

## THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2024 Week Eighteen – White Monday

*“The thing about the NFL – it’s a results-driven business.” – FNIA correspondent Devin McCourty on the Chowds’ firing rookie head coach Jerod Mayo after a 4-13 season.*

### PROLOGUE

The 2024 NFL regular season ended last week, and with it came versions of the home game for five head coaches and some GMs. Antonio Pierce (Raiders), Doug Pederson (J-Squareds), and Jerrod (An Officer and a Gentleman) Mayo were sent packing, joining Matt Eberflus (Monsters of Clock Management), Dennis Allen (Icons), and Robert Saleh (J-E-T-S). General Managers Ran (A Flock Of Seagulls) Carthon (Flaming Thumbtacks) and Tom Telesco (Raiders) also received pink slips, largely owing to poor performances by their head coaches.

The Look Man doesn’t feel too bad about these doings, even if they feel wrong. The NFL is a QB-driven league; if you have a good one, you have a chance. Otherwise, you are playing with fire in a refinery.

Having said that, it feels like Pierce and Mayo received the short end of the stick. They helmed imperfect teams with flyer QBs, poor talent, and nowhere else to go but up. The NFL is a tough business, but these guys were simply patsies holding the jobs until someone else can claim the credit for a turnaround. Kind of like Tony (Skeletor) Dungy, who developed the talent at Tampa Bay before Jon (Chucky) Gruden swooped in and won a Lombardi. It ain’t right; it’s the NFL.



*“I got nowhere else to go!”*

In other NFL news, Detroit took out the Hornheads to retain the One Seed in the NFC, parlaying true grit into a nice W. The Browns demonstrated schizophrenia with a defense that wanted to win and an offense successfully tanking. The final score in that Cleveland-Baltimore game was not indicative of the fight, and Pro Bowl WR Zay Flowers (for Algernon) paid the price with a knee that could hurt B-More’s best chance for a ring under Lamar (Action) Jackson.

The balance of the AFC and NFC games was chalk, with the possible exception of the Tampa and Atlanta finishes. Tampa eked out a win despite a misguided (and successful) attempt to steal a record for WR Mike (Florida) Evans. Did anyone else think it was bush-league to throw the ball to Evans when a kneel-down wins the game?

ATL HC (Radio) Raheem Morris fell after a plucky performance by QB Michael (Big) Penix (Energy) when DC held the ball for the entire OT. Too bad, really, because (Cake) Baker Mayfield earned an ejection in a physical and contentious win over the Religious Icons.

## THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2024

### Week Eighteen – White Monday

Without further ado, the Look Man Report 2024 for Week Eighteen.

#### **LAGNIAPPE**

##### Murph Magic

Longtime Tailpipe Murph hit the Look Man with a trivia question this week: Since the 1970 merger, which NFL head coach has suffered the most one-and-done playoff appearances?

The question stumped the Look Man, who figured it had to be someone who appeared frequently like Don (The Chin) Shula or Marvin (Jerry) Lewis. Both went to the Tournament annually, only to slink home with the stench of a loss to an inferior opponent.

The answer is in the Epilogue section below.

##### Tragedy in NOLA

The Massacre on Bourbon Street was a blight to one of the Look Man's favorite cities in the world. New Orleans is a cultural melting pot, with some of the most beautiful women this side of Eritrea. Local police let down their guard, allowing a terrorist nut to mow down dozens at a popular tourist attraction.

The Sugar Bowl committee postponed the game by a single day, but the response was sloppy, with barriers insufficient to prevent further loss of life. The Look Man is staggered by the cavalier response and heightened security will turn NOLA into an armed encampment for the Super Bowl and Mardi Gras.

The new year is starting off with wildfires and terrorism concerns. Sad news for a country that is, should, and could be better.

##### House?

The media has been all over HC Mike (Omar Epps) Tomlin, who hasn't won in the postseason since 2016. Tomlin gets killed by his hometown fans for this stat despite never suffering a losing season. Too often, the Stillers get off to a good start and coast to the finish line.

Many believe it is due to Tomlin's propensity for physical practices even late in the year. The Look Man believes it is due to the cheap front office, which bets on marginal players who end up imploding.

George Pickens is just the latest mercurial wideout, with Antonio Brown, Chase Claypool, and Diontae Johnson all making the cut. Even Heinz Ward, who was excellent, fell in the draft because he had zero ACLs. No wonder he tried to knock out linebackers at every opportunity.

Tomlin leads 15-14 head-to-head against John Harbaugh's Ducks after 29 matchups, including three postseason games, where Tomlin holds a 2-1 postseason advantage. Here are some interesting comparison stats:

**THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2024**  
**Week Eighteen – White Monday**

Name	Seasons (Head Coach)	Record	Playoff record	Playoff win PCT	Lombardi Trophies
Don Shula	33	328-156-6	19-17	52.80%	3
George Halas	40	316-148-3	6-3	66.70%	6
Bill Belichick	29	302-165-0	31-13	70.50%	6
Andy Reid	26	272-146-1	26-16	61.90%	3
Tom Landry	29	250-162-6	20-16	55.60%	2
Curly Lambeau	33	226-133-2	3-2	60.00%	6
Paul Brown	25	213-104-9	9-8	52.90%	7
Marty Schottenheimer	21	201-133-1	5-13	27.80%	0
Chuck Noll	23	193-148-1	16-8	66.70%	4
Dan Reeves	23	190-166-2	11-9	55.00%	0
Chuck Knox	22	186-147-1	7-11	38.90%	0
<b>Mike Tomlin</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>183-107-2</b>	<b>8-11</b>	<b>44.40%</b>	<b>1</b>
Mike McCarthy	18	174-111-2	11-9	50.00%	1
Jeff Fisher	22	173-165-1	5-6	45.50%	0
<b>John Harbaugh</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>172-104-0</b>	<b>12-10</b>	<b>54.50%</b>	<b>1</b>
Bill Parcells	19	172-130-1	11-8	57.90%	2
Tom Coughlin	20	170-150-0	12-7	63.20%	2
Pete Carroll	18	170-120-1	11-11	50.00%	1
Mike Shanahan	20	170-138-0	8-6	57.10%	2

Why is everyone calling for Tomlin’s job, but silent about John Harbaugh, who has one Coach of the Year award, while Tomlin has never won it? Harbaugh has the most unique QB in the NFL and consistently excellent defenses but has only one ring.

This list is also interesting for who is missing: Sean (Secret Squirrel) Payton, Bill (Spitball) Cowher, and (Iron) Mike Ditka didn’t make the Top 20.



*(Gentle) Ben after one of his many playoff losses...*

## THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2024

### Week Eighteen – White Monday

#### THE LOOKAHEAD

Super Wild Card Weekend has now been dubbed Regular Wild Card Weekend following a successful marketing ploy by the NFL. Roger (Rabbit) Goodell wanted to emphasize the expanded playoffs format, while moving games to streaming platforms. Few were able to witness games on Peacock (the Small Penis Network), but the net increase in viewership made the name superfluous.

The current slate includes Saturday, Sunday and Monday games that are sure to please the Tailpipe Nation, even if 14-3 teams qualified as Wild Cards for roadies. Hornheads-Rams will take place adjacent to a conflagration in LA, while Blitzburgh-Baltimore is sure to bring snot bubbles on the field.

Here is the lookahead for Regular Wild Card Weekend.

#### Saturday

##### LA Lightning Bolts at Houston Slim Shadies (+3/42.5)

Houston limped into the postseason, absent WR Tank Dell and with RB Joe (Richard Milhouse) Mixon on the side of a milk carton. They are running into a potent and portable offense in the Bolts, featuring a solid run game and a good QB in Justin Herbert.

The Bolts are new to the playoff game, having narrowly missed under the coaching malfeasance of several previous head coaches. They fix it on the road, sending the Slim Shadies fishing for the offseason. Bolts.

##### Blitzburgh Stillers vs. Baltimore Dumpster Ducks (-9.5/43.5) – Amazon Prime

Something is awry in the Stillers locker room, and the Look Man can't figure it out. Irrespective, the Dumpster Ducks enter without their best wideout in Zay Flowers (for Algernon).

Still, the running game is staffed by future HOFer Derrick (King) Henry, and including Lamar (Action) Jackson, who is destroying the record books with his 2024 QBR. Action has struggled in the postseason, getting too high in the garbage dump in his previous attempts.

While the Look Man has concerns about his inability to throw outside the numbers, he is a problem inside them. The defense will need a spy to keep him in the pocket and chase him down if he breaks out. And no player on the Stillers has shown the speed required of that task. Stillers cover in a low scoring affair.

##### Denver Donkeys at Crapchester Bisons (-8/47.5)

The MVP race is effectively over, but QB Josh (Irwin) Allen is still a problem for which few have found the answer. They filled the void at WR1 with Amari (Coop) Cooper and the defense is getting healthy with the return of LB Matt Milano (Cookies) opposite edge rusher Vonn Miller.

This game comes down to which team can run and stop the run. Crapchester wins on both counts, covering the points against rookie QB Bo Nix and defense that has been exposed late in the year. Bisons.

## THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2024

### Week Eighteen – White Monday

#### Sunday

##### Green Bay Cheeseheads vs. Philadelphia Cream Cheese Iggles (-4.5/45.5)

Philly QB Jalen Hurts (So Good) returns from concussion protocol just in time to face one of the most underrated defenses in the postseason. If you haven't seen #56 Edgerrin Cooper, you're missing one of the best young linebackers in the NFL. Cooper has speed and leverage, shedding blocks and filling holes like Johnny Wadd.

Cheeseheads QB Jordan Love (Broker) has an elbow and WR (Sister) Chirstian Watson is injured as usual. That simply means that the Pack turns to RB Josh Jacobs to carry the load. Unfortunately, this Philly Gang Green defense is tough and physical, so this game is gonna be a slobberknocker.

The Look Man has liked what Saquon (Big Valley) Barkley brings to the table, and he will be needed on Sunday. What Barkley lacks in playoff experience, he makes up for in guts. Iggles.

##### DC Commies vs. Tampa Bay Expensive Corn Kings (-3/50.5) – Football Night in America

It is no secret that the Look Man is not a (Cake) Baker Mayfield fan. Cake was up to his old tricks in Week Eighteen, strutting and posturing against an outmatched Icons defense. If he tries that foolishness on Sunday Night, he is going to get got by the Commies.

On the other side of the line of scrimmage is QB Jayden Daniels, who has shown tremendous upside in a tough NFC East Division. Daniels is *Smart and Smarter*, making smart and intuitive plays. He also has a solid running attack with Brian Robinson, and Austin Ekeler, with TE Zach Ertz and WR (Scary) Terry McLaurin contributing to the passing game.

The NFC Souse Division is crap, and the Corn Kings should've boat-raced the competition. Cake has had a heckuva year with 43 TD passes, but he often does it with his legs in crunch time. The Look Man predicts two picks with the last one sealing the deal for DC. Commies.

#### Monday

##### Minnesota Hornheads vs. LA (Arizona) Rams (+2.5/47.5) - Monday Night Football

The NFL wisely moved this game to Phoenix due to the LA wildfire situation. They didn't want to tax an already overwhelmed first responder team following terror attacks in New Orleans and Vegas.

The Look Man has underestimated the Hornheads all season, and QB Sam Darnold was exposed in Week Eighteen loss to Detroit. Darnold is susceptible to pressure, which affects his passing accuracy and negates the Justin Jefferson Effect.

Unfortunately, the Rams have neither the pass rush nor DBs to execute the Detroit plan. Further, they will be on the road worrying about their families in a town where the fire is zero percent contained. Hornheads.

#### EPILOGUE

This WCW separates the contenders from pretenders. No one has ever seen this level of competition in NFL history. Detroit and KC are 15-2, and five teams are in the 70% winning club, with Baltimore just behind at a desultory 12-5.

Here's 2024 in a nutshell:

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**Week Eighteen – White Monday**

Rank	Team	Wins	Losses	PCT
1	Cadillacs	15	2	0.867
2	Baby Backs	15	2	0.867
3	Iggles	14	3	0.786
4	Hornheads	14	3	0.786
5	Bisons	13	4	0.692
6	Dumpster Ducks	12	5	0.583

The Minnesota-Detroit was the first ever for teams with double digit wins with the One Seed and division crown on the line. All of these teams can win it all, and you have a handful in the next tier with a puncher's chance. It is incredible.

For those who have trumpeted Tampa Bay and Mayfield, he hasn't won anything yet. Too often his games end with a whimper, not a bang, as he throws the game-losing INT. The Look Man was wrong about them losing the division last week, but there is no doubt about their mediocrity.

Brady consistently posted six wins against his substandard AFC East division opponents, winning double digit games every season. Cake lost twice to Atlanta in 2024. The Look Man doesn't question that Cake is a good QB who has grown up some since leaving Cleveland. He questions whether Cake will ever win a championship. To paraphrase Herm Edwards, "you play to win the Chip" and there are 31 teams that will go home unhappy.

One other note: 2024 has been a nice ride, but too many teams allow wins to become losses because they lack a dependable running game. If you can't milk the clock in the fourth quarter, you allow the opponent to pull victory from the jaws of defeat. The result is a lot of high scoring games with *Alcoa Fantastic Finishes* due to clock management errors and bad coaching.

And the answer to the *Murph Magic* trivia: **Marty Schottenheimer**, who had nine one-and-dones in the postseason between Cleveland and KC. RIP, Marty, who was always more worried about losing than happy about winning and this stat proves it out. Honorable mention for Shula, Marvin Lewis and Tomlin, all with seven early outs.

Marty was truly "home in the shade" but his teams shaped the ultimate winner by beating up the competition. He singlehandedly kept Denver from winning a ring until they obtained a bona fide running game.

Getcha popcorn ready, cuz it's gonna be a show.

Happy New Year,

The Look Man