

WEEK 4



Shooting for the Stars in our 15th Season!

October 31, 2021

NOT DONE YET!

EAST



CENTRAL



WEST



NORTH



COASTAL

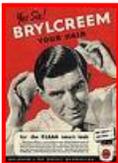


SOUTH



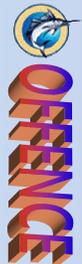
Philip Rivers
Pickering Spartans

Pickering QB, *Philip Rivers* feels exhilaration after connecting with *Sterling Shepard* on a 10-yard TD pass, Rivers' 3rd of the game, in 3rd quarter action in Cobb County. Rivers would later score the winning TD on a 1-yard sneak with 1:28 left in the game to complete a 4-touchdown day and lead the Spartans to a 28-27 rebound win over the Coyotes.



*Who was slick
in Week Four?*

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



Kirk Cousins
QB
Sebastian
Swordfish

31 of 42, 384 Yds, 5 TDs, 0 INTs.
Carried his team to victory again.



Trey Hendrickson
DE
Durham
Thunder Lizards

4 T, 3 SK, 1 FF, 1 INT (0 yds). To top
it off, his FF was returned for a TD.


21

Big plays – a 44-yard cross to **Noah Fant**, an interception by **Jaycee Horn** and a 60-yard catch-and-run by **Robert Woods** – set up two Buffalo TDs and had the visitors leading 14-7 and driving into York territory. But a turnover on downs at the York 39 gave the Swords the chance to regain the momentum. They did, with **Tom Brady** hitting **Mike Williams** on a bomb for a 29-yard TD to tie the game. Nothing went Buffalo's way in the 2nd half. York took a 21-14 lead in the opening drive of the 3rd and an interception by **Jordan Poyer** set up an insurance score as York held on for the win.


28

10-31-2021 Camelot Temp:62 Wind:0-5 None No Line MVP:Henry HFA:ON(3)

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 Buffalo (2-2)	7	7	0	7	21
2021 York (3-1)	7	7	7	7	28

Passing

BUF: Jackson 38/24 307 Yds Int

YOR: Brady 26/15 218 Yds 3 TDs 2 Int

Rushing

BUF: Jackson 10/60 2 TDs, Woods 3/11, Booker 4/10 TD, Davis 4/9

YOR: Henry 28/137

Receiving

BUF: Fant 7/119, Gage 6/51, Woods 5/93, Davis 2/12, Sanders 2/17, Tate 1/12

YOR: Williams 7/95 2 TDs, Henry 3/15 TD, Amendola 2/45, Williams 2/18, Kmet 1/45

Defense

BUF: Sullivan Int 5-Tk, Barnett Sk 4-Tk, Brown 8-Tk, Donald Sk 3-Tk

YOR: Poyer Int 12-Tk

Injuries

BUF: Tartt 6, Brown 5

YOR: Holcomb 3, Dickerson 1

Misc

BUF:

YOR: 11/14 3rd Dwn, 3/3 Red Zn TD


27

Two Brooklin turnovers – a fumble by **Derek Carr** on a sack by **Jerry Hughes** and an interception by **Greg Newsome II** – set up short fields for two New Jersey TD drives that helped stake them to a 24-10 halftime lead. The Hawks got back in it when **Jessie Bates III** ambushed a **Matt Stafford** pass for a pick at the Wrecking Balls' 27. That set up a TD pass to **DeAndre Hopkins** to narrow the gap to 7 points. NJ kicked a 29-yard FG to regain the two-score lead, but the Hawks narrowed the deficit to 3 on Hopkins' 2nd TD. With 1:37 left the Hawks got the ball, but fell short, going four-and-out.


24

10-29-2021 Hawkeye Park Temp:52 Wind:Calm Light Rain Line:NJ by 9 MVP:Stafford HFA:ON(3)

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 New Jersey (2-2)	10	14	0	3	27
2021 Brooklin (1-3)	3	7	7	7	24

Passing

NJ: Stafford 24/16 179 Yds 3 TDs Int

BRH: Carr 43/30 310 Yds 3 TDs Int

Rushing

NJ: Montgomery 22/78, Gallman Jr. 3/7, McKissic 4/4, Burton 1/3

BRH: Scott 13/52, Carr 1/6

Receiving

NJ: McLaurin 4/48 2 TDs, Allen 4/40 TD, Montgomery 3/47, McKissic 2/16, Hogan 1/8

BRH: Hopkins 9/102 2 TDs, Scott 6/36, Engram 4/70, Cobb 4/34, Gronkowski 4/31

Defense

NJ: Adams Sk 6-Tk, Hughes Sk FF 2-Tk, Newsome II Int 3-Tk, Cunningham 8-Tk

BRH: Simmons 8-Tk

Injuries

NJ:

BRH: Lewan 5, Ekeler 3, Vander Esch 2

Misc

NJ: Boswell 2/2 FG Lg 51

BRH: Carr 1-F Lost



Denzel Ward picked off **Ryan Tannehill** at the Pickering 7 as the Coyotes looked to extend their 27-21 lead in the 4th quarter. The Spartans then mounted a back-breaking 20-play, 93-yard drive that took almost 11 minutes off the clock and ended with **Philip Rivers** sneaking it in for a 1-yard TD run to give them a 28-27 lead. The Coyotes took over at their 25 with 1:28 left and no timeouts. After reaching their 46, with 0:16 left, Tannehill connected with **DeVante Parker** for a 36-yard completion in-bounds to the Pickering 18, but was unable to spike the ball in time to stop the clock.

10-29-2021 Coyote Field Temp:68 Wind:0-5 None Line:CB by 16 MVP:Rivers HFA:ON

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 Pickering (1-3)	14	0	7	7	28
2021 Cobb County (3-1)	7	14	6	0	27

Passing

PIC: Rivers 29/22 248 Yds 3 TDs
 CB: Tannehill 31/18 256 Yds TD Int

Rushing

PIC: Swift 16/107, Sanders 20/86, Rivers 3/5 TD
 CB: Breida 7/54, Peterson 10/51 TD, Tannehill 2/15 2 TDs

Receiving

PIC: Shepard 5/62 2 TDs, Ridley 5/82 TD, Sanders 4/37, Brown 4/35, Mooney 2/27
 CB: Parker 8/108 TD, Cook 3/79, Pittman Jr. 3/28, Cooks 2/23, Peterson 1/17

Defense

PIC: Ward Int FF 8-Tk, Howard 8-Tk
 CB: Martinez 12-Tk, Basham FF 9-Tk, White FF 6-Tk

Injuries

PIC: Incognito 7
 CB:

Misc

PIC: 9/13 3rd Down, Rivers 1-F Lost, 446 Yds Off
 CB: 5/7 3rd Down, Golden 1-FR



The Bombers charged out of the gate, with **Leonard Fournette** scoring a TD on the opening drive, the defence stopping **Aaron Rodgers** on the Stars' first possession and **Chase Claypool** snaring a long pass from **Drew Brees** for a 35-yard TD and a 14-0 lead. That would be the home team's high point, as Budapest rallied on defence and began to chip away at the lead, scoring 13 2nd quarter points to draw within 1 point at the half. A 24-yard TD pass to **Stefon Diggs** midway in the 3rd gave Budapest their first lead then Rodgers wrapped up the 4th with 2 more TD passes to win running away.

10-29-2021 The Fortress Temp:77 Wind:Calm Line:BUD by 9 MVP:Rodgers HFA:ON(4

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 Budapest (4-0)	0	13	6	14	33
2021 Bruxelles (1-3)	7	7	3	0	17

Passing

BUD: Rodgers 41/30 412 Yds 4 TDs
 BRX: Brees 36/23 192 Yds TD Int

Rushing

BUD: Wilson Jr. 7/37, Johnson 6/31, Patterson 4/17, Thompson 2/14, Rodgers 3/9
 BRX: Fournette 10/61 TD, Williams 6/42, Mitchell 1/3

Receiving

BUD: Diggs 8/99 TD, Kittle 6/68, Agholor 5/116, Johnson 4/62 TD, Wilson Jr. 3/24 TD
 BRX: Godwin 7/63, Williams 6/38, Claypool 4/58 TD, Fournette 3/20, Valdes-Scantling 1/7

Defense

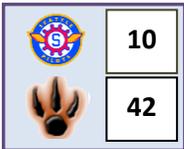
BUD: Goodson 11-Tk, Winovich Sk 4-Tk
 BRX: Clark Sk 4-Tk, Whitehead Sk FF Tk, Fuller 8-Tk, Smith 8-Tk, Walker 8-Tk

Injuries

BUD:
 BRX:

Misc

BUD: 507 Yds Off, Myers 2/2 FG 56 Lg
 BRX: Roberts 2/68 KR



The undefeated Thunder Lizards dominated the win-less Pilots on both sides of the ball in a lop-sided contest. On defence, they held them to just 5 1st downs and 118 net yards of offence, sacking three different QBs a total of 8 times for -55 yards and scoring a TD on a fumble recovery by **Justin Simmons**. That gave the Durham offence all the space it needed to pile up 35 points, 28 of those coming on 4 TD passes by **Josh Allen** and the other on an Allen 1-yard run up the gut. Seattle's lone TD came on the first play of the 2nd half when **Cam Akers** broke a 52-yard run off tackle.

10-29-2021 Jurassic Park Temp:1 Wind: None Line:DTL by 16 MVP:Allen HFA:ON(

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 Seattle (0-4)	0	0	7	3	10
2021 Durham (4-0)	7	21	7	7	42

Passing

SEA: Minshew II 12/9 61 Yds Int, Darnold 2/1 7 Yds, Lance 1/0 0 Yds
 DTL: Allen 40/33 291 Yds 4 TDs Int

Rushing

SEA: Akers 1/52 TD, Darnold 1/19, Mack 5/19, Hunt 4/12, Minshew II 1/2, Lance 2/2
 DTL: Allen 7/29 TD, Hill 11/24, Penny 7/18, Edmonds 8/17

Receiving

SEA: Lamb 4/34, Firkser 2/8, Mims 1/9, Hunt 1/3, Cole Sr. 1/9, Anderson 1/5
 DTL: Waller 8/80 TD, Kupp 6/58 TD, Boyd 5/55 TD, Samuel 5/44, Eskridge 3/24

Defense

SEA: Wright 16-Tk, Mack Sk 4-Tk, Lattimore 8-Tk
 DTL: Hendrickson Int 3-Sks FF 4-Tk, Young 2-Sks 3-Tk

Injuries

SEA:
 DTL: Penny 7

Misc

SEA: 10/65 Pen, 8/55 Sacked, Minshew II 1-F Lost
 DTL: Simmons 1-FR TD, 38:50 TOP, 5/5/0 RedZ



A 76-yard kick return by **Deonte Harris** to open the game led to a 1-yard TD run by **Todd Gurley II** to give Cowtown an early lead. That set off an exchange of TDs as both teams put together sustained drives in response to each other. The teams matched each other score for score through three quarters, with **Russell Wilson** throwing 3 TD passes to Gurley's 3 TD runs to make it 21-21 at the end of the 3rd. Mid-way in the 4th, the Cubs took the lead on a **Joe Mixon** 2-yard TD run. Cowtown failed to answer, missing on 4th & 3 at the Cubs' 16 with 1:37 left, allowing IC to all but run out the clock.

10-29-2021 Joe Ferguson Stadium Temp:66 Wind:0-10 None Line:COW by 4 MVP:Wilson

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 Cowtown (2-2)	7	7	7	0	21
2021 Iowa City (2-2)	7	7	7	7	28

Passing

COW: Fitzpatrick 29/20 204 Yds Int
 ICC: Wilson 20/17 194 Yds 3 TDs Int

Rushing

COW: Murray 7/43, Gurley II 12/41 3 TDs, Fitzpatrick 5/30, Gore 6/21, Harris 1/4
 ICC: Wilson 6/73, Conner 4/23, Carter 3/19, Mixon 9/15 TD

Receiving

COW: Cephus 5/56, Evans 4/34, Gurley II 3/35, Lazard 2/34, Harris 2/11, Murray 1/8
 ICC: Coutee 5/40 TD, Mixon 4/29, Beasley 2/56, Conner 2/20, Lockett 2/23 TD

Defense

COW: Chinn FF 9-Tk, Watt Sk 6-Tk, Smith 9-Tk
 ICC: Rhodes Int 5-Tk, Cox FF 6-Tk

Injuries

COW: Garoppolo 4
 ICC:

Misc

COW: Harris 2/106 KR, 9/13 3rd Down
 ICC: 6/7 3rd Down



This game started as a footrace, with Sebastian gaining the early edge by converting all three of their 1st half possessions to TDs compared with Chino's 2 TDs and a FG. Sebastian increased its lead to 28-17 on the first drive of the 2nd half but were temporarily checked by a **Za'Darius Smith** strip-sack of **Kirk Cousins** that led to a Chino TD. Clinging to a 27-23 lead, a Sebastian defensive stand near mid-field forced a Chino punt that set up an 83-yard TD drive to make it 35-23 for the Fish. The Convicts hung in with a TD, but Cousins' 5th TD pass of the day salted the game away.

10-29-2021 The Big House Temp:91 Wind:0-10 None Line:CHI by 8 MVP:Cousins HFA:ON

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 Sebastian (3-1)	7	14	7	14	42
2021 Chino (3-1)	14	3	6	7	30

Passing

SS: Cousins 42/31 384 Yds 5 TDs
 CHI: Bridgewater 33/24 311 Yds 3 TDs

Rushing

SS: Taylor 9/58, Chubb 8/44 TD
 CHI: Jones II 12/50 TD, McCaffrey 5/8, Bridgewater 1/5

Receiving

SS: Hilton 7/130 2 TDs, Miller 6/59 TD, Ebron 5/47, Akins 5/65 TD, Chubb 3/28
 CHI: Gallup 7/138 TD, Jones Jr. 5/56, Hurst 3/50 2 TDs, Patrick 3/31, Byrd 2/18

Defense

SS:
 CHI: Smith Sk 2-FF 3-Tk, White 9-Tk

Injuries

SS: Massie 4, Clowney 4
 CHI: McCaffrey 8, Prescott 7, Purcell 7, Carter 5, Bouye 5

Misc

SS: Cousins 2-F 1 Lost, 3/3 TD Red Zn
 CHI: 8/42 Pen



The Assassins scored on each of their first 8 possessions, punting for the first time with 2:35 left in the 4th quarter and the game far out of reach of the overmatched Blue Eagles. Las Vegas controlled the play in every aspect, balancing their attack between the pass and the run and completely shutting down **Joe Burrow** and the Scarborough offence. **Justin Herbert** threw 3 TD passes, including a perfect cross to **Jared Cook** into double-coverage that went for 50 yards and put them up 31-0 at the time. **Dalvin Cook** rushed for 168 yards and a TD and safety **Marcus Williams** snared two picks.

10-29-2021 The Eagle's Nest Temp:59 Wind:0-10 None Line:LV by 8 MVP:Cook

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 Las Vegas (4-0)	10	21	10	3	44
2021 Scarborough (1-3)	0	3	0	0	3

Passing

LV: Herbert 27/20 268 Yds 3 TDs
 SBE: Burrow 21/12 97 Yds Int, Lock 7/4 22 Yds Int

Rushing

LV: Cook 31/168 TD, Daniel 9/59, Herbert 1/11 TD, Lewis 1/4
 SBE: Carson 5/22, Dallas 9/13, Gaskin 1/10, Burrow 3/5

Receiving

LV: Pascal 6/66 2 TDs, Cook 4/78 TD, Jeudy 3/35, Hardman 3/27, Guyton 2/21
 SBE: Robinson II 6/76, Ward 4/17, Gaskin 2/8, Uzomah 1/0, Crowder 1/9, Eifert 1/6

Defense

LV: Williams 2-Int Tk
 SBE: Hill FF 11-Tk, Fowler Jr. Sk 5-Tk, Jones 8-Tk, Phillips 8-Tk

Injuries

LV:
 SBE: Jackson 7, Collins 6, Bosa 6, Martin 4

Misc

LV: 40:54 TOP, 511 Yds Off, Fairbairn 3/3 FG 15 Pts
 SBE: 169 Yds off



35
34
James Robinson and **Josh Jacobs** combined for 205 rushing yards and **Ben Roethlisberger** was an efficient 15 of 21 for 201 yards and 4 TDs as the Gladiators upset the Violators at **TERRORDOME**. **Patrick Mahomes** played his heart out, throwing for 378 yards and 5 TDs, but it was not enough to overcome a missed FG and a missed extra point by **Michael Badgely** that ended up being the difference. Virden led at one point 20-7 and entered the 4th quarter up 34-21. But a 4th quarter Galds' rally, sparked by a 36-yard bomb to **Will Fuller V** for a TD, stole the game away.

10-29-2021 TERRORDOME Temp:66 Wind:Calm None Line:VV by 4 MVP:Roethlisberg HFA:ON(3)

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 Georgia (1-2-1)	7	7	7	14	35
2021 Virden (1-3)	14	6	14	0	34

Passing

GEO: Roethlisberger 21/15 201 Yds 4 TDs
VV: Mahomes 35/25 378 Yds 5 TDs

Rushing

GEO: Robinson 21/114, Jacobs 13/91 TD
VV: Elliott 19/111, Mahomes 1/3

Receiving

GEO: Landry 5/31 TD, Johnson 3/36 TD, Fuller V 3/107 2 TDs, Fells 1/3, Bernard 1/11
VV: Brown 8/99 2 TDs, Hockenson 4/45 2 TDs, Green 4/45, Chase 4/138 TD, Elliott 3/18

Defense

GEO: Brown Sk FF Tk, Lewis 8-Tk
VV: Trevathan 8-Tk

Injuries

GEO: Ingram III 6
VV: Ximines 8, Osemele 8, Barr 7, Hooker 7, Thomas 6, Ford 6

Misc

GEO: 3/3 Red Zn TD
VV: 4/4 Red Zn TD, Badgley 0/1 FGA 4/5 XPA



35
14
A turnover on downs at mid-field by the Cadillac allowed the Triumph to daw first blood on an 18-yard TD pass from **Mitch Trubisky** to **DJ Moore**. **Joey Bosa** forced a Trubisky fumble on the next series that Erieau recovered, leading to a **Kyle Murray** 18-yd scramble for the equalizing TD. Bold Triumph gambles on their next two series, converting a 4th & 2 at the Erieau 21 and scoring on the next play then passing for a TD from 10 yards out with no time left in the 1st half, gave them a 21-7 lead. The sluggish Erieau offence could not keep up the pace, handing the Triumph the easy win.

10-26-2021 Temp:66 Wind:5-15 None Line:TCT by 3 MVP:Trubisky HFA:ON(0)

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 Twin Cities (2-2)	0	21	7	7	35
2021 Erieau (1-3)	0	7	0	7	14

Passing

TCT: Trubisky 27/18 191 Yds 4 TDs
ERI: Murray 38/24 170 Yds

Rushing

TCT: Gordon III 18/142, Trubisky 3/34, White 1/22, Edwards-Helaire 1/17 TD
ERI: Murray 9/77 TD, Harris 11/39, Hines 2/29 TD, Waddle 1/6, Moss 1/1

Receiving

TCT: Brown 5/48 TD, Gordon III 5/33 TD, Moore 4/82 2 TDs, White 3/22, Trautman 1/6
ERI: Andrews 8/64, Harris 4/16, Higgins 3/27, Henry 3/35, Hines 2/2, Moss 1/6

Defense

TCT: Savage 11-Tk, Wagner 10-Tk
ERI: Bosa Sk FF 5-Tk

Injuries

TCT: Golladay 7, Maddox 1
ERI: Poole 4, Smith 3

Misc

TCT: Trubisky 1-F Lost, 0/6 3rd Dn, 3/5 4th Dn
ERI: 0/4 4th Dn



The Patriots led 17-14 at the half on a 36-yard **Wil Lutz** FG, recovering well from a 14-7 deficit following a turnover on downs at their own 33 in the 1st. Charleswood added to their lead in the 3rd with a 10-yard scramble for a TD by **DeShaun Watson** to make it 24-14. The Pink Panthers counter-struck in the 4th with a 2-yard TD pass from **Matt Ryan** to **Davante Adams** then took the lead with just 2:15 left on a 7-yard pitch to **Kenyan Drake**. Trailing by 4 points, Watson drove the Pats 75 yards in 11 fast-paced plays, capping the two-minute drill with a 7-yard TD pass to **Travis Kelce** for the win.

10-29-2021 GM Megadome Temp:72 Wind:Calm Line:CHP by 6 MVP:Watson HFA:ON(4)

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 Charleswood (3-1)	7	10	7	7	31
2021 Oshawa (0-3-1)	7	7	0	14	28

Passing

CHP: Watson 43/28 355 Yds 3 TDs
 OSH: Ryan 33/22 186 Yds 3 TDs Int

Rushing

CHP: Watson 6/43 TD, Kamara 9/11, Hill 3/9, Dobbins 2/8
 OSH: Drake 16/111 TD, Singletary 4/33, Ryan 2/2

Receiving

CHP: Metcalf 8/113, Cooper 6/96, Kamara 6/26, Kelce 5/79 2 TDs, Smith-Schuster 2/30 TD
 OSH: Adams 8/68 TD, Goedert 5/50 TD, Schultz 3/22 TD, Drake 3/17, Singletary 1/6

Defense

CHP: Fuller Int 4-Tk, Sweat Sk 4-Tk
 OSH: Reddick 2-Sks 5-Tk, Ward 11-Tk

Injuries

CHP: Trufant 5, Tunsil 1
 OSH: Edelman 7, Williams 6

Misc

CHP: Lutz 1/1 FGA 4/4 XPA
 OSH: 4/4 Red Zn TD



The Crusaders grabbed the early lead on a 12-yard TD pass from **Mac Jones** to **Laviska Shenault Jr** to cap a 75-yard opening drive. It was the start of a lively 1st half that saw several lead changes before the Irish stepped in front to stay after **Jaylon Smith** intercepted Jones and returned it 41 yards to the Crusader red zone with 0:24 left in the 1st half. **Rodrigo Blankenship** kicked a 25-yard FG as time expired in the 2nd for what would turn out to be the winning points. The Irish 'D' shutout the Crusaders in the 2nd half, allowing just 2 1st downs, while tacking on 13 more points to cruise to the win

10-26-2021 True North Field Temp:72 Wind:Calm Line:EE by 9 MVP:Mayfield HFA:O

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 East Elmhurst (3-1)	7	13	10	3	33
2021 Peg City (0-4)	7	10	0	0	17

Passing

EE: Mayfield 28/21 251 Yds 2 TDs
 PCC: Jones 33/19 230 Yds TD 2 Int

Rushing

EE: Jones 17/72 TD, Hubbard 13/28, Thielen 1/23, Hill 1/17, Mayfield 3/14
 PCC: Barkley 7/18, Aiyuk 1/12, Cohen 6/7, Jones 3/7 TD, Ingold 1/2

Receiving

EE: Hill 6/71 TD, Thielen 3/41, Hubbard 3/19 TD, Everett 3/28, Robinson 2/18
 PCC: Shenault Jr. 4/77 TD, Aiyuk 4/61, Barkley 3/3, Higbee 3/38, Michel 1/6

Defense

EE: Barrett Sk FF 7-Tk, Smith Int 8-Tk, Harmon Int 3-Tk
 PCC: Tuioti-Mariner Sk 8-Tk, Okereke 11-Tk

Injuries

EE:
 PCC: Jones 8, Thompson 7, Bush 6, Bullard 5, Allen 5, Rapp 2

Misc

EE: 38:12 TOP
 PCC: Cohen 1-F Lost, Jones,M 1-F Lost



WEEK FOUR

STANDINGS & STATS

EFL 2021 - Week 4 Standings

East	W	L	T	Pct	Stk	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Cobb County	3	1	0	.750	L1	110	27.5	53	13.3	14.3	2 1 0	1 0 0	3 0 0
Buffalo	2	2	0	.500	L1	89	22.3	76	19.0	3.3	1 0 0	1 0 0	2 1 0
New Jersey	2	2	0	.500	W2	76	19.0	111	27.8	-8.8	0 2 0	0 1 0	1 2 0
Bruxelles	1	3	0	.250	L1	85	21.3	121	30.3	-9.0	1 2 0	0 1 0	1 2 0
Central	W	L	T	Pct	Stk	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Charleswood	3	1	0	.750	W1	86	21.5	100	25.0	-3.5	1 0 0	2 0 0	2 1 0
Twin Cities	2	2	0	.500	W1	88	22.0	66	16.5	5.5	1 1 0	1 1 0	1 2 0
Viriden	1	3	0	.250	L2	105	26.3	96	24.0	2.3	0 2 0	1 1 0	1 2 0
Peg City	0	4	0	.000	L4	70	17.5	126	31.5	-14.0	0 2 0	0 2 0	0 3 0
West	W	L	T	Pct	Stk	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Las Vegas	4	0	0	1.000	W4	119	29.8	53	13.3	16.5	2 0 0	2 0 0	3 0 0
Chino	3	1	0	.750	L1	121	30.3	93	23.3	7.0	1 1 0	2 0 0	3 0 0
Iowa City	2	2	0	.500	W1	107	26.8	102	25.5	1.3	1 1 0	0 2 0	1 2 0
Seattle	0	4	0	.000	L4	48	12.0	117	29.3	-17.3	0 2 0	0 2 0	0 3 0
North	W	L	T	Pct	Stk	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Durham	4	0	0	1.000	W4	156	39.0	59	14.8	24.3	3 0 0	1 0 0	3 0 0
Sebastian	3	1	0	.750	W1	137	34.3	130	32.5	1.8	1 1 0	1 0 0	2 1 0
Cowtown	2	2	0	.500	L1	89	22.3	83	20.8	1.5	1 0 0	0 1 0	2 1 0
Scarborough	1	3	0	.250	L2	59	14.8	112	28.0	-13.3	1 1 0	0 1 0	1 2 0
Coastal	W	L	T	Pct	Stk	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Budapest	4	0	0	1.000	W4	141	35.3	59	14.8	20.5	2 0 0	2 0 0	3 0 0
York	3	1	0	.750	W1	97	24.3	108	27.0	-2.8	2 0 0	2 0 0	2 1 0
Brooklin	1	3	0	.250	L1	83	20.8	108	27.0	-6.3	1 1 0	0 2 0	1 2 0
Pickering	1	3	0	.250	W1	62	15.5	93	23.3	-7.8	0 2 0	0 2 0	0 3 0
South	W	L	T	Pct	Stk	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
East Elmhurst	3	1	0	.750	W2	88	22.0	74	18.5	3.5	0 1 0	2 0 0	2 1 0
Georgia	1	2	1	.375	W1	107	26.8	124	31.0	-4.3	0 2 0	0 1 1	0 2 1
Erieau	1	3	0	.250	L3	59	14.8	86	21.5	-6.8	0 2 0	1 1 0	1 2 0
Oshawa	0	3	1	.125	L1	83	20.8	115	28.8	-8.0	0 2 1	0 1 1	0 2 1

EFL 2021 - Week 4 Passing Leaders

			Att	Cmp	C%	Yards	In	I%	Lg	TD	TD%	Rate
1	Rodgers,A	BUD	137	108	78.8	1395	1	0.7	71	14	10.2	140.1
2	Cousins	SS	133	96	72.2	1286	3	2.3	41	12	9.0	123.2
3	Bridgewater	CHI	48	35	72.9	427	0	0.0	43	3	6.3	120.7
4	Allen,J	DTL	150	106	70.7	1307	2	1.3	75	13	8.7	120.6
5	Wilson,R	ICC	105	80	76.2	895	3	2.9	54	9	8.6	117.8
6	Mahomes	VV	162	109	67.3	1481	1	0.6	72	11	6.8	116.3
7	Prescott	CHI	88	65	73.9	754	0	0.0	75	4	4.5	114.5
8	Watson,D	CHP	140	93	66.4	1095	1	0.7	31	10	7.1	110.9
9	Herbert	LV	128	93	72.7	981	2	1.6	50	8	6.3	108.9
10	Roethlisbe	GEO	144	97	67.4	1001	1	0.7	60	10	6.9	107.4
11	Trubisky	TCT	103	64	62.1	717	1	1.0	40	8	7.8	104.7
12	Tannehill	CB	105	68	64.8	930	3	2.9	55	7	6.7	103.3
13	Mayfield	EE	112	77	68.8	888	3	2.7	48	6	5.4	99.1
14	Brady	YOR	120	80	66.7	969	5	4.2	57	9	7.5	98.9
15	Fitzpatric	COW	88	60	68.2	702	2	2.3	52	4	4.5	97.8
16	Jackson,L	BUF	129	85	65.9	865	1	0.8	60	6	4.7	97.2
17	Carr,D	BRH	121	73	60.3	782	2	1.7	42	7	5.8	91.7
18	Stafford	NJ	129	84	65.1	1004	4	3.1	54	6	4.7	91.4
19	Ryan,M	OSH	154	100	64.9	922	5	3.2	28	9	5.8	87.1
20	Jones,M	PCC	129	77	59.7	914	4	3.1	48	6	4.7	83.9
21	Burrow	SBE	106	62	58.5	586	1	0.9	32	4	3.8	82.5
22	Brees	BRX	100	54	54.0	633	2	2.0	75	5	5.0	81.8
23	Rivers,P	PIC	107	57	53.3	640	2	1.9	36	4	3.7	76.1
24	Minshew II	SEA	63	37	58.7	401	3	4.8	62	3	4.8	73.6
25	Murray,K	ERI	112	66	58.9	520	0	0.0	24	1	0.9	73.5

EFL 2021 - Week 4 Kick Return Leaders

EFL 2021 - Week 4 Punt Return Leaders

		No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD			No	Fc	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD		
1	Roberts,A	BRX	7	256	36.6	46	0	1	Lamb	SEA	5	3	74	14.8	38	0
2	Harris,D	COW	6	212	35.3	76	0	2	Harris,D	COW	7	0	85	12.1	18	0
3	Agnew	SEA	13	443	34.1	68	0	3	Hill,K	SBE	7	1	61	8.7	25	0
4	Johnson,D	SBE	6	177	29.5	41	0	4	Proche	DTL	16	3	136	8.5	20	0
5	Patterson	BUD	7	192	27.4	39	0	5	Moore	EE	5	3	42	8.4	16	0
6	Homer	YOR	6	153	25.5	36	0	6	Taylor,T	CHP	8	2	62	7.8	16	0
7	Scott,B	BRH	5	126	25.2	32	0	7	Spencer,D	NJ	8	1	59	7.4	11	0
8	Carter,D	BUF	8	196	24.5	48	0	8	Peoples-Jo	SS	6	4	38	6.3	14	0
9	Rodgers,I	CHP	7	171	24.4	34	0	9	Roberts,A	BRX	5	0	27	5.4	14	0
10	Atwell	OSH	7	170	24.3	38	0	10	Hardman	LV	5	6	25	5.0	9	0
11	Webster,N	NJ	5	119	23.8	30	0	11	Raymond	CB	6	1	19	3.2	6	0
12	Duvernay	TCT	6	124	20.7	35	0	12	Cooper,P	VV	3	6	52	17.3	41	0
13	Abdullah	CHI	7	137	19.6	36	0	13	Peppers	ERI	3	2	49	16.3	22	0
14	Hubbard	EE	4	131	32.8	39	0	14	Grant,J	CHI	4	2	55	13.8	20	0
15	Adderley	VV	3	89	29.7	33	0	15	Atwell	OSH	2	0	23	11.5	17	0
16	Barner	PIC	4	118	29.5	39	0	16	Renfrow	SEA	2	2	21	10.5	14	0
17	Hill	DTL	3	86	28.7	38	0	17	Barner	PIC	3	5	31	10.3	14	0
18	Davis,A	PCC	2	47	23.5	28	0	18	Erickson	BUF	2	2	20	10.0	13	0
19	Waddle	ERI	3	69	23.0	30	0	19	Tate,G	BRH	3	2	28	9.3	19	0
20	Carter	ICC	3	64	21.3	30	0	20	Johnson,D	GEO	2	1	18	9.0	12	0
21	Edmonds	DTL	1	20	20.0	20	0	21	Kirk	ICC	4	0	25	6.3	10	0
22	Dulin	LV	1	19	19.0	19	0	22	Carter,D	BUF	1	2	6	6.0	6	0
23	Bernard,G	GEO	1	18	18.0	18	0	23	Rodgers,Am	BUD	4	6	23	5.8	18	0
24	Lewis,D	LV	2	34	17.0	31	0	24	Fuller V	GEO	1	1	4	4.0	4	0
25	James,R	GEO	2	31	15.5	21	0	25	Powell	EE	3	2	5	1.7	4	0

EFL 2021 - Week 4 Rushing Leaders

		Att	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD	
1	Henry,D	YOR	95	483	5.1	48	2
2	Cook,D	LV	83	427	5.1	49	4
3	Robinson,J	GEO	73	427	5.8	52	2
4	Gordon III	TCT	80	423	5.3	45	0
5	Elliott,E	VV	63	313	5.0	28	3
6	Sanders,M	PIC	66	301	4.6	14	0
7	Jones,A	EE	51	279	5.5	22	3
8	Conner	ICC	41	278	6.8	47	0
9	Drake	OSH	54	270	5.0	18	1
10	Harris,D	CB	36	249	6.9	35	2
11	Taylor,J	SS	40	248	6.2	32	2
12	Ekeler	BRH	43	246	5.7	21	0
13	Chubb,N	SS	51	238	4.7	47	3
14	Murray,K	ERI	35	206	5.9	19	2
15	Wilson,R	ICC	24	192	8.0	20	1
16	Montgomery	NJ	62	192	3.1	18	0
17	Harris	ERI	52	191	3.7	27	1
18	Jackson,L	BUF	31	181	5.8	32	3
19	Carson	SBE	40	180	4.5	11	1
20	Peterson,A	CB	39	176	4.5	16	2
21	Davis,M	BUF	40	172	4.3	19	1
22	Scott,B	BRH	32	169	5.3	20	1
23	Jones II	CHI	44	169	3.8	17	3
24	Swift	PIC	28	159	5.7	24	2
25	Tannehill	CB	12	156	13.0	43	4
26	Allen,J	DTL	24	155	6.5	27	6
27	Gurley II	COW	40	136	3.4	11	4
28	Williams,J	BRX	28	135	4.8	18	0
29	Hubbard	EE	39	123	3.2	16	1
30	Fournette	BRX	27	119	4.4	15	1

EFL 2021 - Week 4 Receiving Leaders

		No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD	
1	Adams,D	OSH	35	318	9.1	28	5
2	Gallup	CHI	32	508	15.9	75	3
3	Diggs,S	BUD	28	341	12.2	46	3
4	Sanders,E	BUF	27	325	12.0	37	3
5	Waller	DTL	26	340	13.1	43	4
6	Johnson,D	GEO	25	236	9.4	20	4
7	Jefferson	BUD	25	360	14.4	31	4
8	Chase	VV	24	467	19.5	72	3
9	Allen,K	NJ	23	253	11.0	35	3
10	Metcalf	CHP	23	329	14.3	25	1
11	Brown,J	VV	23	330	14.3	34	2
12	Hilton	SS	22	377	17.1	38	5
13	McLaurin	NJ	21	304	14.5	54	3
14	Shenault J	PCC	21	296	14.1	42	2
15	Kelce,T	CHP	21	284	13.5	31	5
16	Kupp	DTL	20	357	17.9	75	3
17	Lazard	COW	20	263	13.2	28	3
18	Hill,T	EE	19	250	13.2	23	2
19	Landry	GEO	19	181	9.5	38	2
20	Aiyuk	PCC	19	292	15.4	48	3
21	Hockenson	VV	19	211	11.1	22	4
22	Lockett	ICC	18	188	10.4	19	3
23	Pascal	LV	18	227	12.6	22	3
24	Hopkins,D	BRH	18	223	12.4	28	3
25	Evans,M	COW	18	239	13.3	41	2
26	Cooper,A	CHP	18	237	13.2	24	1
27	Robinson,J	GEO	18	51	2.8	11	0
28	Goedert	OSH	18	173	9.6	20	2
29	Robinson,A	SBE	18	199	11.1	30	1
30	Andrews,M	ERI	17	153	9.0	16	0



AROUND THE



With Spats McChad

NEW YORK – The 2021 season has reached the quarter post in what feels like a blink of an eye. As life as we once knew it struggles to re-emerge from the wreckage of the pandemic, I know I am not alone in feeling that time is waking up as well and carrying us forward faster than our recently hibernating spirits can handle.

As a season milestone, the completion of Week Four compels us to acknowledge this quick passage of time and reminds us that the halfway point of the season is just four more weeks away. Therefore, it is critical that my projections for the regular season be put on the record now, before the season progresses any further and they become redundant to the reality that anyone can see. In other words, it is time to demonstrate my genius now, before the future is any more obvious.

THE FUTURE

Atlantic Bullies – It is a long season and anything can happen but it is safe to say that **Durham** and **Budapest** are both in it for the long haul. Barring a rash of injuries – or an injury to **Josh Allen** or **Aaron Rodgers** – either team could be staring at their first loss in Week 13 when they are scheduled to face each other. Yes, they are that good and the state of the general competition in the Atlantic Conference that unremarkable. If one or both fall to anyone else before or after that Conference Final preview, the victimizer(s) will likely come from other conference. Budapest or Durham will represent the Atlantic conference in the Gale Sayers Game.

Atlantic Challengers – **Oshawa** is off to a poor start, poor enough to make a difference in the natural order in the end. Still, there is enough talent there that I am willing to go out on a limb and predict a rebound that will snare them a playoff berth if not a photo finish division title. Once in the post-season tournament, they have the experienced personnel to knock down one or both of the bullies. The pre-season hype around **Pickering** appeared to be the usual puffery until they upset the Coyotes this week. Although they already have no hope of catching the North Stars, expect them to stabilize in the upcoming weeks and finish in the playoffs.

East Elmhurst is more than a curious novelty now that they have patched some holes at the trade deadline. I don't think it will be enough but with a light schedule and some sleek toys on the roster, a playoff berth as a wildcard or a division winner looks likely.

York cannot be discounted thanks to **Derrick Henry** and **Tom Brady** and a spirited defence. However, their lack of explosiveness means every game has to be a grind in order for them to win. Nevertheless, expect York to bring opponents down to their speed enough to threaten but not crack the playoff circle.

Atlantic Pretenders – **Sebastian** looks stronger than expected on offence out of the gate and I confess to being impressed, possibly for the first time ever, with **Russ Lemmon**'s play-calling. I don't see this success lasting. They will burn out quickly trying to bail out their sinking defence. **Erieau**, the team that got my attention in week one, sadly appears to be reverting rather rapidly to its customary clunky execution on offence. Plays that should work, don't; and bad play calls blow-up. I look for the spark on the roster to help **Kyler Murray** change that and I can't find it. The post-season party is over in **Cowtown** this year. The team does not have the offensive talent to compete for a playoff spot and will have to rely on a defence that is good, but not good enough.

Atlantic Bottom-Feeders – In the pre-season **Scarborough** looked to me to be a boom-or-bust team. Now I am ready to declare them a bust. The "boom" part was never going to be loud anyway, so the bust will be pretty brutal. The test of **DeAndre Hopkins** as a stand-alone feature of the **Brooklin** offence is not going very well. As a result, the Hawks started relying on **Austin Ekeler** to be a workhorse and he has predictably broken down already. This year, desire won't be enough for the Hawks. The return of **Ben Roethlisberger** has elevated **Georgia** to pain-in-the-butt stature and not much more. The thing they did to Virden this week they will do again, just enough to give them the best last-place season highlight reel.

Pacific Bullies – The sole 4-0 team in the conference is a natural bully by temperament but I question whether **Las Vegas** can ultimately rule the schoolyard without **Michael Thomas** in the line-up and healthy. **Charleswood** and its high-powered offence under **DeShaun Watson** will have something to say about the Assassins' challenge for conference dominance as will **Iowa City** under the magical direction of **Russell Wilson**. We learned last year not to underestimate **Cobb County** but the bitch-slap they took from the Spartans this week tarnished their bully image. This is a temporary setback. The team's well-coached talent will ultimately carve a path to the Conference Final to face one of the other three.

Pacific Challengers – **New Jersey** should be pushing teams around but, given their long-established record of under-achievement, the best we can expect from them is to lurk around the edges of the playoff race and hopefully sneak in as a wildcard. **Chino** started well but the absence of **Dak Prescott** will affect all areas of the team, including the defence. Given their history of over-achievement, expect them to mathematically stay in the playoff hunt up until the final week. **Virden** remains a challenger by virtue of their

quarterback and the skeletal remnants of the team that made it to the final last year. Their hearts aren't in it, however, so don't expect them to make the playoffs, even though they should.

Pacific Pretenders – **Buffalo** maintains the aura of a challenger due to the presence of *Lamar Jackson* and *Aaron Donald* on the roster, but the rest of the team's subordination to them, coupled with scattershot schemes, ensures a 500 finish at best. The signing of *Drew Brees* was the final, desperate gambit to keep **Bruxelles** in the playoff picture and their Belgian fans in the stands. It isn't working yet and likely won't. Coming off an unexpected worst season ever in 2020, **Twin Cities** is a pretender of an entirely different kind this year: A pretend cellar-dweller with the output of a pretend playoff contender (think about it).

Pacific Bottom-Feeders – **Seattle** looked poised to take a step forward after a competitive showing last year, but the calamitous quarterback situation there has the Pilots in an irreversible nose dive. **Peg City** lost its season during the off-season. While it would probably be more humane for the players and fans to forfeit every game, justice must be served and the coach and GM forced to oversee every depressing play of the longest 16-game season ever recorded.

You might have noticed there are no records or specific finishes in any of the above summaries. I don't do records – I do relativity. The Pacific Conference will be more interesting than the Atlantic this year because the top teams are good but the gap separating them is slim. Charleswood *should* be the no.1 seed in the Pacific, but the ossified playbook that won them two championships is passé, as Cobb County demonstrated in Week Three. The Coyotes, meanwhile, are probably more naturally the no.3 or no.4 seed but expect them to again outperform expectations, finishing no less than no.2 and, just as likely, no.1. Iowa City will eventually prevail over the Assassins as their first-year starting quarterback eventually wilts under the heat of the playoff spotlight but fail, as they almost always do, to make the conference final. So, Coyotes over the Pats it is to represent the Pacific in Gale Sayers XV.

In the Atlantic, I'll go straight to the bottom line and address Budapest and Durham. Either is worthy of winning it all but only one will get a shot in the final tilt. Durham has the better defence this year and the better team overall around Josh Allen. But the North Stars have a confident and experienced Aaron Rodgers who I just cannot see getting beaten by Allen. Budapest goes to the final where they will handle the Coyotes without much difficulty.

So, there you have it! Budapest repeats. The only real wildcard is the effect of whacky new COVID-19 protocols. I bear no responsibility for my predictions being off if the "East Elmhurst Flu" hits any of the important teams at a critical time.

PROLOGUE (The Man)

[Note: The following is a free dramatization of real-life events]

It was a cold and wet evening's night outside the *Hellenic Cultural Centre* in Pickering. The rain that had fallen heavily during the day had tapered off to a light drizzle but this respite from the harsher sentence of Mother Nature brought no comfort to the man in the back seat of the black Mercedes limousine as it pulled into the dimly-lit parking lot and parked in a reserved spot beside the main entrance.

The driver promptly got out of the car and scurried over to the rear passenger side. He paused briefly to open an umbrella then swung open the passenger door, standing aside as he did so while holding the umbrella aloft over the opening. The man in the back laboured to rise from the sunken comfort of the plush leather seats. He gripped the door frame and with a grunt pulled himself up. The driver extended his hand.

"Let me help you, sir," he said.

"That's okay, Alexis," the man replied as he winced in discomfort. "I can still get out of my own car!"

A short breather, one more heave and the man was up and standing. He took the umbrella, muttered a thank you and began to walk away.

"I will be ready at my usual time, Alexis," he said as he tramped toward the building, looking straight ahead.

"Very good, sir," replied the driver. "I will be waiting for you."

Yes, I can still get out of my car. But for how long? The man thought as he approached the blue doors of the main entrance to the centre. His body was feeling weary. His joints ached. His health wasn't getting any better. He knew he wasn't doing it any favours by smoking, drinking, not exercising and staying up late. He had no choice about the last option. It had been over a year since he had been able to fall asleep without assistance from a pill or a stiff shot of *Ouzo* – sometimes both. Not since the losing started. After today's debacle, there seemed to be no end in sight.

He paused beneath the canopy over the front entranceway, folded his umbrella and walked in. He was greeted by the familiar moustachioed face of the concierge, who smiled warmly.

"Welcome, mister Kostas," he said kindly. "Sorry about the game today. The referees were bad again!"

"Oh, never mind about the game, Polychronos!" the man answered, attempting to be appear unfazed. "What happens tonight is what really counts, eh?" He chortled loudly – a touch too loudly.

"Ah yes!" agreed the concierge. "Tonight, your luck will change, I promise you!"

"Thank you, Polychronos," he sniggered – again, too loudly. "But you always promise that! Promise me I will lose again and maybe my luck will change!"

"Oh, Mr. Kostas, if it will help, I promise that you will lose again!" the concierge replied with a smile. "Bad luck to you, sir!"

"Thank you, Polychronos! Thank you," the man replied with a wry laugh then made his way to the *Domátio Veteránon* where Veteran's Bingo Night was getting ready to begin.

He could feel the tension in his chest subside as he approached the doors to the hall. This was his time to unwind from the stress of the week. A few precious hours where he could be alone with his thoughts while surrounded by friends who accepted him just

for being there with them and for being Greek. These old veterans of the Democratic Army of Greece did not know who he really was. They knew him only as 'Big Gus' and looked up to him as a robust, young man who bestowed small kindnesses upon them. He would bring them cigarettes (for one could smoke inside the Hall of Veterans on Bingo Night), fetch them shots of *Ouzo* and diluted *Metaxa*, help them read and mark their bingo cards and roll the infirm to the bathroom between games. He was, to them, a "good friend," yet at the same time anonymous.

The anonymity he enjoyed in this Greek sanctuary meant that they would not judge him when his team lost. In fact, the veterans cared only for Greek football and were unaware of the local team with Greek connections. Tonight, nobody would be telling him that *Philip Rivers* was washed up and that he should start the kid, *Jalen Hurts*. Not that the thought hadn't crossed his mind but he knew deep down that Hurts was not ready yet and Rivers gave his team the best chance to win. It would have been a difficult position to defend, over intoxicating drinks, after his performance today in the humiliating 13-10 loss to Cowtown...*ahhh Cowtown!* - a team just one degree less hated in the Spartans' locker room than the Thunder Lizards!

He entered the spacious hall. The smell of smoke and liquor was already pervasive. The veterans liked to "settle in" for a good hour before the games started. He did as well, but his postgame speech had been uncommonly long as he oscillated between berating, cajoling, joking with and threatening his players - trying each tack and monitoring for a response. There had been no discernible reaction to his words. The air had been flat - just like the team. The fear that he had lost them already, after just three weeks, was gnawing at him.

"Yiasoo, Gus!" a craggy-faced man croaked, something resembling a smile forming inside folds of wrinkly grey skin where a mouth would be.

"Yiasoo, Promachos! First in line as always for the *Metaxa*, I see!" the man chortled, as if telling an hilarious joke. The room erupted in a crackling hiss of asthmatic laughter. It was indeed an hilarious joke to these men and one he delivered whenever Promachos was in attendance. The ancient guerilla was surely well-pickled from all his years of drinking. The common belief was that this was what kept him alive at the age of 97. He had been 17 when the civil war had started and he had fought through it all, changing sides at least 6 times, according to his ailing memory.

After he had made his rounds, handing out cigarettes, drinks and *Loukoumi* to those who still had teeth to chew, he settled into his seat at a long table at the rear of the hall and studied his cards to make sure they were the right ones. He always played the same set of cards. This was not due to any superstition that they were "lucky." He had never won a game of Bingo in his life. So, the cards could be considered remarkably *unlucky*. No, he played them out of sheer stubbornness. He had to admit that to himself. He played Bingo the same way he coached football: Defiantly. At some point, one of these cards *had* to yield five-in-a-row. And he did not want to miss it when it happened. It wasn't much different from waiting for *Philip Rivers* to complete a long play action pass.

He felt the tension build as the young Bingo Caller, a woman in her fifties named Andromeda, took her seat at the dais at the front of the hall. His heart started to beat rapidly and the first traces of sweat began to form on his palms. He noted that this stress reaction to Bingo was coming earlier every time. It dawned on him in that moment that the weight of all the Bingo losses was piling up to the point where it threatened to nullify the therapeutic benefits of his alone time with the veterans. The yearning to yell "*Bingo!*" was building inside him. He felt like he was about to burst. But yelling "*Bingo!*" was something he could not simply do to relieve the pressure. It would have been unpardonable to yell "*Bingo!*" if he didn't have a bingo. And so, he waited with anticipation that was practically unbearable as Andromeda called the first number, *N-42*.

He fell into the tense rhythm of the game. His sense of despair and frustration was tempered only by the faintest hope that this time it would be different. It was that faint hope that kept him rooted to his chair, burning a hole in the cards with his eyes in a vain attempt to will his numbers to be called. As the first hour passed a familiar pattern took shape. Each of his cards was getting marked in turn, but never the same card twice in a row. He seemed to have the most tiles displayed on the table, but they were spread out evenly over all of his cards.

The first game ended after 16 minutes, with a retired grocer named Spiro winning the game. He was a relatively young 68 years old. Spiro won frequently. It had generated resentment among the old veterans, who whispered behind his back that he was a cheat but were unable to describe how he cheated. The second game ended controversially after 12 minutes, with a review. Andromeda ruled in favour of an 87-year-old former cook named Lambros, who had recorded his 'Bingo' at around the 9-minute mark, but whose voice was too feeble to be heard above the din. In the time it took a scribbled note with the shakily-scrawled 'Bingo' written on it to be passed up to the caller, another player had called "*Bingo!*", halting the game. While the dispute was being sorted out, the man got up and went to the bathroom to relieve his nerves more than his bladder. He returned just in time for the start of the third game.

The games began to melt into each other. The man had lost count of the times he had come close, but had fallen short of a 'Bingo.' By the time the final game started, he was dizzy from the chain-smoking and the liquor and was struggling to keep track of the numbers. Not that it mattered, really. This night was about to end like all of the others; with a shutout.

Oh Ares! You have abandoned your servant at Bingo as well as on the football field! The man thought. His desperation was palpable. He had never invoked *Ares* while playing Bingo before. It had never occurred to him to do so. Even now, the invocation had been reflexive, coming from a place deep within, separated from consciousness until it had popped into his head without volition.

He felt a strange tingling in his head. The drink was hitting him more than usual suddenly. Maybe he was coming down with something after being out in the rain for four hours.

"O-66," said the caller. He recognized that number immediately as being on card #3. He put a tile on the space and tried to

mitigate the effects of Ancient Greek God possession – a surprisingly frequent occurrence in Greece. When Gus was certified “possession-free” heading into Week Nine of the 2017 season, “Zeus’ Dungeon” was mothballed and Gus finished the season wearing a special shower cap to protect his brain from exposure to the elements through the vents. The vents in the helmet were finally sealed at the end of the 2019 campaign and a cosmetic artificial scalp, complete with curly, greasy hair, was fitted over the helmet so give Gus the same appearance he had had before his head exploded.

The Pickering coach had weathered a dreary and disappointing 2020 season without any reportable incidents of possession or dangerous tantrums of the kind that once occurred with alarming frequency in the pre-possession days. Gus could be dangerous all on his own and when he lost control the ‘Gus Gun’ was deployed. This was a shotgun that fired a heavy, rhinoceros-grade, tranquilizing dart, handled by a shooting team of trained professionals overseen by **Akrotatos Thrombos**, Captain of his security detail. The ‘Gus Gun’ had been stored away for over a year now, un-needed in the era of the new, gentler Gus.

When news broke of the strange incident at the *Hellenic Cultural Centre* in Pickering, everyone in the Spartans’ organization mobilized to deal with what was believed to be a re-possession of Gus by a Greek God, most likely *Ares* but possibly one of his sons, *Deimos* or *Phobos*. “Zeus’s Dungeon” was taken out of storage, Captain Thrombos dusted off the ‘Gus Gun,’ and a team of experts from Greece were flown in to administer tests and give a diagnosis.

The problem was: Nobody knew where “Gus” was. He had failed to show up at his limousine at the usual time after Bingo. His wife Helen, beside herself with worry, could not reach him on his phone. The Monday morning meeting time arrived and he was not at the Spartans’ training facility. Interviews with the veterans at the cultural centre told a confusing tale of Gus turning into some kind of giant who had burst through his clothes and stomped off naked into the rainy night. These accounts were believed to be exaggerated but they were too consistent to be dismissed entirely.

It did not take long for reports to start coming in of a feral, mad giant running amok in the GTA. A driver on the 401 had hit a “huge man” crossing the express lanes at 3:00 am early Monday. The impact had totalled his car but the “man” he supposedly hit was



Pickering coach, **Gus Konstantakos** (left) and defensive coordinator **General Pausanias** (right) survey the field in Week Four action in Cobb County. A temporary possession of the Pickering coach by the Ancient Greek God, *Ares*, caused a reappearance of ‘*Spart-O-Man*’ and a revival of the Spartans’ fortunes. They recovered from being down 27-14 to come back and shock the Coyotes, 28-27.

nowhere to be found. A witness had corroborated the fantastic story but police had been cautious in their reporting of the incident, suggesting that the driver had actually hit a deer.

Then came a report of the brazen daylight theft of a live cow from a beef-processing plant in the west end of Toronto. A “giant man wrapped in a curtain” had jumped onto the loading dock, picked up the animal as it was being unloaded from the trailer and ran off with it as it bellowed in fear. This one was less easy to write off to a faulty witness as pieces of the cow began turning up, leaving a trail that led to the Don River, where a smoking campfire and remnants of a roasted cow carcass were discovered.

A security camera caught the “giant” on video late Monday night as it entered and the exited the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto making off with artifacts from the Ancient Greece exhibit. Toronto Police had sent video stills to the Spartans organization and to Gus’s wife, Helen, hoping for an identification. The features of the giant’s face resembled Gus, but his lean, muscular physique and his huge “endowment” below the waist did not resemble Gus at all, according to Helen.

By Tuesday morning, reports of sightings of a “giant man dressed like a Greek God” started coming in from west of Toronto, beginning in Mississauga and moving westward throughout the day and early evening to Kitchener then to London. Police across Ontario were now on high alert but, despite their readiness, they were always one or two steps behind the giant. A theory that the man had multiple accomplices was developed by baffled police investigators to try and account for the rapid speed at which he traveled. But so far, no witness had actually seen anyone accompanying or assisting the man.

On Wednesday morning, a serious collision in the Windsor-Detroit tunnel was caused by “a giant in a toga with a fan on his head.” Gripping video of the giant man emerging from the tunnel and running across the U.S. border while being chased by guards was shown on the major networks, causing popular panic and an emergency mobilization of a national FBI task force.

Around this time, the experts from Greece had arrived in Toronto and had begun to examine the mounting body of video evidence and reports of witnesses. They diagnosed it immediately as a total possession but could not confirm that it was *Ares*. “Ares would have killed somebody by now,” ventured Professor **Zenobios Tsaoussigaropoulos** of the University of Athens Greek Gods Possession Department. “This could be one of his sons or attendants but to confirm this we would need to capture and interrogate him.”

The idea of capturing and interrogating the giant was laughable given the situation. Whoever, whatever it was had disappeared, the last confirmed sighting coming in a Toledo liquor store on Wednesday evening, where “a huge dude in a toga” walked out the door with a case of Ouzo without paying. He had by mid-week eluded a countrywide dragnet that included surveillance aircraft with special cameras and heat-sensing equipment. However, reports of stolen livestock and the pillaging of another Ancient Greek exhibit at a museum in Cincinnati suggested that the giant was heading south parallel to Interstate 75.

On Thursday, as the team made its preparations to fly to Atlanta for their Week Four game against the Coyotes, **General Pausanias**, the Spartans’ defensive coordinator, had an insight.

“If Gus has any control or influence over this spirit possessing him, he will want to be at the game on Sunday,” he said to the room full of team officials, *Olympia Solutions* employees and police. “It looks as if that might be where he is headed if we can infer that the missing livestock reports are the result of his activity.”

It was the most plausible theory put forward up until that point and one that enabled them to get in front of the hunt. If it was wrong, however, another potential target would be in jeopardy. Seeing as it was all they had, they decided to go with it and notify the US authorities that the giant’s possible destination was Coyote Field in Marietta, GA.

By game day a security cordon made up of over 1,000 FBI agents, Georgia State Troopers, Officers from the Cobb County Police Department and Coyote Field Security deployed in and around the stadium looking for a “*Male White, 8’2”, 400-450 lbs, appears to be an Ancient Greek God, possibly Ares or similar war deity, alias ‘Gus,’ wanted for illegal entry and theft. Approach with Caution.*” The Pickering Spartans Football Club, however, stressed in its public communications that they considered this a case of a missing coach, not a criminal investigation, a sentiment echoed by the EFL in its media release.

Game time arrived without a sighting of the giant or any communication from Gus. Defensive coordinator, **General Pausanias** assumed head coaching duties, as was customary whenever Gus was disabled, while offensive coordinator, **Commander Dercylidas** took on play-calling duties on both sides of the ball. **General Pausanias** took the rare step of dressing for the game in full ceremonial Spartan uniform – something he had not done since opening day, 2008, the team’s first ever game. His appearance on the sideline caused an immediate furor, as he was initially mistaken for being the wanted giant. This misapprehension was quickly cleared up, however, when it was pointed out that the General was significantly less than 8-foot tall and holding a clipboard.

Coyote Field was filled to capacity as upbeat Coyote fans looked forward to another victory. The team was 3-0 and coming off a 35-7 slamming of the high-powered Patriots. They appeared to be as strong as last year, possibly stronger, and nobody in the stands wearing Coyote colours expected the 0-3 Spartans to end their team’s winning streak. Coach and GM, **Eron Osman**, had said all of the right things leading up to game, including wishing for the safe return of the Pickering coach. However, his supreme confidence was obvious in his demeanour and in his reference to the Spartans as “a team with a great tradition of excellence and pride.” Whenever a coach points out the great “tradition” of his opponent, you know he’s looking for something nice to say about a team that doesn’t have a great present going on.

The Spartans started out, as they did against Budapest, with a strong opening possession. **Philip Rivers** wasted no time moving the offence up the field, completing a crisp, 6-play, 75-yard drive with a deep strike to **Calvin Ridley** for a 36-yard TD. In a little over 3 minutes, Pickering had drawn first blood. It was a promising sign but one that had to be viewed cautiously given the team’s recent history. Then the Coyotes, as they had done in every game so far, responded with a touchdown on their first series. They sheared

through the Pickering defence for 75 yards in six plays, the key strike being a 55-yard catch-and-run by **Jared Cook** that set up a 2-yard TD run by **Ryan Tannehill** to tie it at 7.

The Spartans came right back with another touchdown on a 17-yard sideline pass to **Sterling Shepard** to regain the lead, then their defence followed up by forcing a Coyote three-and-out. As the offence went to work trying to extend their early lead, CBS play-by-play announcer **Bill Mimes** posed this question to his booth partner, **Phil Mimms**: “Phil, do you think the Spartans are playing for their missing coach, here? They seem to have a fire under them in the early going.”

“It’s too early to tell, Bill,” Mimms replied soberly. “This is a team that has been up and down like a yoyo – mostly down – for more than a year now. Ask me when we get to half time.”

By half time, the Coyotes were leading 21-14 and looking confident. The momentum had shifted their way after **Tre'Davious White** had stripped Rivers on a scramble and **Markus Golden** returned it 42 yards to set up the tying score. Pickering then went three-and-out and a short punt by **Jack Fox** gave Cobb County good field position. **Adrian Peterson** crashed into the end from 7 yards out for the go-ahead TD. Spartan morale plummeted further when a 16-play, 72-yard drive at the end of the 1st half produced no points. **Trey Sermon** was stopped for no gain on 4th & a foot at the Cobb County 3-yard line. They retired to regroup.

Half time featured a parade of local high school marching bands. The Coyotes funded local high school band programs to maintain the tradition and encourage comradery amongst all students centered around football. In appreciation, the student council of North Cobb High, had built a giant Coyote made from reinforced papier mâché. It was wheeled to the center of the field for the bands to march around then drawn back afterwards next to the northeast tunnel, where it was positioned in such a way that it seemed to be keeping an eye on the Pickering bench. The fans were doing their part to keep the pressure on the visitors.

When the Coyotes scored to start the second half, the body language on the Spartans’ sideline showed a team resigned to defeat. **Brandon McManus** hit the upright on the extra point attempt, but Pickering still trailed by two scores, 27-14. The Coyotes’ kicker seemed particularly annoyed with the miss. He approached the referee and pointed at the uprights. The replay showed a kick that started toward the right upright and cut sideways across the face of the uprights at the last instant, hitting the left upright, as if caught by a strong gust of wind. But there was almost no wind on this mild day. It would have been a nasty slider if it had been a baseball pitch.

“I don’t know what Brandon McManus is saying to the officials, Phil,” Mimes remarked. “But he’s pointing at the upright.”

“I don’t know either, Bill,” Mimms replied. “It’s not like the uprights moved. That kick had one heck of a hook to it!”

While the TV cameras and the fans at the stadium focused attention on the impromptu conference on the field, few noticed that the giant papier mâché Coyote had started to move, seemingly on its own. It rocked back and forth briefly before the jaws came suddenly unhinged and a giant man in full Greek God regalia disgorged from its mouth. The crowd closest to the action went silent, unsure what to make of the strange spectacle until it dawned on them in horror that this had to be the giant that had been in the news.

“I AM SPART-O MAN!” his voice roared as two thin blue energy beams streamed from his eyes and hit at the feet of a State Trooper who had begun to advance toward him, causing him to freeze. *“Let me pass, mortals or I shall send you to Hades!”*

In full close-up view of the TV camera, the giant did not seem quite as gigantic as described in the press release but his muscular build and quick, agile movements, as he weaved around staff and security on his way toward the Pickering bench, were indeed supernatural. If those traits weren’t enough, the blue glow in his eyes and the deranged expression on his Gus-featured face underscored that this was a dude *not* to be messed with.

Immediately, **General Pausanias** stepped forward, removed his helmet and dropped to one knee. “Oh Ares, God of Courage and War, behold your humble servant Pausanias, acolyte of the altar in Olympia which bears your name!”

The sight of a blue-blooded Spartan warrior in full regalia surprised and impressed the giant. He stopped in his tracks and studied the General. After about 10 seconds had passed, he spoke, but this time his voice was lower and more familiar:

“Rise, General Pausanias! Re-fit yourself for battle and let us together lead the Spartans of this new age to victory!”

The players watched in stunned silence. This was a Gus they had never seen. He looked like he could play any position on either line and bench press any one of them if he wanted to. As he turned to face them directly, a stillness filled the air.

“Spartans of the New Age!” the giant Gus began, his voice low but penetrating. *“The dead of Thermopylae are watching you. And they find you wanting! A Spartan never surrenders for a Spartan knows that surrender is infinitely worse than mere defeat. Defeat captures the body. Surrender captures the soul! Never Surrender, Spartans of this New and Curious Age. NEVER SURRENDER!!!”*

The players erupted in unison: *“Never Surrender! Never Surrender! Never Surrender!”* They barked it three times, as they had been taught their predecessors on the Championship-winning Spartans of 2010 had done in Durham in Gale Sayers IV. And as the kick-off return unit raced onto the field, the giant that looked like Gus sidled up next to **General Pausanias** and spoke in a familiar voice:

“Okay, General, let’s get this game back on track!” he said with a wink and a smile. *It sounded like Gus.* **General Pausanias** turned and looked the Greek God in the eye. *It was Gus!*

From that moment on the Spartans were a different team. The run game came alive, with **D’Andre Swift** leading the way and **Philip Rivers** completing the passes he needed to cover 75 yards in 10 plays and pull within 6 with a 10-yard TD pass to Shepard.

The Coyotes sensed something had changed in their opponents’ demeanour. They buckled down and unleashed the run game to wear the Spartans’ defence down. The plan worked up until the point at which **General Pausanias**, taking a suggestion from the Greek God next to him, sent linebacker **A.J. Klein** on a rare blitz on 2nd & 7 at the Pickering 17. The Coyotes failed to pick it up and,

with Klein bearing down on him, **Ryan Tannehill** threw early and too far in front of **DeVante Parker**. The ball glanced off his outstretched finger tips and into the arms of a diving **Denzel Ward**, who secured the ball before it hit the ground for a critical red zone pick at the 7-yard line.

“Now press forward, Spartans of the New Age!” commanded the giant Gus. “Put the enemy to rout! No mercy! FOR THE GLORY OF SPART-AAAAAAH!!”

What followed was surely one of the most epic drives in Spartan history measured by length, duration and significance combined. When they took control, they were at their own 7-yard line with 12:20 left in the 4th quarter. Nineteen plays from scrimmage later they were facing 1st & goal at the Cobb County 1-yard line with 1:35 remaining and the Coyotes out of timeouts. This drive is worthy of a separate article all on its own, but my space is running out so I will summarize: they ran the ball 15 times, converted 3 of out 3 third downs, including a 3rd & 10 conversion on a pass to **Darnell Mooney** when they were still in the middle of their own end.

“I am pleased,” the giant Gus remarked to his general. “Pushing forward on the ground grinds the spirit of the enemy into dust. The Spartans were Hoplites, not cavalry. This is Sparta!”

Philip Rivers delivered the mortal blow. He took the snap, burrowed down behind the center and pushed forward across the goal line as the entire Coyote defensive line collapsed on top of him. Two officials’ arms went up simultaneously to signal touchdown. The roar of the fans at Coyote Field suddenly died down.

“THIS IS SPART-AAAAAAH!!” an other-worldly voice boomed across the field, filling the sound vacuum with a triumphant battle cry. “THIS IS SPART-AAAH!!” came the echo from the Spartans’ players.

The extra point was good, giving Pickering its first lead since late in the first quarter, 28-27. The missed extra point by McManus would loom large if Cobb County failed to get in position to score.

The stadium clock read 1:28. The Spartans had possessed the ball for exactly 10:52 on the go-ahead drive, consuming almost the entire 4th quarter. Their defence was now well-rested and eager to get on the field. It was now their turn for glory.

After taking the ball on a touchback, the Coyotes launched an all-out air attack on the Spartan defenders. The secondary played possessed, with **Xavien Howard** and **Darqueze Dennard** knocking passes out of the air and Ward sticking to Parker like glue. However, the veteran Tannehill was not easily flustered. He delivered a dime for 10 yards to Parker on 3rd & 10 and another dart to Parker two plays later for 11 yards and a 1st down to the Cobb County 46, where he spiked the ball with 0:23 left.

The Coyotes needed to reach at least the 40-yard line of Pickering to put them at the extreme end of McManus’ known range. To be more confident, they needed between 15 & 20 more yards to give their kicker a better than 50% chance on a nearly wind-less day. But the memory of the missed extra point and the strange path of that kick was in the forefront of everyone’s minds. They needed more.

Parker dropped a back shoulder throw near the sideline that would have placed them near the Pickering 42-yard line then Tannehill threw too high to Parker in the same spot on the next play. That brought up fourth down with just 0:16 left in the game.

Eron Osman did not have a plethora of good options. The Spartans would likely guard the sidelines and the last two passes to the outside had looked rough. He decided to roll the dice. Tannehill took a seven-step drop, being chased by **Romeo Okwara** as he pedalled backwards. Somehow, he got the ball away with velocity as the Spartan lineman crashed into him, and hit Parker in stride, running on an angle toward the middle of the field. The Spartan secondary froze for a split-second, as if caught off guard by the audacity of the throw. That momentary lapse gave Parker just enough room to induce him to gamble on his speed. Instead of running toward the sideline, he cut up-field and turned on the jets. Ward had been playing Parker loose, with neutral leverage. He would not have been able to catch him had he run toward the sideline, but the cut inside gave him a shot. It was a race to the goal line, but Ward’s favourable angle gave him an edge; he just had to make the tackle. As Parker streaked across the Spartan 20-yard line, Ward dove and wrapped his arms around his lower legs, making just enough contact to bring down the Coyote receiver at the 18-yard line with just 0:04 left and the clock ticking. The Coyote kicking unit readied itself to move as the offence raced in panic to the line to spike the ball. But the distance was too long. The clock expired, sounding the gun before the offence reached the scrimmage line. The game was over!

“LONG LIVE SPART-AAAAAAH!!” rumbled through the air, causing the stands to vibrate. It was no human voice making that sound. “LONG LIVE SPART-AAAH!!” came the comparatively weak refrain from the mass of Spartans players celebrating on the sideline. The God had spoken.

AFTERMATH

As this article goes to print, the aftermath of the strangest incident yet to impact the Pickering Spartans and the EFL is still getting sorted out. The public may never know the full story of what happened in-between the bingo game on Sunday night in Pickering and the appearance of the God *Ares*, in Gus’ form, on the field Sunday afternoon in Cobb County.

However, while the game was still in progress, the authorities who had spent a week attempting to hunt down and capture the possessed **Gus Konstantakos** had refrained from moving in to attempt an arrest. A spokesperson for the Cobb County Police Department, the police of jurisdiction, cited safety of the public and the players as the reason for not trying to apprehend “the suspect,” during the game, but there is reason to doubt this is entirely true.

Reports from the field speak of a strange power, like a spell, that prevented any attempt to interfere with actions on the field. The police could *not* move against *Ares*, Giant Gus or **Spart-O-Man** (take your pick, for each made an appearance that day) as they were held in place by a great, unknown force.

Whatever power this “spell” had over the authorities dissipated almost immediately when the game ended. Minutes after the gun sounded, police were able to gather themselves and seal all of the exits from the field. Officers piled in while Captain Thrombos readied the ‘Gus Gun’ in case it was needed to assist. But before any move could be made, the giant God collapsed to the ground, shrinking as it did so into the fleshy, portly form of the Gus we know so well. He lay on the field – alive but unconscious, an odd dreamy smile fixed on his face. The possession, it appeared, had ended. It’s work complete.

The Coyotes have since filed a protest with the league, citing the intervention of a Greek God as unsportsmanlike. They presented an enhanced video replay of McManus’ missed extra point that shows something striking the ball and knocking it off its course. This appears in a single frame as a blue spark of light hitting the ball. But it could also be a trick of the stadium lighting. The appeal is a long shot as the Coyotes, in the end, will be unable to demonstrate that **Gus Konstantakos** did anything more than give stirring speeches to his players while possessed by the God *Ares*.

And so, the Spartans received a “spark” of divine intervention on the road against the previously unbeaten Coyotes. In the process they (or *Ares*) may have saved their season. Only time will tell if this strange game was indeed the turning point, or whether the power of *Ares* and **SPART-O MAN** may be needed again in the not-too-distant future.

AROUND THE EFL

The bizarre events in Cobb County knocked a lot of interesting Week Four action off the media highlight reels. It’s a shame, because there were several cliff-hangers.

At Hawkeye Park in Brooklin, the Wrecking Balls got off to great start then held on in the 2nd half to shoot down the Hawks, 27-24 and notch their second consecutive win. The Balls stole a possession when **Greg Newsome II** intercepted **Derek Carr** to set-up a 21-yard TD pass to **Terry McLaurin** to make it 24-10 at half time. Brooklin fans who had been counting on a New Jersey 4th quarter collapse were disappointed when **Jamal Adams** tackled **Evan Engram** 3 yards short of the line to gain on 4th down with 1:15 left to end Brooklin’s last ditch rally. NJ’s defensive stand is another Week 4 miracle.

At the Big House in Chino, **Teddy Bridgewater** fared well in his first start in place of **Dak Prescott**, but it was not enough to keep pace with a red-hot **Kirk Cousins** and his dual-threat Swordfish offence. Sebastian handed Chino its first loss of the year by the turbo-charged score of 42-30 and in the process rose to 3-1.

Perhaps the most unexpected result in Week Four occurred at **TERRORDOME** in Virden, where a rejuvenated **Big Ben** out-dueled **Patrick Mahomes** to earn the Gladiators a 35-34 win over the Violators. This was another game where a missed extra point turned out to be the difference. However, worried Virden fans who sense the season already slipping away are not focusing on the missed extra point. Instead, they are taking aim at their team’s defence that allowed Georgia to run over them in a 14-point 4th quarter comeback. Mahomes meanwhile looked great, but his greatness might not be enough this year.

At the GM Megadome in Oshawa, **DeShaun Watson** guided an impressive quick march as time ticked away, capping an 11-play drive with a 7-yard slant to **Travis Kelce** for the game-winning TD with just 0:06 left on the clock to give the Pats a 31-28 win over the struggling Pink Panthers. This could be the signature two-minute drill that drives Watson to become the true franchise QB the Pats hope he can be. In a psychological blow to Oshawa, **Wil Lutz** took out his former team with a 36-yard FG that made the difference in the score. The Pink Panthers are showing incremental progress under their new coach but that progress has yet to result in a win.

At Kelly-Burke Field in Erieau, the Cadillac remained broken down at roadside as they watched the Triumph drive-by them 35-14. A 21-point Triumph outburst in the 2nd quarter, fueled by a failed 4th down attempt by the Caddies at mid-field, was all **Guy Williams**’ crew needed to outclass the sputtering Erieau offence. The Caddies finished 0-for-4 on 4th down conversions, creating four “virtual turnovers” for the equally aggressive, but more successful Triumph to feast on.

At Camelot in York, **Derrick Henry** rushed for 137 yards and **Tom Brady** threw 3 TD passes to lead the Excaliburs over the Derailers, 28-21. Buffalo was on a roll early in the game after a **Jaycee Horn** pick of Brady set up a go-ahead TD and soon were on the march again. That’s when they derailed themselves by going for it on 4th & 18 at the York 39. Coach **Daryl Brothers** dug into his bag of tricks and pulled out a jet sweep to **Robert Woods** that was stoned for no gain by **DeForest Buckner**. York went on from there to tie the game on a 29-yard TD pass from Brady to **Mike Williams**. Now, it may have just been coincidence, but nothing really went right for the Derailers after that longshot failed to hit the mark.

At Joe Ferguson Stadium in Iowa, the Cubs overcame the Corn Kings 28-21 in a refreshingly clean, evenly-played contest. Both teams held the ball for long stretches and there was only one punt in the entire game. **Joe Mixon** scored the game-winning TD on a 2-yard dive in the 4th quarter and the Cub’s ‘D’ held off a late red zone threat to seal the deal.

In other “games,” Budapest brutalized Bruxelles in Belgium, 33-17; the Blue Eagles were murdered in a home invasion by the Assassins, 44-3; the Thunder Lizards stomped on the Pilots, 42-10, sacking the Three Seattle Stooges at quarterback 8 times; and East Elmhurst downed the hapless Pegs, 33-17 in front of 3,000 unhappy fans at True North Field.

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COBB COUNTY @ BUFFALO (line – COYOTES by 2)

INJURIES: Cobb County – None; Buffalo – L'Jarius Sneed (PROBABLE), Jayon Brown (OUT), Jaquiski Tartt (OUT).

The Coyotes were sandbagged by a frenzied Spartans squad last week after manhandling the Patriots the week before. They might have been looking ahead to this divisional match-up and preparing a little extra in advance for a Buffalo team that has yet to establish a signature *modus operandi*, unless one considers Lamar Jackson improv a system that can be studied and planned for. The Derailers have been up and down, along with their quarterback, who has posted passer ratings of 100+ in their two wins and sub-80 in their two losses. The Derailers have been propped up by a league-leading 7 takeaways, 5 of those coming in their two victories, but also derail themselves by sometimes being overly aggressive on fourth down. In other words, there are several Buffalos to choose from when projecting a finish on any given Sunday. The Coyotes on the other hand are consistent – consistently good. **PICK: COBB COUNTY**

BRUXELLES @ NEW JERSEY (line – BOMBERS by 2)

INJURIES: Bruxelles – Richie Grant (QUESTIONABLE), Frank Ragnow (DOUBTFUL); New Jersey – None.

The Wrecking Balls have stabilized after a rocky start, wining their last two games, both on the road. They return home this week to the scene of their first two losses. The Vegas oddsmakers have detected this interesting fact and have given the home team points against a Bombers' team that has so far looked its record. The defence has been atrocious, ranked dead last in yards surrendered and last by far against the run, giving up an astonishing 6.7 yards per carry. This is good news for a New Jersey ground game stuck in the mud with a league low 3.1 yards per carry. They have been unable to get David Montgomery going but it is not for lack of trying. Look for him to have more success against the Raggedy Anns on the Bomber defence. If Bruxelles is to turn it around, Drew Brees has to deliver more than he has. He doesn't have much to work with, but he *is* facing the uptight Balls at home. **PICK: BRUXELLES**

SEATTLE @ VIRDEN (line – VIOLATORS by 6)

INJURIES: Seattle – Rashawn Slater (DOUBTFUL); Virden – Anthony Barr (OUT), Dee Ford (OUT), Malik Hooker (OUT), Kelechi Osemele (OUT), Solomon Thomas (OUT), Oshane Ximines (OUT).

The alarm bells are ringing loudly in Virden after the Violators were out-gunned in their home park by the Gladiators last week. The effects of their semi-rebuild in the off-season are already on display and it is appearing as if Patrick Mahomes cannot do it all on his own. Give him points for trying, however. That effort should be enough to dispatch the Pilots and their grounded air attack. Their three-quarterback rotation gives the offence a pre-season look and feel, which is reflected in the poor results. Seattle was a seller at the trade deadline, dealing an ageing but still effective pass rusher for prospects who may or may not pan out. The bad start has induced an early surrender and acts as camouflage for the talent that remains on this team, which could rise up and bite somebody some day. However, against an angry Violators' team that doesn't like its place in the standings, don't expect it to bite here. **PICK: VIRDEN**

IOWA CITY @ CHARLESWOOD (line – PATRIOTS by 5)

INJURIES: Iowa City – None. Charleswood – Jevon Holland (PROBABLE), Desmond Trufant (OUT), Laremy Tunsil (OUT).

The Cubs are coming off a solid win against a Corn Kings team with debatable prospects. The same uncertainty surrounds the Cubs, who are now facing strong challenges from Vegas and Chino and are mired, at least temporarily, in 3rd place in the West. Iowa is built to run the ball and pass off the play action, a more traditional style that requires a solid defence to slow down opponents. To this point the defence has not held its ground as convincingly as in previous years, ranked in the bottom quarter of the league in yards and yards-per-play surrendered. This leaky defence could be a problem against a Pats team that rebounded from a humiliation against the

Coyotes with a strong offensive display in Oshawa last week. The Pats' offence is built to mow down a standard defence and they have added a few new plays to the play-sheet, which should be enough to overcome the vanilla Cubs' 'D.' **PICK: CHARLESWOOD**

TWIN CITIES @ CHINO (line – CONVICTS by 2)

INJURIES: **Twin Cities** – Kenny Golladay (OUT), Avonte Maddox (OUT); **Chino** – AJ Bouye (OUT), Christian McCaffrey (OUT), Lorenzo Carter (OUT), Dak Prescott (OUT), Mike Purcell (OUT).

The first start of the Terry Bridgewater Era in Chino ended in a loss but the blame can not be placed on the back-up's shoulders. The defence revealed itself last week as not much improved over the unreliable helter-skelter gang that hamstrung last year's campaign. Fortunately for the "unlocked-down crew" they will get a breather this week against the marginally productive but conspicuously sackable, fumble-prone Mitch Trubisky, who is marking time waiting for the Chosen One to take his place. As Melvin Gordon III pads his numbers in a ground-heavy attack and DJ Moore fights Antonio Brown for what meagre catches are available, the defence is quietly building an impressive resume and keeping the Triumph in games their offence doesn't belong in. Bridgewater will find the Triumph defence more disciplined than the free-styling Swordfish secondary. Expect to read Chapter 2 in the Chino slide. **PICK: TWIN CITIES**

PEG CITY @ LAS VEGAS (line – ASSASSINS by 18)

INJURIES: **Peg City** – Alex Leatherwood (DOUBTFUL), Josh Allen (OUT), Jonathan Bullard (OUT), Devin Bush (OUT), Chandler Jones (OUT), Taylor Rapp (OUT), Jalen Thompson (OUT). **Las Vegas** – Ethan Pocic (OUT).

The desert mystics who set the lines evidently don't like what they see happening in Peg City. Not that the return of Andrew Whitworth was going to make a difference in the standings, but he certainly was going to make a difference in the health of future franchise QB, Mac Jones. With only 6 offensive linemen now on the roster and one of those doubtful this week, the Pegs' offence is heading for Erieau-level production in the near future. While the defence is in better shape when healthy, they are not healthy and this week present a vulnerable target for an Assassin offence that enjoys inflicting gratuitous damage on opponents when the opportunity arises. Las Vegas is on a roll offensively and enjoy one of the top-ranked defences in the league. This game is a survivor pool lock. **PICK: LAS VEGAS**

DURHAM @ COWTOWN (line – THUNDER LIZARDS by 8)

INJURIES: **Durham** – David DeCastro (OUT), Rashaad Penny (OUT); **Cowtown** – Jimmy Garoppolo (OUT).

The Thunder Lizards are sitting atop the AP Power Rankings mostly because of a preposterous average point differential in their four wins. A more severe critic might point to the lack of top-tier competition they have faced but to me this merely confirms what most knew heading into the season: Durham is one of the top teams in the league on both sides of the ball and they should beat up on lesser teams. This week they face a rival in the Corn Kings who have offered stiff resistance to many a good Durham team in the past. However, this version of the Kings appears to be missing the ground dimension critical to opening up their few weapons in the passing game. The Durham defence is a sack machine and ranked no.1 in overall efficiency. Cowtown will lose in a shootout and will have to rely on its defence to step up and flip the field. It's hard to envision that happening enough against an ascendent Josh Allen. **PICK: DURHAM**

SEBASTIAN @ SCARBOROUGH (line – SWORDFISH by 2)

INJURIES: **Sebastian** – Jadeveon Clowney (OUT), Bobby Massie (OUT); **Scarborough** – Nick Bosa (OUT), Landon Collins (OUT), DeSean Jackson (OUT), Zack Martin (OUT).

In a league well-stocked with good passing attacks, the Swordfish air game is right up there with the best of them. No doubt Kirk Cousins is benefitting from his opponents' focus on Sebastian's dangerous dual running back threat but his efficiency, coupled with a willingness to push the ball down field, has left a few opponents stunned at the final whistle of a loss. Whether this can go on will ultimately depend on Sebastian unleashing those running backs on somebody. Don't be surprised if they let the dogs loose on a Blue Eagle run defence ranked near the bottom of the league. Scarborough was humiliated in both phases last week in a loss to the Assassins. The defence that had been performing well was brutalized and the offence, which ranks dead last in yards and efficiency, continued to play poorly. Look for Joe Burrow to pick it up a bit versus a rag-tag Sebastian D, but don't expect it to be enough. **PICK: SEBASTIAN**

EAST ELMHURST @ BUDAPEST (line – NORTH STARS by 9)

INJURIES: **East Elmhurst** – Olivier Vernon (PROBABLE), Walker Little (OUT); **Budapest** – None.

The Irish were the only team buying at the trade deadline and that is because they see an opening in the South Division, where the incumbent titlists, the Pink Panthers, have fallen to the bottom of the standings. With plenty of weapons to support Baker Mayfield and a defence with an upgraded pass rush to complement a strong and underrated linebacking corps, East Elmhurst is in position to upend the pecking order in their division. At some point, if they are successful, they will have to beat a team like the North Stars. Knocking off Budapest on the road would be a tall task for the best of teams, let alone one that just recently decided it had enough talent to make a playoff run. We know that anything can happen in a football game if a team believes in itself. However, nagging at the back of our minds

is the prospect of another “COVID” outbreak in the Irish locker room. I hear they don’t wear masks in Budapest. **PICK: BUDAPEST**

BROOKLIN @ GEORGIA (line – GLADIATORS by 4)

INJURIES: Brooklin – Austin Ekeler (OUT), Taylor Lewan (OUT), Trai Turner (OUT), Leighton Vander Esch (OUT); Georgia – Melvin Ingram III (OUT).

Despite the loss last week, the Hawks appear to be righting the ship. They were able to get DeAndre Hopkins into the game, used the run game effectively and held the Balls to under 300 yards. Now if only Derek Carr can stop making game-altering turnovers, Brooklin should be in business to return to that scrappy yet marginal playoff form of last year. The Glads got everyone’s attention with their upset of Virden, on the road no less. Never mind that the Violators’ kicker let 4 points get away from him that would have made the difference – the Glads hung in and prevailed in a shootout with one of the league’s top guns. They did this in large part thanks to a thriving run game that alternated the quickness of James Robinson and the power grooves of Josh Jacobs. That duo might find it tougher going against a more competent Hawks front, but with Big Ben firing bullets again, Brooklin can’t afford to sit on the run. **PICK: GEORGIA**

OSHAWA @ YORK (line – EXCALIBURS by 9)

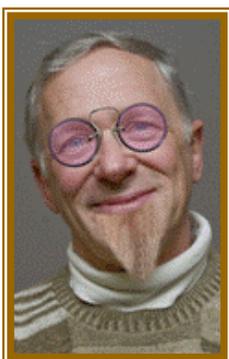
INJURIES: Oshawa – Julian Edelman (OUT), K’Waun Williams (OUT). York – Landon Dickerson (OUT), Cole Holcomb (OUT).

Here we are entering Week Five and the team formerly known as the Mustangs has not won a game. They came close last week, but buckled under the weight of a DeShaun Watson two-minute drill. In pre-season prognoses this is a game most analysts placed firmly in the ‘win’ column for Oshawa. Now, nobody can be so sure. York has only looked bad in the Durham loss so far and that was one that became a feeding frenzy once the game got away from them. Against mortal competition they have looked rugged and capable and everyone agrees that under their new system the Pink Panthers are looking as mortal as can be. Underneath the crumbling bottom line in Oshawa flashes of the old dynasty appear. Expect them to string together enough of those to make this one close. **PICK: OSHAWA**

PICKERING @ ERIEAU (line – SPARTANS by 2)

INJURIES: Pickering – Karl Joseph (DOUBTFUL), Richie Incognito (OUT); Erieau – Brian Poole (OUT), Tyron Smith (OUT).

These are two teams that are better than their records and both are hoping the other plays down to its record again this week. Pickering carries in momentum, having accomplished a stunning upset of the Coyotes last week. Nobody saw that coming and that likely played a role in it coming. So, Erieau is hoping that the Spartans are looking past them to a key divisional match next week and that that neglect will open up something...anything...for their stagnating offence. Surprisingly, the Cadillac is one of only two teams yet to commit a turnover – unless one counts the 8 times they turned the ball over on downs trying to kickstart their engine. Until the Caddies demonstrate better execution on the first three downs, they should probably play within their limits and not make things worse. For the Spartans, last week was a turning point in finding the proper balance between run and pass. They are just getting started. **PICK: PICKERING**



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This Week in EFL History
With Professor Sterling Smitherman

FROM THE EFL ARCHIVES – In Week Four of the 2015 EFL season, the LA Knights finally, mercifully, broke the longest losing streak in league history by dusting up the Mission Viejo Monarchs 30-14 in front of 15,564 fans at Round Table Stadium. The Knights needed 4 turnovers, three short fields and a defensive score and to get the job done but – hey! – when a team has lost 24 in-a-row it will take the win anyway it can. The Knights had last won in Week 11 of the 2013 season, when they beat Carthage 21-14 for their 4th win of the season. They lost the rest of their games that year, went 0-16 in 2014, and had dropped their

first three games of 2015. Chronic losers of the modern era can look back on that remarkable lack of achievement by the Knights and thank them for making them look good.

The Mustangs – unbeaten since arriving in Aurora in 2014 – came the closest they had ever come to losing so far under **Rich Liotta** when they found themselves trailing Markham 20-6 with just 6 minutes left in the 4th quarter. That is when **Matt Ryan** turned it on, throwing a 28-yard TD pass to **Arian Foster**; a 9-yard TD pass to **Brent Celek** after they had recovered an onside kick; then driving his team 70 yards in 0:28 to set up the game-winning FG by **Nick Folk** with 0:19 left. The 23-20 win remains legendary in Mustangs’ lore. It also marked the start of a season-long slide by the North Stars.

The Corn Kings played their third straight overtime game – a league record – and knocked off the Spartans 33-27 to finish their odd streak, 2-1. **Mike Evans** won Offensive Player of the Week for his 11-catch, 181-yard, 2-TD performance. Fittingly, he caught the game-winner in OT.

The Defensive Player of the Week came from the Cubs. **Sheldon Richardson** recorded 5 sacks, 2 of those in overtime, to play a game-changing role in Iowa’s 23-20 win over heir despised rival, Chino.