

WEEK 4



EFL
ELITE FOOTBALL LEAGUE

2023

We're Number 1!

October 29, 2023

EAST



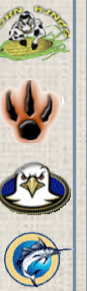
CENTRAL



WEST



NORTH



COASTAL



SOUTH



THE CHAMPS!

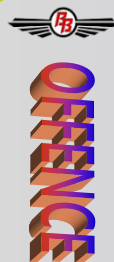
Justin Fields Bruxelles Bombers

Justin Fields, known in Belgium as *'The Champs,'* dekes around a lunging Gladiator lineman on his way to his fifth touchdown run of the afternoon to lead the Bombers to a 41-24 victory over Georgia. Fields finished with 148 yards on 17 carries, peeling off seven runs of 10 yards or more, including a 56-yard scramble in the 4th quarter that set up his final, record-tying score. He also threw for 201 yards. The Bombers are now 4-0 and in full flight. (Story inside)



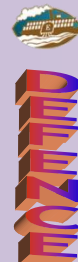
*Who was slick
in Week Four?*

**“Brylcreem” THE
EFL’S FIRST SPONSOR**



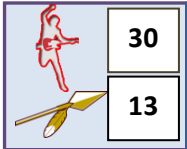
Justin Field
QB
Bruxelles
Bombers

14 of 18, 201 yds, 148 rush yds, 5 TDs! 3 TDs from 10+ yards, 56 Long.



Maxx Crosby
DE
Erieau
Cadillac

11 T, 2 Sks, 3 TFL, 3 HUR, 1 FF. Kept Lamar under pressure all game in win.


30
13

Daniel Jones tossed a 10-yard TD pass to **Jerick McKinnon** and **Desmond King II** intercepted a pass from **Matt Ryan** and returned it 25 yards for a TD to spark the Wrecking Balls to a 23-0 1st half lead. Ryan was replaced by rookie **CJ Stroud** in the 2nd half, after being sacked twice and throwing as many interceptions (2) as completions. Stroud threw 2 TD passes, 4 yards to **Dallas Goedert** and 11 yards to **Adam Thielen**, but was unable to lead a comeback as Jones added a 10-yard TD run early in the 4th to make it 30-7. Jones' record is now 2-0 on the road, and 0-2 at home.

10-29-2023 St. Charles Stadium Temp:72 Wind:Calm

Line:NJ by 1 MVP:Jones

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2023 New Jersey (2-2)	13	10	0	7	30
2023 LaPlata (1-3)	0	0	7	6	13

Passing

NJ: Jones 27/19 170 Yds TD

LPB: Stroud 20/14 169 Yds 2 TDs, Ryan 10/2 43 Yds 2 Int

Rushing

NJ: Jones 13/85 TD, Montgomery 19/49, Samuel 7/6

LPB: Gibbs 9/41, Mixon 8/19, Ryan 1/18, Stroud 1/12

Receiving

NJ: McLaurin 6/69, Doubs 3/28, Hooper 3/23, McKinnon 3/23 TD, Samuel 2/12

LPB: Adams 7/97, Goedert 3/39 TD, Thielen 3/32 TD, Mixon 2/36, Smith 1/8

Defense

NJ: King II Int(TD) 3-Tk, Hughes Sk 4-Tk, Floyd Sk 3-Tk, Heyward Sk 3-Tk

LPB: Watt Sk 15-Tk, Reddick Sk 6-Tk, Simmons Sk 3-Tk

Injuries

NJ: Armstead 4, Bakhtiari 3

LPB: Cominsky 1

Misc

NJ: Ryland 3/3 FG 55 Lg

LPB:


41
24

Justin Fields rushed for 148 yards and a record-tying 5 TDs as part of a 259-yard ground effort as the Bombers steam-rolled over the Glads. Fields also threw for 201 yards. **D'Onta Foreman** set up the first Fields TD run with a 58-yard scamper that fell 2 yards short. Bruxelles exploded for 21 points in the 2nd quarter on momentum gained from two Georgia turnovers by **Tua Tagovailoa**, with Fields scoring all 3 TDs on sweeps inside the red zone. The Glads trailed 31-0 at the half and were unable to scramble back. Field set up his 5th 10-yard TD run with a 56-yard scramble in the 4th.

10-29-2023 DeepWoods Off Col. Temp:78 Wind:0-10 None

No Line MVP:Fields

HFA:ON(3)

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2023 Bruxelles (4-0)	10	21	0	10	41
2023 Georgia (2-2)	0	0	7	17	24

Passing

BRX: Fields 18/14 201 Yds

GEO: Tagovailoa 46/27 400 Yds 3 TDs 2 Int

Rushing

BRX: Fields 17/148 5 TDs, Foreman 19/107, Fournette 3/6

GEO: Jacobs 16/66, Stevenson 6/31

Receiving

BRX: Hopkins 6/87, Godwin 5/96, Foreman 2/9, Fournette 1/9

GEO: Johnson 9/114 TD, Stevenson 6/106, Robinson 3/18, Cooper 3/101 TD, Ertz 2/13

Defense

BRX: Wilson Int FF 12-Tk, Grant Int 5-Tk, Smith 9-Tk, Campbell FF 5-Tk, Anzalone

GEO: Tomlinson Sk 7-Tk

Injuries

BRX:

GEO: Davis 3, Edmunds 1, Ward 1

Misc

BRX: Godwin F-L, Moreau FR, Smith FR, Maher 2/2 FG 43 Lg

GEO: Bell FR, Tagovailoa F-L, Robinson F-L, Bass 1/1 FG 34 Lg



31



10

Kyler Murray strung together completions of 27 yards to Jaylen Waddle and 33 yards and 21 yards for a TD to Tee Higgins to lead the Caddies on a 92-yard TD drive in the 2nd quarter. This score ended a virtual 1st quarter stalemate and gave Erieau a 10-0 lead that they would ride to a 17-3 1st half lead. After a scoreless 3rd quarter, the Caddies broke it open when Maxx Crosby stripped Lamar Jackson and Sione Takitaki recovered at the Buffalo 4, setting up a TD run by Najee Harris to make it 24-3. Murray scored the final TD on a 1-yard run after an Emmanuel Forbes Jr punt block.

10-29-2023 Highmark Stadium Temp:60 Wind:20-30 Rain Line:ERI by 2 MVP:Murray HFA:

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2023 Erieau (1-3)	3	14	0	14	31
2023 Buffalo (1-3)	0	3	0	7	10

Passing

ERI: Murray 32/23 281 Yds TD

BUF: Jackson 32/16 177 Yds

Rushing

ERI: Murray 6/38 2 TDs, Harris 13/21 TD, Pierce 7/8

BUF: Jackson 14/61 TD, Dillon 13/55, Abdullah 3/6, Rice 1/5, McKitty 1/1

Receiving

ERI: Waddle 5/99, Higgins 5/67 TD, Andrews 4/49, Harris 4/30, Pierce 3/30, Henry 1/5

BUF: Gage 6/56, Fant 3/20, Woods 2/76, Toney 1/9, Reynolds 1/5, McKitty 1/7

Defense

ERI: Crosby 2-Sks FF 11-Tk, Houston FF 5-Tk, Pace Jr. Sk 3-Tk, Hill Sk 3-Tk

BUF: Evans 11-Tk, Williams Sk FF 2-Tk, Donald Sk 5-Tk, Adderley Int 4-Tk, Sneed FF

Injuries

ERI: Robinson 12, Bosa 8

BUF: Robinson 8, Donald 5

Misc

ERI: Crosby FR, Takitaki FR, Myers 1/1 FG 46 Lg, Forbes Jr P/Blk

BUF: Jackson F-L, McCy F-L, Elliott 1/1 FG 39 Lg



40



35

Jacoby Brissett threw 4 TD passes and ran 41 yards for another to earn Game MVP. Bryce Young also threw 4 TD passes with 0 interceptions, but fumbled a snap and lost the ball in the 3rd, which set up a key FG by Eddie Piniero that changed the goal of the Coyotes final drive. That kick was the only Irish score of the 2nd half, after they rung up 37 points in the first two frames. Brisset moved the ball easily, scrambling for big gains and throwing TDs to 4 different receivers, including a 34-yarder to Quentin Johnston. Trailing by 5, Young came up short on 4th & 5 at the Irish 9 with 1:35 left.

10-29-2023 Coyote Field Temp:62 Wind:Calm None Line:CB by 7 MVP:Brissett HFA:ON(3)

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2023 East Elmhurst (2-2)	14	23	3	0	40
2023 Cobb County (1-3)	7	14	7	7	35

Passing

EE: Brissett 30/21 280 Yds 4 TDs

CB: Young 36/24 430 Yds 4 TDs

Rushing

EE: Brissett 4/92 TD, Brown 12/47, Charbonnet 9/46, Knight 8/19

CB: Etienne 11/41, Young 4/34 TD, Cook 5/16, Hill 5/6, Strong Jr. 1/6

Receiving

EE: Metcalf 7/130 TD, Skowronek 6/78 TD, Jones 3/28 TD, Brown 2/6, Knight 1/3

CB: Cooks 7/98 TD, Musgrave 5/129 TD, Addison 4/71 TD, Pittman Jr. 4/69, Etienne 2/35 TD

Defense

EE: Parsons 2-Sks 5-Tk, Rodriguez FF 9-Tk, McCain FF 5-Tk, Ogunjobi 8-Tk

CB: Oluokun 10-Tk, Payne Sk 4-Tk, Kancey 8-Tk

Injuries

EE:

CB: Adams 9, Allen 9, Jones 6, White 4, Woods 3

Misc

EE: Allen FR, Hilton FR, Piniero 2/2 FG 47 Lg

CB: Etienne F-L, Young F-L



13



37

In the re-match of the 2022 Gale Sayers Game, **Patrick Mahomes** hit **Tyreek Hill** with a 75-yard bomb for a TD on the first play of the game. The Violators kept their fast pace, intercepting **Josh Allen** on Durham's second series, which set up a TD pass to **Ja'Marr Chase**, while the defence held Durham to just a field goal after a **Jalen Pitre** pick of Mahomes. Virden finished the half with Mahomes connecting again with Hill for a 21-yard TD to make it 24-3. The Lizards clawed back with 10 points in the 3rd, but two **Matt Prater** FGs and a TD run by rookie **Keaton Mitchell** put the game away.

10-29-2023 TERRORDOME Temp:63 Wind:Calm None Line:DTL by 13 MVP:Mahomes HFA:ON(4)

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2023 Durham (2-2)	0	3	10	0	13
2023 Virden (4-0)	14	10	3	10	37

Passing

DTL: Allen 41/20 164 Yds TD Int
VW: Mahomes 37/26 416 Yds 3 TDs Int

Rushing

DTL: Allen 8/51, Allgeier 5/20
VW: Conner 19/71, Akers 7/33, Mahomes 4/19, Mitchell 1/8 TD

Receiving

DTL: Samuel 4/42, Allgeier 4/17, Kupp 4/29, Knox 2/16, Palmer 2/24, Tucker 2/11 TD
VW: Chase 9/118 TD, Hill 8/182 2 TDs, Hockenson 3/40, Olave 3/63, Conner 3/13

Defense

DTL: Mathieu 13-Tk, Hendrickson FF 6-Tk, Pitre Int 4-Tk, Barton FF 5-Tk
VW: Judon 2-Sks 6-Tk, Mosley 11-Tk, Hooker Int 4-Tk

Injuries

DTL: Ruckert 3
VW:

Misc

DTL: Santos 2/2 FG 47 Lg
VW: Prater 3/4 FG 38 Lg



19



24

With 1:37 left in the 4th, **Jeff Wilson** slipped through a all-out five-man blitz to score a TD from 5 yards out and put the Triumph in front to stay, 24-19. The winning drive was set up by a Swordfish turnover on downs at the Triumph 44 with 2:22 left as the Fish clung to a 19-18 lead, taken on a 53-yard pick-six by **Kendall Fuller**. The Triumph moved the ball well throughout, but 3 turnovers, 2 picks of **Trevor Lawrence** and a lost fumble by Wilson, led to 13 Sebastian points. The Fish turned the ball over on downs three times, once at their own 19. **Dustin Hopkins** was a perfect 4 of 4 in FGs.

10-29-2023 Wilhalla Stadium Temp:77 Wind:Calm None Line:TCT by 14 MVP:Wilson HFA

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2023 Sebastian (0-4)	6	0	7	6	19
2023 Twin Cities (2-2)	3	9	6	6	24

Passing

SS: Cousins 37/25 191 Yds TD
TCT: Lawrence 37/18 224 Yds TD 2 Int

Rushing

SS: Cousins 3/36, Taylor 8/22, Chubb 12/20 TD
TCT: Wilson 21/127 TD, Lawrence 6/69, Henderson Jr. 3/8

Receiving

SS: Peoples-Jones 7/91, Schultz 6/46, Chubb 3/18 TD, Taylor 3/1, Gallup 2/13
TCT: Moore 6/99 TD, Lockett 4/63, Wilson 3/20, Pierce 3/22, Duvernay 1/9, Higbee 1/11

Defense

SS: Deablo Sk FF 4-Tk, Hicks FF 8-Tk, Jenkins 11-Tk, Fuller Int(TD) 2-Tk, Wallace Int
TCT: Sweat Sk FF 3-Tk, Wagner 9-Tk, Clark Sk 3-Tk

Injuries

SS: Tuipulotu 7, Johnson 5
TCT: Moseley 7, Maddox 3, Bradbury 1

Misc

SS: Hicks FR
TCT: Wilson F-L, Hopkins 4/4 FG 38 Lg



30



31

With 0:13 remaining and no timeouts, **Kenny Pickett** found **D.J. Chark** near the left pylon for a 16-yard TD pass then **Wil Lutz** kicked the extra point to give the Patriots a thrilling comeback victory. The Pats trailed 30-17 with 5:53 left in the 4th when Pickett went to work, scrambling for 40 yards of a 75-yard drive to pull within 6 on an 8-yard scramble for a TD. Pickett rushed for 79 yards on the day. The Charleswood 'D' then forced a three-and-out to set up the game-winning drive. The Blue Eagles led 17-7 at half time, led by a **Joe Burrow** TD pass to **Jahan Dotson** and a 15-yard TD run.

10-29-2023 Patriot Place Temp:75 Wind:Calm Line:SBE by 4 MVP:Pickett HFA:ON

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2023 Scarborough (1-3)	7	10	7	6	30
2023 Charleswood (1-3)	7	0	7	17	31

Passing

SBE: Burrow 31/20 183 Yds TD Int
CHP: Pickett 34/21 206 Yds 2 TDs Int

Rushing

SBE: Cook 20/93 TD, Burrow 2/19 TD, Perine 4/7
CHP: Pickett 9/79 TD, Dobbins 6/69 TD, Pacheco 8/51, Singletary 2/15, Gibson 2/2

Receiving

SBE: Cobb 5/51, Robinson 4/29, Zaccheaus 4/68, Dotson 3/26 TD, Uzomah 2/10
CHP: Singletary 6/30, Smith-Schuster 6/82, Chark 4/61 2 TDs, Agholor 3/26, Kelce 1/3

Defense

SBE: Roberts Sk 8-Tk, Davis Int 6-Tk, Jones Sk 4-Tk, Bosa Sk 4-Tk, Dallas 2-FF 3-Tk
CHP: Sweat Sk 6-Tk, Samuel Jr. Int 5-Tk, Jones FF 6-Tk, Campbell 8-Tk

Injuries

SBE:
CHP: Ojabo 10, Darby 8, Cushenberry 7

Misc

SBE: Walker P/Blk, Lovato FR, Crosby 3/3 FG 41 Lg
CHP: Holland F-L, Lutz 1/1 FG 36 Lg



16



26

Brandon Aiyuk covered up a **Saquon Barkley** fumble at the Cowtown 2-yard line, allowing **Younghoe Koo** to kick a 20-yard FG to put Peg City in front 16-13 with 8:01 left in the 4th quarter. The Crusaders forced a punt then Barkley put the game on ice on the next series, stretching to the outside for 20 yards and breaking loose on a perfectly executed screen for a 41-yard TD. This was a tight game throughout, with Cowtown holding a 16-13 late in the 3rd after falling behind 13-3 late in the 2nd quarter. Peg City 'D' controlled the line of scrimmage allowing just 21 yards by Corn King RBs.

10-29-2023 True North Field Temp:72 Wind:Calm Line:COW by 13 MVP:Barkley HFA

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2023 Cowtown (3-1)	0	13	3	0	16
2023 Peg City (4-0)	7	6	3	10	26

Passing

COW: Garoppolo 38/23 263 Yds TD Int
PCC: Tannehill 34/20 256 Yds TD

Rushing

COW: Watson 1/39, Williams 17/23, Garoppolo 2/4, Bourne 1/2
PCC: Barkley 17/67 TD, Kamara 8/42

Receiving

COW: Evans 6/63, Lazard 5/91, Benjamin 4/36, Watson 3/37 TD, LaPorta 3/27, Bourne 1/4
PCC: Barkley 8/107 TD, Meyers 4/76, Kamara 4/40, Everett 2/16, Ingold 1/4, Aiyuk 1/13

Defense

COW: Chinn 10-Tk, Smith 9-Tk, Ioannidis FF 5-Tk
PCC: Okereke FF 8-Tk, Long Int 3-Tk

Injuries

COW: Pierce 10, Watt 6, Davis 2
PCC: Whitehair 4

Misc

COW: Williams F-L, Cole FR, Cole P/Blk, Slye 3/3 FG 49 Lg
PCC: Humphrey FR TD, Koo 2/2 FG 51 Lg



17



20

Za'Darius Smith blocked a 28-yard FG attempt by **Randy Bullock** in OT, setting up a 53-yard drive back by the Convicts for the game-winning 40-yard FG by **Harrison Butker** with 0:22 left. The story of the game turned out to be the Convicts' defence, which came up big stopping four 4th down conversion attempts by the Hawks, 3 in or near the Chino red zone, and one in Hawks' territory, which set up a 32-yard FG that gave Chino a 10-7 lead at the time. The failure to capitalize wasted a 333-yard passing day by **Geno Smith** and opened the door for **Jared Goff** to salvage the big win.

10-29-2023 The Big House Temp:84 Wind:0-10 None Line:CHI by 8 MVP:Goff HFA:ON

	1	2	3	4	5	Tot
2023 Brooklin (1-3)	7	0	0	10	0	17
2023 Chino (3-1)	0	7	3	7	3	20

Passing

BRH: Smith 52/37 333 Yds 2 TDs Int

CHI: Goff 49/31 264 Yds TD

Rushing

BRH: Ekeler 8/40, Smith 4/40, Robinson 11/29

CHI: Jones 12/77, McCaffrey 9/20 TD, Goff 2/11

Receiving

BRH: Hollins 9/105 TD, Conklin 7/73 TD, Engram 6/56, London 5/64, Ekeler 4/25

CHI: McCaffrey 8/70, Flowers 7/86 TD, Jones 5/19, Boyd 5/53, Mooney 4/23, Campbell 2/13

Defense

BRH: Tranquill Sk 11-Tk

CHI: White 10-Tk, Whitehead Int 5-Tk, Smith Sk 3-Tk, Jarrett Sk 3-Tk

Injuries

BRH: Paye 2, Al-Shaair 1

CHI: Gardner-Johnson 4

Misc

BRH: 1/5 4thDwn, Bullock 1/2 FG 40 Lg

CHI: Jackson 1/50 KR, Z. Smith Blk FG, Butker 2/3 FG 40 Lg



9



26

Aaron Rodgers hooked up with **Justin Jefferson** for a 38-yard TD pass to cap the opening drive of the 2nd half and put the North Stars in front to stay, 14-6. The Pilots' fought the Stars to a virtual standstill in the 1st half, causing punter **Jake Camarda** to make 5 appearances, while keeping the deficit to 7-6 on field goals of 52 and 43 yards by **Evan McPherson**. **Carson Wentz** could not get the offence moving in reply to the TD, but the Pilots' 'D' hung tough, holding the Stars to 4 FGs the rest of the way, two of those set up by short fields after missed 4th downs deep in the Seattle end.

10-29-2023 Ferenc-Liszt Int'l Temp:71 Wind:0-10 None Line:BUD by 4 MVP:Jefferson

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2023 Seattle (1-3)	3	3	0	3	9
2023 Budapest (3-1)	0	7	10	9	26

Passing

SEA: Wentz 36/24 163 Yds 2 Int

BUD: Rodgers 27/20 239 Yds 2 TDs

Rushing

SEA: Walker III 23/112, Wentz 1/6

BUD: Mostert 10/34, Perkins 4/15, Jones II 3/12, Achane 5/8

Receiving

SEA: Lamb 8/84, Walker III 6/12, Renfrow 5/47, Moreau 2/6, Mingo 2/11, Dell 1/3

BUD: Jefferson 7/124 TD, Diggs 6/56, Raymond 3/35, Mostert 2/20 TD, Brown 2/4

Defense

SEA: Mack Sk FF 5-Tk, Joseph-Day Sk 7-Tk, Smoot Sk FF 3-Tk, McDonald IV Sk 4-Tk

BUD: David 13-Tk, Maulet Int 5-Tk, Harris Sk 4-Tk, Dean 8-Tk, Harris Int 3-Tk

Injuries

SEA: Washington 12, Sermon 10, Lattimore 8

BUD: Barno 6, Harris 1

Misc

SEA: McPherson 3/3 FG 52 Lg

BUD: Fold 4/4 FG 45 Lg



23

Jalen Hurts found **DeVonta Smith** open on a long hitch for a 27-yard TD with 4:14 left in the 3rd to give the Spartans the margin they would need to notch their 4th win. It was the second TD pass of the day to Smith, and the third of 4 thrown by Hurts, who finished with a 156.3 passer rating on the day. **Derek Carr** played the 1st half for Iowa and kept it close, passing for 158 yards and 1 TD on just 8 completions. **Russell Wilson** played the 2nd half but was unable to keep pace with the efficient and deadly Spartans' offence. **George Pickens** ended the scoring with a 32-yard TD catch in the 4th.

10-29-2023 Thermopylae Stadium Temp:56 Wind:0-5 None Line:PIC by 10 MVP:Hurts

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2023 Iowa City (2-2)	3	10	10	0	23
2023 Pickering (4-0)	7	7	14	7	35

Passing

ICC: Carr 19/8 158 Yds TD, Wilson 11/8 89 Yds TD
PIC: Hurts 22/17 265 Yds 3 TDs

Rushing

ICC: Johnson 11/137, Wilson 3/25, Carter 4/9
PIC: Gray 9/62, Sanders 14/60 TD, Swift 7/47 TD, Hurts 8/43

Receiving

ICC: Brown 6/137 TD, Kirk 4/65, Carter 3/24, Johnson 2/6 TD, Njoku 1/15
PIC: Smith 6/115 2 TDs, Freiermuth 3/41, Brown 3/65, Ricard 2/10, Swift 1/-3

Defense

ICC: Jewell 16-Tk, Brents 8-Tk
PIC: Elliss Sk 4-Tk

Injuries

ICC: Noteboom 8, Smith 6, St-Juste 3
PIC:

Misc

ICC: Tucker 3/3 FG 40 Lg
PIC:



42

Tom Brady threw 4 TD passes and **Derrick Henry** rushed for 148 yards and a 5-yard TD run in the 2nd as the Excaliburs cut down the Bats by 32 points. After falling behind 14-0, Billtown caught a break when **Britain Covey** fumbled a punt and **Kaleb McGary** recovered for the Bats at the York 12, setting up a 10-yard TD pass from **Justin Herbert** to **Andrew Beck**. But there would be no more breaks for the Bats, as York marched right back with a 67-yard TD drive then added another TD just before the half on a 39-yard pass to **Cole Kmet**. It was no contest in the 2nd half as York coasted to victory

10

10-29-2023 Veteran Field Temp:51 Wind:10-20 None Line:YOR by 13 MVP:Brady HFA:ON

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2023 York (3-1)	7	21	7	7	42
2023 Billtown (0-4)	0	7	3	0	10

Passing

YOR: Brady 22/19 242 Yds 4 TDs
BB: Herbert 23/19 130 Yds TD

Rushing

YOR: Henry 33/148 TD, Williams 1/8, Scott 1/5
BB: Harris 7/47, Herbert 6/45, Spears 4/10, Breida 3/9, Beck 1/1

Receiving

YOR: Kmet 6/109 2 TDs, Williams 5/81, Davis 2/17 TD, Burks 2/18 TD, Henry 2/7
BB: Spears 4/32, Jeudy 4/33, Hodgins 3/12, Harris 3/12, Watkins 2/29, Kincaid 1/0

Defense

YOR: Rousseau 2-Sks 4-Tk, Gary 11-Tk, Asamoah Sk 3-Tk
BB: Davis 11-Tk, Stone FF 5-Tk

Injuries

YOR: Williams 11, Mathis 10, Zuniga 10, Holcomb 7, Ojulari 6, Addison 2
BB: Leonard 10, Fuller 9, Williams 4

Misc

YOR: Covey F-L, Asamoah FR, Scott 1/49 FGR
BB: McGary FR, Hodgins F-L, Fairbairn 1/2 FG 5 Lg



WEEK FOUR

STANDINGS & STATS

2023 EFL - Week 4 Standings

East	W	L	T	Pct	Stk	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Bruxelles	4	0	0	1.000	W4	128	32.0	51	12.8	19.3	2 0 0	2 0 0	3 0 0
New Jersey	2	2	0	.500	W1	73	18.3	64	16.0	2.3	0 2 0	0 2 0	1 2 0
Buffalo	1	3	0	.250	L3	48	12.0	109	27.3	-15.3	1 1 0	1 1 0	1 2 0
Cobb County	1	3	0	.250	L1	75	18.8	107	26.8	-8.0	0 2 0	1 1 0	1 2 0
Central	W	L	T	Pct	Stk	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Peg City	4	0	0	1.000	W4	108	27.0	83	20.8	6.3	2 0 0	1 0 0	3 0 0
Virden	4	0	0	1.000	W4	147	36.8	47	11.8	25.0	3 0 0	1 0 0	3 0 0
Twin Cities	2	2	0	.500	W2	107	26.8	95	23.8	3.0	1 1 0	0 1 0	1 2 0
Charleswood	1	3	0	.250	W1	78	19.5	112	28.0	-8.5	1 2 0	0 1 0	0 3 0
West	W	L	T	Pct	Stk	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Chino	3	1	0	.750	W2	98	24.5	61	15.3	9.3	2 0 0	1 1 0	2 1 0
Iowa City	2	2	0	.500	L2	94	23.5	105	26.3	-2.8	1 0 0	2 0 0	2 1 0
Seattle	1	3	0	.250	L2	39	9.8	105	26.3	-16.5	1 1 0	1 1 0	1 2 0
Billtown	0	4	0	.000	L4	44	11.0	110	27.5	-16.5	0 3 0	0 2 0	0 3 0
North	W	L	T	Pct	Stk	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Cowtown	3	1	0	.750	L1	100	25.0	69	17.3	7.8	1 0 0	2 0 0	3 0 0
Durham	2	2	0	.500	L2	102	25.5	118	29.5	-4.0	1 1 0	1 1 0	2 1 0
Scarborough	1	3	0	.250	L1	103	25.8	108	27.0	-1.3	0 2 0	1 1 0	1 2 0
Sebastian	0	4	0	.000	L4	56	14.0	131	32.8	-18.8	0 1 0	0 2 0	0 3 0
Coastal	W	L	T	Pct	Stk	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Pickering	4	0	0	1.000	W4	143	35.8	74	18.5	17.3	3 0 0	1 0 0	3 0 0
York	3	1	0	.750	W2	136	34.0	81	20.3	13.8	0 1 0	1 0 0	2 1 0
Budapest	3	1	0	.750	W3	89	22.3	65	16.3	6.0	2 0 0	0 1 0	2 1 0
Brooklin	1	3	0	.250	L1	78	19.5	92	23.0	-3.5	1 1 0	0 1 0	1 2 0
South	W	L	T	Pct	Stk	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Georgia	2	2	0	.500	L2	109	27.3	111	27.8	-0.5	1 2 0	2 0 0	2 1 0
East Elmhurst	2	2	0	.500	W1	91	22.8	119	29.8	-7.0	1 0 0	1 1 0	1 2 0
LaPlata	1	3	0	.250	L3	57	14.3	84	21.0	-6.8	1 1 0	1 1 0	1 2 0
Erieau	1	3	0	.250	W1	97	24.3	99	24.8	-0.5	0 2 0	0 2 0	0 3 0

Rushing			G	Att	Yds	Avg	Gain	10	25	50	FD	Lg	Td	Att/G	Yds/G
1	Henry	YOR	4	110	525	4.8	78.2	11	0	0	26	79	5	27.5	131.3
2	Sanders	PIC	4	85	404	4.8	82.4	12	0	0	23	18	5	21.3	101.0
3	Cook	SBE	4	78	387	5.0	79.5	9	0	0	19	64	4	19.5	96.8
4	Wilson	TCT	4	55	371	6.7	74.5	11	0	0	16	52	3	13.8	92.8
5	Jacobs	GEO	4	82	352	4.3	84.1	10	0	0	17	23	1	20.5	88.0
6	Foreman	BRX	4	63	327	5.2	76.2	8	0	0	11	58	1	15.8	81.8
7	Walker III	SEA	4	67	316	4.7	79.1	10	0	0	13	40	1	16.8	79.0
8	Jackson	BUF	4	48	286	6.0	75.0	11	0	0	14	28	1	12.0	71.5
9	Johnson	ICC	4	41	272	6.6	90.2	8	0	0	13	53	1	10.3	68.0
10	Fields	BRX	4	40	271	6.8	77.5	13	0	0	20	56	6	10.0	67.8
11	Jones	NJ	4	46	266	5.8	84.8	11	0	0	24	21	2	11.5	66.5
12	Conner	VV	4	55	259	4.7	80.0	5	0	0	18	23	4	13.8	64.8
13	McCaffrey	CHI	4	66	252	3.8	77.3	3	0	0	16	46	4	16.5	63.0
14	Kamara	PCC	4	42	241	5.7	85.7	8	0	0	10	27	1	10.5	60.3
15	Etienne	CB	4	46	223	4.8	67.4	9	0	0	12	45	0	11.5	55.8
16	Robinson	BRH	4	43	217	5.0	83.7	4	0	0	12	53	1	10.8	54.3
17	Williams	COW	4	70	215	3.1	72.9	5	0	0	12	34	1	17.5	53.8
18	Pickett	CHP	4	24	213	8.9	91.7	8	0	0	14	24	2	6.0	53.3
19	Dillon	BUF	4	55	206	3.7	70.9	6	0	0	13	26	1	13.8	51.5
20	Barkley	PCC	4	61	190	3.1	82.0	3	0	0	9	20	3	15.3	47.5
21	Montgomery	NJ	4	54	178	3.3	87.0	3	0	0	7	11	0	13.5	44.5
22	Brissett	EE	4	22	175	8.0	86.4	6	0	0	9	41	2	5.5	43.8
23	Allen	DTL	4	30	171	5.7	70.0	8	0	0	10	21	0	7.5	42.8
24	Jones	CHI	4	33	168	5.1	63.6	8	0	0	11	27	1	8.3	42.0
25	Mahomes	VV	4	19	166	8.7	94.7	8	0	0	8	20	0	4.8	41.5
26	Chubb	SS	4	55	164	3.0	78.2	3	0	0	10	15	2	13.8	41.0
27	Mixon	LPB	4	52	163	3.1	78.8	2	0	0	9	14	2	13.0	40.8
28	Hurts	PIC	4	32	163	5.1	84.4	8	0	0	14	28	2	8.0	40.8
29	Mostert	BUD	4	33	160	4.8	84.8	4	0	0	9	16	1	8.3	40.0
30	Dobbins	CHP	4	30	154	5.1	80.0	4	0	0	7	44	1	7.5	38.5
31	Murray	COW	3	28	147	5.3	89.3	5	0	0	7	21	0	9.3	49.0
32	Ekeler	BRH	4	31	145	4.7	90.3	4	0	0	9	16	3	7.8	36.3
33	Murray	ERI	4	22	142	6.5	95.5	5	0	0	16	28	2	5.5	35.5
34	Pacheco	CHP	4	42	133	3.2	76.2	1	0	0	4	10	0	10.5	33.3
35	Harris	ERI	4	39	132	3.4	82.1	3	0	0	8	14	2	9.8	33.0
36	Pierce	ERI	4	36	126	3.5	80.6	4	0	0	7	15	1	9.0	31.5
37	Spears	BB	4	25	123	4.9	88.0	4	0	0	9	16	1	6.3	30.8
38	Patterson	BUD	2	16	118	7.4	87.5	2	0	0	6	39	2	8.0	59.0
39	Lawrence	TCT	4	18	112	6.2	88.9	4	0	0	10	24	2	4.5	28.0
40	Stevenson	GEO	4	28	112	4.0	71.4	2	0	0	6	18	0	7.0	28.0
41	Smith	BRH	4	10	106	10.6	100.0	5	1	0	4	29	0	2.5	26.5
42	Allgeier	DTL	3	35	106	3.0	71.4	1	0	0	3	14	1	11.7	35.3
43	Akers	VV	4	28	102	3.6	78.6	3	0	0	7	22	0	7.0	25.5
44	Wilson	ICC	4	13	101	7.8	84.6	5	0	0	6	21	1	3.3	25.3
45	Charbonnet	EE	4	27	101	3.7	81.5	2	0	0	5	12	0	6.8	25.3

Receiving		G	No	Dp	Att	Rac	Yds	Avg	25	50	FD	Lg	Td	Rec/G	Yds/G	
1	Metcalfe	EE	4	31	1	39	59	398	12.8	3	0	21	30	2	7.8	99.5
2	Adams	LPB	4	31	0	45	84	516	16.6	4	0	19	62	1	7.8	129.0
3	Hill	VV	4	27	2	42	144	554	20.5	6	0	20	75	5	6.8	138.5
4	Peoples-Jones	SS	4	25	0	41	34	318	12.7	2	0	16	31	0	6.3	79.5
5	Jeudy	BB	4	25	2	34	47	227	9.1	0	0	15	17	0	6.3	56.8
6	Jefferson	BUD	4	24	1	39	52	334	13.9	3	0	15	38	2	6.0	83.5
7	Cooks	CB	4	23	3	39	65	326	14.2	3	0	17	48	2	5.8	81.5
8	Waddle	ERI	4	23	3	37	35	349	15.2	4	0	14	28	0	5.8	87.3
9	London	BRH	4	23	3	37	79	349	15.2	4	0	19	47	0	5.8	87.3
10	Chase	VV	4	23	2	38	46	311	13.5	2	0	19	28	2	5.8	77.8
11	Kmet	YOR	4	22	0	33	86	254	11.5	2	0	13	39	2	5.5	63.5
12	Moore	TCT	4	22	3	40	60	283	12.9	2	0	18	34	3	5.5	70.8
13	Andrews	ERI	4	22	2	30	42	197	9.0	0	0	10	24	2	5.5	49.3
14	Gage	BUF	4	22	1	40	34	170	7.7	0	0	13	17	2	5.5	42.5
15	Johnson	GEO	4	22	2	39	53	290	13.2	1	0	20	28	4	5.5	72.5
16	McCaffrey	CHI	4	21	2	32	213	162	7.7	1	0	10	26	2	5.3	40.5
17	Godwin	BRX	4	21	0	24	120	329	15.7	4	0	14	52	2	5.3	82.3
18	Kelce	CHP	4	20	2	31	53	206	10.3	0	0	14	18	1	5.0	51.5
19	Hodgins	BB	4	20	2	30	19	181	9.1	1	0	6	29	0	5.0	45.3
20	Lamb	SEA	4	20	1	32	20	246	12.3	1	0	13	29	0	5.0	61.5
21	Flowers	CHI	4	20	1	31	38	226	11.3	0	0	15	21	2	5.0	56.5
22	Allen	NJ	4	20	0	29	15	125	6.3	0	0	10	14	2	5.0	31.3
23	Lazard	COW	4	20	2	29	130	322	16.1	2	0	13	57	2	5.0	80.5
24	Higbee	TCT	4	19	4	32	46	208	10.9	1	0	13	26	2	4.8	52.0
25	Williams	YOR	4	19	0	34	73	266	14.0	2	0	14	39	2	4.8	66.5
26	Ekeler	BRH	4	19	0	29	143	98	5.2	0	0	4	20	2	4.8	24.5
27	Robinson	SBE	4	19	0	24	22	188	9.9	2	0	10	29	2	4.8	47.0
28	Schultz	SS	4	19	1	35	13	129	6.8	0	0	4	10	0	4.8	32.3
29	Jones	SS	4	18	0	30	63	183	10.2	2	0	9	34	1	4.5	45.8
30	Burks	YOR	4	18	1	25	172	301	16.7	2	0	10	66	2	4.5	75.3
31	Evans	COW	4	18	6	35	45	227	12.6	1	0	10	27	2	4.5	56.8
32	Smith	PIC	4	18	3	24	55	324	18.0	4	0	17	30	3	4.5	81.0
33	Kamara	PCC	4	18	1	26	184	158	8.8	0	0	9	24	1	4.5	39.5
34	Campbell	CHI	4	18	1	23	23	191	10.6	1	0	13	29	0	4.5	47.8
35	Boyd	CHI	4	18	1	26	18	206	11.4	0	0	11	17	1	4.5	51.5
36	Pittman Jr.	CB	4	18	0	29	33	254	14.1	1	0	12	28	0	4.5	63.5
37	Kirk	ICC	4	18	2	30	40	220	12.2	1	0	11	31	1	4.5	55.0
38	Thielen	LPB	4	17	0	25	15	132	7.8	0	0	8	12	2	4.3	33.0
39	Goedert	LPB	4	17	1	27	99	231	13.6	2	0	13	37	1	4.3	57.8
40	Stevenson	GEO	4	17	2	25	185	190	11.2	2	0	8	37	0	4.3	47.5
41	St. Brown	YOR	4	16	0	26	28	163	10.2	0	0	9	21	1	4.0	40.8
42	Samuel	NJ	4	16	1	19	58	142	8.9	1	0	9	40	0	4.0	35.5
43	Smith-Schuster	CHP	4	16	2	28	49	185	11.6	1	0	10	34	1	4.0	46.3
44	Engram	BRH	4	16	2	26	45	173	10.8	0	0	9	24	0	4.0	43.3
45	Diggs	BUD	4	16	0	30	58	156	9.8	1	0	7	46	2	4.0	39.0



AROUND THE



With Spats McChad

NEW YORK – Week Four has come and gone, and finally we are beginning to see some good football being played, as evidenced by the sudden uptick in offence compared with weeks one through three. Since there is no longer a proper pre-season (as I define it based on historical precedent of four games, before the Age of Coddling began) the first two or three weeks of the regular season are spent getting into game shape, which means getting used to contact and, as importantly, coordinating the offence.

A defence can get by with good talent and less coaching. Defense, for all its sometimes exotic and deceptive schemes, is still a reactive unit – once they are hardened to contact, they are good to go. A well-oiled, synchronized and properly led offence has the initiative over the defence. Getting that offence tuned up to function under the duress caused by a good defence requires precision and timing, both of which require practice, practice, and more practice.

After three weeks of fumbling and bumbling their way through on-the-job training, it seems like many offences that had been dormant are starting to pick up steam. Charleswood, Cobb County, East Elmhurst, Erieau, York, all had their top offensive performances this week. Not all teams follow this precise trend, of course. It is not like a switch is flipped in Week Four and all teams start to put up more points. Teams evolve, or in some cases, devolve, at different paces.

The Spartans, the Violators and, to a lesser degree, Peg City, hit the ground running to start the season and have not let up. The Crusaders aren't in the same class offensively as the first two, but for them, 27 points per game is a blitzkrieg.

Some teams began to click a week or two earlier, as in the case of Brooklin, Bruxelles, Cowtown, Iowa City, Scarborough and Twin Cities. Perhaps a look back at the pre-season game snaps might reveal a little more participation for their starters.

A few squads have regressed, such as Buffalo sharply, Chino a bit, Durham somewhat, Georgia (still averaging 27 points per game though), and LaPlata falling off a cliff after Week One. Others, like Billtown and Seattle, are still not off the ground and likely never will be. It may become obvious later that no amount of pre-season drilling would have helped them anyway.

And then there are the special cases, like New Jersey, Sebastian and Budapest, who occupy their own individual categories. The Wrecking Balls appear to be afflicted by some kind of home *disease*, as opposed to home sickness. Sebastian...well, they really don't have a baseline to measure from due to their zany fourth down proclivities and a strangely "off" *Kirk Cousins*. Budapest has geared down from the last three seasons, but it is a steady gear all the same, suggesting that 22.3 points per game may be close to top speed for this group. It's hard to imagine this to be their ceiling, given the receiving talent, but there is nervousness that *Aaron Rodgers* may be returning to his Blue Eagle form, necessitating a more conservative game plan.

So, while there is a lot of variation, the overall trend is moving toward more offence, with an average of 50.2 points scored per game in Week Four compared with a steady average of between 43 and 44 points per game over the first three weeks of the season. Except incremental improvement going forward, with injuries to key offensive and defensive players cancelling each other out in the big picture, while turning the fortunes of certain teams in the wrong direction.

JUSTIN TIME

The Bruxelles Bombers is one of a handful of EFL teams on, what I call, "location probation." Despite a pleasantly surprising playoff appearance and victory in the wildcard game, the Bombers are on thin ice financially when compared with most EFL teams. Belgium, like all countries with a strong French presence, has more refined, some would say "decadent," entertainment interests. Football in Belgium is soccer – and soccer is an art as much as it is a sport. The intricacies of American football are lost to this audience in the brutal carnage of twisted knees, snapped Achilles, broken limbs, cracked ribs, and worst of all, concussions. The military art at the core of American football is not recognizable for this non-martial people, who have not fielded a respectable army since the Napoleonic Era. That is why the Bombers in Belgium have been adopted mostly by the rebellious Flemish majority – a slightly more brutish version of the French, but not significantly so. Belgians mostly are selfish and prefer the carnal pleasures over sports. If sport they must, individual sports are preferred. Other than soccer, there is no other team sport that naturally captivates.

Having said that, everyone can get behind a winner – even Belgians. The Bombers' initial public acceptance had more to do with their success on the field as it had to do with embracing a new way of footballing. Over the first four years of their existence in Belgium, the Bombers compiled an impressive 46-18 record and regularly appeared in the post-season. Then came the 7-8-1 campaign of 2021 and, along with the lingering effects of the COVID-19 *Scamdemic*, a near complete collapse of support for the Bombers. It is very likely that the Bombers would be almost anywhere but in Bruxelles this year if not for the 2022 miracle of *Justin Fields*, known affectionately in Belgium as "The Champs" – a play on the French word for "fields," *champs*.

The 2021 first round pick of the Patriots, dealt to the Bombers in his draft year, entered the league with high expectations. I am one of the few who questioned whether he could live up to those expectations, and today I remain unconvinced that Fields ultimately will. But when one combines incredible athletic talent with a brain that has never had to think beyond the synaptic reaction to collegiate level stimuli, the results are “Justin Fields,” an athlete who always looks incredible and has no idea what the hell is going on. He reacts to threats instinctively, according to his own script, bails on plays pre-snap without telling his own teammates, and defences don’t know what to do about it.

I thought that an off-season of opponents looking at the film and his tendencies would be enough to snuff out Bruxelles’ hopes of Fields leading them to new heights this year, but I was wrong. The Bombers’ opponents either did not consider the team to be a threat and thus did not attempt to gameplan for Fields, or they still have not figured out that Fields cannot figure them out, and that their best defence is just to contain him in the pocket and watch the meltdown.

Week Four was a good test of the Bombers’ QB saviour. He faced a new set of eyes in a rare inter-conference match-up against a good defensive coach in **Dave Birdsall**. The Gladiators have not had a glut of defensive talent in recent years, but the unit is well-coached and often performs above expectations. Coupled with what is shaping up to be one of the more potent offences in the league, the first real test of the staying power of the Bombers’ offence was imminent.

With Justin’s cannon arm, elusive and powerful running style and **Kenny Main**’s brain behind him, Fields and the offence passed the test with flying colours. The best of “Fields Football” was on display at DeepWoods Off Coliseum in Richmond Hill Georgia in Week Four, as the Bombers hammered the homies 41-24, leaving a lasting impression on gobsmacked Gladiator fans and Coach Birdsall alike.

“We knew we had to keep their quarterback in the pocket, and we had a plan for that, but that is easier said than done,” a sombre **Dave Birdsall** admitted frankly to media after the game. “He beat the X’s and O’s. With Fields, what you see on film and what you experience in real time on the field are two completely different things.”

That sounds a lot like what was said about **Lamar Jackson** in his first two seasons.

The Bombers executed the same game plan they have been executing since the mid-point of 2022, the Gladiators’ brain trust knew it was coming, and they still couldn’t stop it. Fields tied a league record set by **LaDainian Tomlinson** of the Convicts in 2007 and recently tied by Durham’s **Josh Allen** in 2022, with 5 rushing touchdowns. One of those was a gimme sneak; the other four were designed sweeps from the pistol from 5, 11, 10 and 10 yards out, the kind of runs requiring speed, vision, dexterity, and the power to run through diving arm tackles of defenders. In other words, these were impressive runs. In total, he rushed for 148 yards. Fields did not throw a touchdown pass, but he was highly efficient, completing 14 of 18 passes for 201 yards without a pick.

On the other side, Tua was forced into a comeback posture early. He threw two interceptions and lost a fumble to mar a 400-yard passing day. Georgia trailed 31-0 at halftime, but the panic set in earlier, after the Bombers had taken a 24-0 lead in the second quarter on a short TD drive following Tua’s first interception. Facing 4th & goal at the Bruxelles’ one-yard line, the Glads went for it and **Josh Jacobs** was smothered for a loss by a swarming nine-man box. I can’t blame the coach for trying there, but the Bombers had the three plays before it well-covered. The Glads came away with nothing and to add insult to injury, with 0:25 left in the half, Tua fumbled a snap at his own 24, to set up a 10-yard Fields TD run with 0:15 left to take a 31-point advantage into the final 30 minutes.

Always the gentleman, the Bombers coach made it sound like the game was closer than it was. “We were fortunate to get some early breaks and take advantage of them,” Main stated in the post-game presser. “That put them in a spot where – we have a good defence, you know, it’s up there with any of them – it put them, it put us in that situation where we could come after them. It made them one-dimensional. But, you know, if we don’t get those breaks, it’s a different game. They’re a good team, they put up 24 points in the second half. We weren’t letting them do that. So, I’m happy with the win. Happy to get out of here without a bad injury to Darius.”

The Bombers did suffer a scare in the third quarter when their shutdown corner, **Darius Slay**, hobbled off the field and did not return. But it looks as if he avoided a serious injury, which is great news for a Bomber defence that is ranked in the top five and gave up in this game almost half the *total* number of points they have surrendered through four games this season.

Bruxelles is now 4-0 – one of the league’s four remaining perfect teams. The spirit of Flemish Nationalism is once again burning in the writings of team beat reporter, **Faart von Wijnendaele** of the *Brussels Times*, as he equates the struggle of ‘*The Champs*’ to prove himself to the haters with the centuries-long struggle of the proud Flemish Nation. Belgian fans who had gawked in curiosity back in 2017 at the new team and had gotten caught up in the heady atmosphere of success in the early years, are starting to turn back to the Bombers in the hopes of a return to the mood of revelry in those pre-COVID years. Whereas last year’s playoff run was totally unexpected, in fact unbelievable even as it was happening in real time, this hot and frankly dominant start has instilled real hope for a revival of the franchise and perhaps lasting success in Europe. It comes *Just-in* time!

CONVICTED AS CHARGED

Since the expansion of the league to 24 teams and the introduction of the division vs division rotation in inter-conference play, there is a feel of added novelty to Weeks Four, Seven, Eleven, Fourteen and now Fifteen, when teams from opposite conferences face each other. It reminds me of when Major League Baseball tentatively offered interleague play for the first time. I am always curious to see how teams that rarely face each other fare against each other. It is like a wildcard element, an unknown, is injected into every game script and you have no idea exactly what it will be and how it will affect the game. Film is one thing. But as we learned in Georgia this week, *feel* is something else. When teams face each other often, or even once a year, they develop a feel for each other. That is why one will see wrecks like Seattle push back and sometimes push around better teams in their own division. The division rivalry effect is real. But



Brooklin Hawks' coach, **Tom Jones**, objects to where the ball is placed after **Bijan Robinson** failed to reach the line of gain for the third time in the game on 4th & short. The Hawks' coach went for and missed four fourth down attempts in Chino territory in a 20-17 OT loss.

inter-conference play, there are not many established rivalries, unless the teams have faced each other in the Gale Sayers Game before.

The Week Four tilt between the Convicts and the Hawks was sparkingly fresh. The teams had faced each other just once in the past five years, both were undergoing simultaneous transitions to new quarterbacks, and both were experiencing growing pains in the process. Both would be going in nearly blind to sort out their issues on the field.

Preparing my pre-game analysis for my Podcast, I realized I had little idea of what this game would look like. The oddsmakers seemed to know – they set the Convicts as 8-point favourites – but what they were basing their analysis on was not clear to me. I doubted that the Convicts were that much better, even at home, but I was not sure myself why I thought that. Possibly it was because the Hawks were trending up after a decisive win over East Elmhurst and the Convicts were at least treading water after a loss to the Cubs and a tooth-pulling win over Charleswood. Aside from that, it was simply a gut-feeling, likely based on some negative vibe I was picking up from the surly Chino coach, **Rob Nazar**, contrasted with a very upbeat, bordering on manic, vibe from Hawks coach, **Tom Jones**.

It turns out, my gut was bang on! The Convicts and their fans emerged nervous wrecks after another ugly and painful win, one that took them almost 70 minutes to achieve. The only thing pleasant at all about the 20-17 overtime final for fans at The Big House was the fact of the win itself. The process to get there was almost, I repeat, *almost*, not worth it. No wonder coach Nazar is grumpy all the time. But maybe grumpy, born of a skeptical negativity, carries with it some hidden benefits, even as it makes life miserable for those around Mr. Grumpy. Maybe, just maybe, it introduces a sense of caution and a willingness to take the little wins when they are available and not double down on risk when it is not necessary.

An upbeat maniac coach on the other hand can be both an inspiration and a danger to his team. Football is an emotional sport, but channeling too much emotion can cloud judgement and create emotional blowback. Watching this game unfold, it was clear that the Hawks were moving the ball better and had a pretty solid handle on the **Jared Goff**-led Chino offence. The Hawks looked like a marginally better team – not far better, but good enough to make me confident that they *should* have won this game, had their super-animated coach not put himself in the way.

There is no question that **Tom Jones** is feeling the pressure to deliver with free agent **Geno Smith** at the helm after he unceremoniously waived his successful starter of four years, **Derek Carr**. Carr was beloved by many in Brooklin, both players and fans, and the unforeseen signing of Smith, former star of the CFL's B.C. Lions, came as a shock. People did not know what a Geno Smith-led Hawks team would look like, although it was assumed that equally beloved head coach, **Tom Jones** had an idea. When Brooklin dropped their first two games, and Geno looked a little shaky, doubt began to creep in. Last week's big win over the Irish injected hope and confidence – maybe a little too much of the latter judging from the freewheeling decisions that may have cost Brooklin the game. The Hawks coach is feeling the heat from critics for the failure of his offence to convert on four fourth down gambles in Chino territory, three of

them in very makeable field goal range.

The first happened at 8:28 of the second quarter, a 4th & 1 at the Chino 18-yard line, the score tied, 7-7. The Convicts went all-in to stop the run, bringing in a fifth defensive lineman and a fourth linebacker – a formation usually reserved for well inside the five-yard line. Smith failed to audible and handed off to rookie **Bijan Robinson**, who slammed into the Chino wall for no gain. The second came with 0:55 left in the first half at the Chino 28, the score still tied at 7. The Hawks waived the opportunity to take the lead before the half when **Austin Ekeler** was buried by an avalanche of defenders looking specifically for him. The third came at the 8:39 mark of the third at the Chino 25, no change in the score, Robinson was again engulfed by Convicts just short of the line of gain on 4th & 1; and finally, the fourth ended unhappily as well with Robinson failing to gain an inch on 4th & inches at the Chino 38-yard line at the 3:44 mark of the third, the score still somehow tied, 7-7. This last decision to go for it, on the very edge of **Randy Bullock**'s range with half a yard to go, was defensible. What was less defensible was the decision to hand it off to Robinson, who was swallowed up like Captain Ahab by the malignant Moby Dick-like Chino defence. Is **Geno Smith** so precious that he cannot be risked on a sneak?

When the ice finally broke late in the third quarter with **Harrison Butker**'s 32-yard field goal giving Chino a 10-7 lead, it set the stage for a lively fourth quarter that saw Smith intercepted early yet still manage to give the Hawks the lead on a touchdown pass to **Tyler Conklin** on the next series due to the moribundity of the Chino offence. It was the near mastery of the Convicts by the Brooklin defence on this day that created the incriminating context for the damning criticism of the Brooklin coach later. The Chino offence finally got its act together and re-took the lead on a TD pass from Goff to **Trey Flowers**, but the Hawks sent the game to overtime when Bullock finally got his chance to kick a field goal and nailed it from 40 yards away.

With that field goal, it felt like every chance was being given to the Hawks to nab the win. Sure enough, they won the toss and marched straight down the field and came within 10 yards of winning the game outright, but a sack by **Grady Jarrett** and a pressure-induced errant throw by Smith set up a 4th & goal at the 10. There was a pause in the live game commentary, as the broadcast crew considered briefly the not implausible scenario that Jones would go for it an attempt to put the game away. Sanity prevailed, however, and Jones reluctantly sent Bullock into the field to attempt the go-ahead field goal.

The Football Gods (yes, they exist!) had seen enough of the Hawks' coach's antics, however, and had reserved a cruel punishment. **Za'Darius Smith** bolted through a gaping hole in the Hawks' front line and blocked the kick, giving Chino possession at their own 25. Nine plays and 53 yards later, Butker nailed the game-winning field goal from 40 yards – poetically, it was from the exact same distance as Bullock's blocked attempt.

It was an important win for the Convicts, as it put them alone in first place in the wonky west. This fact should have been the main story coming out of Chino. Instead, it was the summary trial of the Hawks' coach that dominated panels and talk shows. Each individual decision to go for 4th down could be debated on its own merits, but the cumulative effect of four missed opportunities, coupled with the play-calling in those situations, formed an agglomeration of failures that pointed to only one man: **Tom Jones**.

A weary-eyed but still fevered Jones addressed the media after the game, adopting a defensive posture before even fielding a question: "It was a tough loss for us today, but I wouldn't change our approach one bit," he announced defiantly, attempting to get ahead of the narrative. "I have two of the best running backs in football and an offensive line that I trust. I'll bet those horses to get me one yard when we need it every time. Give credit to the Convicts, they threw everything and the kitchen sink at us. But I'd still do it all over again. We won't back down from those challenges. Go Hawks!"

Like an accused felon standing unbowed before the judge and jury, the Hawks coach announced to the whole sports world that he had done nothing wrong and, would in fact, do it all over again. Although there are analysts and fans out there who will defend Jones, citing "analytics" or some other rationale, like "showing confidence" in his offence, or "seizing the opportunity" to put pressure on a Convicts' offence that was not firing on all cylinders, most of the sane and sober sports world, having watched and measured the flow of the game without referring to a chart, saw it differently. *Guilty and convicted as charged!* Good thing the verdict came in after Jones had safely flown from Chino, or he would still be at the Big House, in a cell.

AROUND THE EFL

In the first week of inter-conference play, the Pacific Conference beat the Atlantic Conference 7 games to 5. The showcase game, a repeat of last year's Gale Sayers Game between Virden and Durham, tilted the advantage to the Pacific. Let's look at that one first...

At **TERRODOME** in Virden, the top-billed game of the week lost its competitive lustre early with the opening play bomb from **Patrick Mahomes** to **Tyreek Hill** for a 75-yard touchdown. Hill was covered by rookie corner **Christian Gonzalez**, who was able to keep pace but unable to turn his head in time to see the deadly-accurate spiral drop in over his shoulder to fall neatly into Hill's hands. No need for the Violators' star to break stride. Once the ball was in his possession, the afterburners kicked in for the roadrunner Hill and Gonzalez was left at the wayside like Wile E. Coyote. It was a bold opening statement by Virden, meant to send the message, 'Now it's our turn' to their Thunder Lizard opponents, who had so handily bested them for the championship. **Josh Allen** was intercepted by **Malik Hooker** on Durham's second possession, setting up a 12-yard touchdown pass to **Ja'Marr Chase** to make it 14-0. With the game in danger of slipping away, the Lizards' **Jalen Pitre** picked off Mahomes past midfield. But when all Durham could muster off the turnover was a 47-yard **Cairo Santos** field goal, the trajectory of the match became obvious to all but the most blinkered Durham fan. Mahomes connected with Hill for another long touchdown to end the first half with a 24-3 lead. The Violators' defence that might have given up such a lead last year, held the Thunder Lizards to just 10 points in the second half. Virden racked up 547 yards of offence, held the ball for over 35 minutes while piling up 28 first downs and held Durham to just 217 yards of offence. They dominated in every facet of the game and in the process not only sent a message to their championship foe, but to the entire league.

At St. Charles Stadium in St. Charles, MD, the Braves hoped to rebound at home from two straight road losses while the Wrecking Balls looked to rebound on the road from two home losses. The good **Daniel Jones** showed up this time for New Jersey, completing 19 of 27 passes for 170 yards and a touchdown while rushing for 85 yards and a touchdown to lead the Wrecking Balls to a 30-13 win. Braves' QB **Matt Ryan** threw two interceptions in his first two series, the second a 34-yard pick-six by **Desmond King II** to dig his team a 13-0 hole. By the time 30 minutes of game time had passed, LaPlata trailed 23-0 and Ryan had completed just 2 of 10 passes and been sacked twice. That was enough to prompt coach **Stanley Milton** to give rookie **C.J. Stroud** his first action of the year. Stroud played well, going 14 of 20 for 169 yards, two touchdowns and no interceptions. While this was not enough to save the game, it was enough to give already frustrated St. Charles fans hope for this season. Don't be surprised if we see Stroud again next week.

At True North Field in Winnipeg, two "B-List" undefeated teams faced each other in a game that would decide which one would continue the charade of being elite for another week. After an intense struggle through three quarters the Crusaders broke a 16-all deadlock with 10 fourth quarter points to outlast the Corn Kings 26-16. Two Cowtown turnovers led to 14 Peg City points, including an 11-yard fumble return for a touchdown by **Marlon Humphrey**. The go-ahead, 20-yard field goal by **Younghoe Koo** in the fourth quarter came after the Corn Kings uncharacteristically went for it on 4th & 3 at the Peg City 35, rather than test the trusty leg of **Joey Slye** from 53 yards. "I thought we had a good shot with a screen in that situation," coach **Jim Coghlin** explained afterwards. "They threw the timing off just enough with that bull rush by Allen. But we didn't lose the game because of that. They controlled the line of scrimmage. We couldn't get the run going." This was a tighter game than I expected. The Peg City defence made the difference, as it often does.

At Coyote Field in Marietta, GA, one of the best quarterback duels of the young season ended with **Jacoby Brissett** leading the Irish to a 40-35 win over rookie **Bryce Young** and the Coyotes. Brissett played error-free football, passing for 280 yards and 4 touchdowns and rushing for 92 yards and a touchdown on just 4 carries to earn the game ball. Young matched those touchdown numbers exactly, passing for 430 yards and rushing for 34 in his best performance of the year, by far. But Young also fumbled a snap in the third quarter that led to an **Eddie Pineiro** field goal and a 40-28 Irish lead. That turned out to be a critical 3 points, as the Coyotes would score a touchdown to pull within 5 points and later turn the ball over on downs inside the East Elmhurst 10-yard line with 1:39 left because they needed a touchdown rather than a field goal to stay in the game. Last week, Young notched the first victory of his young career with his worst statistical performance; this week, he had by far the best performance of his career – one of the better single games of the year by any quarterback – but lost. Football is a great and funny game!

At Thermopylae Stadium in Pickering, the Spartans scored touchdowns and the Cubs kicked field goals as the home team outpaced the visitors, 35-23. The only remotely remarkable thing about this game was that the Cubs were able to stay close enough, long enough, to keep the Pickering starters on the field for almost four full quarters. Fourth string running back **Eric Gray** came in to run out the final 8 minutes of the contest, proving that anybody can run effectively in the Spartans' system, even with **Trent Williams** out. **Jalen Hurts** won his second Game MVP of the season with a nearly perfect day, completing 17 of 25 for 265 yards and 3 touchdowns, good for a passer rating of 156.3. The Cubs continued with their QB platoon of **Derek Carr** and **Russell Wilson** – Derell Carlson combined for 247 yards and 2 touchdowns through the air and were turnover free. Both teams scored on five drives, with the difference being that the Spartans found the end zone on all five, while the Cubs settled for 3 field goals and two touchdowns. Even I can do that math.

At Wilhalla Stadium in Minneapolis, the Triumph got by the floundering Swordfish, 24-19, kept afloat by four **Dustin Hopkins** field goals. The closeness of this game was not due to a revival of the Sebastian offence, which gained just 261 yards of offence and committed another fourth down *faux pas*, by going for it on 4th & 2 from their own 19 with the score tied at 6 in the 2nd to gift Hopkins a field goal. That the Triumph had to sweat it out as survivor pool favourite for Week Four was due to a mentally lazy **Trevor Lawrence**, who missed on easy throws and tossed two interceptions, including one run back for a TD by corner **Kendall Fuller** to give the Fish a 19-18 lead in the 4th. **Jeff Wilson** saved the day with a 5-yard TD run with 1:37 left. It's not good when **Jeff Wilson** has to save the day.

At Patriot Place in Charleswood, the Pats stormed back with 17 points in the fourth quarter to win a 31-30 thriller over the Blue Eagles. Let me re-phrase that: 'to win a *close one*, 31-30 over the Blue Eagles.' The word "thriller" does not belong in the same sentence as "Blue Eagles" and "Patriots" as long as both teams look like candidates for the fourth overall pick (that means "last place" with the new lottery rules). The fact that Scarborough blew a 30-17 lead in the final five minutes is not, by itself, surprising – it is that **Kenny Pickett** led the charge, the guy named after the Civil War General whose infamous charge lost the Battle of Gettysburg for the Confederacy. If **Chris Dickinson** had been commanding the Union Army on that day, Jefferson Davis would be a household name today.

At Ferenc-Liszt International Airport Stadium in Budapest, the North Stars trudged slowly and methodically over the Pilots, 26-9. The outcome of this game was never in doubt. What was in doubt was whether Seattle would be able to score on a Budapest defence that had just shutout the far better LaPlata offence last week. The Pilots scored three times – all field goals – thanks to some success in the field position battle and **Tank Dell**'s punt return skills. The North Stars' offence seemed to lose interest after **Aaron Rodgers** connected with **Justin Jefferson** for a 38-yard TD pass to make it 14-6 in the 3rd. It's like they said to themselves, 'yeah, we can still do this,' and decided to take the rest of the game off. Who can blame them? It must be tough staying focused against a team like the Pilots.

And finally, two clunkers: At Veteran Field in Williamsport, the Excaliburs pummelled the Bats 42-10 on the strength of 4 TD passes by **Tom Brady** and another shambolic performance by still win-less Billtown. **Boston Scott** returned a missed *field goal attempt* 48 yards for York off the opening drive to get the game off to a bad start for Billtown and things got worse from there. At Highmark Stadium in Buffalo, **Kyler Murray** "got right" with 3 TDs – 1 passing and 2 rushing – in leading Erieau 31-10 over the Derailers. But is it really getting "right" when a quarterback does well against Buffalo, or is he merely doing his *job*? We'll know if Murray is really on his way back to 2022 form if he can avoid looking like **Trevor Lawrence** did this week when the Caddies face the Fish next week.

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RECORD VS THE SPREAD AFTER WEEK 4:

23-22-3

Jimmy's WEEK FIVE PICKS

SEATTLE @ NEW JERSEY (line – WRECKING BALLS by 6)

INJURIES: Seattle – Marshon Lattimore (OUT), Trey Sermon (OUT), Ar'Darius Washington (IR); New Jersey – Arik Armstead (OUT), David Bakhtiari (OUT).

My record against the spread so far is not living up to my high standards because of outfits like New Jersey. The Wrecking Balls have been two completely different teams – an offensive wasteland at home and an efficient machine on the road. Their record reflects this, as they are win-less at home and perfect on the road. This should be an easy home date for New Jersey, but I struggle to sum up the courage to blindly take a line that screams “take me.” The Pilots’ defence stood up to the North Stars on the road last week, which is ominous for Daniel Jones’ home persona. While Carson Wentz is unlikely to do much damage in return, the Pilots’ defence goes into every game looking to score, and this is a distinct possibility with the likes of Khalil Mack taking aim at David Bakhtiari’s back-up. On the other hand, if New Jersey is to win at home this year, this is the kind of team it will be against. **PICK: NEW JERSEY**

BILLTOWN @ BUFFALO (line – DERAILERS by 4)

INJURIES: Billtown – Joe Thuney (DOUBTFUL), Jordan Fuller (OUT), Shaquille Leonard (OUT), Marcus Williams (OUT); Buffalo – Aaron Donald (OUT), Wan'Dale Robinson (OUT).

The Bats are another team throwing my record into the tank. They were unable to cover the widest spread in the league last week and lost by 32 points. They are deservedly tied for last in the AP Power Rankings as they cannot score and, apparently, can no longer stop anybody. The Derailers have been a train wreck since blowing out the Coyotes on opening day, but at least they have won big against somebody. A line favouring Buffalo here at home is logical, even though the spread is one-quarter of all the points they have scored in their last three games. Aaron Donald is out, which is significant, but whether the Bats can exploit this is questionable. I want to think Justin Herbert can do something on his own, but he hasn't so far. I think all the Derailers need to do here is let Jaycee Horn shut down Jerry Jeudy, put a spy on Herbert, and sit back and watch. But then there's Lamar to consider...hmmm... **PICK: BILLTOWN**

COBB COUNTY @ CHINO (line – CONVICTS by 8)

INJURIES: Cobb County – Jamal Adams (IR), Brian Allen (OUT), Brandon Jones (OUT), Tre'Davous White (OUT), J.T. Woods (OUT); Chino – Felix Anudike-Uzomah (PROBABLE), Chauncey Gardner-Johnson (OUT), Jimmie Ward (OUT).

The Convicts are fortunate that the Hawks' coach was snorting coke last week and gave up three easy field goal chances for a chance at what was behind Door Number Two. In fact, the Convicts just look lucky to be in first place in the West after two very shaky outings. They are still, all things considered, clearly the best team in that sorry division now that the Bats have revealed themselves to be terrible. The Coyotes got their best effort from Bryce Young last week, but they still lost to the Irish. The image of Cobb County as a dark horse is fading fast, but that does not mean they can't be a thorn in the Convicts' side. Young has weapons he is still learning to fire, but only a couple need to hit to do damage. Chino should win again, but in typical desultory fashion. **PICK: COBB COUNTY**

BRUXELLES @ IOWA CITY (line – BOMBERS by 7)

INJURIES: Bruxelles – None; Iowa City – Joe Noteboom (OUT), Tyron Smith (OUT), Benjamin St-Juste (OUT).

It's time to take the Bombers seriously, very seriously. Not that we didn't before, but they didn't simply find a way to win last week; they took it to a very good Glads team and won handily. The Cubs have been a surprise in that they have seriously challenged every team so far and managed to nip two wins in the process. The dual quarterback method has been a success so date as Russell Wilson and Derek Carr jointly lead an offence that specializes in chunk plays and racking up yards. This has masked a tin can defence that

Scraps hard but eventually succumbs to a determined attacker. As such, the Cubs are not on my list of teams most likely to bring Justin Fields down to Earth. The Bomber QB ran for five touchdowns last week, and not the 1-yard variety. **PICK: BRUXELLES**

CHARLESWOOD @ TWIN CITIES (line – TRIUMPH by 8)

INJURIES: Charleswood – Lloyd Cushenberry (OUT), Ronald Darby (OUT), David Ojabo (OUT); **Twin Cities** – Garrett Bradbury (OUT), Avonte Maddox (OUT), Emmanuel Moseley (OUT).

Effort finally paid off for the Pats last week as they rallied to beat Scarborough (who doesn't?). Kenny Pickett showed a side of himself we don't talk about much – his ability to scramble. That, and his best game passing so far, put the Patriots over the top. This week he must repeat at least that level of play for his team to have any chance in the home of a hostile rival who barely scraped by Sebastian and sees the gap widening behind Peg City and Virden. Trevor Lawrence is coming off his worst outing of the year against one of the league's worst defences. He will be looking to re-establish his "franchise" aura by getting the ball more consistently to Tyler Lockett. The Pats' secondary is certainly vulnerable and the Triumph have the aerial weapons to beat it. It won't be close. **PICK: TWIN CITIES**

VIRDEN @ PEG CITY (line – VIOLATORS by 4)

INJURIES: Virden – Frank Clark (QUESTIONABLE), Derwin James (QUESTIONABLE); **Peg City** – Cody Whitehair (OUT).

The undefeated Violators are likely a tad surprised to see themselves fighting for the top of the Central Division this early against an undefeated Peg City. The Crusaders have surprised many with the ability of its offence to consistently score over 25 points per game, a threat that was missing last year. Ryan Tannehill is a stabilizing influence, while Saquon Barkley and Alvin Kamara together present a perpetual, unnerving dual threat in the backfield. The defence remains excellent as well. This means Virden will have its work cut out for it on the road if it wants to stay on top of the heap. Fortunately for Patrick Mahomes, he has excellent third and fourth options at wide receiver and tight end T.J. Hockenson to seek out if he doesn't want to directly challenge Jalen Ramsey and Marlon Humphrey on the corners. But he should not lean too much on the pass, as one-dimensionality will get punished by the Pegs' defence. **PICK: VIRDEN**

GEORGIA @ DURHAM (line – THUNDER LIZARDS by 1)

INJURIES: Georgia – Nate Davis (OUT), Tremaine Edmunds (OUT), Denzel Ward (OUT); **Durham** – David Andrews (PROBABLE), Jeremy Ruckert (OUT).

Both teams have lost two in a row and are coming off humbling losses to the kind of good teams they need to beat if they intend to make noise in the post-season. Durham's offence did not look any better for having all their starters playing, but Josh Allen was able to cut his interceptions down to one. Against Bruxelles, Tua Tagovailoa turned the ball over 3 times for the second straight week and suddenly the Glads are looking like a team in trouble as they face another tough road challenge. Something must give and I am thinking that if Josh Jacobs and Rhamondre Stevenson can keep the Durham pass rush honest, the team doing the giving up will be Durham. Cooper Kupp saw his first action last week and he looked rusty. While he was on the sideline, we saw how out of synch Allen was with his other receivers. Tyler Allgeier hasn't looked good yet either. The Durham defence, on the other hand, can be had. **PICK: GEORGIA**

COWTOWN @ LAPLATA (line – CORN KINGS by 6)

INJURIES: Cowtown – Carlton Davis (OUT), Michael Pierce (OUT), TJ Watt (OUT); **LaPlata** – John Cominsky (OUT).

CJ Stroud was inserted into the game in the second half of last week's loss to New Jersey and the rookie looked pretty good. Will he get the start this week? Was benching Matt Ryan a stern message to him to take care of the ball better; or was it the end of line for the undisputed leader of the legendary Mustangs? I guess we'll see, but not knowing for certain makes gauging the probabilities here much more difficult. Whoever the quarterback is for LaPlata will benefit from not having to worry about TJ Watt, who is out with a torn pectoral. Carlton Davis is also missing, opening a hole in the secondary. On the other side, Jimmy G will be facing a pretty good defence with all its key players healthy. The Corn Kings fared okay last week against a sturdy Crusader defence, so do not expect the Braves 'D' to dominate, but the Corn Kings will certainly be looking for mistakes from the opposing QBs to help them out. **PICK: LAPLATA**

ERIEAU @ SEBASTIAN (line – CADILLAC by 3)

INJURIES: Erieau – Myles Garrett (QUESTIONABLE), Ivan Pace Jr (QUESTIONABLE), Joey Bosa (OUT), Aaron Robinson (IR); **Sebastian** – Austin Johnson (OUT), Marlon Tuipulotu (OUT).

Both squads are coming off much improved performances than we have seen thus far. The Fish, unfortunately, were unable to turn three takeaways into a victory, although they pushed the Triumph to the edge. The Caddies mauled Buffalo, proving at least that there is a more dysfunctional team out there. Kyler Murray won the game ball, and he earned it with his best passing day of the season and finding the end zone with his legs. I hesitate to proclaim he is back to form, but the Swordfish defence will pose no greater test than Buffalo's did. The defence, which has been sketchy, forced a couple more fumbles to remain tied for the league lead, but they have yet to lock

Down the leaky secondary against a strong opponent. Sebastian is trending toward their first win. Expect it here. **PICK: SEBASTIAN**

SCARBOROUGH @ EAST ELMHURST (line – IRISH by 1)

INJURIES: Scarborough – None; East Elmhurst – None.

The Blue Eagles' win over Durham vaulted them up the power rankings, perhaps prematurely. They couldn't hang on against the Pats last week, giving up the game in the final seconds to a Kenny Pickett rally. Joe Burrow was pedestrian against a roast-able Pats' secondary, and now Scarborough fans are hoping Dalvin Cook can somehow save them from another two-win season hell. Jacoby Brissett was the star for the Irish last week against what is thought to be a good Coyote defence. They now have a share of first place in the South and can take temporary ownership with a win here and a Georgia loss. I don't see anything standing in their way. They are at home, with a faint hope brewing in Queen's that anything can happen with their rivals floundering. **PICK: EAST ELMHURST**

PICKERING @ BROOKLIN (line – SPARTANS by 12)

INJURIES: Pickering – None; Brooklin – Raekwon Davis (PROBABLE), Azeez Al-Shaair (OUT), Kwity Paye (OUT).

The Hawks' coach went into seclusion to avoid the barrage of second-guessing following four failed 4th & 1 gambles that likely cost them the game against Chino last week. Sometimes coaches try too hard. Brooklin sits firmly in the basement and cannot afford any more nonsense. Conversely, they have nothing to lose at this point as the prospects of a playoff berth already look exceedingly dim. The Spartans are rolling with confidence on the attack. That has made up for what has been an occasionally porous defence that has lived off takeaways. The Cubs moved the ball and made more of a game of it than expected last week. The Hawks' defence is improved over last year and is head and shoulders above the Cubs, so points will not come as freely. The Spartans will need to get a grip on the line to contain the revamped Hawk's run game. Against a division rival on the road, double digit lines are dangerous. **PICK: BROOKLIN**

BUDAPEST @ YORK (line – EXCALIBURS by 8)

INJURIES: Budapest – Amare Barno (OUT), Shelby Harris (OUT), Sam Williams (OUT). York – Phidarian Mathis (IR), Mario Addison (OUT), Cole Holcomb (OUT), Aziz Ojulari (OUT), Javonte Williams (OUT), Jabari Zuniga (OUT).

The Excaliburs were dismissed by some after failing to maul the Lizards' back-ups three weeks ago. Otherwise, they have looked strong, and the wizards of the wastelands are taking notice. This line jumps out at me as an exceedingly generous against a North Stars' team that just two years ago was setting itself up to supplant the Mustangs as the league's all-time dynasty. The severity of Budapest's Week One loss still lingers in the spread formula, although clearly, they are in the process of returning to a semi-dominant form. The York offence is "quietly" one of the league's most prolific, averaging over 400 yards and exactly 34 points per game. Derrick Henry is working like a pack mule, averaging 27 carries per game, while Tom Brady is distributing the ball to everybody but star wide receiver, Amon-Ra St. Brown. I don't see this pace continuing against the Stars' no.4 ranked defence. Expect a tough slog. **PICK: BUDAPEST**

EFL FOCUS

A weekly tour of Media from around the EFL. This week we focus on.....

BILLTOWN



BLUE EAGLES TRENDING UPWARDS!

(I hope)

By Mike Myers

Native Scarberian, Mike Myers provides his take on Chris Dickinson's take on the Blue Eagles for the 2023 season. Remember; he does write comedy, you know!

2022 Record: 3-14 – Last place in North and out of the playoffs

The Skinny – Scarborough comes into the year having made the playoffs once in the past 6 years and with a record of 29-82-2 in the last 7 years the franchise which always believed in going all in no matter what has decided to allow its strong young Core to develop and even

though it may take a couple of years to bear fruition the seeds are there.

Record Prediction: 6-11 but trending in the right direction again.

The Offense – Joe Burrow leads a group of young exciting speedy receivers who lack experience. Allen Robinson will help to try and take them to the next level. Marvin Mims, Jayden Reed and Jahan Dotson also provide tempo to the hurry up game. Veteran CJ Uzomah will mainly be a blocker at the TE position. The running game of Dalvin Cook and Samaje Perine will be essential to take the heat off of Burrow. The OL is good led by stalwarts Zack Martin, Corey Linsley and Orlando Brown. Dan Moore, Lael Collins and Cam Robinson will be in a rotation along with young Ed Ingram.

The Defense – Superstar Nick Bosa will get his sacks but the line will have trouble stopping the run. Justin Jones and James Smith-Williams will be asked to do this. Neville Gallimore and Dante Fowler provide depth. Elandon Roberts and EJ Speed are the new LB's and will share duties with former #2 overall pick Travon Walker who needs to step it up this year. Talonua Hufanga and Grant Delpit lead a strong Safety group but besides Micheal Davis and Dane Jackson the CB's will have trouble stopping the elite WR's in the EFL.

Special Teams – This will be Mason Crosby's swan song and he is just as reliable as he always been in his 15-year career. 24 yr old Blake Gillikin is the new punter and has a strong leg. Mims, Reed, DeeJay Dallas and Hassan Haskins are a very productive return team with lots of speed capable of big returns.

The Outlook – The Blue Eagles know they are not among the elite yet in the EFL. They hope the youngsters will develop into stars. Football is a funny game where anything can happen year to year so the motto for the team this year is “One small step forward now, One giant step for the future.”



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ELITE FOOTBALL LEAGUE