

# 2014



# EFL NEWS

ELITE FOOTBALL LEAGUE

# 2014

## QUARTER FINALS

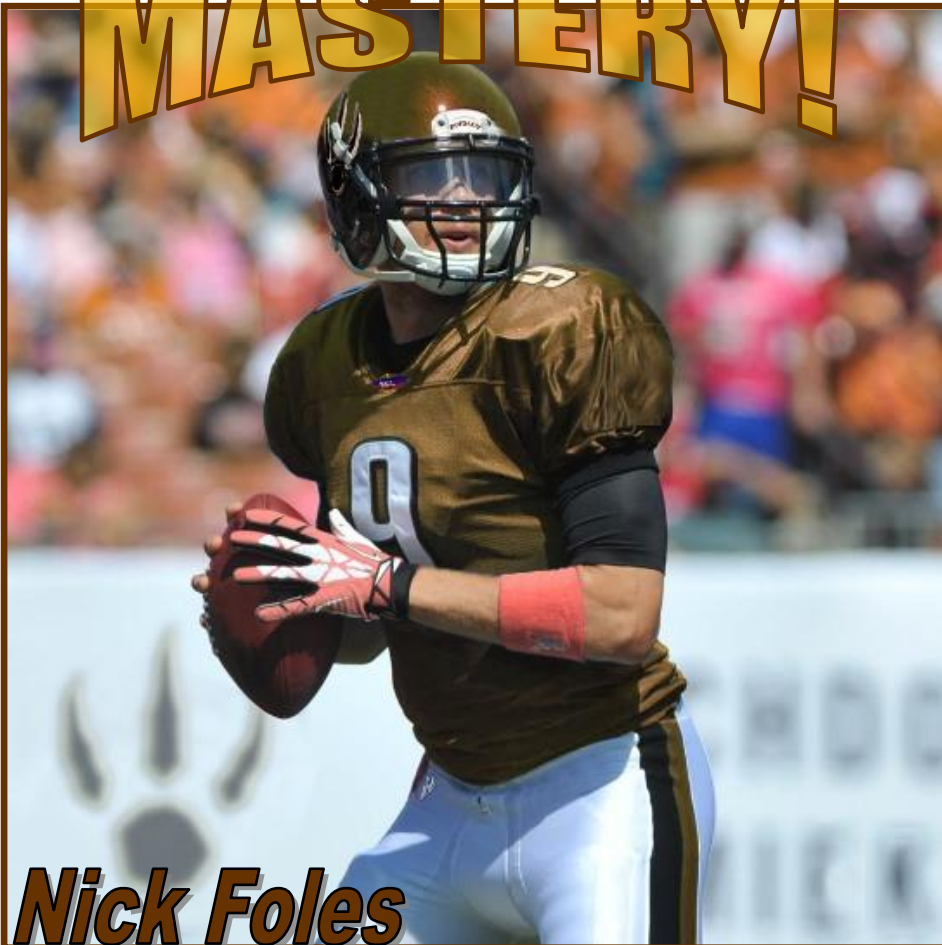
## QUARTER FINALS

February 15, 2015



EAST		WEST		NORTH		SOUTH	
TWIN CITIES	20	CHINO	11	PICKERING	20	SOUTH CAROLINA	10
CARTHAGE	31	SANTA CLARA	38	DURHAM	42	AURORA	34

# MASTERY!



## Nick Foles

### LATEST EFL NEWS INSIDE

- **FOLES RECORD-SETTING DAY LIFTS LIZARDS PAST SPARTANS**
- **MUSTANGS THROTTLE REGS WITH 2<sup>ND</sup> QUARTER OUTBURST**
- **TRIUMPH CAN'T TRIUMPH OVER CANNIBALS**
- **RGIII RETURNS AND CONVICTS WISHED HE HAD NOT**

Also in this issue

- **SPATS FEATURE, 'THE LOST CAUSE,' 'DIE-ASPORA,' 'QUARTER FINAL ROUND-UP.'**
- **JIMMY THE GEEK**



*Who was slick in the Quarter Finals?*

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



Nick Foles  
QB  
Durham  
Thunder Lizards

23 of 28, 419 yards, 6 TDs. Total mastery in victory over Spartans.



Brandon Boykin  
CB  
Aurora  
Mustangs

7 Tackles, 3 PDs, 1 INT. Pick-Six was the nail in the coffin vs Regs.



12-5-0

# Pickering

20

## MVP

Nick Foles

42



13-4-0

# Durham

### TEAM LEADERS

Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Manning	28	49	350	1
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Johnson	16	70	4.4	0
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Garcon	8	134	16.8	1

Team	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
Pickering	7	10	3	0	-	20
Durham	0	28	7	7	-	42

### TEAM LEADERS

Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Foles	23	28	419	6
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Gerhart	4	29	7.3	0
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Johnson	7	153	21.9	2

### Play of the Game

In the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter, facing 4<sup>th</sup> & 1 at their own 40 and leading 7-0, the Spartans went for it. **Terrance West** was stopped for a loss, giving Durham a shortened field for the game-tying TD drive.

### KEYS TO THE GAME

- 1 of 6 on 4<sup>th</sup> down.
- QB rating of 54.4 on pass attempts of 20+ yards for Peyton Manning.

## SPARTANS 'FOLED' IN DURHAM!

### NICK FOLES THROWS 6 TDS.

### KEYS TO THE GAME

- The accuracy of QB Nick Foles (82%).
- 225 yards-after-catch by Durham receivers.

**SUMMARY:** The Thunder Lizards won the toss and elected to go on the attack to start the game. But soon they were punting after a **Wallace Gilberry** sack helped hold their opening drive to 28 yards. Pickering got the ball at their 20 after a touchback and survived a fumble by **Chris Johnson** to move the ball into Durham territory where they faced 4<sup>th</sup> and 1 at the 37. They went for it and handed the ball to **Terrance West** to gain the 1<sup>st</sup> down. A pass interference penalty on **Dominique Rodgers-Cromartie** in the end zone put the ball at the 1-yard line where West finished off the drive by following **Marshall Yanda** across the goal line for the opening score. The Lizards went three-and-out on their next series, giving the ball back to Pickering in good field position. The Spartans came up 1-yard short of a 1<sup>st</sup> down at their own 40 yard line. But instead of punting away, they elected to go for it. This time West was stuffed for a loss by **Jared Allen** and the Lizards took over at the Pickering 39. Seven plays later, **Nick Foles** found **Eric Decker** for an 11-yard TD pass to tie the game at 7. From that point on the momentum shifted to the home team. On Pickering's subsequent possession, Johnson fumbled trying to stretch for a 1<sup>st</sup> down, handing the ball over to Durham at the Pickering 35. Three plays later Foles connected with **Calvin Johnson** down the sideline for a 22-yard TD pass. The Spartans countered with a field goal but the Lizards struck again quickly with **Megatron** cutting through the middle of the Pickering secondary for a 68-yard TD pass play to make it 21-10 for Durham. **Pierre Garçon** countered by turning a short slant into a 70-yard TD to bring the Spartans within 4, trailing 21-17. But Durham finished off a 38-point 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter with a 20-yard TD pass from Foles to **Antonio Gates** to make it 28-17 Durham at half time. After a Spartans three-and-out to start the 2<sup>nd</sup> half, Foles connected with **TY Hilton** for passes of 29 and 13 yards to set up a 7-yard TD to **Dwayne Bowe** to make it 35-17. A Spartans FG made it 35-20 then Dino RB **Toby Gerhart** fumbled at the Durham 41. The Spartans drove to the 23, but were stopped on 4<sup>th</sup> and 4, setting up a game-clinching 53-yard TD pass to Decker, the 6<sup>th</sup> TD pass of the game for Foles – breaking the previous playoff record of 5 shared by **Peyton Manning** and **Tom Brady**.

**QUOTES:** "Nick went out there and executed the game plan to perfection. He put the ball on the money and gave our great receivers opportunities to make plays. I can't say enough about the kid right now. He beat one of the best tonight!" – Durham Coach, **George Kaldis**.  
 "I liked the call to go for it. We knew it would be a game where we would have to put up 30 points and keep the ball out of their hands. That wasn't the reason we lost. We didn't execute consistently in the passing game. That's partly on me, partly on the receivers." – Pickering QB, **Peyton Manning**.



### ANGRY FAN



### titter

### HAPPY FAN



**Aristedes @AristedesKalogiannis**  
 The sight of the warrior Polamalu healthy and idle on the sideline for the first half was most curious.



**Dino Dick @Dinolover**  
 Lizards are peaking at the right time!  
 Foles is a superstar in the making.

# Pickering 20 Durham 42



	1	2	3	4	F
Pickering	7	10	3	0	20
Durham	0	28	7	7	42

## Complete

\* Playoff \* 02-14-2015 Jurassic Park Temp:68 Wind:Calm \*Internet\* No Line MVP:Foles HFA:ON(4)

1	4:53	Pickering	TD	West 1 run (Janikowski) (15-80-6:25)	7-0
2	13:23	Durham	TD	Foles 11 pass to Decker (Dawson) (6-39-2:46)	7-7
2	10:13	Durham	TD	Foles 22 pass to Johnson (Dawson) (3-35-1:38)	7-14
2	7:02	Pickering	FG	Scobee 47 (6-52-3:03)	10-14
2	4:32	Durham	TD	Foles 68 pass to Johnson (Dawson) (5-80-2:30)	10-21
2	3:27	Pickering	TD	Manning 70 pass to Garcon (Janikowski) (2-77-0:57)	17-21
2	1:00	Durham	TD	Foles 20 pass to Gates (Dawson) (6-73-2:22)	17-28
3	12:08	Durham	TD	Foles 7 pass to Bowe (Dawson) (4-59-1:36)	17-35
3	7:36	Pickering	FG	Scobee 42 (8-46-4:21)	20-35
4	13:16	Durham	TD	Foles 53 pass to Decker (Dawson) (6-87-3:53)	20-42

### Player Stats

Passing	Att	Cmp	Yds	25	In	Td	Sk	Rate
Manning	49	28	350	3	0	1	0	86.3

Passing	Att	Cmp	Yds	25	In	Td	Sk	Rate
Foles	28	23	419	4	0	6	1	158.3
Brees	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	79.2

Rushing	Att	Yds	Avg	FD	10	Lg	Td
Johnson	16	70	4.4	2	1	22	0
West	8	26	3.3	4	0	7	1
Manning	2	2	1.0	0	0	1	0

Rushing	Att	Yds	Avg	FD	10	Lg	Td
Gerhart	4	29	7.3	1	2	14	0
Jackson	8	29	3.6	1	1	11	0
Hyde	8	28	3.5	3	0	5	0
Foles	3	22	7.3	1	1	12	0
Bush	2	4	2.0	0	0	2	0
Brees	1	-1	-1.0	0	0	0	0

Receiving	No	Dp	Att	Yds	Avg	FD	25	Lg	Td
Garcon	8	0	11	134	16.8	5	1	70	1
Thomas,D	6	1	11	72	12.0	3	1	25	0
Tate	5	0	9	51	10.2	2	0	19	0
Johnson	5	0	7	29	5.8	0	0	7	0
Simpson	2	0	6	46	23.0	2	1	32	0
Cameron	2	0	5	18	9.0	1	0	10	0

Receiving	No	Dp	Att	Yds	Avg	FD	25	Lg	Td
Johnson	7	0	8	153	21.9	6	1	68	2
Decker	5	1	7	89	17.8	3	1	53	2
Hilton	4	0	4	70	17.5	3	1	29	0
Bowe	3	0	3	61	20.3	3	1	39	1
Hyde	2	0	2	7	3.5	0	0	4	0
Gates	2	0	4	28	14.0	1	0	20	1
Jackson	1	0	1	14	14.0	1	0	14	0

Fumbles	No	Rec	Td
Johnson	2	0	0
Pace	0	1	0
Yanda	0	1	0

Fumbles	No	Rec	Td
Gerhart	1	0	0
Davis,T	0	1	0

Kick Returns	No	Yds	Avg	Lg	Td
Todman	4	74	18.5	22	0
Robinson	3	42	14.0	18	0

Kick Returns	No	Yds	Avg	Lg	Td
Hester	3	52	17.3	24	0

Punt Returns	No	Fc	Yds	Avg	Lg	Td
Tate	2	0	13	6.5	9	0

Punt Returns	No	Fc	Yds	Avg	Lg	Td

Kicking	FG	Lg	XP	Pts
Scobee	2-2	47	0-0	6
Janikowski	0-0	0	2-2	2

Kicking	FG	Lg	XP	Pts
Dawson	0-0	0	6-6	6

Punting	No	Yds	Avg	Tb	20	Bk	Lg
Colquitt	1	51	51.0	0	0	0	51

Punting	No	Yds	Avg	Tb	20	Bk	Lg
Morstead	3	153	51.0	1	1	0	54

Punting	No	Yds	Avg	Tb	20	Bk	Lg
Colquitt	1	51	51.0	0	0	0	51

Punting	No	Yds	Avg	Tb	20	Bk	Lg
Morstead	3	153	51.0	1	1	0	54

Defense	Tkl	Sk	Def	Str	Hur	FF	Int
Haden	9	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
McDonald	5	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Munneryn	5	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Gilberry	4	1	0	0	1	0	0-0
Hatcher	4	0	0	1	0	0	0-0
Pace	3	0	0	0	1	0	0-0
Brown	3	0	0	0	0	1	0-0
Roach	3	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Reid	3	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Watson	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Banks	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Tillman	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Redding	1	0	0	1	1	0	0-0
Keo	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Blackmon	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Jones,A	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Poe	0	0	0	0	1	0	0-0

Defense	Tkl	Sk	Def	Str	Hur	FF	Int
Rodgers-Cro	9	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Allen	8	0	0	1	3	0	0-0
Houston	5	0	0	0	2	0	0-0
Lofton	5	0	0	0	0	1	0-0
Mathieu	5	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
Chancellor	5	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Sherman	4	0	4	0	0	1	0-0
McCourty	4	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
Joseph	3	0	1	0	1	0	0-0
Davis,T	2	0	0	0	1	0	0-0
Jones	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Footé	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Smith,S	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Rivers	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Paea	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Dumervil	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Drescher	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Massaquoi	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Dockett	0	0	1	0	0	0	0-0



**NICK FOLES**  
**DURHAM**

419 yards passing and 6 TD passes. It doesn't get better in the playoffs.

	Pickering	Durham
First Downs	20	25
Rushes	26-98	26-111
Passes	49-28-350	29-24-422
Sacked	0-0	1-6
Fumble	2	1
Penalties	3-25	4-29
Turnovers	1	1
Missed Tackles	5	6
Dropped Passes	1	1
Bad Passes	3	3
Passes	3	4
Runs 10+	1	4
Blitzes	16	16
Challenges	0-0	2-2
Time	29:39	30:21
Third Down	7-17	5-8
Fourth Down	1-6	0-0
Red Att/Td/Fg	2/1/0	3/3/0
Net Offense	448	527



11-5-0

South Carolina

10

MVP

Matt Ryan

34



13-3-0

Aurora



CAN-AM QUARTER FINALS

TEAM LEADERS

Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Romo	24	46	235	1
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Gore	13	67	5.2	0
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Jennings	7	96	13.7	1

Team	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
South Carolina	7	0	3	0	-	10
Aurora	3	21	7	3	-	34

TEAM LEADERS

Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Ryan	22	38	241	1
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Forte	19	85	4.5	2
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Cooper	6	81	13.5	0

Play of the Game

Trailing 17-7 in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter with the ball at their 17, **Tony Romo** went deep to a double-covered **Keenan Allen**. The result was a 35-yard pick-six for **Brandon Boykin**.

KEYS TO THE GAME

- 4 costly turnovers
- AJ Green held to 3 catches for 21 yards
- 7 "bad" passes by Tony Romo

MUSTANGS 'D'-FY REGS!  
 TURNOVERS FUEL 'STANGS 21-  
 POINT 2<sup>ND</sup> QUARTER BURST

KEYS TO THE GAME

- two 4<sup>th</sup> down conversions on first TD drive
- Boykin "pick six"
- Forte 6 1<sup>st</sup> downs and 2 TDs

**SUMMARY:** The Mustangs opened with the ball but their first series hit a wall when **Trent Williams** was flagged for holding and **Matt Ryan** threw incomplete on 3<sup>rd</sup> and long. The Regs opened by testing the Aurora line with **Frank Gore** but found no headway and were forced to punt. Starting at mid-field, the Mustangs gained a 1<sup>st</sup> down before getting stopped on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2 and had to settle for a 48-yard **Nick Folk** FG for the game's first points. But the Regs quieted the loud crowd in Aurora with an 81-yard drive that ended with **Greg Jennings** breaking a tackle and streaking into the end zone for a 31-yard TD catch and a 7-3 South Carolina lead. Aurora got the ball back at their 20 after downing the kick-off in the end zone and proceeded to go to work. They overcame two holding penalties and Ryan converted a 3<sup>rd</sup> and 14 with a 19-yard completion to **Anquan Boldin** to march all the way to the Regs' 30, where they faced a 4<sup>th</sup> and 4. Instead of opting for another FG, they went for it and were able to convert when Ryan checked down to **Riley Cooper** for a 7-yard gain. Three plays later they faced 4<sup>th</sup> and 2 at the Regulator 15 and again snubbed the FG. **Darrel Young** converted with a 14-yard run and **Matt Forte** finished off the drive with a 1-yard TD run to regain the lead for Aurora 10-7. The 16-play drive consumed almost 9 minutes and seemed to take the steam out of the Regs' defence that was forced back onto the field immediately when **Justin Gilbert** fumbled the ensuing kick-off return at the 33. Forte broke free for runs of 16 and 12 yards to set up a 5-yard TD pass to Boldin to make it 17-7. The teams traded punts then the Regs took over at their 17, looking to get out of a hole with a big play. But the big play went the other way when **Brandon Boykin** intercepted a pass intended for **Keenan Allen** and returned it 35 yards for a TD to make it 24-7 at the half. The Regs opened the 2<sup>nd</sup> half with a FG but the Mustangs countered with another long drive; Boldin caught passes of 20 and 19 yards to set up Forte's second TD of the game to make it 31-10. The Regs tried to get back in the game, but an interception of **Tony Romo** by **James Harrison** at the goal line and a strip of Allen after the catch by **Erin Henderson** at the Mustangs' 27 kept them off the board. Aurora added a late FG to round out the scoring and advance.

**QUOTES:** "In playoff football anything can happen. This was a much tougher game than the final score makes out. Our defence once again made some big plays and we got a score on that interception by Brandon that put them in a tight spot." – Aurora Coach, **Rich Liotta**.  
 "I certainly could have played better. I'm not going to make excuses for anything that happened out there. There were plays to be made that I didn't make – pure and simple. But if you think I'm going to cry about it or apologize for saying we were going to win, forget it!" – Regs' QB, **Tony Romo**.



ANGRY FAN

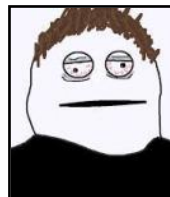


titter

HAPPY FAN



**Johnny Rebb**@JRTheState  
 The Regulators went down fighting against the better team. That's all you can ask.



**Blitzed** @Chadhartley  
 1 down, 2 to go! Bring on Durham!



# South Carolina 10 Aurora 34



	1	2	3	4	F
South Carolina	7	0	3	0	10
Aurora	3	21	7	3	34

**Complete**

\* Playoff \* 02-14-2015 Candlestick Park Temp:54 Wind:0-10 None No Line MVP:Ryan

1	6:58	Aurora	FG	Folk 48 (7-20-2:52)	0-3
1	1:08	South Carolina	TD	Romo 31 pass to Jennings (Tucker,J) (9-81-5:43)	7-3
2	7:14	Aurora	TD	Forte 1 run (Folk) (16-80-8:54)	7-10
2	5:31	Aurora	TD	Ryan 5 pass to Boldin (Folk) (4-33-1:35)	7-17
2	1:48	Aurora	TD	Boykin 35 interception return (Folk)	7-24
3	8:11	South Carolina	FG	Tucker 50 (11-48-6:42)	10-24
3	1:20	Aurora	TD	Forte 3 run (Folk) (13-80-6:51)	10-31
4	1:51	Aurora	FG	Folk 52 (4--2-0:11)	10-34

### Player Stats

Passing	Att	Cmp	Yds	25	In	Td	Sk	Rate
Romo	46	24	235	1	2	1	2	56.0

Rushing	Att	Yds	Avg	FD	10	Lg	Td
Gore	13	67	5.2	3	3	14	0
Reece	5	27	5.4	2	1	10	0
Romo	1	1	1.0	1	0	1	0

Receiving	No	Dp	Att	Yds	Avg	FD	25	Lg	Td
Jennings	7	1	11	96	13.7	5	1	31	1
Houster	4	0	5	38	9.5	3	0	11	0
Reece	4	0	4	36	9.0	2	0	14	0
Allen	4	1	14	32	8.0	1	0	11	0
Green_A	3	0	8	21	7.0	0	0	8	0
Bennett	2	0	3	12	6.0	0	0	7	0
Gore	0	0	1	0	0.0	0	0	0	0

Fumbles	No	Rec	Td
Romo	1	1	0
Allen	1	1	0
Rodgers	1	0	0
Gilbert	1	0	0

Kick Returns	No	Yds	Avg	Lg	Td
Rodgers	4	82	20.5	30	0
Gilbert	1	25	25.0	25	0
Moch	1	2	2.0	2	0

Punt Returns	No	Fc	Yds	Avg	Lg	Td
McClain	3	1	17	5.7	14	0

Kicking	FG	Lg	XP	Pts
Tucker	1-1	50	1-1	4

Punting	No	Yds	Avg	Tb	20	Bk	Lg
Koenen	4	187	46.8	0	0	0	56

Defense	Tkl	Sk	Def	Stf	Hur	FF	Int
Hall	7	1	0	0	1	0	0-0
Spikes	6	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Hicks	5	0	0	1	2	0	0-0
Brooks,T	5	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Shields	4	0	3	0	0	0	0-0
Lotulelei	4	0	0	1	2	0	0-0
Fletcher	4	0	2	0	0	0	0-0
Mitchell	4	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Kuechly	3	0	1	1	0	0	0-0
Cooper	3	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Curry	2	0	0	0	1	0	0-0
Gilbert	2	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
Thompson	1	1	0	0	1	0	0-0
Ealy	1	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
Acho	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Reynolds	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Graham	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0

Passing	Att	Cmp	Yds	25	In	Td	Sk	Rate
Ryan	38	22	241	1	0	1	2	85.5

Rushing	Att	Yds	Avg	FD	10	Lg	Td
Forte	19	85	4.5	6	2	16	2
Young,D	3	30	10.0	3	2	14	0
Ryan	6	5	0.8	0	0	7	0

Receiving	No	Dp	Att	Yds	Avg	FD	25	Lg	Td
Cooper	6	1	8	81	13.5	4	1	38	0
Boldin	5	0	11	81	16.2	5	0	20	1
Forte	4	0	8	24	6.0	1	0	11	0
Edelman	3	0	4	27	9.0	2	0	14	0
Miller	2	0	4	11	5.5	0	0	7	0
Kerley	2	0	3	17	8.5	0	0	11	0

Fumbles	No	Rec	Td
Avril	0	1	0
Boykin	0	1	0

Kick Returns	No	Yds	Avg	Lg	Td
Johnson	1	17	17.0	17	0

Punt Returns	No	Fc	Yds	Avg	Lg	Td
Edelman	3	1	36	12.0	14	0

Kicking	FG	Lg	XP	Pts
Folk	2-2	52	4-4	10

Punting	No	Yds	Avg	Tb	20	Bk	Lg
Koch	5	236	47.2	1	3	0	56

Defense	Tkl	Sk	Def	Stf	Hur	FF	Int
Harrison	8	0	0	1	0	0	1-0
Dansby	8	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
Boykin	7	0	3	0	0	0	1-35
Henderson	4	1	1	0	1	1	0-0
Thomas	4	0	2	0	0	0	0-0
Bowman	4	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
Weddle	4	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Peterson	3	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
Franks	3	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Davis	2	0	0	0	0	1	0-0
Walden	2	0	0	0	0	1	0-0
Norman	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Watt	1	1	2	0	0	1	0-0
Avril	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Goodman	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Breeland	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0



Director of the offence with 241 yards and a key TD pass in the 2<sup>nd</sup>.

	South Carolina	Aurora
First Downs	21	22
Rushes	19-95	28-120
Passes	46-24-235	38-22-241
Sacked	2-19	2-19
Fumble	4	0
Penalties	7-60	9-85
Turnovers	4	0
Missed Tackles	7	7
Dropped Passes	2	1
Bad Passes	7	1
Passes	1	1
Runs 10+	4	4
Blitzes	18	25
Time	26:32	33:28
Third Down	5-15	7-16
Fourth Down	1-3	2-2
Red Att/Td/Fg	1/0/0	3/3/0
Net Offense	311	342



11-5-0

# Twin Cities

20

MVP

Philip Rivers

31



13-3-0

# Carthage

### TEAM LEADERS

Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Cutler	25	41	243	2
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Martin	8	38	4.8	0
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Brown	7	93	13.3	0

Team	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
Twin Cities	7	3	3	7	-	20
Carthage	7	3	7	14	-	31

### TEAM LEADERS

Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Rivers	25	36	371	2
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Lacy	18	76	4.2	2
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Gordon	7	143	20.4	1

### Play of the Game

Trailing 20-17 in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, **Philip Rivers** fired a bullet 26 yards down field to a double-covered **Josh Gordon**, who carried to the 20 for a 43-yard play on the game-winning TD drive.

### KEYS TO THE GAME

- Back-to-back lost fumbles in 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter
- Could not stop Josh Gordon in the 4<sup>th</sup>

## RIVERS RALLY RAISES CANNIBALS!

### TRIUMPH MISS EARLY CHANCES

### KEYS TO THE GAME

- 4 TDs in 4 trips to the Triumph red zone
- 154 pass yards in 4<sup>th</sup> quarter

**SUMMARY:** In a rare back-to-back home stand against the same opponent, the Cannibals picked up where they left off last week against the Triumph. On the second series of the game for Twin Cities, with linebacker **Lavonte David** in his face, **Jay Cutler** threw a pass into the hands of Cannibal corner **Keenan Lewis** for a 1<sup>st</sup> quarter interception that set up the game's first points: a 4-yard TD run by **Eddie Lacy**. But the Triumph rebounded with a 12-play, 79-yard drive that ended with Cutler checking down to tight end **Lance Kendricks** for a 16-yard TD pass. The Triumph looked to gain the edge early in the 2<sup>nd</sup> when safety **Nate Allen** intercepted **Philip Rivers** and returned the ball to the Carthage 48. Three completions for 40 yards by Cutler brought them to the 8, but a strip of **Doug Martin** by safety **Donte Whitner** at the 2 yard line kept them off the scoreboard. The Cannibals went three-and-out, giving the ball back to Twin Cities in great field position. But as the Triumph once again closed in they lost the ball when **Kyle Arrington** punched it out after a catch by **Kendall Wright** at the 15 yard line. The reprieve was short-lived as **Jurrell Casey** strip-sacked Rivers and **Manny Lawson** picked up the ball at the 19. The Triumph could not punch it into the end zone and had to settle for a 32-yard FG by **Stephen Gostkowski** to take a short-lived 10-7 lead. Rivers led Carthage 54 yards in 53 seconds to tie it on a 42-yard FG by **Steven Hauschka** as time expired in the 1<sup>st</sup> half. On the opening drive of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half, **Darius Butler** picked off Rivers and returned it 40 yards to set up a go-ahead 30-yard FG, but Rivers bounced back with a 13-yard TD pass to **Josh Gordon** to give Carthage a 17-13 lead. Cutler responded by going 6 of 10 for 65 yards and a 13-yard TD to Wright on the ensuing drive to regain the lead for Twin Cities 20-17. But Rivers saved his best for last. He connected with a double-covered Gordon for 43 yards to set up a 5-yard TD pass to **Doug Baldwin** to take a 24-20 lead. He then put the game away on Carthage's next possession with completions of 33 yards to Gordon and 39-yard to **Danny Amendola** to set up a 5-yard Lacy TD run with 2:32 left in the game. A last ditch effort by Cutler was suddenly cut short when **Jason Verrett** picked off a deep pass intended for **Vincent Jackson** to ice the game.

**QUOTES:** "I give the credit to our defence for keeping us in this game in the first half. It could have gotten ugly but they made some big plays and gave us time to get into our groove. Anyone who thinks our defence isn't elite is smoking the funny stuff." – Carthage QB, **Philip Rivers**.  
 "Again the game boiled down to turnovers. It's frustrating. We paid for ours and didn't make the most of the opportunities they gave us. That and not having an answer for Josh Gordon are the reasons we lost today." – Twin Cities coach, **Guy Williams**.



ANGRY FAN



titter

HAPPY FAN



**Molly @Mollyqerim**  
 Working on my tan....working on my tan. Hey, I have to come away with something from this trip!



**Kokopali @Crimpcarving**  
 The Great Mak'i aii Wapuititi could not have done better! We shall crush the Sluggs like the bugs they are!



# Twin Cities 20 Carthage 31



	1	2	3	4	F
Twin Cities	7	3	3	7	20
Carthage	7	3	7	14	31

## Complete

\* Playoff \* 02-12-2015 The Killing Field Temp:19 Wind:0-10 None No Line MVP:Rivers

1	8:58	Carthage	TD	Lacy 4 run (Hauschka) (2-18-0:49)	0-7
1	2:33	Twin Cities	TD	Cutler 16 pass to Kendricks (Gostkowski) (12-79-6:18)	7-7
2	1:03	Twin Cities	FG	Gostkowski 32 (8-5-2:56)	10-7
2	0:00	Carthage	FG	Hauschka 42 (6-54-0:53)	10-10
3	7:17	Twin Cities	FG	Gostkowski 30 (7-32-3:01)	13-10
3	1:31	Carthage	TD	Rivers 13 pass to Gordon (Hauschka) (11-80-5:39)	13-17
4	11:40	Twin Cities	TD	Cutler 13 pass to Wright (Gostkowski) (12-80-4:51)	20-17
4	7:27	Carthage	TD	Rivers 5 pass to Baldwin (Hauschka) (8-80-4:13)	20-24
4	2:32	Carthage	TD	Lacy 5 run (Hauschka) (6-86-2:01)	20-31

### Player Stats

Passing	Att	Cmp	Yds	25	In	Td	Sk	Rate
Cutler	41	25	243	1	2	2	2	73.5

Passing	Att	Cmp	Yds	25	In	Td	Sk	Rate
Rivers	36	25	371	4	2	2	4	98.3

Rushing	Att	Yds	Avg	FD	10	Lg	Td
Martin_D	8	38	4.8	1	2	10	0
Vereen	7	36	5.1	2	2	18	0
Cutler	3	19	6.3	3	1	17	0

Rushing	Att	Yds	Avg	FD	10	Lg	Td
Lacy	18	76	4.2	6	2	12	2
Blount	3	18	6.0	1	1	10	0
Rivers	3	-1	-0.3	0	0	0	0

Receiving	No	Dp	Att	Yds	Avg	FD	25	Lg	Td
Wright	10	1	14	86	6.1	4	0	13	1
Brown	7	0	11	93	8.5	4	1	25	0
Kendricks	3	0	4	30	7.5	1	0	16	1
Vereen	3	1	7	7	2.3	1	0	6	0
Martin_D	1	0	1	7	7.0	1	0	7	0
Jackson	1	1	4	20	20.0	1	0	20	0

Receiving	No	Dp	Att	Yds	Avg	FD	25	Lg	Td
Gordon	7	0	11	143	13.0	6	3	43	1
Baldwin	5	1	9	63	7.0	5	0	17	1
Cook	5	0	5	60	12.0	4	0	18	0
Amendola	5	0	7	83	11.9	2	1	39	0
Lacy	2	0	3	11	5.5	0	0	7	0
Sanders	1	0	1	11	11.0	1	0	11	0

Fumbles	No	Rec	Td
Martin_D	1	0	0
Wright	1	0	0
Lawson	0	1	0

Fumbles	No	Rec	Td
Rivers	1	0	0
Whitner	0	1	0
David	0	1	0

Kick Returns	No	Yds	Avg	Lg	Td
Ginn Jr.	1	22	22.0	22	0
Mason	1	8	8.0	8	0

Kick Returns	No	Yds	Avg	Lg	Td
Blount	3	72	24.0	28	0

Punt Returns	No	Fc	Yds	Avg	Lg	Td
Brown	1	1	4	4.0	4	0

Punt Returns	No	Fc	Yds	Avg	Lg	Td
Moncrief	0	2	0	0.0	0	0

Kicking	FG	Lg	XP	Pts
Gostkowski	2-2	32	2-2	8

Kicking	FG	Lg	XP	Pts
Hauschka	1-1	42	4-4	7

Punting	No	Yds	Avg	Tb	20	Bk	Lg
Ryan	2	95	47.5	0	2	0	51

Punting	No	Yds	Avg	Tb	20	Bk	Lg
McAfee	2	83	41.5	0	1	0	50

Defense	Tkl	Sk	Def	Stf	Hur	FF	Int
Butler	8	0	0	0	0	0	1-40
Casey	7	2	0	2	0	1	0-0
Ward	7	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
Burnett	6	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Wilson	4	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Worlds	3	1	0	0	2	0	0-0
Hughes	3	1	0	1	0	0	0-0
Maxwell	3	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
Lawson	3	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Dorsey	3	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Allen,N	1	0	0	0	0	0	1-11
Gholston	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Slay	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Taylor	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Webb	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Ansah	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0

Defense	Tkl	Sk	Def	Stf	Hur	FF	Int
Lewis	9	0	1	0	0	0	1-2
Jones,A	4	1	0	0	1	0	0-0
David	4	1	0	0	0	0	0-0
Arrington	4	0	2	0	0	1	0-0
Johnson	4	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
Whitner	4	0	0	0	0	1	0-0
Hardy	4	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Beason	4	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Verrett	2	0	0	0	0	0	1-6
Peko	2	0	0	0	1	0	0-0
Wolf	1	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
Babineaux	1	0	0	0	1	0	0-0
Claiborne	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Fuller	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Jones,D	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Sutton	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0



He out-gunned his opponent in the clutch with big throws in the 4<sup>th</sup>.

	Twin Cities	Carthage
First Downs	18	26
Rushes	18-93	24-93
Passes	41-25-243	36-25-371
Sacked	2-10	4-37
Fumble	2	1
Penalties	0-0	2-15
Turnovers	4	3
Missed Tackles	4	5
Dropped Passes	3	1
Bad Passes	4	3
Passes	1	4
Runs 10+	5	3
Blitzes	19	30
Time	29:09	30:51
Third Down	5-12	7-12
Fourth Down	1-1	0-0
Red Att/Td/Fg	5/2/2	4/4/0
Net Offense	326	427



# PAC QUARTER FINALS

12-5-0

# Chino

11

MVP

RGIII

38

13-4-0

# Santa Clara

## TEAM LEADERS

Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Newton	20	39	213	1
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Newton	10	114	11.4	0
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Woodhead	6	84	14.0	0

Team	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
Chino	0	3	0	8	-	11
Santa Clara	10	7	14	7	-	38

## TEAM LEADERS

Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
RGIII	17	27	215	2
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Moreno	13	75	5.8	2
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Jeffery	3	93	31.0	1

### Play of the Game

Trailing 10-0 early in the 2<sup>nd</sup>, Chino went for it on 4<sup>th</sup> & 3 at the Santa Clara 45. But **Vontaze Burfict** stoned **Cam Newton** for no gain, forcing a turnover on downs.

### KEYS TO THE GAME

- 1 of 14 on 3<sup>rd</sup> down
- 2 of 6 on 4<sup>th</sup> down
- Slow start

## RGIII RETURNS! HEALTHY SLUGGS' QB LEADS TEAM TO BLOWOUT WIN

### KEYS TO THE GAME

- RGIII 69 yards rushing
- Grimes and Revis limited Chino WRs
- Moreno 2 TDs

**SUMMARY:** Questions about the health of **RGIII** were answered on the game's opening drive when he scrambled for gains of 14 yards and 18 yards to help set up a 1-yard run by **Knowshon Moreno** to make it 7-0 for the Sluggs. After a quick three-and-out by the Convicts, Griffin spearheaded a FG drive with runs of 15 and 7 yards to help set up a 36-yarder by **Alex Henery** to give his team a 10-0 lead. Chino earned its first 1<sup>st</sup> down with 1 minute left in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter on a 10-yard run by **Danny Woodhead** then followed that up with an 11-yard pass to **Roddy White**, but soon found progress stalled at the Santa Clara 45. Facing 4<sup>th</sup> and 3 the Convicts elected to gamble to keep the drive alive. They sent **Cam Newton** on a keeper off left tackle but the Sluggs were ready for him and **Vontaze Burfict** pulled him down for no gain. Griffin went to the air immediately, drawing a pass interference penalty on **Alterraun Verner** then completing 3 straight passes to bring the ball to the Chino 10. From there, Moreno carried it to the end zone on two attempts to make it 17-0 for the home team. The Convicts pushed back, with a 20-yard pass to White and a 16-yard run by **Adrian Peterson** getting them into FG range. But they could go no further and had to settle for a 36-yard FG by **Dan Bailey** to break the shutout and go into half time down 17-3. The Convicts got the ball to start the 2<sup>nd</sup> half but were forced to punt after **Nick Fairly** brought down Newton for an 8-yard loss. On the Sluggs' ensuing drive, Convicts' corner **Johnathan Joseph** was flagged twice, resulting in a couple of 1<sup>st</sup> downs, and Moreno slipped through the line on a draw play for 23 yards to set up a 1-yard TD run by **Stevan Ridley**. With the Sluggs leading 24-3 Newton struggled to find open receivers as the sturdy Santa Clara defenders played the pass. A holding penalty and a 10-yard sack by **Shaun Phillips** scuttled one Chino drive and, on the next Sluggs' series, RGIII hit **Alshon Jeffery** for a 63-yard pass play to set up a 5-yard check down TD to Moreno to make the score 31-3. After Chino turned the ball over on downs at their own 40, the Sluggs struck for the last time on an 18-yard TD pass to Jeffery. Chino finally found the end zone after a 47-yard pass to Woodhead set up a 9-yard TD pass to **James Jones** but it was not enough to prevent a Sluggs' romp to victory.

**QUOTES:** "Of course we didn't take them lightly! We take no team in this league lightly – even LA! They simply beat us up. We turned in our worst performance of the year at the worst possible time." – Chino Coach, **Rob Nazar**.  
 "I think we're a different team when I play. Not taking anything away from Matt, he has his style which is good, but different. They took us down last week but this week we were different. You know what I'm saying?" – Banana Sluggs' QB, **RGIII**.

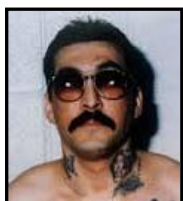


ANGRY FAN



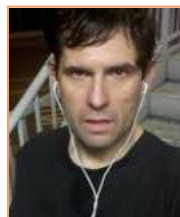
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HAPPY FAN



**Quentin San Pedro @QSP**

That was as rough a corn-holing as I have ever seen this team receive.



**Drew Redwood @MercurialDR**

This was a first round knockout. Dare I say, a "slugfest?" LOL!





# Chino 11 Santa Clara 38



	1	2	3	4	F
Chino	0	3	0	8	11
Santa Clara	10	7	14	7	38

## Complete

\* Playoff \* 02-14-2015 MetLife Stadium Temp:48 Wind:5-15 None No Line MVP:Griffin III

1	8:54	Santa Clara	TD	Moreno 1 run (Henery) (13-84-5:59)	0-7
1	1:53	Santa Clara	FG	Henery 36 (8-43-4:47)	0-10
2	10:16	Santa Clara	TD	Moreno 6 run (Henery) (7-55-3:10)	0-17
2	5:41	Chino	FG	Bailey 36 (9-54-4:27)	3-17
3	7:31	Santa Clara	TD	Ridley 1 run (Henery) (12-81-4:47)	3-24
3	1:19	Santa Clara	TD	Griffin III 5 pass to Moreno (Henery) (5-84-2:30)	3-31
4	12:45	Santa Clara	TD	Griffin III 18 pass to Jeffery (Henery) (4-40-2:06)	3-38
4	4:57	Chino	TD	Newton 9 pass to Jones (2 - Hartline) (5-78-2:39)	11-38

### Player Stats

Passing	Att	Cmp	Yds	25	In	Td	Sk	Rate
Newton	39	20	213	1	0	1	3	76.1

Passing	Att	Cmp	Yds	25	In	Td	Sk	Rate
Griffin III	27	17	215	1	0	2	1	112.4
Flynn	1	1	12	0	0	0	1	116.7

Rushing	Att	Yds	Avg	FD	10	Lg	Td
Newton	10	114	11.4	6	6	31	0
Peterson	11	35	3.2	1	1	16	0
Woodhead	1	10	0.0	1	1	10	0
Jones.M	1	0	0.0	0	0	0	0

Rushing	Att	Yds	Avg	FD	10	Lg	Td
Moreno	13	75	5.8	4	2	23	2
Griffin III	6	69	11.5	3	4	18	0
Ridley	13	35	2.7	2	0	7	1
Flynn	1	-1	-1.0	0	0	0	0

Receiving	No	Dp	Att	Yds	Avg	FD	25	Lg	Td
Woodhead	6	0	11	84	14.0	3	1	47	0
White	4	0	6	46	11.5	2	0	20	0
Olsen	3	0	4	19	6.3	1	0	8	0
Jones.J	3	1	4	35	11.7	2	0	14	1
Peterson	2	0	3	11	5.5	1	0	7	0
Jones.M	1	0	4	11	11.0	1	0	11	0
Hartline	1	1	6	7	7.0	0	0	7	0
Floyd	0	0	1	0	0.0	0	0	0	0

Receiving	No	Dp	Att	Yds	Avg	FD	25	Lg	Td
Moreno	5	0	5	39	7.8	5	0	12	1
Johnson.A	5	0	8	52	10.4	4	0	11	0
Cobb	3	0	5	32	10.7	3	0	13	0
Jeffery	3	0	7	93	31.0	2	1	63	1
Jones	2	0	2	11	5.5	0	0	8	0
Ridley	0	0	1	0	0.0	0	0	0	0

Fumbles	No	Rec	Td
Jones.J	1	0	0

Fumbles	No	Rec	Td
Holliday	1	0	0
Revis	0	1	0
Burfict	0	1	0

Kick Returns	No	Yds	Avg	Lg	Td
Archer	5	162	32.4	41	0

Kick Returns	No	Yds	Avg	Lg	Td
Holliday	1	17	17.0	17	0
Manning	1	0	0.0	0	0
Stewart	1	0	0.0	0	0

Punt Returns	No	Fc	Yds	Avg	Lg	Td
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Punt Returns	No	Fc	Yds	Avg	Lg	Td
Holliday	2	0	-1	-0.5	0	0

Kicking	FG	Lg	XP	Pts
Bailey	1-1	36	0-0	3

Kicking	FG	Lg	XP	Pts
Henery	1-1	36	5-5	8

Punting	No	Yds	Avg	Tb	20	Bk	Lg
Lechler	4	150	37.5	0	2	0	46

Punting	No	Yds	Avg	Tb	20	Bk	Lg
Masthay	2	69	34.5	0	1	0	39

Defense	Tkl	Sk	Def	Stf	Hur	FF	Int
Carter	17	0	0	1	0	0	0-0
Coples	6	1	0	1	1	0	0-0
Verner	5	0	2	0	0	0	0-0
Alonso	3	0	0	0	1	0	0-0
Bethea	3	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Joseph	3	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Sanford	3	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Clayborn	2	1	0	0	1	0	0-0
Ware	2	0	0	0	1	0	0-0
Pollard	2	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
House	1	0	0	0	0	1	0-0
Peppers	1	0	0	0	1	0	0-0
Vereen	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Dunbar	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Shazier	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Ngata	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0

Defense	Tkl	Sk	Def	Stf	Hur	FF	Int
Byrd	8	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Matthews	7	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Burfict	7	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Revis	6	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
Jenkins	4	0	1	0	0	1	0-0
Grimes	3	0	3	0	0	0	0-0
Mathis.R	3	0	0	0	2	0	0-0
Fairley	2	1	0	0	1	0	0-0
Tuitt	2	1	0	0	1	0	0-0
McCoy	2	0	0	1	2	0	0-0
Dennard	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Phillips	1	1	0	0	3	0	0-0
Johnson.C	1	0	0	0	2	0	0-0
Manning	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Brown	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Bryant	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Purifoy	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Rolle	0	0	2	0	0	0	0-0



**RGIII**  
**SANTA CLARA**

69 yards rushing, 215 yards passing and 2 TD passes led Slugs to rout.

	Chino	Santa Clara
First Downs	19	27
Rushes	23-159	33-178
Passes	39-20-213	28-18-227
Sacked	3-21	2-7
Fumble	1	1
Penalties	5-40	5-25
Turnovers	1	0
Missed Tackles	5	5
Dropped Passes	2	0
Bad Passes	4	1
Passes	1	1
Runs 10+	8	6
Blitzes	11	23
Time	28:20	31:40
Third Down	1-14	4-10
Fourth Down	2-6	0-2
Red Att/Td/Fg	3/1/1	6/5/1
Net Offense	351	398



# AROUND THE



## With Spats McChad

NEW YORK – There won't be too many "could-a, should-a, would-as" coming from the mouths of the losers in this year's Quarter Final round. They were each beaten soundly by the home favourites – all of which covered their point spreads with ease.

Of course there will be those among the defeated who will refuse to go away quietly. The most rabid Spartans' fans will likely fixate on the failed 4<sup>th</sup> down gambit early in the second quarter to explain their loss to Durham. The few Regulator diehards who believed an upset was possible at Aurora will undoubtedly ponder why the Mustangs' secondary was playing deep against a running formation on that game-changing pick-six by **Brandon Boykin**. Convicts supporters will angrily debate the play call on 4<sup>th</sup> and 3 early in the second quarter that saw **Cam Newton** stopped for no gain at the 45, setting up a short field and a second touchdown for the Sluggs. And the Triumph faithful will spend the off-season blaming **Jay Cutler** for being **Jay Cutler** when the chips were down. But while fans of the fallen attempt to isolate the turning points of these four first-round blowouts, the rest of the football-watching world will be moving on, hopefully, to a more exciting Conference Championship round.

While I certainly expected better competition in the first round, I am not surprised by the winners. The league's four best teams are in the final four; as it should be. I would listen to the argument for Pickering as a "lost champion" – the first potential finalist to fall out of the race – but there is room for skepticism on the grounds that they placed too much faith in the ageing star, **Peyton Manning**, to compensate for their defensive flaws. The Cannibals are in a similar position; with **Philip Rivers** and **Lavonte David** making up for some conspicuous weaknesses. But fortunately for Carthage, they were at home this past week and did not have to face a team the calibre of Durham in the first round.

Before we move on to my recap of the *Flatulent Four* I am on the hook to give you my forecasts for the Conference Championships. As you know, I hate doing this because, being right as often as humanly possible, my predictions tend to ruin the suspense leading up to the games. In the unlikely event that I get it wrong, I am of course open to a barrage of criticism from my envious enemies.

I am bracing myself for that barrage of ridicule because what I am about to write will undoubtedly shock some of you – I know I shocked myself when I did the *McChad Math* and came to the only conclusion possible using my advanced system. It will be a Durham-Santa Clara final, my friends. Yes, the Mustangs will finally fall this week – of that I am confident. I won't delve deep into the 'Why' part of that prediction (I can't reveal all my secrets) except to say that it is time for an Aurora loss; too bad for them that it will come on the "eve of glory" so to speak. As far as the PAC match-up goes, the Sluggs remain the team to beat in that conference and now that **RGIII** is back and looking healthy the game itself is a mere formality.

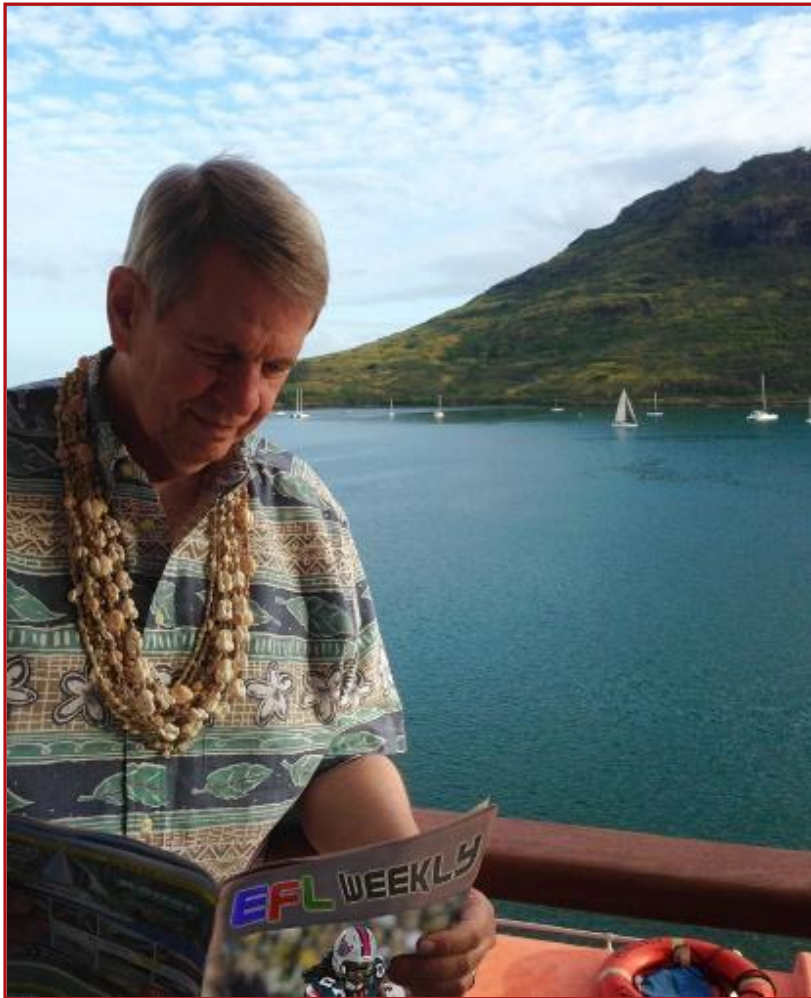
There is a part of me that hopes I am wrong because it gets boring for me too, being right all the time. But it is, I am afraid, a vain little hope. I hope you enjoy the suspense of seeing how my predictions unfold. Now let's look at how the Final Four ended up one game away from Columbia:

### **THE LOST CAUSE**

Sometimes a game is decided long before it ever starts. As cruel Fate roughly guided the reluctant Regulators to the post-season and a third meeting with the masterful Mustangs the sense around the league was that a team had to be sacrificed so that Aurora could fulfil its Destiny; but finding that sacrifice turned out to be more difficult than anticipated.

As the season wound down it became apparent that, deep down, no team relished the privilege of being trampled under hoof in front of a national television audience. The so-called "race" for the final playoff spot in the Can-am Conference became a contest to determine which of the contending teams could slow down faster and thus avoid a post-season embarrassment while securing a slightly better pick in the draft. Ironically, it was the dawdling Regulators who failed to slacken their pace in time to avoid being first in line for a beating in the Quarter Final.

The realization that he was about to leave his quiet comfort zone for the glare of the national spotlight and an exposé of the many shortcomings of his team seemed to weigh heavily on Coach **Hal Corson** over the final six weeks of the season. Passive game plans, confused press conferences, questionable play-calling, and a barely detectable but still evident spring in his step when advancing to mid-field to congratulate his opponent after a loss were preliminary signs of a man plagued by self-doubt and worry. But when a crafty Week Sixteen loss to Gwinnett was undercut by a convenient Markham collapse against Durham and the "good news" reached him that he had "won" a playoff berth, Corson could no longer control his inner demons.



South Carolina coach **Hal Corson** relaxes on deck while moored in a tranquil bay off the island of Kauai, Hawaii. The stress of a playoff race was taking its toll on the easy-going Corson, causing him to take an impromptu sabbatical while his Regulators travelled to Aurora to face the 16-0 Mustangs.

In a sad post-game presser in which he broke down and heaped scorn on his own performance as a coach rather than offer his fans and players hope by focusing forward on the franchise's first ever playoff game in Regulator red, the venerable Corson demonstrated to his own team that he was less than fully fit to command it as it travelled to Aurora to face its biggest challenge of the season, perhaps in its existence.

According to my sources, Regulators' team President, **Clive Benjamin III** visited a broken and reportedly catatonic Hal at his home the day after the Regs' embarrassing loss to Gwinnett to inform him of the tragic (and false) news that there had been a "horrible mistake" – the tie-breaking calculations had been botched by the league and that, upon further review, it was Markham that was to advance to the Quarter Final. As consolation, the team was thanking him for his superlative efforts by paying to send Hal and his wife Gerri on a Hawaiian cruise. The plane for San Francisco was, in fact, leaving that very afternoon so he had better get packing! An airport limo would be at his door in three hours to whisk him away.

In a sudden recovery that would have turned the head of a Southern Baptist faith healer, **Hal Corson** reportedly bolted up from his chair and bellowed: "Gerri! Get packing, we're going to Hawa-ii!" Without asking any questions, the previously hard-pressed but suddenly liberated Corson went to work making his escape; his devoted, but suspicious wife in tow behind him. While this was going on, Regulators management was hard at work devising a plan to escape with honour

from Aurora.

In the team's darkest hour they turned to the descendant of a local hero, a man who had mastery of lost causes imprinted on his very DNA. **Ambrose Huntington Hogg**, former head coach of the obscure Division IV Secession College Rebels outside of tiny Meggett, SC, was the great-great-great-great-great-great grandson of Captain **Jebediah Shackleton Hogg**, a South Carolina Militia cavalry officer who led a valiant charge into the retreating Union Forces of General John Hatch at the Battle of Bloody Bridge on John's Island in the dying days of the American Civil War. His fierce attack broke the will of the Union soldiers and helped to force a Union retreat from John's Island. Out-numbered 4 to 1, the Confederate stand was aided by an overconfident advance, the sweltering summer heat, and the ferocity of the defenders. Captain Hogg personally oversaw the bayoneting of the Union wounded and disposal of their bodies into giant pits, for which the local farmers erected a statue in his honour.

While head football coach of the Rebels, **Ambrose Hogg** insisted on scheduling exhibition matches against teams like the Gamecocks, Clemson, and Florida State, losing by scores as lop-sided as 63-0, 72-0 and 93-0 against the back-ups from those teams. But on the day that Rebels' running back **Huckleberry Hotchkiss** somehow emerged from a converging pack of Bulldogs and broke free for a 98-yard kick return touchdown to score in a 67-7 loss to Mississippi State, Hogg's Division IV college program became a legend, albeit a strictly local one. If anyone could rally the Regulators against a seemingly invincible foe, it would be Ambrose Hogg, who relished such opportunities to defeat the odds and bolster the legend of his great ancestor.

But convincing Hogg – who liked to call himself General Hogg and was also known as 'Old Lead Lips' for his odd habit of filling a gap in his front teeth with a Civil War-era minié ball – to take the job was not as easy as one might think. Hogg was worried that the Regulators might be too good, that the odds against them weren't long enough. He nodded approvingly at the 30-0 loss to Aurora in Week 15, but cocked a suspicious eyebrow when informed of the outcome in Week One: "*Ah you sayin' that them theyah Regulators scawed 27 poin's agin' them Mustangs? Heck, theyah could easilh win dis game!*"

Finally, Hogg agreed to take the job on a one-week contract (with options for as many weeks as necessary if he were to actually win the game in Aurora), when Benjamin was able to convince him that, as far as America was concerned, it would be



Aurora corner **Brandon Boykin** picks off an errant pass from **Tony Romo** as Regulators' coaching assistants look on in horror. Acting head coach, **Ambrose Huntington Hogg** (pictured fourth from right) had the daunting task of trying to find a weakness in the league's best defence.

nothing less than a miracle if the Regulators won this game. "Picture your Rebels beating Alabama's first stringers," he said. "That's what America thinks your chances are!"

The picture of such an impossibly lost cause lit up Hogg's imagination. *"That wud be sum kin'a miracle! An' you sayin' dem dum Yankahs don' know any betta? Eee-Aw! Let's go get-em!"*

Convinced that he could actually win the game, Hogg ran intense three-a-day practices that were short on new tactics and long on fiery speeches. But he did introduce what he called, *"the Regulatah Yell,"* a version of the Rebel yell that had caused the blood of Union soldiers to run cold back in the day. The players did not know how to take him – at first thinking his appearance was some kind of joke. His strong southern accent and strange antics initially caused laughter, but that soon stopped when Hogg set up a "whooping station" to flog the players who didn't take his drills seriously. *"The onlah team shud be laughin' right now is them Mustangs. Laughin' at y'all for tha whoopin' theyah plan on layin' on yo lazy asses!"*

Somehow, against all odds, Hogg's enthusiasm and total conviction eventually got through to the players. He convinced them that their honour had been defiled. He instilled in them a strong sense of grievance. He made them angry at the Mustangs. No team from the north was going to subjugate the South Division and tell it how to play the great game of football. Football had been invented in the South, after all, and had been stolen by the *"thievin' Princeton Yankahs"* he claimed. *"Weah goin' to play owah game! Ya hear? Owah game! Regalatah football! An' when weah dun with'em, theyah gonna know they bin in a game!"*

On the day before the game, **Tony Romo** caused a stir when he "guaranteed" a win – Namath style – in an interview with **Johnny Rebb** of *'The State.'* This cocky statement became instant bulletin board material for the Mustangs' defence and brought on its fair share of national ridicule, but it had the effect of further inspiring his team. The Regulators were as ready mentally as they were ever going to be. What remained to be seen was how that mental preparation would stand up against the physicality of the Mustangs no. 1 ranked defence – a defence that was already being talked about as being one of the best in EFL history.

The Regulators were 16-point underdogs. That was Nevada's way of saying they did not stand a chance. But for one quarter at least it looked like they might not only beat the spread, but possibly pull off the upset of the decade. The Regs got the

better of the early exchanges, giving up a field goal on Aurora's second possession but retaliating immediately with a touchdown on a 31-yard touchdown pass to **Greg Jennings**. At the end of the first period they held a 7-3 lead, a disquieting beginning for the rowdy Aurora home crowd that had come fully expecting to relax and enjoy the slaughter.

Outwardly, Aurora coach **Rich Liotta** appeared composed, but his game plan betrayed anxiety. Repeated attempts to get the ball deep to **Anquan Boldin** did not meet with the type of success to which he and his team had become accustomed. But his dogged determination to retake the initiative was eventually rewarded. He turned to four-down football to make it happen.

After the South Carolina TD the Mustangs took over at their 20 and began the drive that would turn their horse around, so to speak. They overcame two holding penalties, converted a 3<sup>rd</sup> and long and successfully gambled twice on 4<sup>th</sup> down in makeable field goal range. The message to the Regulators' defence was clear: *you cannot stop us*. Of course, the Regulators twice thought that they had. But instead of the field goal unit, the Mustangs had kept their offence on the field and had made the play they needed on each occasion.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> play of the drive, facing 4<sup>th</sup> and 2 at the 15, the Regulators correctly played the run and slanted their line to the left, expecting the Mustangs to run to the right as was their habit. But this time Liotta would send fullback **Darrel Young** to the left. With left tackle **Trent Williams** laying the key block, Young found room to run and was finally tackled at the 1 yard line. At that moment you could almost see the puffed up Regulators deflating like a football in a New England winter. On the next play **Matt Forte** ran behind the same spot and crossed the goal line with hardly a hand touching him. The crowd cheered while Forte handed the ball calmly to the official as if the time to celebrate had not yet come; there was still work to be done. But the tide had officially turned against the upstarts from the South.

From that point onward the game unfolded very much like one might have imagined before the coin toss. The Regulators tightened up and the Mustangs preyed on their opponent's uncertainty. **Justin Gilbert** fumbled the ensuing kickoff, leading to a quick and short touchdown drive that featured Forte gashing through the South Carolina line for 28 yards on 2 carries before Ryan finished it off with a 5-yard pass into the end zone to **Anquan Boldin**. With the Mustangs suddenly up by two score, 17-7, it was now the Regulators' turn to become anxious. But **Ambrose Hogg** would have none of it. His answer was to strike back and to strike back with full force.

*"Ya'll go get 'em now, ya hear?"* screamed Hogg on the sideline as **Tony Romo** jogged onto the field. He furiously waved his grey Cavalry Stetson, with one side of the brim turned up and the red cockade. *"Ya'll attack them damn Yankahs! You strike 'em deep ya 'hear?"*

One thing about Civil War-era etiquette is that trickery was not a strong point of men of arms. *Pickett's Charge* was no attempt to ambush the Union Army. It was a deliberately planned, bull-headed full frontal assault on a fortified enemy who was well-prepared to receive them. It marked both the high-water mark and the beginning of the end of the Confederacy. With **Ambrose Hogg** howling the *"Regulatah Yell"* at the top of his leather larynx, the Regulators set up in a pro set with **Frank Gore** in the 'I' behind **Marcel Reece** – a position of strength for the running game. The Mustangs responded with 3 down linemen and 6 defensive backs, a most unusual formation under such circumstances. But with Hogg yelling *"hit 'em deep"* it seemed like a good idea at the time. For good measure Liotta had his corners play loose and he double-teamed the only two players that would have a chance to catch a deep pass.

A quarterback with half a brain would have noticed something peculiar in the Aurora formation and have called an audible in that situation. But proving that he, in fact, had a mere quarter of a brain, Romo rotated his head for what seemed like the right amount of time, barked out a few meaningless signals in an appropriately loud and insistent voice, paused for effect, and yelled "hut!" He faded back deep in the pocket as the Aurora linemen went through the motions of rushing, all the while waiting patiently for him to throw – kind of like a screen pass in reverse. Finally, he lofted a deep, perfect spiral over the head of **Keenan Allen** and into the waiting arms of **Brandon Boykin**. The crowd roared with excitement as Boykin galloped like a mustang through the flat-footed Regulators and all the way to the end zone for the pick six.

The Mustangs had scored 21 points in the span of less than 6 minutes. The game was, realistically, over – the league's best defence was not about to allow the Regulators to recover. But as the game played out and the South Carolina cause appeared more and more lost, Hogg became more and more animated, apparently relishing the hopelessness of it all. The Regulators continued to fight, making several forays into Mustangs' territory, only to be turned back. They never gave up, but they were clearly over-matched. By the final gun, Hogg was jubilant, patting his players on the back and whooping it up like he had won the lottery: *"Ya 'll gave 'em a gud fight boys! Yeah, ya 'll did!"*

**Rich Liotta** strode across mid-field for the post-game handshake and was taken aback to find Hogg standing at mid-field with his sheathed cavalry sword resting on the upturned palms of his outstretched hands.

*"Please accept my honourable surrendah, sah!"* Hogg barked, placing much emphasis on the 'sir.' *"The South has fallen agin. But agin in glorah!"*

### **THE DIE-ASPORA**

Shocking video, professional and amateur, capturing the Week 13 melee between members of the *Royal Greek Society* and members of the *Hellenic Cultural Centre* that resulted in the latter crashing the gate at the front (and only) entrance into Thermopylae Stadium proliferated on YouTube in the days that followed the event. Later dubbed, 'Greek Gate' by the mainstream



The Greek-Canadian Diaspora gathered in Jurassic Park to watch the showdown between the Spartans and the Thunder Lizards. Spartan #205 of the 300 Spartans Booster Club (left) whips up enthusiasm before the game. A helmeted Spartan supporter raises his fist in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter after *Terrance West* got Pickering on the board first with a 1-yard TD run (upper right). The same fan reacts to a *Chris Johnson* fumble in the 2<sup>nd</sup> (lower right).

media, the sight of the Greek-Canadian Diaspora in full fight would have been an instant slapstick comedic classic if not for the tragedy of “Little Georgios,” the 9-year old fan of the Durham Thunder Lizards who was paralyzed from the waist down when he was accidentally trampled by a charging knot of balding, fat, drunk, middle-aged men in Manning jerseys, who were trying to breach a steel barricade with a giant concrete parking curb. The fact that it was the only barricade left standing and there was a clear path around it would have given the episode a hilarious, farcical quality except, of course, for the sad fate of “Little Georgios.”

Community outrage spread as far as Athens itself, where the newly elected Greek Prime Minister, **Alexis Tsipras** blamed the tragedy on EU-imposed austerity measures that had forced so many Greeks to leave their country of origin. “If Greece had more welfare programs, the people would not wish to leave, and maybe Little Georgios would be able to walk today,” he proclaimed.

Not surprisingly, the feuding factions blamed each other for sparking the conflict that led to such a horrible calamity and the resultant deep embarrassment and shame of their community. But when the monthly poll commissioned by *Demoskratikos*, a Greek language weekly, in the wake of ‘Greek Gate’ suggested that Greek Canadians were 8% more likely than Turks to be the target of a hate crime and that 15% of respondents were prepared to try a Turkish restaurant over a Greek one – the first time in memory that the polled responses had favoured Turks over Greeks – the heads of the factions reached out to each other to call a truce.

“Why are we fighting each other when we should be celebrating the glory of Greece on display in the success of our Greek-owned teams?” asked **Smota Platypusopoulos** of the *Royal Greek Society*.

“Good question! We should be celebrating the magnificence of the motherland and building a future together for our children, not crippling them with the burdens of their ancestors,” responded **Vasilis Vasilinistusakas** of the *Hellenic Cultural Centre*.

And so it was agreed that the upcoming bout between the Pickering Spartans and the Durham Thunder Lizards would become the setting of a giant fund-raising event for “Little Georgios,” jointly organized by the *Royal Greek Society* and the *Hellenic Cultural Centre* to demonstrate “strength in unity” and “healing in comradeship.” A Unity Committee was formed and quickly set about organizing the events and attractions that would both build community pride and raise money for “Little Georgios” and his family. The main event, of course, would be the quarter final clash between the Spartans and the Thunder Lizards that would serve as “a cause for community celebration,” regardless of the final score.

In the days leading up to the big game the Greek-Canadian community came together as one in a way not seen since the Greek National Team's victory in the Euro Cup in 2004. On the day of the contest, a giant Unity Tailgate was organized that brought together fans of both teams to enjoy the best souvlaki that the chains of Hellenic Heaven and Apollo's Feast restaurants could offer. Games, contests and draws were organized to raise money for Little Georgios and to build community spirit. Even the team's owners pitched in: Rare bottles of Ouzo from **Gus Konstantakos'** private stock were raffled off to raise money and **George Kaldis** engaged his **Uncle Smyrno**, a master carpenter, to build a wheel chair ramp into Little Georgios' home.

By game time, supporters of both teams were in full revelry and intermingling in the stands, waving flags, singing patriotic songs, and cheering lustily for players from both teams as they were introduced on the field. The atmosphere in Jurassic Park had intensified to championship magnitude, the energy of the crowd overcoming the stifling humidity of the engineered greenhouse climate of the so-called '8<sup>th</sup> Wonder of the World.'

The game started well for Pickering. Technically they were the visitors, but the unnaturally large proliferation of their fans at a normally hostile park buoyed the Spartans' spirits. A keen observer would have detected the fleeting looks of resentment on the faces of Thunder Lizards' fans when the Spartan faithful in their midst collectively leapt to their feet and cheered as rookie running back **Terrance West** broke through the Durham line for a touchdown to open the scoring. In the spirit of unity and friendship, however, they recovered their composure, expressing support for the good fortune of their rivals with polite, forced smiles and light clapping. The clapping got a little lighter and the smiles became more like grimaces as enthusiastic Spartans fans roared their approval after **Jason Hatcher** wrapped up **Reggie Bush** 1 yard short of a 1<sup>st</sup> down to force a Durham punt on 4<sup>th</sup> down.

On the Spartans' ensuing possession, however, the Durham defence managed what appeared to be a stop at the Pickering 40 yard line, causing robust applause from the Lizard lovers. But instead of the punting unit, **Gus Konstantakos** took the stadium and his team's own fans by surprise by signalling for **Peyton Manning** and the offence to stay on the field. Fans of both sides stood in anticipation to get a better view of this early dramatic moment in the game. To the uproarious delight of the "home crowd," West was stuffed for a loss, turning the ball over to Durham just a few yards out of field goal range. Now it was the Spartans' boosters' turn to swallow their angst and offer compliments their rivals. The less belligerent among them offered limp-wristed handshakes to neighbours sporting Thunder Lizards paraphernalia, while the most bull-headed grumbled quietly under their breath.

**Nick Foles** suddenly looked like a different quarterback than he had on Durham's first two possessions, making short work of the Pickering secondary to cap off a 39-yard drive with an 11-yard touchdown pass to **Eric Decker**. The Durham fans erupted in an ovation while the Pickering acolytes cursed loudly, then caught themselves and mumbled half-heartedly, in a general way, about that being a "nice pass" that beat the defender "fair and square."

The Spartans took to the ground game on their next series, with **Chris Johnson** getting the call three times in a row. He might have had a fourth except that Lizards' linebacker **Curtis Lofton** forced a fumble as Johnson reached the line of gain and teammate **Thomas Davis** recovered. Again the Lizards had a short field to work with and Foles made short work of it, connecting with **Calvin Johnson** three plays later for a 22-yard touchdown pass.

With the score suddenly 14-7 for Durham the momentum had shifted both on the field and in the stands. Durham fans were hooting in triumph while Spartans fans were griping miserably about the decision to go for it on 4<sup>th</sup> down. But suddenly, in the spirit of sportsmanship that had permeated the air not 10 minutes earlier, Pickering proponents grudgingly offered to their Durham counterparts that their team had done "a good job so far" while Lizards backers pointed out that there was "still a lot of football to play yet."

The scores went back and forth for the remainder of the first half, with a little less "back" for the Spartans and a little more "forth" for Durham resulting in a 28-18 half time lead for the home team. Frustration at 3 straight incomplete passes and a useless 5-yard check down pass by Manning to end the half had done much to raise the already high tension level among members of the Spartan-supporting *Hellenic Cultural Centre*; but the 15-minute half time break served to cool off some of the hotter heads. By the time **Phil Dawson** was ready to kick off to start the third quarter, everyone was back to singing songs and tipping back their plastic cups of beer with gusto.

Unfortunately for Pickering fans, Manning started the second half where he had left off the first: checking down for 5 yards and missing on the next two throws for a quick three-and-out. Frustration was starting to show on the field for Pickering. On Durham's first play, Hatcher levelled Foles after a throw to draw a 15-yard roughing the passer penalty, bringing loud jeers from the '300 Spartans,' who, as a group, were starting to feel the effects of too many cans of 'Mythos' lager. But Foles continued to stand tall in the pocket and kept throwing darts to his receivers, finally hitting **Dwayne Bowe** for a 7-yard touchdown pass. It was now 35-17.

The Spartans replied with an unsatisfying field goal, but soon got the ball back when **Toby Gerhart** fumbled at his own 41 yard line. With hope that their fortunes were turning for the better, beleaguered Pickering fans became extra boisterous in an attempt to inspire their team, while irritated Durham fans pointed out that the Dinosaurs were still in the lead and that the Spartans still had "a lot of catching up to do." But then they hastily conceded that it would "sure be something" if they were to make a comeback.

The hope for Pickering was short-lived, however. **Richard Sherman** jumped the route and knocked away a pass intended for **Pierre Garçon** on 4<sup>th</sup> and 4 at the Durham 23. Spartan fans groaned, Lizards fans grinned. The Spartans had eschewed the field goal attempt, perhaps thinking at the time that field goals would not be enough to keep pace with a red-hot Foles. If that is what Coach Gus was thinking, he was correct. Foles came back with a quick flick to Decker, who charged through a gaping hole in the coverage

and bounced off defenders while darting 53 yards for an electrifying touchdown. It was now 42-20 for Durham and the situation looked grim for the Spartans.

Durham fans cheered wildly – most had stopped trying to be gracious, although none of them actively taunted the despondent fans of the visitors. The Spartan fans brooded, actively avoiding eye contact with anyone wearing Thunder Lizards brown. For them, the situation was now officially desperate. As the dancing and clapping of the Durham fans lost steam over the course of an extra long network television break, an eerie calm settled over the field at Jurassic Park. It was a calm suddenly broken by the baritone bawling of **Gus Konstantakos** on the Pickering sideline: “NNNNEEEEEVVVVVEEEERRR SSSSSUUUUURRRRREEENNNNNDDDDDEERRRRRR!”

Spartans’ fans across the stadium perked up and roared back: “NNNNNNNEEEEEVVVVVEEEERRRRR SSSSSUUUUUUURRRRREEENNNNDDEERRRRRRRRR!!!”

As soon as the crowd noise died down again, a hoarse howl immediately emanated from **George Kaldis** on the Durham sideline: “SSSSSUUUUUURRRRRREEEENNNNNDDDDDEERRRRRRRR OORRRR DIEEEEEEE!”

Thunder Lizards fans across the stadium promptly straightened up and answered: “SSSSSUUUUUURRRRRRRREEEENNNNDDEEEEEERRRRRRR OOOORRRRRR DDDDDIIIIIIEEEEEE!”

That began a back-and-forth chant battle between members of the *Hellenic Cultural Centre* and members of the *Royal Greek Society* that continued throughout the next Pickering possession; a 14-play marathon that ended when Manning threw off target to Johnson at the Durham 4-yard line on 4<sup>th</sup> and goal.

<NEVER SURRENDER!> <SURRENDER OR DIE!> <NEVER SURRENDER!> <SURRENDER OR DIE!> and so on and so on.....until the inevitable happened:

With two minutes remaining, as **Golden Tate** was wrapped up by **Devin McCourty** after a 9-yard gain on 4<sup>th</sup> and 10, fans of the Lizards turned to fans of the Spartans, wherever there were, and yelled as one: “DIE!”

That was the spark that finally ignited the incendiary cloud of emotion that had been gradually building over the course of three quarters. The ‘300 Spartans’ were the first to respond. They did so reflexively, by indiscriminately hurling the contents of their beer cups and rushing headlong through the seats to grab the nearest Durham supporter. The ‘Tyranosaurs,’ a group of fanatical Thunder Lizards fans, (many of whom belonged to the *Royal Greek Society*) reacted immediately, moving in a pack towards the section of the stadium where **Vasilis Vasilinistusakas** and hundreds of members of the *Hellenic Cultural Centre* were seated.

Within seconds dozens of fights had erupted between the most belligerent and drunk. Within minutes, mad melees between gangs of supporters of both teams had broken out throughout the entire stadium. Police estimates later pegged the total number involved at nearly two thousand. The ‘Seat of Honour,’ in which was perched “Little Georgios” – flanked on either side by Elders from both the *Royal Greek Society* and the *Hellenic Cultural Centre* – was overrun by mobs of fanatics charging at each other from both directions. The stadium descended into chaos as crazy, drunken Greeks brawled and others, many of them with families in tow, tried desperately to escape.

What was left of the game was delayed for over an hour while police and security attempted to restore order. Miraculously nobody was killed. But hundreds were injured, including “Little Georgios,” who was fortunate to escape with only scrapes and bruises after several of the Elders had formed a protective “tent” around the poor boy. The elders were not as lucky. Many suffered broken bones, a few had teeth smashed, and one had his ribs broken when Spartan #205 (a particularly large man) fell on top of him.

And so ends a particularly sad chapter in the never-ending rivalry between the *Royal Greek Society* and the *Hellenic Cultural Centre* and, by extension, the Durham Thunder Lizards and the Pickering Spartans. To quote a famous phrase: “Can’t we all just get along?”

#### QUARTER FINAL ROUND-UP

In two of the four Quarter Final match-ups the drama around the teams and off the field overshadowed the action on the field; the outcomes in both Aurora and Durham were not much in doubt past the first quarter. But at the Killing Field in Carthage, where the Triumph were facing the Cannibals for the second consecutive week, **Jay Cutler** put up his best fight yet against the team that had had his number during the regular season.

With the investigation continuing into the activities of Cutler and certain members of the Twin Cities offence on the eve of their Week 16 showdown against the Cannibals, Triumph Coach **Guy Williams** thought it best to remove his star quarterback from the source of any temptation – whether that would be alluring Polynesian women in skimpy grass skirts or the powerful intoxicating effects of “fingers” dipped in *King Pu Pu’s Fiery Hard Warrior Power Sauce*. The Triumph switched hotels for the week and hired a retired Navy SEAL named Jake to mind Cutler after hours. Apart from repeated attempts by **Johnny Manziel** to drag Cutler and Jake out to various “hot” nightclubs throughout the week, there were no other questionable incidents that might have raised suspicions that the Cannibal franchise was involved in attempts to illegally and unethically undermine the Twin Cities quarterback.

Although the Cannibals were favoured by 5 points, many of the network analysts polled in the pre-game broadcast pegged the Triumph to win the game outright. The usual theatre, and not much analytical substance, accompanied these made-for-TV predictions. When boiled down to their essence, the argument seemed to consist of a generally-held belief that Carthage winning 3



games in a row against a closely matched opponent was highly unlikely. Not impossible, of course, but improbable. Such upside down analysis suggests that, all things being equal, something that hadn't happened yet is more likely to happen in the future than the thing that *had* happened twice already.

In the event, history repeated itself, albeit not as emphatically as before. Cutler had his customary multi-interception game, but only one of those came when the outcome of the game was in doubt. His hurried throw into the arms of **Keenan Lewis** in the first quarter led to the Cannibals' first touchdown. After that, he not only kept his team in the game, but he actually put them in front by a score of 20-17 early in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter with a 13-yard touchdown toss to **Kendall Wright**. The blunders that really hurt the Triumph this time were two red zone fumbles, one by **Doug Martin** and the other by Wright that scuttled opportunities to grab an early lead.

This was a clean game, with just 2 penalties called – both on Carthage. But nerves were evident on both sides as the teams combined for 7 turnovers. It was a tight struggle, but not a confident one until the veteran **Philip Rivers** woke up in the final period. After Cutler's go-ahead touchdown throw, the Cannibals' QB took charge without warning. He was helped by the raw playmaking force of **Josh Gordon**, who defeated a double team to snatch a long slant for a 43-yard gain to set up the first of two 4<sup>th</sup>-quarter touchdowns and give Carthage a 24-20 lead. The Cannibals would add another touchdown against a folding Triumph defence to make the final score 31-20 and leave no doubt which of the two Class of 2012 Expansion Teams was better equipped to handle the fearsome Banana Sluggs (I love writing that!) in the Pacific-Atlantic Conference Championship.

Speaking of the ferocious Banana Sluggs (I love writing that too!), they looked like a completely different team in pounding the Convicts 38-11 one week after being unceremoniously dumped by them in the season's final week. That is because they *were* a different team. With **RGIII** back at quarterback and **Matt Flynn** back on the bench, the savvy but slow Convicts' defence was unable to cheat in any direction out of respect for the range of the fleet-footed star. He did most of his running early, but it was enough to stake his team to a 10-0 lead and, in the process, he sent an unnerving message to the Chino defence that it could never relax.

For **Rob Nazar** and **Cam Newton** it was a bitterly disappointing end, especially given the overall calibre of the Convicts this year. Thoroughly beaten in all phases of the game, Nazar could find no redeeming quality in the experience. "I'd say that what we learned today was who will not be wearing a Convicts' jersey next year. You can bet there will be changes."

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## JIMMY'S CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIP PICKS

### PACIFIC-ATLANTIC CONFERENCE

#### SANTA CLARA @ CARTHAGE (line – BANANA SLUGGS by 3)

**INJURIES:** Santa Clara – Andrew Whitworth (OUT); Carthage – TJ McDonald (OUT), Harrison Smith (OUT);

The Banana Sluggs laid a severe beating on the Cannibals in Week 11, out-scoring them by 27 points, 51-24 and out-doing them in everything else. It was a wake-up call for a Carthage team that had, until that point, lost just one game and that by just one point. Ken Main vowed it would be different next time, confident that his team would overcome the setback and meet Santa Clara again in the playoffs. The part about meeting again turned out to be prophetic. But the part about the outcome being different remains to be seen, and depends on how one interprets the word "different." The Sluggs could win by 26 points this time and, technically, the outcome would be "different." But if he means that the Cannibals will prevail in their second shot at the pre-season favourite to represent the PAC in the EFL Championship then he is taking a huge leap. Not that the Cannibals are a prohibitive long-shot, but in order to win they are going to have to hold off the league's second-most efficient offence with a defence that is one Lavonte David away from being the least efficient, on a yards-per-play basis, in the league. It doesn't help that Harrison Smith and TJ McDonald

are listed as “OUT” for Carthage, but even with them in the line-up this is not an imposing group. Take David out of the mix and there is just end Greg Hardy to stoke fear in opposing quarterbacks and RGIII has already shown he can out-run and dart around most of his kind. On the down side for the Santa Clara pivot, his top protector on the flank, left tackle Andrew Whitworth, will definitely be “OUT” for this game. Carthage makes up for its defensive shortcomings with the league’s most prolific offence, by yards gained. While most of its serious damage is done by Philip Rivers in the passing game, the Cannibals’ offence is equipped to run the ball to grueling effect with thunder feet, Eddie Lacy and LeGarrette Blount hauling the pigskin. Arrayed against that offence is an impressively talented defence that has performed below expectations but has recently started to make its mark in the passing game. The corner tandem of Darrelle Revis and Brent Grimes will pose a serious challenge to the Cannibals’ bread-and-butter attack combos of Philip Rivers to Josh Gordon and Doug Baldwin. Sack master Robert Mathis will force the occasional early throw and eat up pass blockers if he doesn’t dump Rivers on his behind a couple of times. The Cannibals have the home field advantage yet are still underdogs. That is a testament to how the fundamental advantages enjoyed by the Sluggs are viewed by people with money on the line. Having said that, playoff football is more emotional than the regular season football and Philip Rivers is an emotional powder keg. Expect Rivers to come out with a lot of “extra” in this game and defy the fundamentals while RGIII tries to prove he’s a star and perhaps tries a little too hard. **PICK: CARTHAGE**

## **CAN-AM CONFERENCE**

### **DURHAM @ AURORA (line – MUSTANGS by 3)**

**INJURIES:** Durham –None; Aurora – Arian Foster (OUT).

The Thunder Lizards came closer than most to handing the Mustangs a regular season loss but could not recover from an early 4<sup>th</sup> quarter onslaught by Anquan Boldin and a damaging fumble by Calvin Johnson. That victory fit the mold of so many by the Mustangs before and after it: a bang-bang-bang combo of big offensive plays and a takeaway or two by the defence in the span of a single quarter to stun their opponent and force them into catch-up mode, allowing a predatory defence to finish them off. The scary thing about the Mustangs is that they make such weekly dominance look easy. But given the competition they faced in the South Division, combined with a pair of “gimme” tilts against weak inter-conference opponents, and perhaps it *should* have looked easy given the preponderance of talent on the roster. In games versus divisional opponents, the Mustangs averaged an astonishing 30.25-point margin of victory; against teams in the other Conference, that average victory margin shrunk to an impressive 18.25; and in games against the North it shrunk to 15, but that includes a 41-10 blowout of Cowtown. Anyway you cut it Aurora is full value for being perfect to this point. But how perfect are they? The team with the best shot at killing the Mustangs’ season with a single blow is Durham. The Aurora offence is good, but not great; and its quick-strike strength rests almost exclusively in the combo of Matt Ryan throwing long to Anquan Boldin. But the Lizards have Richard Sherman, the best corner in football, to relegate that threat to the ‘Use with Caution’ category. Matt Forte is like a slow-acting poison in his effect on the other team’s defence; and that is fine as long as the other team’s offence is being held at bay. If the Lizards can get the upper claw somehow, Forte could become a sideshow. This game will ultimately come down to both team’s defences, but in particular that of Aurora. The Lizards have more offensive weapons to contain and a higher-grade quick strike capability. Fortunately for Aurora, they have a defence better equipped than any other to keep upstart Nick Foles in his place. But even so, if he can sneak a pass or two through to Megatron and TY Hilton, while sustaining possession with complementary running backs Reggie Bush and Fred Jackson, the Lizards could find themselves on top in the second half with all of the play-calling advantages that brings. Of course, if the Aurora turnover machine is turned on and well-oiled then this analysis might as well be thrown out the window. Few things can stop a predatory defence when it is in “kill mode.” I don’t think that will be the case, however. Expect the defences to play conservatively and the offences to move tentatively at first until the game becomes so frustrating for both that both coaches roll the dice with their big guns. When that happens, expect the Lizards to gain big yards, but the Mustangs to make the big plays. **PICK: AURORA**

