bisons at Houston Slim Shadies (-1)

The Stephon Diggs Revenge Tour promises to be a war. Diggs forced his way out of his second NFL city in Crapchester, and now plays for the Slim Shadies in H-Town. The Bisons were looking ahead to this game when they got boat-raced last weekend at Baltimore. Unfortunately, they lose DT Ed Oliver (Twist) and DE Von Miller from their defense at the worst time.

Houston got C Juice Scruggs back, but the Bisons' D is tricky. Former Chowds HC Bill Belicheat did a segment on Inside the NFL, calling the Bisons a "spin the wheel" defense that is unpredictable. Buffalo runs a lot of stunts and alignments with a solid zone behind it. Houston QB CJ Stroud has appeared mortal against the zone while carving up man-to-man.

This is a pick-'em game, but the Look Man picked H-Town to be the surprise AFC team of the year. It starts today. Houston.

Cleveland Browns at DC Commies (-3)

Runaway Rookie of the Year candidate Jayden Daniels has astounded the NFL world with his 82% completion percentage. He has stunned the NFC East by leading the division with a 3-1 record, including road wins over Cincinnati and Arizona.

Enter the scuffling Cleveland Browns at 1-3, and you have a recipe for a win. But not so fast my friend. The Commies will be looking ahead to a local showdown with Baltimore in Week Six for supremacy of the I-95 corridor. This team is young and inexperienced, and the defense is largely the same smoke and mirrors show Dan Quinn used in Dallas.

The Browns get back TE David Njoku (means injury-prone in Swahili), but the Look Man thinks this is a panic move. Njoku still has a high ankle sprain and could use another week. perhaps more importantly, tackles Jedrick Wills and Jack Conklin return against a stout front seven in DC. RB Nick Chubb is still a week or two away from his 2024 debut after Stillers S (That little) Minkah Fitzpatrick tore his knee apparatus with a cheap shot in 2023.

Look for Browns D-Co Jim (May the) Schwartz (Be with you) to confuse Daniels with a bunch of robber coverages and other tricks. Browns offense gets clicking and the Barking Dawg Defense shows up. Browns, baby, Browns in a nail biter to get to 2-3.

Dallas Cowpokes at Blitzburgh Stillers (-2.5) Football Night in America

NBC wanted to flex the Ducks-Bengals, but the NFL said, Nah, baby, nah. As a result, we get this venerable matchup of old-time greats. Pokes Fan and Stillers Fan are competing for most Lombardis even when no trophies are involved.

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Look for Dakota Prescott to attempt to carry the load due to a substandard running game. Micah Parsons and DeMarcus Lawrence are both MIA, so the Stillers retaliate by ramming it down the Pokes' throats on the ground. Expect fireworks, and a great football game with at least one defensive score. Stillers.

New Orleans Religious Icons (+5.5) at Kansas City Baby Backs (-5.5) Monday Night Football

KC is scrambling offensively, and has now lost WR Rashee (Brown) Rice to a knee. Travis Kelce reappeared after spending much of the season on the side of a milk carton. And little wonder after he spent his summer canoodling with superstar GF Taylor Swift, shooting commercials, and making movies.

The surprising Religious Icons have been up and down, losing to the Iggles and ATL after destroying the Black Cats and Pokes. They still have offensive firepower, but the key to this team is the run game. Alvin (Kandid) Kamara is the engine, but slash star Taysom Hill does the dirty work. It's little wonder they lost close games after Hill suffered an injury.

Everyone is gunning for the Baby Backs, who have a target on their backs in their quest for a Three-peat. The Look Man has lost a lot of money betting against KC, but he won't this week. Baby Backs, baby, in a bad Chilis jingle.

EPILOGUE

The Look Man was called out by the Rear Admiral for his Week Four picks, in which he went 1-4. He was on a heater for the season, and figures the poor performance had something to do with Hurricane Helene. His motto remains: "All picks wrong, or your money back!" except *Pepto Bismol Picks of the Week*; those are money.

Pundits are saying the NFL has returned to a running league, with QBs posting sub-300-yard games at an alarming rate. The Look Man says bah to the that, and Cake Baker Mayfield's 347 and Kirk Cousins' five bills passing show that it can be done.

Defenses are playing a LOT of shell Cover Two, forcing offenses to sustain long drives for the win. The Look Man expects breakout passing any day now, especially with pass rushers getting injured at an alarming rate. As usual in the NFL, nobody knows nothing...

Peace,

The Look Man