

# 2014



# EFL NEWS

ELITE FOOTBALL LEAGUE

# 2014

Week Eight

Week Eight

December 7, 2014



GWG	26	SC	24	AUR	31	SEB	34	CAR	27	PIC	39	CHI	23	DTL	48	MVM	10	YOR	37
CHP	27	VIR	34	TCT	13	MOH	29	SBE	24	ICC	19	MAR	16	SCB	17	COW	28	LAK	10

**Sick Sack!**



### LATEST EFL NEWS INSIDE

- SPARTANS CHOP DOWN CUBS
- SLUGGS BLASTED BY LIZARDS
- PATS' ROOKIES OUT TO PROVE SOMETHING
- AND MUCH MORE.....


Also in this issue

- SPATS FEATURE, 'FAWKE DICKIE,' 'AROUND THE EFL.'
- JIMMY THE GEEK
- THIS WEEK IN EFL HISTORY

*Lavonte David* (left) of Carthage sacks *Terrelle Pryor* as seconds tick away in the final quarter. The sack ended a Scarborough rally, lifting the Cannibals to perfect 8-0 with a 27-24 road win.




*Who was slick in Week Eight*



**Andy Dalton**  
QB  
Sebastian Swordfish

23 of 31, 258 yards, 3 TDs. Took over game in 2<sup>nd</sup> half for Fish win.



**Wallace Gilberry**  
DE  
Pickering Spartans

4 Tackles, 4 Sacks. Kept the Cubs underwater in 2<sup>nd</sup> half of road win.

**"BRYLCREEM" THE EFL'S FIRST SPONSOR**



8-0-0

# Carthage

## 27



# GAME OF THE WEEK

### MVP

**Philip Rivers**

## 24



3-5-0

# Scarborough

### TEAM LEADERS

Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Rivers	20	31	235	3
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Lacy	14	82	5.9	0
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Sanders	2	75	37.5	1

Team	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
Carthage	10	0	3	14	-	27
Scarborough	0	14	7	3	-	24

### TEAM LEADERS

Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Pryor	17	29	231	1
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Pryor	15	136	9.1	1
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Jackson	6	119	19.8	1

### Play of the Game

With 0:25 left, the Blue Eagles faced 3<sup>rd</sup> & 1 at the Carthage 26 with no TOs left, trailing 27-24. **Lavonte David** sacked **Terrelle Pryor** for a loss and Scarborough failed to get a play off, ending the game.

**SUMMARY:** Rookie QB, **Terrelle Pryor**, making his first start in place of injured **Aaron Rodgers**, started slow; his first two drives resulted in punts while the Cannibals built a 10-0 lead on a FG and a 10-yard TD pass from **Philip Rivers** to **Danny Amendola**. But a 14-yard scramble by Pryor on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 13 ignited a drive that ended with a 4-yard TD run by the rookie. On their next possession, a perfectly thrown deep fly to **DeSean Jackson** for a 60-yard TD pass with just 0:12 left in the 1<sup>st</sup> half put Scarborough in front 14-10. Carthage opened the 2<sup>nd</sup> half with a FG but the Eagles answered with a TD, using a kick out-of-bounds by **Steven Hauschka** and runs of 24 and 17 yards by Pryor to set up a 1-yard dive by **Ray Rice**. The Eagles added a FG early in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter to make it 24-13 but the Cannibals charged back with a 41-yard kick return by **LeGarrette Blount** setting the stage for a 5-yard TD pass to Amendola. Scarborough then drove into Carthage territory, but Pryor fumbled at the 38 yard line. Rivers hit **Emmanuel Sanders** for a 62-yard TD pass on the next play to give Carthage a 27-24 lead. Using his team's last timeout, Pryor drove his team to the Carthage 26 with 0:25 left, only to be sacked by **Lavonte David**. The Eagles' FG unit took the field but failed to place the kick before time expired.

**QUOTES:** "My bud, Chris D is a great guy. He would give you the shirt off his back. But Chris, bro, you got to stop giving these games away with crazy calls! Terrelle had that feel good thing going at the end then - <WHAM> - he's on the ground 'cause he didn't see that blitz coming. I get where you're coming from but, come on man, he's just a kid back there!" - Sports writer, **Mike Myers**, writing in *The Scarberian*.

"Philip was clutch, but we also got a big time defensive play from a big time player to put it away for us at the end!" - Carthage coach, **Ken Main**.



### HAPPY FAN



### titter

### ANGRY FAN



**Kokopali @Crimpcarving**

The Elders are please with the victory of our warriors in a cold place far away. We dine on fruit bat soup to celebrate!



**HayBaby @neilyoungswatching**

Helpless, helpless, helpless...baby can you hear the eagles now?

12-04-2014 Bluff's Stadium Temp: 51 Wind: 5-15 None MVP: **Philip Rivers**

#### Scoring Summary

1 10:51	Carthage	FG Hauschka 37 (8-39-3:56)	3-0
1 0:58	Carthage	TD Rivers 10 pass to Amendola (Hauschka) (11-81-5:39)	10-0
2 3:45	Scarborough	TD Pryor 4 run (Feely) (15-77-7:55)	10-7
2 0:12	Scarborough	TD Pryor 60 pass to Jackson (Feely) (5-93-1:43)	10-14
3 8:46	Carthage	FG Hauschka 32 (11-55-5:11)	13-14
3 4:19	Scarborough	TD Rice 1 run (Feely) (8-60-4:27)	13-21
4 14:11	Scarborough	FG Feely 23 (7-38-3:30)	13-24
4 10:00	Carthage	TD Rivers 5 pass to Amendola (Hauschka) (8-58-4:04)	20-24
4 4:14	Carthage	TD Rivers 62 pass to Sanders (Hauschka) (1-62-0:15)	27-24

	CAR	SBE
First Downs	16	26
Rushes	17-90	39-195
Passes	31-20-235	29-17-231
Sacked	4-28	4-38
Fumble	0	2
Penalties	5-29	6-39
Turnovers	1	1
Missed Tackles	8	4
Blitzes	25	36
Time	25:02	34:58
Third Down	5-11	9-15
Fourth Down	0-0	0-0
Red Att/Td/Fg	4/2/2	3/2/1
Net Offense	297	388



**EFL**  
ELITE FOOTBALL LEAGUE

# QUICK COUNTS!!

Blue 35, Blue 35, hut, hut hut! Red 23, 3, Red 23, 3, hut, hut, hut! Green 49, hut!



<b>SPARTANS</b>	7	17	14	0	0	<b>38</b>
5-3-0	OT					

**Peyton Manning**  
12 of 17, 278 yards, 2 TDs



<b>CUBS</b>	0	6	3	10	0	<b>19</b>
4-4-0						

**Russell Wilson**  
23 of 38, 276 yards, 1 TD

Rookie running back **Terrance West** got the call three times inside the Cubs' 5 yard line and 3 times he found the end zone to lead the Spartans' in scoring. He and **Chris Johnson** combined for 32 carries and 156 yards rushing, setting up opportunities for **Peyton Manning**, who threw TD passes of 11 yards to **Pierre Garcon** and 80 yards to **Demaryius Thomas**. Pickering scored majors on 5 of its first 6 possessions and was comfortably in control 38-12 by the time the Cubs finally found the end zone on a 22-yard TD pass to **Mike Wallace** from **Russell Wilson** late in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter.



<b>GLADIATORS</b>	10	3	10	3	0	<b>26</b>
2-6-0	OT					

**LeSean McCoy**  
80 rush yards, 84 rec yards, 2 TDs



<b>PATRIOTS</b>	7	7	3	10	0	<b>27</b>
3-5-0						

**Sammy Watkins**  
8 Catches, 106 yards, 1 TD

A 38-yard FG by **Rob Bironas** with no time left decided a back-and-forth contest that saw the Pats come back 4 times from deficits. Both teams feasted on turnovers by the other but the Pats prevailed in points-off-turnovers by scoring 14 points after 2 interceptions of **Ben Roethlisberger** while the Glads managed just 10 points off 2 picks by **Blake Bortles**. After **Shaun Suisham** had given the Glads a 26-24 lead with 3:36 left, the Pats took over at their 24 yard line. Hard running by **Chris Ivory** and **Lamar Miller** keyed a 13-play, 56-yard drive to the Glads' 20 to set up the game-winner.



<b>REGULATORS</b>	0	14	0	10	0	<b>24</b>
5-3-0	OT					

**Tony Romo**  
20 of 47, 174 yards, 2 TDs



<b>VIOLATORS</b>	7	7	14	6	0	<b>34</b>
2-6-0						

**Jamaal Charles**  
24 Carries, 105 yards

Turnovers and penalties for both teams characterized a disjointed 1<sup>st</sup> half that ended with Virden handily winning the time of possession but tied with the Regulators on the scoreboard 14-14. The 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter belonged to Virden; a 1-yard TD run by **Ben Tate** capped a 13-play, penalty-assisted opening drive that put them in front then **Matt Stafford** finished off a 28-yard drive, after a weak punt by **Michael Koenen** and nice return by **Marcus Sherels**, with an 11-yard TD pass to **Dez Bryant** to make it 28-14. A **Jamaal Charles** fumble in the 4<sup>th</sup> made it interesting, but the Regs never recovered.

Blue 35, Blue 35, hut, hut hut! Red 23, 3, Red 23, 3, hut, hut, hut! Green 49, hut!



**CONVICTS**  
6-2-0

13	7	0	3	0	<b>23</b>
OT					

**Cam Newton**  
22 of 29, 209 yards, 2 TDs



**NORTH STARS**  
3-5-0

3	0	6	7	0	<b>16</b>
OT					

**Alex Smith**  
15 of 33, 129 yards, 2 TDs, 1 INT

**Roddy White** fumbled at his 27 on Chino's first play, but Markham could not gain a 1<sup>st</sup> down and settled for a FG. From then on, it was all Chino in the 1<sup>st</sup> half. **Cam Newton** scrambled for 30 yards to set up the tying FG then White hauled in a dump-off from Newton and took it 47 yards to set up the go-ahead kick by **Dan Bailey**. A 27-yard pick return by **Bernard Pollard** to the Markham 13 set up a 6-yard TD pass from Newton to **Danny Woodhead** then a 24-yard TD pass to **Brian Hartline** made it 20-3 at the half. The Markham rally in the 4<sup>th</sup> fell short with **Alex Smith** fumbled with 2:20 left.



**MUSTANGS**  
8-0-0

10	0	0	21	0	<b>31</b>
OT					

**Matt Ryan**  
32 of 50, 309 yards, 2 TDs, 2 INTs



**TRIUMPH**  
6-2-0

0	13	0	0	0	<b>13</b>
OT					

**Johnny Manziel**  
24 of 43, 239 yards, 2 INTs

Completions of 17 and 20 yards to **Anquan Boldin** set up a 4-yard TD pass from **Matt Ryan** to **Bruce Miller** to open the scoring for Aurora. Two picks by **Johnny Manziel** in the 1<sup>st</sup> led to an Aurora FG then a 4<sup>th</sup> & 1 stand by the Triumph that turned the momentum. The Triumph capitalized on a **Byron Maxwell** interception and a pair of 29-yard passes to **Vincent Jackson** to score 2 FGs and a TD for a 13-10 half time lead. The Triumph held on through a scoreless 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter but finally broke in the 4<sup>th</sup>, falling behind on a 16-yard TD pass to Boldin and giving up 2 more TDs on late miscues.



**SWORDFISH**  
2-6-0

3	3	14	14	0	<b>34</b>
OT					

**Andy Dalton**  
23 of 31, 258 yards, 3 TDs



**HELLFIRE**  
1-7-0

3	6	7	13	0	<b>29</b>
OT					

**Andrew Luck**  
22 of 33, 343 yards, 2 TDs, 1 INT

The Hellfire's **Matt Prater** kicked 3 FGs in 3 trips into the Sebastian red zone to top **Adam Vinatieri** of the Swordfish 9-6 in a 1<sup>st</sup> half kicking duel. **Andy Dalton** caught fire in the 3<sup>rd</sup>, completing 4 passes for 66 yards to open the quarter and putting the Fish in front with a 6-yard TD to **Wes Welker**. A sack of **Andrew Luck** by **Perry Riley Jr.** on 4<sup>th</sup> & 2 at mid-field set up another Swordfish TD, but Luck rebounded with a 49-yard TD pass to **Jimmy Graham** to make it 20-16. Sebastian broke it open with a TD off a **Montee Ball** fumble and a pick six by **Antonio Allen** put them ahead to stay, 34-16.

Blue 35, Blue 35, hut, hut hut! Red 23, 3, Red 23, 3, hut, hut, hut! Green 49, hut!



**T-LIZARDS**  
5-3-0

0	17	10	21	0	<b>48</b>
				OT	

**Fred Jackson**  
12 Carries, 105 yards, 3 TDs



**SLUGGS**  
6-2-0

7	7	3	0	0	<b>17</b>
				OT	

**RGIII**  
28 of 44, 275 yards, 2 TDs, 2 INTs

Santa Clara jumped out to an early 14-0 lead on the strength of 2 TD passes of 17 and 20 yards from **RGIII** to **Alshon Jeffery**. The Lizards responded by handing the ball off to **Fred Jackson** 9 out of 10 plays on the ensuing drive and scoring when he cut through for a 10-yard TD run. That score set off a string of 27 consecutive Durham points fueled by a **Richard Sherman** interception and a **Trindon Holliday** fumble that led to a FG and 24-yard, go-ahead TD pass from **Nick Foles** to **Eric Decker**. The game turned into a laugher in the 4<sup>th</sup>, with Jackson and **Reggie Bush** adding 3 more TDs.



**EXCALIBURS**  
4-4-0

16	7	7	7	0	<b>37</b>
				OT	

**Kelvin Benjamin**  
7 Catches, 136 yards, 2 TDs



**KNIGHTS**  
0-8-0

0	7	3	0	0	<b>10</b>
				OT	

**Le'Veon Bell**  
29 Carries, 163 yards

**Tom Brady** connected deep for TD strikes of 26 yards to **Victor Cruz** and 39 yards to **Kelvin Benjamin** to grab a 16-0 lead and finish a 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of dominance by the Excaliburs. The Knights got one back in the 2<sup>nd</sup> after an OB kickoff and 44-yard run by **Le'Veon Bell** set up a 6-yard TD run by **Ryan Mathews**. But York would drive 81 yards in 15 plays on their next series to end the 1<sup>st</sup> half with a 10-yard TD pass to Benjamin. The Knights drove inside the York red zone to start the 3<sup>rd</sup>, but had to settle for a FG. York countered with back-to-back TDs by **Marshawn Lynch** to run away with the win.



**MONARCHS**  
2-6-0

0	3	0	7	0	<b>10</b>
				OT	

**Ryan Tannehill**  
20 of 36, 192 yards, 1 TD



**CORN KINGS**  
5-3-0

0	7	14	7	0	<b>28</b>
				OT	

**Larry Fitzgerald**  
6 Catches, 136 yards, 2 TDs

After a scoreless 1<sup>st</sup> quarter **Larry Fitzgerald** finally broke free for a 30-yard pass play to set up a 3-yard TD run by **Alfred Morris** in the 2<sup>nd</sup>. The Monarchs countered with a 20-play, 81-yard FG drive to get on the board before half time. The Kings took control in the 3<sup>rd</sup> when **Chris Ogbonnaya** broke a 16-yard run to convert 4<sup>th</sup> and 1 at the Monarchs' 45. That set up a 6-yard TD pass from **Joe Flacco** to **Julius Thomas** to make it 14-3. A 10-yard TD pass to Fitzgerald on their next series made it 21-3; enough to hold off **Ryan Tannehill** and a banged up Monarch's offence from mounting a comeback.

## WEEK EIGHT

# STANDINGS

East	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Carthage	8	0	0	1.000	267	33.4	190	23.8	9.6	4 0 0	4 0 0	6 0 0
Twin Cities	6	2	0	0.750	203	25.4	165	20.6	4.8	2 2 0	3 1 0	5 1 0
Charleswood	3	5	0	0.375	147	18.4	213	26.6	-8.3	3 1 0	2 2 0	2 4 0
Viriden	2	6	0	0.250	231	28.9	233	29.1	-0.3	2 2 0	0 4 0	1 5 0
Mohave	1	7	0	0.125	178	22.3	242	30.3	-8	0 4 0	1 3 0	1 5 0
West	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Chino	6	2	0	0.750	223	27.9	185	23.1	4.8	3 0 0	3 1 0	4 2 0
Santa Clara	6	2	0	0.750	250	31.3	206	25.8	5.5	3 1 0	4 0 0	6 0 0
Iowa City	4	4	0	0.500	224	28	239	29.9	-1.9	2 2 0	2 2 0	3 3 0
Mission Viejo	2	6	0	0.250	163	20.4	220	27.5	-7.1	2 2 0	1 3 0	2 4 0
Los Angeles	0	8	0	0.000	118	14.8	246	30.8	-16	0 4 0	0 4 0	0 6 0
North	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Cowtown	5	3	0	0.625	219	27.4	190	23.8	3.6	3 2 0	2 2 0	3 3 0
Durham	5	3	0	0.625	235	29.4	185	23.1	6.3	3 1 0	3 1 0	4 2 0
Pickering	5	3	0	0.625	219	27.4	162	20.3	7.1	3 1 0	2 2 0	3 3 0
York	4	4	0	0.500	166	20.8	172	21.5	-0.8	1 3 0	1 3 0	2 4 0
Markham	3	5	0	0.375	162	20.3	169	21.1	-0.9	2 2 0	2 2 0	3 3 0
South	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Aurora	8	0	0	1.000	283	35.4	101	12.6	22.8	4 0 0	4 0 0	6 0 0
South Carolina	5	3	0	0.625	208	26	199	24.9	1.1	3 1 0	3 1 0	4 2 0
Scarborough	3	5	0	0.375	175	21.9	201	25.1	-3.3	0 4 0	1 3 0	2 4 0
Gwinnett	2	6	0	0.250	153	19.1	224	28	-8.9	1 3 0	1 3 0	2 4 0
Sebastian	2	6	0	0.250	169	21.1	251	31.4	-10.3	0 4 0	1 3 0	1 5 0

# PASSING

#	Player	Team	Att	Cmp	C%	Yards	In	I%	Lg	TD	TD%	Rate
1	Cutler	TCT	153	104	68.0	1200	4	2.6	42	15	9.8	113.2
2	Foles	DTL	125	76	60.8	1036	0	0.0	57	9	7.2	111.3
3	Rivers, P	CAR	247	167	67.6	2336	7	2.8	75	17	6.9	109.0
4	Newton, C	CHI	247	175	70.9	1860	3	1.2	47	15	6.1	107.7
5	Ryan, M	AUR	302	199	65.9	2290	5	1.7	76	22	7.3	106.0
6	Manning, P	PIC	250	162	64.8	2042	7	2.8	80	20	8.0	105.1
7	Wilson, R	ICC	249	169	67.9	2014	5	2.0	69	13	5.2	101.4
8	Stafford, M	VV	271	172	63.5	2499	7	2.6	65	14	5.2	99.9
9	Brees	DTL	150	109	72.7	1168	4	2.7	45	7	4.7	99.5
10	Griffin II	SCB	225	143	63.6	1839	3	1.3	65	10	4.4	98.4
11	Flacco	COW	287	179	62.4	2224	12	4.2	80	19	6.6	91.0
12	Smith, A	MAR	217	128	59.0	1290	2	0.9	48	12	5.5	90.6
13	Bortles	CHP	216	132	61.1	1672	7	3.2	72	11	5.1	88.7
14	Romo	SC	320	193	60.3	1974	6	1.9	71	17	5.3	87.9
15	Brady	YOR	212	122	57.5	1475	5	2.4	55	10	4.7	84.9
16	Tannehill	MVM	247	144	58.3	1577	6	2.4	51	13	5.3	84.7
17	Luck	MOH	282	168	59.6	2015	9	3.2	77	11	3.9	81.2
18	Rodgers, A	SBE	237	141	59.5	1622	8	3.4	54	10	4.2	80.2
19	Dalton	SS	300	174	58.0	1737	6	2.0	74	9	3.0	76.2
20	Roethlisberger	GWG	274	164	59.9	1710	10	3.6	63	9	3.3	73.7

## RUSHING

#	Player	Team	Att	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	Lacy	CAR	169	821	4.9	57	12
2	Morris, A	COW	153	812	5.3	41	5
3	Charles, J	VV	142	746	5.3	51	6
4	Johnson, C	PIC	165	746	4.5	35	3
5	Moreno	SCB	156	742	4.8	24	13
6	Lynch, M	YOR	156	737	4.7	48	7
7	McCoy, L	GWG	175	673	3.8	35	7
8	Spiller	ICC	111	655	5.9	55	3
9	Gore	SC	122	635	5.2	56	5
10	Forte	AUR	135	504	3.7	29	8
11	Peterson, A	CHI	113	493	4.4	31	6
12	Murray	MVM	108	487	4.5	62	3
13	Bell, L	LAK	117	477	4.1	44	1
14	Ivory	CHP	121	449	3.7	50	4
15	Ball, M	MOH	89	416	4.7	21	3
16	Ellington	MAR	76	414	5.4	43	2
17	Miller, L	CHP	102	408	4.0	49	1
18	Jackson, F	DTL	87	405	4.7	20	8
19	Mathews, R	LAK	105	375	3.6	19	4
20	Ridley	SCB	71	372	5.2	26	6

## RECEIVING

#	Player	Team	No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	Brown, A	TCT	63	736	11.7	45	8
2	Green, A	SC	60	757	12.6	71	7
3	Bryant, D	VV	56	921	16.4	50	7
4	Jackson, D	SBE	51	792	15.5	60	7
5	Graham, J	MOH	49	712	14.5	65	5
6	Edelman	AUR	49	448	9.1	52	7
7	Boldin	AUR	49	911	18.6	76	12
8	Johnson, A	SCB	49	595	12.1	40	1
9	Woodhead	CHI	46	426	9.3	35	4
10	Garcon	PIC	45	564	12.5	71	8
11	Wright, K	TCT	44	385	8.8	35	4
12	Olsen	CHI	42	395	9.4	36	3
13	Jackson, V	TCT	40	771	19.3	42	6
14	Forte	AUR	40	284	7.1	41	1
15	Wallace, M	ICC	40	611	15.3	69	6
16	Douglas, H	MOH	40	429	10.7	33	1
17	Fitzgerald	COW	39	598	15.3	80	7
18	Rice, R	SBE	39	333	8.5	22	0
19	Williams, T	CHP	39	569	14.6	72	4
20	Evans, M	COW	38	573	15.1	46	5

## KICKING

#	Player	Team	FGA	FGM	FG%	40	50	Lg	Pts
1	Zuerlein	ICC	21	19	90.5	7	3	51	80
2	Folk	AUR	18	15	83.3	10	5	55	79
3	Crosby	VV	19	16	84.2	6	2	54	73
4	Prater	MOH	21	18	85.7	4	2	56	70
5	Hauschka	CAR	16	12	75.0	7	2	53	69
6	Bailey, D	CHI	19	14	73.7	7	0	49	67
7	Henery	SCB	13	11	84.6	3	0	47	64
8	Dawson	DTL	11	11	100	3	1	57	61
9	Feely	SBE	18	14	77.8	4	0	49	61
10	Novak	COW	14	12	85.7	3	0	44	59
11	Vinatieri	SS	16	14	87.5	4	1	54	59
12	Tucker, J	SC	17	11	64.7	3	1	50	58
13	Gostkowski	TCT	10	10	100	5	0	49	53
14	Carpenter	MVM	13	10	76.9	1	0	44	49
15	Brown, J	MAR	12	10	83.3	5	2	52	48
16	Walsh	YOR	14	9	64.3	4	2	54	46
17	Suisham	GWG	9	9	100	3	0	45	45
18	Bironas	CHP	9	7	77.8	3	0	49	39
19	Lindell	LAK	9	7	77.8	3	1	59	34
20	Janikowski	PIC	3	2	66.7	0	0	27	33



# AROUND THE



## With Spats McChad

NEW YORK – Familiar though it is, as well as my home of over 20 years, New York is dreary and unwelcoming this time of year. The temperature hovers just above freezing point, creating a clammy cold that chills the bone. The impending winter sun infrequently finds the sidewalk in downtown Manhattan and everywhere people are in more of a hurry than usual to get important things done between Thanksgiving and Christmas. There is not much to cheer about in early December. Of course, New York is beautiful at Christmas, with glitzy holiday lights and decorations on display in all of the city's prominent parks and landmarks. But at this particular time of the year, almost three weeks before the big day, New Yorkers aren't admiring any of it. In fact, we are annoyed by the constant reminder that the time of spending more money than we have has come again. Don't take this the wrong way – I love Christmas Eve and Christmas day. But the journey to those sacred days is pure Hell.

This week I bring you *Professor McChad's Mid-Term Report Card* – my annual mid-season grade of all EFL teams. I have been busy watching film, reading reports and pouring over stats in order to give you the most authoritative view of the state of the league's teams. There is a lot to expound on, but before I get to that, here is a quick review of Week Eight EFL action:

### ***FAWKE DICKIE***

At Bluff's Stadium in Scarborough, an unseasoned rookie quarterback and a perpetually muddled coach were all that stood between Carthage and a perfect half-season record. As most people outside of Scarborough had expected, **Philip Rivers** and the Cannibals took care of business in the end with a 27-24 win. But the path to victory was not a smooth one.

The first start for **Terrelle Pryor** did not bring the upset victory that tormented but hopeful Blue Eagles' fans had been craving, but neither did it give them a reason to wreck Bluff's Stadium again. By any statistical measure Pryor had a great day, passing for 231 yards and a touchdown without an interception and turning in the first 100-yard rushing performance of year for a Scarborough player, with 136 yards and a touchdown on the ground. The Eagles were not blown out by a dangerous Carthage team and they were in the game until the end (which counts for something in the current phase of the Dickinson Era). But in the sometimes cruel world of professional football the rookie's impressive effort ultimately failed to garner a much-needed win due to a pair of fourth-quarter rookie blunders. The first was completely on Pryor. But the second came with the help of his coach.

It was not a dominant day for the high-powered Cannibals' offence. This was partly due to the absence of **Josh Gordon**, but it was also because the Blue Eagles' offence controlled the ball thanks to Pryor keeping drives alive by running and passing for key third down conversions. It took the rookie a couple of series to get his bearings (during which time his team fell behind 10-0) but when he got going he played like a poor man's **Randall Cunningham**. He scrambled three times for a total of 40 yards on Scarborough's first touchdown drive, calling his own number off tackle from 4 yards out for the score. On his next drive he scrambled for 24 yards before throwing a perfect strike to **DeSean Jackson** for a 60-yard touchdown. The Cannibals looked like they were caught completely off guard.

The Pryor Show continued after intermission with the rookie rushing for 43 yards of a 60-yard drive to pay dirt on Scarborough's first possession of the second half. The Cannibals became so preoccupied with Pryor that slumping **Ray Rice** was able to finish it off with a rare crash through the line for a 1-yard touchdown run to make the score 21-13 for Scarborough. After the Blue Eagles' defence drove the Cannibals backwards on their next possession and the offence drove for a field goal to make the score 24-13, the fans were rocking rickety old Bluff's Stadium in jubilation. **Chris Dickinson** looked giddy on the sidelines, running around high-fiving everyone in sight. The Carthage players looked confused and on the ropes.

But, true to his 2014 form, **Philip Rivers** was able to rally his troops and get the job done in the 4th quarter with the game on the line. He threw a 5-yard cross for a touchdown to **Danny Amendola** to pull within 4 points. The Eagles charged back and were threatening to score again when Pryor made his first critical blunder. Carrying the ball like the proverbial "loaf of bread" on a designed sweep, he seemed oblivious as **Arthur Jones** reached out and swatted it out of his hand for a turnover. Rivers took full advantage, slinging a medium out pass that the dynamic **Emmanuel Sanders** took 62 yards to the house. In a span of 6 minutes Rivers had overcome an 11-point deficit and given his team a 27-24 lead with 4:14 remaining.

To the rookie's credit, he did not wilt under the pressure – at least not initially. He gamely led his team to just outside of field goal range before **Domata Peko** broke through for a 3<sup>rd</sup> down sack that forced a punt. Carthage got the ball back and





Cubs' back-up QB, **Colin Kaepernick** watches his team from the sideline. Once a hot prospect and contender for the starting job, Kaepernick is reportedly depressed, gaining weight, and becoming less tradable and playable every week.

attempted to put the game away by making a first down. But a fired up **Jerrell Freeman** sacked Rivers on 3<sup>rd</sup> down to bring on the Cannibals' punting unit and one last chance for the Blue Eagles.

With 1:29 left in the game and one timeout remaining, Pryor and the Blue Eagles took control at their 32 yard line, needing at least a field goal to tie; a touchdown would earn a win. The rookie ran the two-minute drill like a veteran, scrambling for an 11-yard gain on the first play, hustling to the line quickly, delivering a strike to Jackson for 11 yards and spiking the ball to stop the clock. Time elapsed: 38 seconds. An 11-yard pass to **Brandon Marshall** and a 9-yard pass to Rice put them in field goal range at the Cannibals' 26. But Rice was unable to get out of bounds, forcing Dickinson to call his last timeout with 25 seconds left on the clock.

It was 3<sup>rd</sup> and 1. *What...to...do.....?* You could almost smell the thought wafting upwards from inside **Chris Dickinson's** ears. Manic and high on the moment, his mind may have wandered back to that moment in the summer of 2011 when he won the Florida Dragons from Chinese heiress **Cai Qing** in a game of *Mah Jong*. He hadn't hesitated back then. See what his boldness got him! *Go big or go home, baby*, might have been the actual thought embedded in his brain at the moment of decision. With his play chart haphazardly covering his mouth, he barked the fateful call loudly into his mouth-piece, causing Pryor to jolt backwards as he simultaneously absorbed the noise through his headset and took a spray of saliva in the face from an overexcited Dickinson, who was standing not more than a foot away from him. "*Banshee loose, blam blam, six in the trench, red dog reach on 3!*" he screamed; which, translated from Scarborough Playbookese, means a long crossing pattern to the flanker, (in this case Jackson) from the shotgun with an extra pass blocker and the outlet receiver at the sideline.

It might have been a great play if **Tom Brady** or **Peyton Manning** had been executing it. Hell, even **Joe Flacco** might have pulled it off. The Cannibals were in a zone, but not deep, and shading to the outside; the middle was almost wide open. Defending a cross might not have occurred to them for the very same reason that throwing it would not have occurred to most coaches in that scenario – the risk of being tackled down field with no timeouts remaining. But a deep shot to the end zone was not a horrible idea in theory, provided the receiver was in the end zone, the ball was thrown away from the defender, and the quarterback avoided getting sacked. In his haste and excitement to attempt his gambit, Dickinson forgot to mention that last little part to his rookie QB.

Pryor dropped back, taking all seven steps, and focused on finding Jackson streaking down field. He did not see **Lavonte David** blitzing from the blind side. Either did **Ray Rice**, who was tasked with picking up the blitz. David crashed into Pryor a split second after Rice screamed "look out!" to the hapless rookie. Down went the Scarborough QB, with David planted firmly on top of him and not in much of a hurry to get off either. Incredulous spectators watched in horror as the Scarborough field goal unit scrambled onto the field and frantically attempted to set up as the clock ticked away. Some were yelling "spike it," but spiking it was not an option on fourth down. Tragically, but predictably, time ran out before the Eagles could line up for the field goal try. The final gun sounded just as holder **Dustin Colquitt** got into his crouch. Some fans might have hoped it was the sound of **Chris Dickinson** putting himself out of his own misery instead of the signal for the end of the game. But alas, Dickinson was alive and well and shaking his head on the sideline as he high-fived dejected members of his field goal unit as they came off the field. "Wow, you guys almost got that kick off! The beers are on me for that one, boys! Should have given you more time!" he said with a sheepish grin.

Suffering Scarborough fans were once again incensed to the edge of violence by such incompetence. But this time the urge to riot was tempered by their appreciation of the rookie's efforts. In the end, they filed out of Bluff's Stadium grumbling, but peaceful, while in the background a gang of radicals wearing *Guy Fawkes* masks, belonging to the 'Fawke Dickie' movement aiming to oust Dickinson from any direct involvement with the team, quietly organized another lynch mob in the parking lot.

#### **A CHANGE OF TACTICS**

Have the Pickering Spartans become a running team? The recent play-calling trend says so. In their first four games of the season, the Spartans passed the ball on 65% of their plays from scrimmage. In the last four games they have passed the ball just 38% of the time. Why the change? The results suggest that **Peyton Manning** was not thriving as the center of attention in the Spartans' early season attack. Pickering got off to a dismal 1-3 start passing the ball first and running second. But since Coach **Gus Konstantankos** placed the load on the backs of **Chris Johnson** and rookie **Terrance West**, the Spartans are 4-0. The interesting

part is that Manning is doing most of the damage on the scoreboard, with 11 TD passes in the last 4 games, while Johnson and West do most of the dirty work.

*"Everyone entered the season expecting Peyton to pass the Spartans to a title and opponents game-planned accordingly,"* writes **Severin Hanfottner Jr.** of 'Coaches Call.' *"Even his coach bought the hype. But after getting trampled by the Mustangs in Week 4 Coach Konstantakos saw that he had to change his philosophy. Like so much else he does, he did it dramatically."*

Handfottner Jr. is bang on. The Spartans' change of tactics was plainly evident again in Week 8 on the road against the Cubs. There was nothing subtle about the 9 consecutive carries by **Chris Johnson** on the game's opening drive. Ironically, the Spartans came up empty after that effort, failing to convert 4th and goal at the 2, but the message was received loud and clear at the other end: *focus on Peyton and we will run the ball down your throat.*

The Spartans ran the ball 42 times for 167 yards, averaging just less than 4 yards per carry. But they were able to convert that apparently conservative ball control style into 38 points thanks to the deadly accuracy of Manning, who took advantage of the Cubs' focus on the run and a mediocre secondary to hit on big plays to **Pierre Garçon** and **Demaryius Thomas**. And so the run set up the big pass which set up 3 touchdown runs by West and an easy 38-19 victory for Pickering.

The Cubs looked listless a week after scoring a huge upset on the road at Durham. Although the general mood in Iowa City remains upbeat, criticism of **Deron Redding** is mounting in some quarters. In fact, whenever the Cubs' secondary struggles, detractors become vocal about the surplus talent wasting away on the bench that could be shopped for a decent corner. The player whose name comes up most often is **Colin Kaepernick**. But he may not be tradable anymore.

**Archibald Thacker** of the *Des Moines Register*, a persistent critic of Redding's GM style, writes: *"They say his players love him. But is anybody speaking to Colin Kaepernick? If you think you haven't seen Kap in a long time, maybe you just no longer recognize him. He is out there, every day, every practice. But with each passing week he gets a little heavier, a little less motivated, a little more depressed. The fault for this deplorable situation lies at the feet of the indecisive Redding, who holds on to the once-promising star for purely selfish reasons. For shame!"*

When Kaepernick's trade value was at its peak, Redding reportedly said at an off-season GM's Conference, "It would take 3 first round picks just to begin the discussion for Kap." Nobody was willing to start the discussion at that price when Kaepernick looked like he might beat out **Russell Wilson** for the starting gig. I imagine even fewer are willing to talk trade now.

#### **AROUND THE EFL**

At Patriot Place, the Pats survived 10 penalties and found a running game they didn't know they had in shaving Gwinnett by a score of 27-26 on a 38-yard field goal by Rob Bironas with no time remaining. The game found a way to be dramatic, in spite of low quality play from both sides. The Pats ran the ball 43 times in an effort to get the most out of a sinking **Blake Bortles**, who might have stunk in spite of the runs except for finding **Sammy Watkins** 8 times for 106 yards, including a 19-yard touchdown pass that the rookie receiver snatched in double coverage; the rookie of the year voting just got less interesting. **LeSean McCoy** impressed for the Glads, gaining 164 all-purpose yards and scoring 2 touchdowns, but Big Ben was "Bad Ben" today.

At TCF Bank Stadium it looked like a blowout early when **Johnny Manziel** was picked off twice in the 1st quarter deep in his own territory. The first pick led to a 44-yard field goal by **Nick Folk** but the second cost the Triumph nothing when **Matt Forte** was stuffed for a 1-yard loss by **Devin Taylor** on 4th and 1 at the 12. The stop seemed to light a fire under the Triumph while it dampened the morale of the Mustangs' offence. Twin Cities took a 13-10 lead and actually held it into the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. But veteran **Anquan Boldin** got open when it mattered while "Johnny Football" fumbled when it mattered, leading to a 21-point 4<sup>th</sup> quarter for the Mustangs and a 31-13 victory.

With **Adrian Peterson** out of the line-up, Cam Newton took centre stage at the Dawg Pound as Chino subdued Markham 23-16. The Convicts' QB passed for 209 yards and 2 touchdowns and led his team in rushing yards with 58. Defensively, **Alterraun Verner** kept **Jordy Nelson** in check, basically emasculating **Alex Smith** and the entire North Stars' offence. Gradually, Markham's offence is slowing down to the speed of a salt truck just in time for winter.

At **TERRORDOME**, **Lance Barrate** stole a page from the Pickering playbook and took the game out of his quarterback's hands. Virden ran the ball 50 times for 195 yards to grind out a 34-24 win over a ragged Regulators squad that was flagged 12 times for 110 yards. **Matt Stafford** still managed to sneak in a couple of interceptions to go with a pair of lost fumbles by his teammates to keep South Carolina in it longer than they deserved on this day.

At the Fiery Depths in Mohave it was visiting Swordfish QB, **Andy Dalton** who caught fire, going 23 of 31 for 258 yards and 3 touchdown passes to lead Sebastian over the Hellfire 34-29. Dalton's performance is a setback for the grassroots fan movement to oust him as the starter, but detractors can still point to the woeful Hellfire defence as the principal culprit.

We round off our Week 8 wrap-up with three blowouts: the Corn Kings picked on a Monarchs team disabled by injuries to win 28-10; the Monarchs kept it close for one half but collapsed in the third quarter. York's defence held the Knights to just 38 yards passing and a **Tom Brady** reinvigorated by a healthy receiving corps threw 3 TDs as York dumped LA 37-10 at Round Table Stadium. Finally, in Santa Clara the ferocious Banana Sluggs (I love writing that!) jumped out to a 14-0 lead then fell apart on both sides of the ball to surrender 27 unanswered points in a 48-17 loss to Durham. The game was a fiasco by the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, with a frustrated **Major Gerow** ordering his offence to attempt 4<sup>th</sup> & 10 from his team's own 13 that failed and set up the Durham TD that put the game finally out of reach.



## Professor McChad's Mid-Term Report Card

December 2014

In the Hallowed Halls of High Learning in the Living Football University called the EFL only the strictest standards apply. As a Senior Fellow of said EFL University it falls on me to maintain those standards by applying rigour to my grades. No team is spared the most exacting analysis and criticism based on my profound and every-increasing knowledge of this wonderful sport. For the sake of the sport, I spare no one. But if you meet or exceed the standard, you will be recognized and, in rare cases, praised. Here is my rating scale:

**A: Excellent**    **B: Good**    **C: Fair**    **D: Poor**    **F: Fail**

A plus (+) indicates slightly above the grade; a minus (-) slightly less.

**Aurora (A+):** The Mustangs are not just 8-0; they are a *strong* 8-0. This means that no team has come close to beating them, despite what a drunken Triumph fan might claim to the contrary. With an average point differential of 22.8 points they stand astride the power rankings like a colossus; and in many of those games they stopped trying after half time. A nitpicker would point out that they have the least efficient running game in the league. But then I would point out that they run out the clock a lot against defences geared to stop the run. With few challenges remaining on their schedule, they could go 16-0.

**Carthage (A):** It's hard to argue with perfection, but in a Division that includes Charleswood, Mohave, and a cursed Viriden team, 8-0 is not quite impressive enough to earn the top grade. The offence under Philip Rivers is good enough to carry this team to the Final, but difficulty stopping the run against teams with suspect running games could pose a problem against the rushing powerhouses of the West when they face them in the second half of the season. Lavonte David and Greg Hardy have been standouts on the defence but have yet to be the big difference-makers some had expected them to be.

**Charleswood (B-):** Seldom does a 3-5 team garner a 'B' grade of any kind, but seldom does a team with so little achieve so much. Make no mistake – this is a bad team. But they are playing, overall, like a mediocre team. Their 3 wins are 3 more than most had expected by the halfway point and they have been competitive in 3 of their 5 losses. The reasons for this are difficult to discern through a statistical analysis of their performance, which suggests the Pats are who we think they are. The secret to the Pats' success may be beyond conventional analysis and found in individual performances by standouts like Sammy Watkins, Blake Bortles, and (fill-in-the-blank) at key moments in a game.

**Chino (B+):** At 6-2, the Convicts might normally demand a grade of A-, but a closer look at their opponents places them firmly in the 'B' category. 5 of their 6 wins have come against sub-500 teams and the other was by the narrowest of margins against up-and-down Iowa City. Losses to Santa Clara and Viriden make them a suspicious playoff prospect. Despite having some big names on the roster, they have not yet proven that they belong with the "Big Boys."

**Cowtown (B+):** The 5-3 Corn Kings have quietly ambushed a couple of top-ranked opponents, beaten a couple of equals, and subdued a weakling. Had it not been for an embarrassing misstep at home against a sickly Gwinnett team they would be squarely in the 'A' category and alone atop the brutal North Division. Nobody expected such a strong start from this team and analysts are still trying to figure out how they have done it with a -7 turnover differential and chronic injuries on defence. A gun-slinging Joe Flacco is one answer; a stubborn and disciplined defence that gives up yards grudgingly is another.

**Durham (B):** Sometimes these grades are all about how a team performs against expectations. Since we expected Durham to be about 7-1 at the halfway point and they are actually 5-3, the grade suffers. The talent is there and often on display, but it disappears at the darndest times, such as opening day against Markham or in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter against Iowa City. Quarterback Roulette may be hurting the offence while a defensive coaching staff prone to lapses relies on Richard Sherman to bail them out.

**Gwinnett (C):** The 2-6 Glads are in rebuilding mode and playing like it. But when Ben Roethlisberger is your quarterback and LeSean McCoy your running back there is always hope to steal a game from a better opponent. The Glads have done that once, but more often they have looked like a team with no chance to win despite the big name QB. Anybody who thinks a quarterback is all a team needs to compete should take a look at how Ben is performing without decent wide receivers. The Glads receive a 'C' grade because their no-name defence is somehow looking better than the worst defence in the league.

**Iowa City (B-):** The Cubs have packed a lot of drama into their mediocre 4-4 record. It is a team composed of extremes – an extremely dangerous offence and an extremely bad defence – that merge to form a perfectly *'blah'* team. Where the Cubs belong in the hierarchy of PAC teams remains to be seen, but so far they have let their opponents dictate their pace of play by rising to the occasion against the strong and malingering against the weak. Give them a 'B' for net performance and a minus for the volatility.

**Los Angeles (D):** A 0-8 start to the season seems well below the humble expectations for this team, but a closer look at their schedule reveals that it could have been predicted. The closest thing to an "easy" game came in Week 4 against the Monarchs and, coincidentally, the Monarchs had the Knights pencilled in as *their* "easy" game. The Knights have been pathetic

on offence which has impacted their defence – a good one by league standards. Robert Quinn is keeping the losses respectable.

**Markham (C+):** The high water mark of the Markham season may have come in the first week against the Thunder Lizards. A 3-1 start stoked hopes for another “Markham Miracle,” but four consecutive losses since have nudged predictions closer to where they used to be in the days before Eli’s 2012 Championship transformed the franchise. The Stars remain remarkably consistent with past editions of the team, running the ball well, despite no workhorse running back, and defending with a grudge. But the difference this year is that they are not as good at it as they used to be.

**Mission Viejo (C):** 2-6 does not normally earn a straight C grade, but the Monarchs earn credit for fighting through a rash of injuries and a dearth of talent to avoid being winless. Extra marks are awarded for lively showings in defeat against teams they have no business being on the same field with. With this generous mark I am also recognizing that the Monarchs are slowly getting better. They are no longer the worst at everything and are demonstrating a higher level of defeat than ever before.

**Mohave (D-):** A team capable of biting almost any team in the butt has just not done it enough to earn a respectable grade. Nobody not already caught on tape saying so is willing to admit that they predicted the Hellfire would challenge for a playoff berth this year. But few thought Mohave would be a doormat either. 1-7 is a disgrace for this team but few are noticing outside of Mohave. A horrendous pass defence, a -9 turnover differential and a hard-luck Luck are all you need to know.

**Pickering (B):** The “Dream Team” centered on Peyton Manning and the passing attack experienced some early growing pains that resulted in a 1-3 first quarter. But those pains seem to have been alleviated by running more and passing less. The winning formula of running Chris Johnson and Terrance West into the ground to soften up defences for the Manning “kill shot” has worked to perfection so far; the resultant 4-game winning streak the Spartans currently enjoy rescues what was an early failing grade. When this team starts to generate takeaways, look out!

**Santa Clara (B+):** Taking into account the effects of a rookie head coach and the upheaval created by a government-directed nuclear strike that uprooted them from their previous home town, the Sluggs have not done badly. But the quality of this team’s personnel is so far above that of their main competition that 6-2 is simply not good enough. Heated debates once raged about which defence was the best: the Sluggs or the Mustangs. After 8 games there is no comparison. The Sluggs dominate in one category: sacks. The price for that is a team that is getting run over for 157 yards a game and getting the least possible production out of a pair of elite corners. Santa Clara’s imposing running attack needs a strong defence at its back.

**Scarborough (D+):** A 3-5 record might normally draw a ‘C’ grade, but the Blue Eagles have not looked impressive even in victory. Ray Rice has laboured badly behind one of the league’s better offensive lines, causing opponents to no longer respect the run. With Brandon Marshall disappearing for long stretches Aaron Rodgers has one reliable target left and DeSean Jackson is not going to move the chains with regularity. The defence has been respectable but a weak corner tandem is hurting the bottom line. Throw in some suspicious play-calling and you have another lost season for Bluebirds.

**Sebastian (C-):** I face the same conundrum every year when grading the Swordfish: do I award points for effort in a lost cause, or do I focus solely on the bottom line? To be fair, I should consider what Coach Russ Lemmon is working with when assigning a performance grade. A 2-6 record is about where the Fish should be, but a pathetic showing against a very beatable Gwinnett knocks them down half a peg in my eyes. Andy Dalton remains a *faux* franchise quarterback who will never be good enough to lift this still building outfit high enough to play over its head.

**South Carolina (B):** At 5-3 and in the thick of the playoff hunt the Regs are where they had hoped and many had predicted they would be by the mid-season mark. A top grade passing attack and dangerous linebackers have allowed them to break into the contender ranks in a year when most teams are in various stages of rebuilding. Tony Romo has been, usually, good, while judicious coaching has minimized the effects of nagging weaknesses in the secondary and a lightweight defensive line.

**Twin Cities (A-):** At 6-2 the Triumph have been about as good as they could be under the circumstances. The sudden loss of Jay Cutler curbed impressive first quarter momentum and lost them ground to Carthage. But if they can remain a 500 team with ‘Johnny Football’ calling the shots they will be in a tenable position when Cutler returns. Coach Williams has managed his resources brilliantly and earned success on the football field, making the off-season neglect of the running game look even more egregious in retrospect – enough to warrant a minus next to what would otherwise be a straight ‘A’ grade.

**Virden (D):** It may be time to break out *The Hidden Game of Football* by Harry Schultz of Football Outriders.org to find out why this year’s edition of the Violators stands at 2-6. There must be an analytical explanation even if I can’t find it. A minus-8 turnover differential is a good place to start. Pointing out the awful pass defence would be next, but pointing it out does not explain *why* such a talented and deep secondary is going up in flames every week. Then there is Matt Stafford, a seemingly very average quarterback two years after terrorizing defences around the league. It all looks to me like the work of a strong curse.

**York (B-):** The Excaliburs have done well to keep their heads above water with a rash of key injuries on both sides of the ball. But when healthy they still don’t look like more than a borderline contender. An opening day thumping of Sebastian and a solid outing versus Cowtown showed the better side of a team with teasing potential but too many structural flaws on offence to be reliable from week-to-week. The other side, the dark one, was a lacklustre challenge to Markham and a no-show at Pickering. The defence is playing over its head, bumping the grade into the B range and keeping the Yorkies in the race.

# BUG THE BOOKIE!

## JIMMY THE GEEK GIVES YOU HIS PICKS FOR WEEK NINE EFL ACTION

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**RECORD VS THE SPREAD AFTER WEEK 8:**

**48-30-2**

### JIMMY'S WEEK NINE PICKS

#### **CHARLESWOOD @ AURORA (line – MUSTANGS by 19)**

**INJURIES:** Charleswood – Michael Crabtree (OUT), Jerod Mayo (OUT), Nate Solder (OUT), Anthony Spencer (OUT), Vince Wilfork (OUT); Aurora – Max Unger (QUESTIONABLE), LaRon Landry (DOUBTFUL), Jeremy Kerley (OUT).

What might have been seen as a championship preview prior to Patriots deconstruction is now seen as a potential disaster for Friday Night Football ratings. The league's "flex" scheduling doesn't kick in until Week 10 and that is a crying shame. While casual fans will tune out in favour of 'WWE Smackdown' bettors will be interested in seeing if the Mustangs cover against the "Charleswood Charm" – the term being used to describe the Pats' ability to be bad and competitive at the same time. Left tackle Nate Solder is out for the Pats, which is bad news for the offence; and Vince Wilfork's season is over, which is bad news for the defence. But an abnormal two-quarter pause to reboot last week against Twin Cities has some observers wondering if the Mustangs are dominating opponents too much and losing focus. It will be hard for Aurora to get up for the Pats with Chino scheduled for the week after. But you can bet Rich Liotta will have a solid game plan ready, even if his players are only going through the motions. That might be just good enough. **PICK: AURORA**

#### **DURHAM @ VIRDEN (line – THUNDER LIZARDS by 1)**

**INJURIES:** Durham – Calvin Johnson (OUT); Virden – Melvin Ingram (OUT), Mark Ingram (OUT), Justin Blackmon (OUT), Julio Jones (OUT), Nick Perry (OUT).

Both teams are coming off of big wins and unable to afford more lapses, but Virden's tortured season could be hanging in the balance. Optimists hope that the Violators' victory over South Carolina was the turning point in their season, but pessimists are rightly pointing out that they did many of the same bad things that they have been doing all season but won anyway because the refs were merciful and the Regulators were simply terrible. The truth is somewhere in between. The Regs were bad, but a win, even one less than well-earned, can be enough to shake a monkey off of a back. The Lizards finally broke out last week with a blowout of the Banana Sluggs on the road. While the Sluggs were also culprits in their own demise, Durham came on with fury after a poor start and avoided dropping their third game in a row. The Lizards look like a strong bet to cover, but the loss of Calvin Johnson will be felt. I cling to the belief that the Violators' corners are better than their numbers; 9 deflections last week is a strong sign that they may be finally coming around. Virden can pull off an upset here, but will likely fall tragically again. **PICK: DURHAM**

#### **TWIN CITIES @ MARKHAM (line – TRIUMPH by 3)**

**INJURIES:** Twin Cities – Jerome Felton (PROBABLE), Clint Bolling (OUT), Jay Cutler (OUT), Doug Martin (OUT), Henry Melton (OUT), Shane Vereen (OUT); Markham – Anthony Fasano (OUT), Jordan Reed (OUT).

With a weakened Triumph team visiting, the North Stars have a golden opportunity to stop their losing streak at four games. The Dawg Pound can be an intimidating place to play and rookie Johnny Manziel is new and raw. Markham is starving for a big play; they have not completed a pass of more than 25 yards in 3 games. While Andre Ellington always looks dangerous, he is proving to be a delicate commodity, rushing the ball more than 15 times in a game just once all season. The Triumph running attack is even more fragile, with just 170 rushing attempts for the entire team, 5 fewer than LeSean McCoy. If Manziel can avoid pressure and find open receivers down field, the Triumph won't need a running game to turn this game into a laugh – but that is a very big "if." The

Stars will want to keep Johnny Football contained in the pocket, come with pressure up the middle, and trust their corners to hang with Antonio Brown and Vincent Jackson long enough to force secondary reads. Both game plans could go out the window if the Markham weather wants to play too. When in doubt, go with the home team and the veteran QB. **PICK: MARKHAM**

### **COWTOWN @ MOHAVE (line – CORN KINGS by 6)**

**INJURIES:** **Cowtown** – Brett Keisel (QUESTIONABLE), Ryan Clady (OUT), Brandon Flowers (OUT); **Mohave** – Dwayne Gratz (OUT), Justin Houston (OUT), Bruce Irvin (OUT), Amini Silatolu (OUT).

If you believe the Corn Kings are for real, you must take these points and run. If you have your doubts, like I do, then you must carefully consider the line and, much as every fibre of your being may resist it, you must bet on the basket case Hellfire to cover or win outright. While Mohave has failed to disappoint just once all season, this could be one of those situations where the Hellfire may not be relied upon to fail. Brett Keisel is listed as ‘Questionable,’ which may not seem important, except that the Corn Kings’ defensive line lacks stamina and the Mohave heat is hellish. With Brandon Flowers out, somebody is going to get free in the secondary for Andrew Luck. Finally, the Mohave defensive line is stout enough to take away the run game from the shaky front five of Cowtown, putting the game in the volatile hands of Joe Flacco, the league’s interception leader. The Hellfire pass defence has been ugly, but all they need to shine this week is a couple of errant throws by Big Joe. **PICK: MOHAVE**

### **GWINNETT @ CARTHAGE (line – CANNIBALS by 16)**

**INJURIES:** **Gwinnett** – Lance Briggs (OUT), Mike Iupati (OUT), Tommy Kelly (OUT), Maurkice Pouncey (OUT), Reggie Wayne (OUT); **Carthage** – Donte Moncreif (PROBABLE), Rhet Ellison (OUT), Josh Gordon (OUT), Kyle Rudolph (OUT), Harrison Smith (OUT).

Josh Gordon remains out for Carthage, which might not save the Glads from suffering their 7<sup>th</sup> loss, but likely will affect the Cannibals’ chances of covering this inflated spread. With Gordon in the line-up Carthage averages 430 yards and 34 points per game; out of the line-up the numbers fall to 356 yards and 30 points. Many of those yards without Gordon in the line-up have come from Eddie Lacy, who is suddenly the most relevant star on the offence after Philip Rivers. Expect Lacy to pound the ramshackle Gwinnett line for time-consuming yards, which will slow down the pace of scoring. Against an unremarkable Carthage defence, Big Ben is more than capable of stealing a couple of touchdowns in garbage time, even with practice squad-calibre wide receivers as targets. Pencil in the Cannibals as 9-0 and pencil in the Glads to cover. **PICK: GWINNETT**

### **IOWA CITY @ SOUTH CAROLINA (line – REGULATORS by 2)**

**INJURIES:** **Iowa City** – C.J. Spiller (QUESTIONABLE), Bruce Miller (OUT), Xavier Rhodes (OUT); **South Carolina** – Sam Acho (OUT), Kyle Van Noy (OUT), Kevin Zeitler (OUT).

CJ Spiller is listed as ‘Questionable’ for Iowa but the Cubs have a full stable of young running backs waiting in the wings to replace him and Deron Redding has a penchant for getting the most of his running game. The rising star for the Cubs is Russell Wilson, who has come alive in the past 3 games and led his team to upsets over Virden and Durham. The Cubs’ defence continues to give up lots of ground, which could be a big problem against a Regulator offence that has scored 20 points or more in every game so far. The Regs will want to pick on the league’s worst secondary, but a firm nod to the running game might be the best way to get the most out of that mis-match. Tony Romo is averaging 40 pass attempts per game as the role of Frank Gore in the offence gradually gets smaller. It is not clear why Gore is being phased out, but Romo’s efficiency drops in games where Gore has less than 20 carries. The Regs will need their ‘A’ game to withstand a surging Cubs squad. **PICK: IOWA CITY**

### **YORK @ CHINO (line – CONVICTS by 4)**

**INJURIES:** **York** – Geno Atkins (OUT), Von Miller (OUT), Robert Geathers (OUT), Asante Samuel (OUT), Nick Toon (OUT); **Chino** – Adrian Peterson (OUT);

“The Beast,” Marshawn Lynch goes up against 2013 MVP Adrian Peterson in a game that is being billed the ‘Battle of the Backs.’ How each back performs will go a long way to determining the winner of this game as both quarterbacks will be relying on the distraction of their star runners to gain a big-play edge. But the quarterback who least needs the help of his running back is Cam Newton, who can make his own mark in the running game if needed. That might sound strange with Tom Brady on the other side, but a pocket passer like Brady needs plenty of targets and the Yorkies are now notorious for having only two – Victor Cruz and Kelvin Benjamin – who cause any concern at all for opponents; with Alterraun Verner on one of them, Brady may find he has nobody to go to most of the time and, unlike his opponent, no legs to make something out of nothing. **PICK: CHINO**

## SCARBOROUGH @ SANTA CLARA (line – BANANA SLUGGS by 4)

**INJURIES:** Scarborough – Kroy Biermann (OUT), Nate Burluson (OUT), King Dunlap (OUT), LaMichael James (OUT), Aaron Rodgers (OUT), Charles Sims (OUT), D.J. Williams (OUT). Santa Clara – Jairus Byrd (DOUBTFUL), Randall Cobb (OUT), Nick Fairly (OUT), Rob Gronkowski (OUT), Clay Matthews (OUT), Louis Nix III (OUT).

Terrelle Pryor is turning some heads filling in for Aaron Rodgers, but all I see is a new guy with an unpredictable running style taking advantage of the lack of film of his tendencies. Not that the Banana Sluggs care about film. They do their thing regardless of the opponent. Facing a fanatical defence might work to the advantage of the Eagles' rookie – if he can avoid the initial charge he could find a lot of open field where blitzing linebackers used to be. But if Scarborough is going to win, Pryor needs to do more than scramble; he needs to find receivers down field against two of the best corners in the league. On the other side, the Sluggs have the beef up front to push around Ndamukong Suh and control the ball if needed. If they grab the early lead, the Eagles will be subjected to a long and painful grind. After two humiliating losses, the Sluggs will be angry. **PICK: SANTA CLARA**

## PICKERING @ MISSION VIEJO (line – SPARTANS by 6)

**INJURIES:** Pickering – Charles Tillman (OUT); Mission Viejo – Dee Milliner (DOUBTFUL), Brandon Browner (OUT), Brian Cushing (OUT), Mike James (OUT), Kenbrell Thompkins (OUT), Mike Williams (OUT).

DeMarco Murray returns for the Monarchs. While welcome news for the home team, it is no reason to think this will be a close game. The Spartans are steady after a wobbly start and are looking pretty formidable after 4 straight wins. While it is too soon to use the word “unstoppable,” I have it warming up on my note pad, ready to go if the Spartans' winning streak makes it to six. In order for that to happen, though, they will have to knock off Santa Clara in Week Ten, a job they are probably planning right now while pretending to plan for Mission Viejo. It is possible, (in the way that it is possible that a comet will strike the Earth in the next two weeks) that the Monarchs will devise a game plan ingenious enough to catch the Spartans looking past them and thereby threaten the spread. However, it is more likely that they will fall quickly and never be in it. **PICK: PICKERING**

## LOS ANGELES @ SEBASTIAN (line – SWORDFISH by 5)

**INJURIES:** Los Angeles – Brian Orakpo (QUESTIONABLE), Andre Brown (OUT), Brandin Cooks (OUT), Cortland Finnegan (OUT), Garrett Graham (OUT); Sebastian – Leon Hall (OUT), Rahim Moore (OUT), Wes Welker (OUT).

Well, here it is: a game less appealing than a Knights-Monarchs game. You didn't think that was possible? Think again. The Fish are favoured by 5 points, but it is moderately possible that they won't score 5 points. This is the time, if it is ever going to happen in 2014, for the Knights' defence to finally shine and for their offence to finally move the ball. Andy Dalton is coming off a big game which suggests he will be a disaster in this one. His team is also busy digesting a rare win. Sated and sluggish, Sebastian might be hard pressed to keep up with a hungry Knights team desperate to taste victory. It is not often I can say that the Swordfish are the better team, but this week, the better team will fall to the hungrier team. **PICK: LOS ANGELES**



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**ANCIENT HISTORY**  
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PRESENTS  
*This Week in EFL History*  
*With Professor Sterling Smitherman*

FROM THE EFL ARCHIVES – In Week Six of the 2008 EFL season, the centerpiece match-up was between undefeated Florida and undefeated Iowa City at Dragonmount in Florida. The Dragons pummelled Iowa early, staking out a 24-6 lead, before a 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter rally by the Cubs made it a one-point game. But a 4<sup>th</sup> down gamble by the Cubs at their 47 with 4 minutes left came up 1 yard short, setting up what amounted, in the days before 2-point conversions, to be the killing blow when Steven Jackson scored from 2-yards out. The Dragons went on to win 38-23 as a pick six by Lofa Tatupu added insult to injury.

The Mohave Hellfire kept close on the heels of Florida with a 38-23 win over Los Angeles. Kurt Warner threw 4 TD passes to win Offensive Player of the Week honours and Aundrae Allison averaged 40 yards per kick return to set up the Mohave offence all game.

The Patriots kept pace with perfect Florida by easily dispatching the Pickering Spartans 34-10. With each win by the Dragons and Patriots the build-up to Week 10, when the two would face each other, became more intense.

At the bottom of the league, it took a visit to Winnemucca to get the Corn Kings in the win column. Even so, the Outlaws put forth what would turn out to be their best offensive production of the season in a 34-28 final.

The Thundersnow finally scored a touchdown after 9 quarters without a score in losing 34-10 to Kutztown. When it came it was Allen Rossum returning a kickoff 102 yards for a TD and not from the offence. Late night comedians were beginning to notice the Thundersnow.

Marcus Trufant of the Patriots returned a fumble for a TD and snagged an interception to fuel the debate about who was most fit to be MVP, he or Dragon, Antonio Cromartie?