

WEEK 15

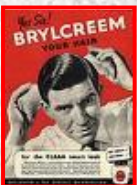
WEEK 15

# 2012 EFL 2012

January 27, 2013



EAST				WEST				NORTH				SOUTH			
Virden	12	3	0	Death Valley	14	1	0	Durham	13	2	0	Scarborough	13	2	0
York	12	3	0	Los Angeles	9	6	0	Markham	11	3	1	Garland	8	7	0
Commonwealth	7	8	0	Chino	9	6	0	Cowtown	8	6	1	Gwinnett	8	7	0
Mohave	3	12	0	Mission Viejo	2	13	0	Pickering	6	9	0	South Carolina	5	10	0
Charleswood	1	14	0	Iowa City	1	14	0	Twin Cities	6	11	0	Sebastian	3	12	0



Who was slick  
in Week  
Fifteen?

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

# BIGGEST BEN!



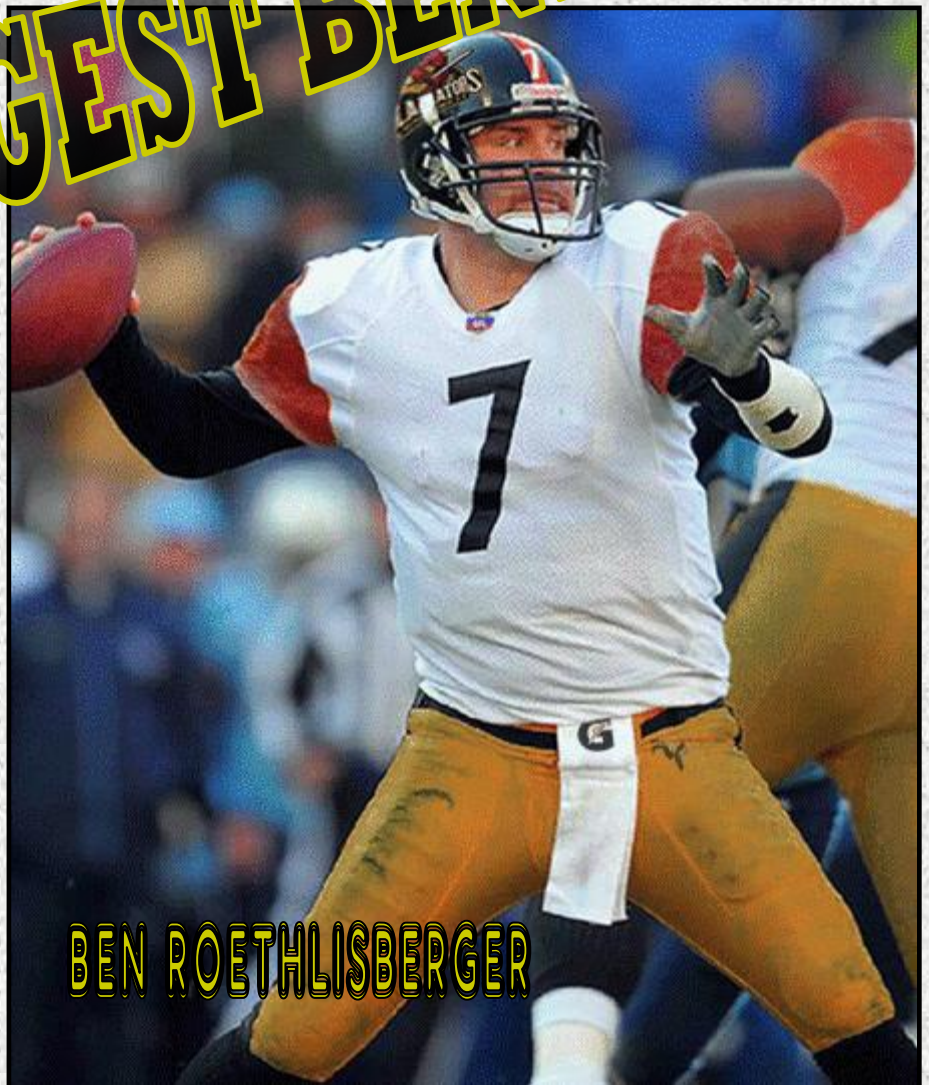
**Josh Freeman**  
**QB**  
**Commonwealth  
Colonials**

25 of 31, 344 yards, 4 TDs.  
Dissected ailing Pats' secondary.



**DeMarcus Ware**  
**OLB**  
**Virden  
Violators**

7 tackles, 5 Sacks, 1 PD, 2 FF.  
Unstoppable D-force over Cubs.



**BEN ROETHLISBERGER**

Gwinnett QB *Ben Roethlisberger* takes aim at the Scarborough secondary in Week 15 action. The Gladiators pulled off a shocking road upset. (MORE INSIDE)





8-7-0

28



# GAME OF THE WEEK



13-2-0

19

## BEN COMES UP BIG!

### GLADS' QB THROWS FOR 354 YARDS, 2 TDS TO KEEP PLAYOFF HOPES ALIVE!

#### GLADIATOR OF THE GAME

**Ben Roethlisberger**

24 of 37, 354 yards, 2 TDs, 1 INT

Team	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
Gwinnett	7	7	7	7	-	28
Scarborough	7	3	3	6	-	19

#### BLUE EAGLE OF THE GAME

**Aaron Rodgers**

31 of 51, 316 yards, 2 TDs

**GAME SUMMARY:** Fighting for their playoff lives for the fourth consecutive week the Gladiators matched the Blue Eagles score for score, twice answering Scarborough field goals with touchdowns, and came out on top, 28-19, in a road upset with significant playoff implications for both teams. Few gave Gwinnett much chance heading into Bluff's Stadium to face the nearly perfect 13-1 Blue Eagles and it appeared the game would follow expectations early in the first quarter when **Antonio Cromartie** picked off **Ben Roethlisberger** in Gwinnett territory on their first possession. The turnover set up a 12-yard TD strike from **Aaron Rodgers** to **Heath Miller** to open the scoring 7-0 in favour of the home team. But the Glads responded immediately with Roethlisberger slinging a dart to **Demaryius Thomas** that the speedy wide receiver carried to Scarborough 32 for a 47-yard pass play. Six plays later **Ahmad Bradshaw** caught the Eagles out of position and barreled through the center of the line for a 5-yard touchdown run to tie the game. The defences took over, forcing a pair of punts on both sides before the Eagles resumed the scoring by finishing off a 77-yard drive with a 30-yard field goal by **Sebastian Janikowski**. Again the Glads answered immediately, this time with a 41-yard pass to **Jeremy Maclin** to put them at the Scarborough 6 yard line then a quick out pass to Nate Burleson for the TD to make it 14-10 for Gwinnett at half time. After forcing a Glads' punt to start the 2<sup>nd</sup> half, Scarborough marched deep into Gwinnett territory but had to settle for a 20-yard field goal to narrow the Glads' advantage to 14-13. But Gwinnett once more fired back with Big Ben connecting with Maclin on a deep out for a 49-yard touchdown pass. Trailing 21-13, Scarborough got a 45-yard punt return from **DeSean Jackson** to give them great field position at the Gwinnett 31. Four plays later, Rodgers hit **Brandon Marshall** on the fly for a 21-yard TD pass. The Eagles went for two points, looking to tie the game, but the attempt failed. Gwinnett put the game away when Bradshaw ploughed into the end zone from a foot away with 5:02 left to cap a 71-yard drive. Trailing 28-19, Scarborough needed more than one score to win, but time ran out on them as Gwinnett's defence held them to short gains and no points the rest of the way.

#### QUOTE OF THE GAME

"All that matters is what I do from here on. I'm excited about showing people – proving to everybody I'm about winning at all costs, no matter how bad I play."  
– Gwinnett QB **Ben Roethlisberger**.

"Hey, you know I was out partying the night before and I'm not sure what I think about this right now. Should we have won the game? Yes; but we didn't because they played better. So, I guess it turned out right."  
– Scarborough owner, **Chris Dickinson**.



#### FANS' THUMB UP

Big Ben's 354 yards passing

#### FANS' THUMB DOWN

Rodgers' 6 bad passes



#### FAN RATING



01-25-2013 Bluff's Stadium Temp: 26 Wind: 0-10 MVP: **Ben Roethlisberger**

1 7:02 Scarborough	TD Rodgers 12 pass to Miller (Janikowski) (6-39-3:28)	0-7
1 2:27 Gwinnett	TD Bradshaw 5 run (Brown,J) (9-80-4:35)	7-7
2 3:18 Scarborough	FG Janikowski 30 (10-77-4:45)	7-10
2 1:16 Gwinnett	TD Roethlisberger 6 pass to Burleson (Brown,J) (5-71-1:43)	14-10
3 5:42 Scarborough	FG Janikowski 22 (12-76-5:45)	14-13
3 4:25 Gwinnett	TD Roethlisberger 49 pass to Maclin (Brown,J) (3-63-1:09)	21-13
4 11:39 Scarborough	TD Rodgers 21 pass to Marshall (2 - failed) (4-31-0:41)	21-19
4 5:02 Gwinnett	TD Bradshaw 1 run (Brown,J) (11-71-6:32)	28-19

	GWG	SBE
First Downs	18	23
Rushes	15-46	24-104
Passes	37-24-354	51-31-316
Sacked	2-17	1-12
Fumble	1	0
Penalties	9-75	7-50
Turnovers	1	0
Missed Tackles	8	5
Blitzes	8	15
Time	28:08	31:52
Third Down	4-10	8-17
Fourth Down	0-0	2-3
Red Att/Td/Fg	3/3/0	4/1/2
Net Offense	383	408



# QUICK COUNTS!!

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



**KNIGHTS**  
9-6-0

0	6	0	3	0	<b>9</b>
OT					

**Shonn Greene**  
22 Carries, 122 yards



**UNDERTAKERS**  
14-1-0

14	0	14	14	0	<b>42</b>
OT					

**Drew Brees**  
28 of 36, 360 yards, 4 TDs

**Drew Brees** threw TD passes of 5 yards to **Marques Colston** and 26 yards to **Rob Gronkowski** to stake the Undertakers to a 14-0 lead in the 1<sup>st</sup>, but the LA defence shut them down in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and **Dan Carpenter** added a pair of field goals to keep the Knights in the game, trailing just 14-6 at half time. The Death Valley offence proved to be too strong to hold at bay for long and 2 more TD passes from Brees – to **Ryan Mathews** and Gronkowski – on the first two possessions of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half provided the Undertakers with more than enough scoring to win easily over the punch-less Knights.



**SWORDFISH**  
3-12-0

0	0	7	8	0	<b>15</b>
OT					

**Michael Jenkins**  
7 Receptions, 152 yards, 1 TD



**MUSTANGS**  
8-7-0

7	10	3	10	0	<b>30</b>
OT					

**Arian Foster**  
26 Carries, 82 yards, 3 TDs

Mustangs' running back **Arian Foster** ran for 3 TDs and the Garland defence took care of its opponent, holding the Swordfish running game to just 19 yards on 11 carries and creating 3 turnovers, to snap a 4-game losing streak and set up a playoff opportunity going into the final week. The Mustangs controlled the ball for over 40 minutes and built up a 20-0 lead before the Swordfish struck with a TD in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter on a 63-yard pass to **Michael Jenkins**. A failed 4<sup>th</sup> down attempt by Sebastian in the 4<sup>th</sup> set up the final Garland TD, a 1-yard run by Foster, and put the game out of reach.



**T-LIZARDS**  
13-2-0

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

**Calvin Johnson**  
6 Receptions, 101 yards, 1 TD



**NORTH STARS**  
11-3-1

10	10	3	10	0	<b>33</b>
OT					

**Jonathan Stewart**  
26 Carries, 126 yards, 1 TD

Markham running back **DeAngelo Williams** finished off a 67-yard drive, consisting entirely of running plays, with a 12-yard dive through the Durham line to take a 10-0 lead in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter. A 57-yard pass to **Wes Welker** set up an 8-yard TD pass from **Eli Manning** to **Steve Breaston** in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter to help Markham build a 20-0 half time lead. An interception by **Jared Allen** set up a 45-yard TD pass to **Calvin Johnson** to give Durham some life in the 3<sup>rd</sup>, but the North Stars' running game controlled the clock and added a 4<sup>th</sup> quarter touchdown to keep the Dinos from rebounding.





# QUICK COUNTS!!

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



## REGULATORS

5-10-0

0	3	0	7	0	10
OT					

Tony Romo  
26 of 40, 277 yards, 1 TD, 1 INT



## SPARTANS

6-9-0

10	14	3	0	0	27
OT					

Darren McFadden  
23 Carries, 128 yards, 1 TD

**Jonathan Joseph** intercepted **Tony Romo** on the game's first play from scrimmage to set up a 42-yard **Josh Scobee** FG and an early lead for Pickering. They would add to it later in the 1<sup>st</sup> when **Robert Griffin III** hit **Vincent Jackson** on a slant for an 80-yard TD. The Regulators responded with a drive to the Pickering 4 but had to settle for a FG. Pickering continued to dominate with a pair of TD runs – 3 yards by **Chris Johnson** and 46 yards by **Darren McFadden** to lead 24-3 at half time. The Spartans slowed the pace down in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half, controlling the ball and holding the Regs to a late score.



## CORN KINGS

8-6-1

0	10	3	10	0	23
OT					

Malcolm Floyd  
5 Receptions, 95 yards, 2 TDs



## TRIUMPH

4-11-0

7	0	0	7	0	14
OT					

Kendall Wright  
3 Receptions, 50 yards, 1 TD

A botched snap led to a Cowtown turnover and **Tim Tebow** took advantage with completions of 33 yards to **Mohamed Massaquoi** then a 23-yard TD pass to Kendall Wright for an early Triumph lead. The Triumph passing game would soon cool off, giving **Joe Flacco** time to find his rhythm with a 38-yard pass to **Malcolm Floyd** then a 13-yard TD pass to Floyd 5 plays later to take a 10-3 lead. A 58-yard fumble recovery for a TD by **Craig Steltz** put the Triumph ahead 14-13 in the 4<sup>th</sup>; but a key interception by **Kenny Phillips** set up a 21-yard TD strike to Floyd to seal the Cowtown win with 3:45 left.



## MONARCHS

2-13-0

3	3	3	0	0	9
OT					

TJ Yates  
27 of 46, 259 yards, 1 INT



## CONVICTS

9-6-0

0	10	0	7	0	17
OT					

Christopher Ivory  
13 Carries, 104 yards

Chino's **Cam Newton** was intercepted 3 times in the first 21 minutes, twice in the Monarchs' red zone, to keep the early score tied 3-3. The Convicts broke the tie with a 12-yard TD run by Newton that was set up by a 25-yard run by **Christopher Ivory**. The tenacious Monarchs stayed close heading into the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, adding two more field goals and playing strong defence before an interception by Chino safety **Bernard Pollard** at the tail end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter set up a 4<sup>th</sup> quarter TD pass of 5 yards from Newtown to **Steven Jackson**. The Convicts' defence did the rest hang on to victory.



# QUICK COUNTS!!

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



<b>EXCALIBURS</b>
12-3-0

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

**Tom Brady**  
17 of 22, 258 yards, 4 TDs



<b>HELLFIRE</b>
3-12-0

3	10	7	0	0	<b>20</b>
OT					

**Andrew Luck**  
21 of 33, 208 yards, 2 TDs

**Tom Brady** threw TD passes of 19 yards to **Donald Jones** and 4 yards to **Michael Crabtree** on York's first 2 possessions to set the stage for another blowout. But turnovers on fumbles by **Brandon Jacobs** and Brady set up 10 Hellfire points, giving York a narrow 14-13 edge at half time. A 33-yard punt return by **Marc Mariani** set up a 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter TD pass of 16 yards to **Victor Cruz** then Brady unloaded a bomb to Crabtree for a 39-yard scoring play to make it 28-13. Mohave fought back, with **Andrew Luck** hitting **Roy Williams** for a 24-yard TD, but fell short at the York 22 with 3:43 remaining.



<b>CUBS</b>
1-14-0

7	0	7	10	0	<b>24</b>
OT					

**Russell Wilson**  
13 of 22, 222 yards, 3 TDs



<b>VIOLATORS</b>
12-3-0

7	10	21	3	0	<b>41</b>
OT					

**Matt Stafford**  
25 of 36, 349 yards, 3 TDs, 1 INT

**Matt Stafford** found **Julio Jones** for 31 yards then 25 yards to convert a 56-yard drive to a TD in just 47 seconds at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> half. That score gave Virden a 17-7 lead after a competitive opening 29 minutes that saw a Virden drive halted by a **Tyvon Branch** interception and the Cubs' offence curbed by 4 first half sacks by **DeMarcus Ware**, who went on to set a record with 5 in the game. **Russell Wilson** connected with **Mike Wallace** for 2 TD passes and **Stephen Hill** for another, but it was not enough to overcome a Virden offence that passed at will and controlled the ball on the ground.



<b>PATRIOTS</b>
1-14-0

7	14	0	0	0	<b>21</b>
OT					

**Michael Vick**  
29 of 45, 367 yards, 1 TD, 2 INTs



<b>COLONIALS</b>
7-8-0

7	14	14	10	0	<b>45</b>
OT					

**Josh Freeman**  
25 of 31, 344 yards, 4 TDs

The Patriots were leading an early firefight 21-14 and were on the march when **Donte Whitner** snatched a misfired **Michael Vick** pass and returned it 40 yards for the tying TD. On the Pats' next series Vick was picked off again, this time by **Ronde Barber**, to halt a drive into Colonial territory and keep the teams deadlocked at the half. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> half it was all Commonwealth, beginning with a 3-yard TD pass from **Josh Freeman** to **Jeremy Shockey** in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and ending with a 36-yard FG by **Stephen Gostkowski** in the 4<sup>th</sup> to bookend 24 unanswered points and a decisive home field win.





# BODY COUNT



## WEEK FIFTEEN INJURY REPORT



<b>CHARLESWOOD</b>	Louis Delmas, S – OUT (Season); Jon Beason, ILB – OUT (Season); Marcus Trufant – OUT (Season); Jerraud Powers, CB – OUT (Season); Barry Church, S – OUT (Season)
<b>CHINO</b>	Shilo Keo, S – OUT (5 games)
<b>COMMONWEALTH</b>	Stephen Nicholas, OLB – OUT (Season); Josh Morgan, WR – OUT (Season); Kevin Smith, RB – OUT (Season); Dannell Ellerbe, LB – OUT (Season) ; Fred Jackson, RB – OUT (Season)
<b>COWTOWN</b>	Maurkice Pouncey, C – OUT (3 games)
<b>DEATH VALLEY</b>	None
<b>DURHAM</b>	None
<b>GARLAND</b>	Laurent Robinson, WR – OUT; Julian Edelman, WR – OUT (4 games); Jahvid Best – OUT (Season)
<b>GWINNETT</b>	Robert Geathers, DE – OUT (3 games)
<b>IOWA CITY</b>	Mario Williams, OLB – OUT
<b>LOS ANGELES</b>	Osi Umenyiora, DE – OUT (3 Games); Sam Young, T – OUT (3 Games)
<b>MARKHAM</b>	Matt Speath, TE – PROBABLE
<b>MISSION VIEJO</b>	Aaron Maybin, LB – QUESTIONABLE; Derek Cox, CB – OUT (Season); Tim Hightower, RB – OUT (Season); Ovie Mughelli, RB – OUT (Season); Ben Grubs, G – OUT (Season); Danny Watkins, G – OUT (Season)
<b>MOHAVE</b>	Brian Price, DT – DOUBTFUL; Chris Hope, S – OUT (3 games); Quan Cosby, WR – OUT (2 games); Chris Massey, LS – OUT (Season)
<b>PICKERING</b>	None
<b>SCARBOROUGH</b>	None
<b>SEBASTIAN</b>	Leon Hall, CB – OUT (2 games); Zach Strief, T – OUT (Season); Kenny Britt, WR – OUT (Season); Carlos Dunlap, DE – OUT (Season); Mike McGlynn, C-G – OUT (Season)
<b>SOUTH CAROLINA</b>	Patrick Chung, S – DOUBTFUL; Brandon Graham, DE – OUT (Season); Major Wirght, S – OUT (Season)
<b>TWIN CITIES</b>	Antoine Winfield, CB – OUT; Mike Jenkins, CB – DOUBTFUL; Jay Cutler, QB – OUT (2 games); Jerome Felton, RB – OUT (Season)
<b>VIRDEN</b>	Shawne Merriman, DE-LB OUT; Anthony Castonzo, T – OUT (3 games); Eric Berry, S – OUT (2 games); Jeff Otah, T – OUT (Season)
<b>YORK</b>	Juron Criner, WR – OUT (2 games)



# STATS



## WEEK FIFTEEN

### STANDINGS

East	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Virden (y)	12	3	0	0.8	477	31.8	316	21.1	10.7	7 1 0	7 0 0	10 1 0
York (y)	12	3	0	0.8	414	27.6	264	17.6	10	6 1 0	5 2 0	9 2 0
Commonwealth	7	8	0	0.467	325	21.7	421	28.1	-6.4	5 3 0	3 4 0	6 5 0
Mohave	3	12	0	0.2	254	16.9	470	31.3	-14.4	2 6 0	2 6 0	3 8 0
Charleswood	1	14	0	0.067	191	12.7	515	34.3	-21.6	1 6 0	1 6 0	1 10 0
West	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Death Valley (z)	14	1	0	0.933	595	39.7	333	22.2	17.5	8 0 0	7 0 0	10 1 0
Chino	9	6	0	0.6	352	23.5	292	19.5	4	4 4 0	4 3 0	6 5 0
Los Angeles	9	6	0	0.6	397	26.5	270	18	8.5	4 3 0	5 2 0	7 4 0
Mission Viejo	2	13	0	0.133	195	13	474	31.6	-18.6	1 6 0	2 6 0	2 9 0
Iowa City	1	14	0	0.067	248	16.5	380	25.3	-8.8	1 6 0	0 7 0	1 10 0
North	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Durham (z)	13	2	0	0.867	462	30.8	251	16.7	14.1	7 0 0	5 2 0	9 2 0
Markham (y)	11	3	1	0.767	426	28.4	248	16.5	11.9	6 1 1	6 1 1	9 1 1
Cowtown	8	6	1	0.567	378	25.2	293	19.5	5.7	5 2 0	3 3 1	5 5 1
Pickering	6	9	0	0.4	307	20.5	336	22.4	-1.9	3 5 0	3 4 0	5 6 0
Twin Cities	4	11	0	0.267	257	17.1	341	22.7	-5.6	3 5 0	0 7 0	2 9 0
South	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Scarborough (z)	13	2	0	0.867	442	29.5	233	15.5	13.9	7 1 0	6 1 0	9 2 0
Garland	8	7	0	0.533	351	23.4	303	20.2	3.2	5 3 0	3 4 0	4 7 0
Gwinnett	8	7	0	0.533	338	22.5	321	21.4	1.1	4 3 0	4 3 0	6 5 0
South Carolina	5	10	0	0.333	269	17.9	389	25.9	-8	3 4 0	3 4 0	3 8 0
Sebastian	3	12	0	0.2	214	14.3	442	29.5	-15.2	1 6 0	2 6 0	2 9 0

(z)-clinched division

(y)-clinched wild card

### PASSING

	Att	Cmp	C%	Yards	In	I%	Lg	TD	TD%	Rate	
1 Brees	DVU	564	408	72.3	5283	7	1.2	59	70	12.4	135.8
2 Stafford	VV	484	343	70.9	4579	8	1.7	64	40	8.3	121.2
3 Brady	YOR	415	274	66.0	3874	13	3.1	75	32	7.7	108.6
4 Schaub	DTL	198	126	63.6	1872	3	1.5	66	12	6.1	108.4
5 Smith,A	LAK	477	325	68.1	3626	5	1.0	51	31	6.5	107.8
6 Cutler	TCT	290	191	65.9	2135	3	1.0	55	17	5.9	102.9
7 Rodgers,A	SBE	488	334	68.4	3937	9	1.8	78	24	4.9	101.4
8 Rivers,P	DTL	274	174	63.5	2442	10	3.6	53	20	7.3	101.3
9 Luck	MOH	429	280	65.3	2998	10	2.3	52	21	4.9	92.2
10 Flacco	COW	432	238	55.1	3060	10	2.3	81	31	7.2	91.8
11 Manning,E	MAR	393	237	60.3	3478	16	4.1	75	22	5.6	90.9
12 Romo	SC	478	314	65.7	3643	17	3.6	75	23	4.8	89.8
13 Ryan,M	GDM	493	311	63.1	3565	9	1.8	81	18	3.7	89.3
14 Roethlisbe	GWG	474	303	63.9	3485	16	3.4	80	24	5.1	88.8
15 Wilson,R	ICC	357	213	59.7	2703	10	2.8	71	17	4.8	87.6
16 Newton,C	CHI	400	249	62.3	2668	12	3.0	75	19	4.8	85.1
17 Vick	CHP	329	195	59.3	2163	12	3.6	71	10	3.0	73.8
18 Freeman,J	COM	373	225	60.3	2564	19	5.1	61	15	4.0	73.2
19 Dalton	SS	454	271	59.7	2672	14	3.1	63	13	2.9	73.0
20 Griffin,R	PIC	354	204	57.6	2582	19	5.4	93	14	4.0	71.3
21 McCoy,C	MVM	190	108	56.8	956	6	3.2	44	5	2.6	66.0
22 Henne	DVU	6	6	100.0	101	0	0.0	36	1	16.7	158.3
23 Naanee	CHI	1	1	100.0	15	0	0.0	15	0	0.0	118.8
24 Thigpen	GWG	1	1	100.0	10	0	0.0	10	0	0.0	108.3
25 Bradford,S	ICC	43	26	60.5	323	0	0.0	51	2	4.7	99.3



## RUSHING

		Att	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD			Att	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD		
1	Jones-Drew	COW	345	1546	4.5	61	5	13	Jackson,S	CHI	206	809	3.9	52	1
2	Rice,R	SBE	298	1522	5.1	70	12	14	Newton,C	CHI	139	794	5.7	25	17
3	Turner,M	YOR	264	1255	4.8	43	7	15	Stewart,J	MAR	153	773	5.1	25	7
4	Jackson,F	COM	237	1137	4.8	74	7	16	Johnson,C	PIC	198	716	3.6	36	3
5	McCoy,L	GWG	223	1013	4.5	67	10	17	Sproles	LAK	86	682	7.9	34	1
6	Williams,D	MAR	156	978	6.3	73	11	18	Murray,D	MVM	154	667	4.3	24	5
7	McGahee	DVU	187	952	5.1	66	5	19	Gore	SC	177	619	3.5	15	6
8	Wells,B	VV	225	931	4.1	63	9	20	Tate,B	VV	119	575	4.8	27	1
9	Mathews,R	DVU	201	924	4.6	36	1	21	Greene,S	LAK	143	575	4.0	36	1
10	Bush,R	DTL	203	918	4.5	44	13	22	Thomas,P	SS	127	547	4.3	31	5
11	Brown,D	ICC	168	893	5.3	72	6	23	Jacobs,B	YOR	134	523	3.9	57	9
12	Martin,D	TCT	197	842	4.3	55	1	24	Foster,A	GDM	155	518	3.3	34	10

## RECEIVING

		No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD			No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD		
1	Graham,J	MOH	106	1111	10.5	52	5	13	Witten	CHP	69	710	10.3	55	4
2	Gronkows,R	DVU	90	1288	14.3	54	13	14	Marshall,B	SBE	68	799	11.8	44	6
3	Fitzgerald	COW	85	1342	15.8	87	14	15	Gonzalez	LAK	67	659	9.8	36	7
4	White,R	LAK	83	1046	12.6	48	8	16	Hernandez	DVU	67	712	10.6	54	15
5	Johnson,C	DTL	79	1450	18.4	66	13	17	Jackson,D	SBE	66	916	13.9	73	6
6	Wallace,M	ICC	76	1502	19.8	71	14	18	Cruz	YOR	66	1398	21.2	75	13
7	Welker	MAR	75	1116	14.9	73	5	19	Bryant,D	VV	64	1019	15.9	64	12
8	Colston	DVU	74	1037	14.0	59	10	20	Baldwin	COM	63	885	14.0	61	5
9	Bowe	DTL	71	967	13.6	53	13	21	Williams,M	MVM	63	782	12.4	37	1
10	Nicks,H	MOH	71	1176	16.6	51	12	22	Pettigrew	SC	63	587	9.3	26	4
11	Smith,S	LAK	71	1010	14.2	51	10	23	Wayne	GWG	62	932	15.0	80	8
12	Winslow	YOR	69	771	11.2	35	3	24	Jones,J	VV	62	1056	17.0	35	8

## KICKING

		FGA	FGM	FG%	40	50	Lg	Pts	
1	Akers	MAR	37	33	89.2	15	3	51	144
2	Tynes	VV	32	29	90.6	9	0	49	141
3	Crosby	DTL	30	26	86.7	5	3	54	130
4	Janikowski	SBE	31	26	83.9	9	3	52	128
5	Carpenter	LAK	30	26	86.7	7	5	57	119
6	Gould	GDM	30	26	86.7	6	1	50	117
7	Gostkowski	COM	31	27	87.1	9	1	54	115
8	Scobee	PIC	31	28	90.3	15	4	58	113
9	Gano	DVU	19	14	73.7	3	3	55	113
10	Bailey,D	CHI	31	24	77.4	10	2	51	112
11	Kasay	COW	24	19	79.2	7	1	52	100
12	Walsh	YOR	21	15	71.4	3	1	54	96
13	Zuerlein	ICC	31	22	71.0	12	3	51	92
14	Brown,J	GWG	20	17	85.0	5	1	52	92
15	Rackers	MVM	26	20	76.9	10	4	59	77
16	Longwell	SC	19	15	78.9	7	1	50	77
17	Vinatieri	SS	20	20	100.0	7	0	49	76
18	Bironas	TCT	15	11	73.3	4	2	53	65
19	Cundiff	MOH	11	10	90.9	3	0	48	62
20	Folk	CHP	11	8	72.7	4	0	48	47
21	Lindell	LAK	5	5	100.0	0	0	36	16



## INTERCEPTIONS

		No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD			No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD		
1	Webster	COW	5	99	19.8	41	1	13	Flowers	COW	4	68	17.0	27	1
2	Chancellor	DTL	5	18	3.6	15	0	14	Byrd,J	MAR	3	89	29.7	89	1
3	Sherman	DTL	5	54	10.8	29	1	15	Joseph,J	PIC	3	20	6.7	20	0
4	DeCoud	GWG	5	52	10.4	29	0	16	Matthews	DVU	3	56	18.7	31	0
5	Barron	CHP	4	122	30.5	45	2	17	Allen,J	DVU	3	4	1.3	4	0
6	Barnett	VV	4	64	16.0	35	1	18	Woodson	LAK	3	24	8.0	21	0
7	Phillips,K	COW	4	45	11.3	42	0	19	Newman	VV	3	87	29.0	50	1
8	Brown,T	MAR	4	3	0.8	3	0	20	Williams,T	VV	3	90	30.0	66	0
9	Webb,L	MVM	4	60	15.0	36	0	21	Manning,D	YOR	3	50	16.7	29	0
10	Cromartie	SBE	4	133	33.3	57	1	22	Griffin,M	SBE	3	21	7.0	9	0
11	Revis	SBE	4	94	23.5	72	1	23	Cushing	GDM	3	10	3.3	9	0
12	Weddle	GDM	4	40	10.0	19	0	24	Tillman	MAR	3	34	11.3	34	0

## SACKS

1	Ware,D	VV	19	10	Avril	GDM	9	19	Jones,C	SS	7
2	Babin	YOR	16	11	Barnes,A	GWG	9	20	Carter,A	LAK	6
3	Allen,J	DTL	16	12	Seymour	SC	9	21	Tuck	SBE	6
4	Pierre-Pau	ICC	14	13	Cole,T	MAR	8	22	Suh	SBE	6
5	Suggs	SBE	13	14	McDonald	PIC	8	23	Jenkins,C	YOR	6
6	Peppers	CHI	12	15	Campbell,C	SBE	7	24	Dumervil	DTL	6
7	Harrison,J	CHI	10	16	Atkins	YOR	7	25	Johnson,M	YOR	6
8	Freeney	TCT	10	17	Miller,V	YOR	7	26	Mathis,R	GWG	6
9	Sheard	PIC	10	18	Smith,A	VV	7	27	Dockett	GWG	6

## TACKLES

1	Laurinaiti	GWG	153	10	Kuechly	SC	122	19	Hall,D	GDM	94
2	McClain,R	MOH	148	11	Briggs	GWG	116	20	Mayo	DVU	92
3	Barnett	VV	141	12	Hawthorne	COM	114	21	Angerer	MAR	92
4	Smith,D	CHI	128	13	Burnett,K	TCT	114	22	Martin,S	MVM	90
5	Washington	PIC	128	14	Pierre-Pau	ICC	113	23	Taylor,P	CHP	88
6	Jackson,D	LAK	127	15	Conner	SS	112	24	Clark,R	YOR	88
7	Johnson,D	COW	125	16	Maulaluga	MVM	103	25	Bowman	GDM	86
8	Cushing	GDM	123	17	Henders,EJ	SC	100	26	Curry,A	CHP	84
9	Lofton	DTL	122	18	Chaney	SS	95	27	Phillips,K	COW	83

## KICK RETURNS

		No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD			No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD		
1	Harvin	PIC	37	1126	30.4	109	2	13	Scott,D	SBE	43	999	23.2	100	1
2	McKnight	MAR	41	1245	30.4	100	1	14	Banks	MOH	66	1531	23.2	47	0
3	Sherels	SS	52	1468	28.2	76	0	15	Weems	COW	39	883	22.6	35	0
4	Ginn Jr.	TCT	52	1434	27.6	106	1	16	Cobb	DVU	49	1105	22.6	35	0
5	Sproles	LAK	42	1135	27.0	82	0	17	Tate,B	MVM	72	1622	22.5	52	0
6	Stroughter	CHP	85	2278	26.8	104	1	18	Mariani	YOR	45	1009	22.4	49	0
7	Karim	GDM	26	642	24.7	35	0	19	Lefeged	VV	33	633	19.2	51	0
8	Gates,C	ICC	62	1487	24.0	75	0	20	Boykin	PIC	16	288	18.0	32	0
9	Logan	GWG	50	1195	23.9	42	0	21	Rogers,J	ICC	2	63	31.5	33	0
10	Cribbs	CHI	40	949	23.7	58	0	22	Reed,D	DTL	3	92	30.7	40	0
11	Hester,D	DTL	27	633	23.4	52	0	23	Skrine	MVM	1	30	30.0	30	0
12	Washington	COM	62	1445	23.3	42	0	24	Cosby	MOH	1	28	28.0	28	0

## PUNT RETURNS

		No	Fc	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD			No	Fc	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD		
1	Peterson,P	GDM	33	10	581	17.6	80	4	13	Bryant,D	VV	16	11	161	10.1	46	0
2	Bess	DTL	20	16	279	14.0	40	0	14	Banks	MOH	19	3	188	9.9	23	0
3	Sproles	LAK	38	9	520	13.7	84	3	15	Cribbs	CHI	45	6	435	9.7	18	0
4	Jones,J	CHP	36	1	469	13.0	75	2	16	Adams,J	PIC	29	15	249	8.6	15	0
5	Arenas	SC	25	11	325	13.0	31	0	17	Jackson,D	SBE	36	21	306	8.5	45	0
6	Mariani	YOR	29	11	357	12.3	69	1	18	Tate,B	MVM	21	4	176	8.4	22	0
7	Crayton	MAR	17	8	191	11.2	40	0	19	Edwards,A	ICC	40	4	333	8.3	41	0
8	Ginn Jr.	TCT	40	6	428	10.7	25	0	20	Sherels	SS	21	8	150	7.1	13	0
9	Washington	COM	38	3	401	10.6	19	0	21	McKelvin	GWG	2	1	37	18.5	19	0
10	Weems	COW	48	12	499	10.4	65	0	22	Decker	DTL	3	0	53	17.7	21	0
11	Logan	GWG	27	15	280	10.4	27	0	23	Pettis	SBE	1	1	16	16.0	16	0
12	Cobb	DVU	21	12	212	10.1	62	1	24	Bush,R	DTL	2	0	25	12.5	14	0





# AROUND THE



*With Spats McChad*

NEW YORK – It has been 21 days since the NHL and NHLPA reached a collective bargaining agreement that ended the 113-day hockey lockout and salvaged a piece of the 2012-2013 season. Gary Bettman apologized to the fans and everybody moved on as if nothing had happened. Talk in the ‘Twitterverse’ and other social media about a fan protest in the form of a one-game boycott certainly had my support, even if it was only symbolic; I attend, at most, just one or two Rangers games a year and that is because I get free tickets occasionally. But all the talk was, in the end, just talk – vapid, pretentious internet blabber of the most impotent kind. The fans are back and happy to be so – everybody is just so darn glad to have their Saturday night ritual back.

Although I respect and understand the power of words in my profession, there is something about Twitter, Facebook, and the Comments section at the end of online news articles that steals the power of words even as the medium expands their number. When everyone has an opinion, and can share it with others instantaneously, deep thought ends and virtual shouting matches begin. The therapeutic benefits of “being heard” act as a placebo to counteract the uncomfortable impulses that cause a person to complain in the first place. Meaning, in the end, that those who feel their voices are being heard are less likely to act. This is the case with the fans’ reaction to the NHL lockout. They purged their frustration and anger with a dose of online vitriol then carried on being fans without taking action. Bettman’s “apology” was another empty gesture, designed to appease an empty protest. The good thing is that the new CBA will provide a full decade of labour peace before the exploitation of the hapless fans begins anew.

## **TEAM OF DESTINY – OF COURSE!**

*"BIG BEN NEVER BIGGER"* ran the headline in the Gwinnett Gazette online. *"BIG Ben comes up BIG"* blazoned the Georgia Star. *"BIG-PLAY BEN BEATS BLUEBIRDS"* declared the Atlanta Constitution-Journal. *"BEN COMES UP BIG"* the EFL Newsletter Weekly blares. Against the odds **Ben Roethlisberger** returns a conquering hero to Gwinnett for a Week 16 match-up against Garland, fronting an 8-7 team that is one win (and a Cowtown loss) away from a wild card berth. His performance in a surprising 28-19 upset of Scarborough at Bluff’s stadium was truly unconscious. Big Ben completed 24 of 37 pass attempts for 354 yards, 2 touchdowns and 1 obligatory interception that fortunately for him had no effect on the outcome – all this without the benefit of a reliable ground game to keep a formidable Scarborough pass rush and secondary honest. “Good Ben” was in the game for the Glads and “Bad Ben” was nowhere to be seen.

After appearing to be out of the race in Week 11 following a 31-13 blowout loss to Markham, the Gladiators are winners of 4 in a row and are attracting national attention for the right reasons again. The “Never-Say-Die Glads” are one of the good news stories heading into the final week of the regular season, having climbed off a branch dangling treacherously over the precipice of playoff elimination. Big Ben is being credited with playing a big role in this revival. But while all this eulogizing of Big Ben is a refreshing change, it also smacks of hypocrisy. The media outlets that are currently lauding his poise and determination under pressure were levelling a withering barrage of criticism that would have disabled any person of average intellect and traumatized any associated loved ones within earshot. Luckily for Ben, his general obliviousness comes in handy when it prevents him from hearing or understanding the worst of his many critics, while the same quality can be a severe detriment in the passing game.

Now sports media appear to be somewhat united in declaring Gwinnett a “Team of Destiny.” I agree – they are a team destined to finish *out* of the playoffs after winning their Conference the previous year. What is the reason for this impending fall from grace? Big Ben, who else? **Russ Flont** can sputter and spit until his eyes pop out of their sockets about guts, determination, fighting spirit and about how he *never* doubted the Glads would recover from a 0-4 start; but the reality is that Gwinnett does not control its own destiny – Cowtown does. The Corn Kings are one victory away from taking the Gladiators’ media-assigned spot in the playoff rankings; and even if they were to fall flat on their faces at home against the pugnacious Spartans, there is still Garland to deal with. The Mustangs have recently gone through their own “dark night of the soul” moment and will be aiming to demonstrate their own grit on the final week of the season when the chips are down. If that Mustang defence, praised in training camp by the same media now praising the freshly redeemed Roethlisberger, shows up to play, be prepared for a sudden and unwelcome return of “Bad Ben” to the Coliseum in Gwinnett.

## **ROMAN FOOTBALL DISCOVERED IN TEXAS**

Sloppy tackling by the defence, no running game by the offence, and 2 interceptions thrown by **Andy Dalton** signalled that the



Swordfish were in their usual form in a 30-15 loss to Garland in Week 15. The Swordfish could not have come to Garland at a better time for the Mustangs – a team that has stumbled severely through 4 straight losses and badly needed a lift.

The farcical early 1st quarter of this game had edgy fans at the Corral whooping it up one minute and raining showers of boos the next. An interception and 25-yard return by safety *Earl Thomas* 5 minutes into the game put Garland at the Sebastian 21 and brought the happy crowd to its feet; but seconds later *Darrius Heyward-Bey* had the ball knocked out by Sordfish corner *Patrick Robinson* and *Glover Quin* recovered to prompt a loud and unusually bitter hail of heckling by the normally good-natured Garland crowd. The mood darkened even more when Sebastian receiver *Michael Jenkins* slipped away from *Eric Weddle* and raced 56 yards to the Garland 31 then *Vince Wilfork* was flagged for a 15-yard personal foul. But Garland fans everywhere (presuming there are some outside of Garland) can thank the Swordfish for being themselves and handing them back



Garland offensive line coach **Chrill Pickens** strides off the field after a crucial victory over Sebastian in Week 15. The Mustangs scored all 3 of their touchdowns on the ground, leading some to believe Pickens' 1950's "system" is finally working.

the momentum. A false start and a holding penalty knocked them back 15 yards then *Will Smith* bull-rushed through *Gosder Cherilus* and stripped the ball from Dalton as he brought him to the ground. *Jameel McClain* recovered for the Mustangs, bringing jubilation once more to the gathering at the dusty Corral. In a sign that **Doug Shirley** is determined to take the heat off **Matt Ryan**, the Mustangs ran the ball four straight times to cover the final 27 yards of the ensuing 57-yard touchdown drive, hitting pay-dirt when *Arian Foster* bowled through the middle of the Swordfish line for a 6-yard score.

Foster finished with 3 touchdowns on the afternoon and carried the ball 26 times as the Mustangs controlled the ball for over 40 minutes; but his 3.2 yards per carry average and failure to reach the 100-yard bench mark yet again this season marks a disturbing trend for the former Cubs standout. Questions about a possible nagging injury to Foster are over-lapping with increasingly vocal criticism of offensive line coach, **Chrill Pickens**, Shirley's former High School football coach. The 68-year old Pickens is an "old school" coach in the literal sense. He teaches basic blocking schemes from the days before the innovation of the '4-3' defence – the kind that work best when 14-year-olds are playing other 14-year-olds from the late 1950's.

"I like to keep it simple," Pickens explained in an interview last year with the local community paper, the *Garland Milkhorse*. "With a simple scheme the players can focus on blocking. That's what I like my offensive line to do – block! Running around and pulling, or what have you, isn't blocking, it's dancing. This ain't a ball room, it's a *football field!*"

With the likes of *Duane Brown*, *Max Unger*, *D'Brickasahw Ferguson*, *Chris Kuper* and *Jeff Faine* as starters, it's not as if Pickens has no talent to work with; so how does he explain the second worst running game in football?

"'Protect the quarterback!' That's what I tell 'em!" explains Pickens. "I look 'em in the eye and tell 'em, 'the quarterback's smarter than all of ya put together and he has skill to go with it. Without 'im you'd all be bagging groceries or doing hard time in a Federal Penitentiary.' That's what I tell 'em - to put it in perspective for 'em, ya know! They ain't too bright those big lumoxes, so ya have to spell it out for 'em." Quarterback protection is factored into every play design, even hand-offs to the running back, according to Pickens. "You never know what'll happen on any play, so I put someone back there to protect Matt."

Despite a chronic lack of production in the ground game, don't expect Pickens to be shown the door any time soon. Shirley's loyalty to his old teacher is readily apparent when asked about whether it's time for a change at his position. "Chrill is a good guy and he loves the players to death. Never mind what he says to reporters, the players respect him and he knows what he's teaching them – he's been teaching it for 40 years."

That may be, but it appears from the results on the field that Pickens has been teaching the same things for 40 years and

hasn't bothered to brush up on new techniques. This is not an oversight.

"Everyone's tryin' new things like they're inventing football or somethin'! I tell ya, football's been around a long time, since the Romans, and the game hasn't changed a lick since **Walter Camp** turned it from rugby back to the original Roman game," Pickens scoffed in the *Milkhorse* article when asked what innovators he admired growing up. "Who did I admire? I admired my high school coach, **Jed Jedson**. He played with **Jim Thorpe** on the Canton Bulldogs and coached high school football into his 80's. He wouldn't quit coaching, even when he couldn't see or hear, or walk very well. When they finally replaced him in my senior year, he just kept coming to practice and taking over the drills. He had fight in 'im for sure. One day he collapsed on the field and died. I remember us all saying he would have wanted it that way – to die right there on the field doing the thing he loved best. We were sad, but happy for him at the same time. Good old Jed!"

### ***DeMARCUS....WHERE?***

The mid-season trade that sent **DeMarcus Ware** from Death Valley to Virden was probably the best thing that could have happened to the once-vanishing superstar and the team he joined. Gone from the stands are fan-made posters with slogans like 'DeMARCUS....WHERE??', 'WARE ARE YOU DEMARCUS?' and 'WAREFORE ART THOU DeMARCUS?' With 9 sacks in his last two games, Ware was named 'EFL Defensive Player of the Week' for the 2<sup>nd</sup> straight week and now *everybody* knows where he is and what he's doing – violating baby bears.

The Violators' linebacker set a single-game EFL record in Week 15 with 5 sacks to give his team a defensive shot in the arm in a 41-24 win over the lowly 1-14 Cubs. Nobody will likely remember or care 5 years from now that the record was set against a team with 3 rookies starting in the middle of the offensive line. After almost a full season under fire, Cubs' rookies **Riley Reiff**, **Rodney Hudson**, and **Senio Kelemete** do not seem to have learned anything except how to throw up their hands and look at each other after surrendering a sack or taking an obvious penalty. The three combined have been tagged with 12 sacks allowed and penalized 15 times, but those numbers don't tell the complete story of how the play of the entire line has been affected by the need to send help to the middle. With Kelemete playing beside him, right tackle **Jared Valdeher** has had a long year – giving up 5 sacks and leading the team in penalty yards trying to cover for the rookie. The rookie experiment has been a disaster for young quarterback **Russell Wilson**, whose blindside has been well-protected by stalwart **Tyron Smith**, but who unfortunately has a birds-eye view of opposing linemen and blitzing linebackers pushing back or running over his protection to his front and to his right.

Despite this, and although the Cubs are dead in the standings at 1-14, they are a team that few EFL teams take lightly, due to spasmodic signs of life that surprise you – like the opening score of this game when Wilson threw a gem to **Mike Wallace**, who defeated the Virden zone by turning on the after-burners to race to a 36-yard TD. It was a brilliant-looking play and one that must both please and frustrate Iowa fans. They see potential in the young talent assembled by **Deron Redding** but no results commensurate with that talent. From the start it was not going to be a playoff year for Iowa City; but nobody predicted a last place finish in the West Division, which is where they will end up regardless of what happens in the final week. Meanwhile, Virden is one win away from clinching the East Division title.

### ***AROUND THE EFL***

The Week 15 tilt between the Knights and the Undertakers had been billed as a "grudge match" after the two had combined for 1,244 total yards and 90 points in a 49-41 Week One Death Valley victory that will go down in history as the most remarkable display of total offense ever witnessed. What a difference 14 weeks makes....The LA Knights did not pass the ball until their 13th play from scrimmage while **Drew Brees** started with 8 straight completions to build a 14-0 lead 10 minutes into the game. Brees threw 4 TD passes in the game to bring his season total to 70 with one game remaining. It is an astounding testimony to his dominance this year that he has not thrown fewer than 3 TD passes in a single game all season. When his counterpart **Alex Smith** finally did throw the ball it was "lucky 13" as he connected with **Tony Gonzalez** on a short hitch that went for 31 yards. Despite the success, the Knights passed just 5 more times in the first half and just 14 times all game in a humiliating 42-9 loss to Death Valley. One has to wonder if Smith is healthy or if **Jeff Dohrn** is not. Smith has quietly compiled impressive passing numbers this season – throwing 31 TD passes to just 5 interceptions and sporting a 107.8 QB rating. Why the ball has suddenly been taken out of his hands the past two weeks is a source of bafflement and frustration in LA.

In a game that meant nothing to Markham's playoff fortunes, and much to Durham's hopes for top seed in the Conference playoffs, the North Stars ran all over the Thunder Lizards, rushing the ball 53 times for 277 yards in a 33-14 humbling at the Dawg Pound. It was an impressive display of power football by Markham; but while it drew attention to a season-long struggle by Durham to stop the run, as well as the strength of the Markham offensive line, it also inadvertently underscored the reluctance of **Darrin Jones** to put the game in the hands of his quarterback. **Eli Manning** has attempted just 393 passes in 15 games this year, for an average of 26 attempts per game. With offensive weapons at his disposal in the passing game, Jones runs (excuse the pun) the only offence in the league that has rushed more often than it has passed. Is it for style or necessity? You be the judge.

Having billions of dollars to throw around won't necessarily make a person happy, but it certainly can make things easier or the normally impossible suddenly possible. With his father's fortune behind him, **Ryan Rich** – the richest boy in the world – became the youngest coach in the history of professional football to receive accreditation as a member of the Professional Football Coaches Association. Normally this is a designation reserved for active professional coaches, but with **Richard Rich** lobbying on his son's



behalf the PFCA agreed to grant an exception if “the applicant” (Ryan) could demonstrate “full control over a professional football team in a live game.” A couple of e-mails, a phone call, and what is believed to be a substantial bribe later, and Commonwealth Coach **Will Blandford** was in the Bahamas with his girlfriend while Ryan Rich donned the blue and red jacket of the Colonials Coaching Staff. Exploiting a weakened Pats’ secondary, Ryan directed the Colonials to a 45-21 pasting of Charleswood to register his first professional win. When the players tried to sneak up on him to douse him with blue Gatorade, Ryan was ready with his head back and his mouth open. “I love blue Gatorade!” he cried excitedly.

In Mohave, the Hellfire were no match again for the Excaliburs but at least put up a fight in a 28-20 loss. **Tom Brady** fired 4 TD passes to keep his team in the hunt for the East Division title, but with Virden facing Charleswood in Week 16, it looks as if **Jay Hammond’s** crew will have to settle for a wild card.

In Chino, the pesky Monarchs needed 3 interceptions to stay in the game but their offence could not break into the end zone against the Lockdown Crew. **Cam Newton** ran for a TD and passed for another to propel his team to a 17-9 win and set up a winner-takes-all showdown against LA in the season’s final week.

The Corn Kings snapped a 3-game losing streak by scoring 10 points in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter to snatch a difficult 23-14 win over the Triumph and maintain control over their destiny. Pickering, the team they must beat in Week 16 in order to make the post-season, looked a lot like the team many had predicted they would be in an impressive 27-10 win over the struggling Regulators.

# BUG THE BOOKIE!

**JIMMY THE GEEK GIVES YOU HIS PICKS  
FOR WEEK SIXTEEN EFL ACTION**

*Your source for fantasy and on-line betting solutions*



**RECORD VS THE SPREAD AFTER WEEK 15:**

**104-42-4**

## PLAYOFF PICTURE AT A GLANCE

PACIFIC-ATLANTIC  
CONFERENCE

CAN-AM  
CONFERENCE

OUT	ALIVE	IN	IN	ALIVE	OUT
			1		
			2		
			3		
			4		

## JIMMY'S WEEK SIXTEEN PICKS

### **CHINO @ LOS ANGELES (line – KNIGHTS by 6)**

This is the “flex game” of the week for Sunday night and no wonder – it doesn't get much heavier than this in the regular season. The winner goes on, the loser goes home. Not only that, but these traditional rivals boast tough, ego-maniacal defences that will try to out-do each other in the Sack Dance competition as much as they will try to kill the opposing quarterback. The last time these teams faced each other it was a walk-in-the-park win for LA thanks to a couple of punt return touchdowns by Darren Sproles. The Convicts hit a wall in that game trying to run the ball against the Knights' front seven while their passing attack could not compensate for it. They managed to score just 3 points then and there is no reason to believe it won't be just as difficult this week. Cam will need to be creative with his arm and his legs to generate scoring opportunities, while the Lockdown Crew will have to live up to its name. The Knights played at half speed in their Week 14 win over the Cubs and their loss to Death Valley last week. Whispers about Alex Smith having a sore arm persist despite vehement denials by the team. Sproles, a main weapon, was also mostly silent at the Graveyard. The Knights are a more balanced and more talented team and this is their game to lose in front of their home crowd; but they will have to get their offence out of first gear if they plan to play in the post-season. **PICK: CHINO**

### **DEATH VALLEY @ IOWA CITY (line – UNDERTAKERS by 7)**

The Undertakers are West Division Champions and have the no. 1 seed locked up for the post-season. So what does the team that has everything play for in the final week of the season? Stats, baby, that's what! While most coaches would rest their big name stars after locking up everything that can be locked up over 16 games – or at least restrict them to a little tune-up action before giving the back-ups a chance – that will likely not be the case this week. The final figure for the Stat to Stand the Test of Time – Drew Brees' TD pass record – has yet to be determined. Standing at 70 it is already beyond belief, but it can get beyond comprehension if it rises by another 5 or so. With all of those TD passes, there are a lot of TD-catchers on Death Valley – and five of them have 10 or more. Brees could make that six if, hypothetically, he threw 5 TD passes to Willis McGahee. And, speaking of McGahee, he and running mate Ryan Mathews could become just the second running back tandem in EFL history to rush for more than 1,000 yards each in a single season since Cowtown's Marion Barber and Laurence Maroney achieved that feat in 2008. So, you see, there is a lot for the Undertakers to play for and the Cubs are the perfect team for it. **PICK: DEATH VALLEY**

### **MOHAVE @ MISSION VIEJO (line – MONARCHS by 1)**

Recent signs of competitiveness on both sides of the ball since TJ Yates took over as the starter in Mission Viejo have them favoured by Vegas for the first time this year. With the Hellfire now “it” after being tagged for a loss by the lowly Patriots, picking the Monarchs to win is the fashionable, Californian thing to do if you are a poolie or a chronic gambler on the West Coast. Well, don't buy the hype! The Monarchs are still horrible and picking off an overly eager Cam Newton 3 times last week doesn't change that. They still lost the game, which should be a red flag for anyone with half a brain. Mohave is not a respectable opponent, but they are not the Cubs, which is the only team so far that has wet its pants for fear of the Monarchs – the others simply wet their pants because they are laughing so hard. Enough banter – this game doesn't deserve so much attention. **PICK: MOHAVE**

### **COMMONWEALTH @ YORK (line – EXCALIBURS by 10)**

The Excaliburs have a slim chance to regain the East Division Crown they lost at Virden in Week 13 but have to pray for a miracle, and also win this game, to do it. A miracle, being miraculous, must come against all reasonable odds. Certainly, it appears that there is no reasonable chance that Charleswood will upset the Patriots, meaning a miracle is indeed in play. Tom Brady must turn his team's full attention to the game on the field, however, and avoid watching the scoreboard. He must also throw a few touchdown passes. The Colonials are coming off a blasting of Charleswood that has their spirits high, and they are motivated by the desire to be the first expansion team to ever achieve a .500 record. Well, good luck with that! With both Fred Jackson and Kevin Smith out, the running game that has kept Josh Freeman from being a second-year disaster is no more, which means he will be exposed to the meanest pass rush in the league with nothing on hand to slow them down. In their first match-up, the Colonials kept the game and the score respectable. Don't expect such respectability this time. **PICK: YORK**

### **VIRDEN @ CHARLESWOOD (line – VIOLATORS by 10)**

The Violators can clinch the East Division with a win against the worst team in the league. Due to the pressure of a meaningful game coming on the road against a meaningless opponent, it is very likely that Virden will experience a few early embarrassments and may even be horrified to find they are tied or trailing at half time. Don't worry if you are a Virden fan because that is the



absolute worst case scenario – one that will end happily with Matt Stafford throwing 3 second half touchdowns to Dez Bryant and Beanie Wells finishing the game with 15 straight carries. The best case scenario is that what I just described happens in the first half instead of the second, Beanie Wells carries the ball 40 times, and Mark Ingram sees his first on-field action of the 2012 season to give him a breather. **PICK: VIRDEN**

### **SCARBOROUGH @ SOUTH CAROLINA (line – BLUE EAGLES by 5)**

Scarborough missed an opportunity to pull in front of the Thunder Lizards for the no. 1 seed in the CAC when Gwinnett wrestled them to the ground last week. The difference in the game was red zone offence, with the Blue Eagles kicking field goals while the Glads scored touchdowns. Math did the rest. This week they must win at the Carolina Slammer to stand a hope of salvaging the no.1 spot in the playoff pecking order and hope for the dome-spoiled Triumph to play a game for the ages at wet and sloppy Jurassic Park. The Regulators have nothing to play for, but they have been playing that way for most of the season, so expect them to give a full effort while the professional and not overly passionate Blue Eagles simply do what it takes to get the job done and rise above the spread. **PICK: SCARBOROUGH**

### **GARLAND @ GWINNETT (line – GLADIATORS by 3)**

Both teams will be looking at the out-of-town scoreboard to see how the Corn Kings are faring as they battle each other for the right to fall into the final wild card berth in the CAC. These are two teams currently going in opposite directions. The Gladiators are winners of four straight, including upsets over Cowtown and Scarborough during that run, while the Mustangs were recently in freefall before landing on the Swordfish and splattering them last week. These divergent paths have converged at 8-7 with an opportunity for both teams to set a new direction in the final week of the season. Despite the presence of running threats on both sides, expect fortunes to ride predominantly on the effectiveness of their passing games. If Big Ben and Matt Ryan cannot gain separation from each other throwing the ball, the difference may come down to which team's running game underperforms less, or to special teams. While the Mustangs have the better defence, Big Ben showed last week against Scarborough that he can rise above a good defence when he is motivated. Ryan can perform similar feats but hasn't done so lately. Don't be surprised if Patrick Peterson or Leodis McKelvin take the game away from the usual suspects. **PICK: GARLAND**

### **MARKHAM @ SEBASTIAN (line – NORTH STARS by 9)**

With expectations low in Florida and attendance even lower it's not a bad year to be bad if you're a Swordfish – nobody expects anything from you and few are there to see you flounder. The over-under on the attendance this week is 11,000 and I am going with the under. On the field the North Stars are developing into one of the class units in the league and are bucking league-wide trends by winning the old-fashioned way – on the ground and with defence. Markham leads the league in rushing attempts and rushing yards and actually has as many rushing TDs as passing TDs. They also lead the league in takeaways with 37. Sebastian is hopelessly over-matched in this game even if the Stars play their back-ups because most of them could start for the Swordfish. With a conservative team facing an inept one this game could set a new benchmark for boredom. **PICK: MARKHAM**

### **TWIN CITIES @ DURHAM (line – THUNDER LIZARDS by 11)**

Tim Tebow returns to Jurassic Park to face his former team but finds himself back on the bench as a result of an experiment with 'Tebow Time' that turned sour three games after it had started so promisingly against Scarborough in Week 12. The Thunder Lizards might have been hoping to face the linebacker in quarterback's clothing but instead will get a crack at journeyman Jason Campbell in their quest for Can-Am supremacy. Durham can clinch the 1<sup>st</sup> overall seed in the playoffs with a win here. It is important enough to them that you can expect a full effort from the Dinos...at least until the second half. The Triumph can be competitive against the better teams, but only to the degree of worrying them a lot, never finishing the deal. With 11 points on the table and the prospect of Durham resting players, one should worry about the spread. **PICK: TWIN CITIES**

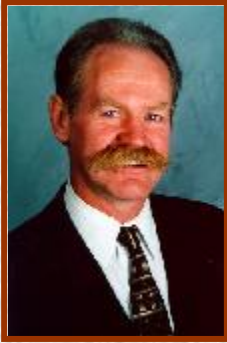
### **PICKERING @ COWTOWN (line – CORN KINGS by 7)**

The pressure is squarely on the Corn Kings here as they hold their playoff fate in their own hands. Win and they are in; lose and they are out. The Spartans, eager to play the spoiler in the Division from the moment they traded Stanford Routt but with no success thus far, will unveil every trick in their playbook if that's what it takes to topple Cowtown and keep them out of the post-season. If the Spartans succeed in their quest for ruination, the winner of Garland at Gwinnett will advance to the post-season and Gus Konstantankos will earn the fickle admiration of their fan base. Maurkice Pouncey is out of action for Cowtown, which will hurt their running game. When these teams met on Opening Day, the Corn Kings out-gained but did not out-score the Spartans at Thermopylae Stadium. This week, they have to out-score them and it doesn't have to look pretty. **PICK: COWTOWN**

# EFL FOCUS

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

## MARKHAM



## MARKHAM

### Economist and Sun

**Lanny McDonald, beat writer for the Markham North Stars, is well known in the Greater Toronto Area as a former Toronto Maple Leafs player and hockey star. He covers football for the Markham Economist and Sun in order to bring local credibility to the sport. Unfortunately, his football knowledge is rudimentary....so have patience.**

## MARKHAM CELEBRATES MORE THAN A WIN!

YORK COUNTY – In past years, the final home game for the Markham North Stars, despite being dubbed “Fan Appreciation Night,” is nothing more than a night on the calendar that signals the end is near on another dreary football campaign. However drastic roster overhaul in 2012 gave a beacon of light to a town , whereby despite the team moniker " North Stars ", as the sun really only shines about 10 times a year, the light at the end of the tunnel became reality last week in Cowtown , when Markham clinched its first ever playoff berth .

So as the final gun sounded in Markham's home finale, in which it pounded divisional rival Durham 33-14 , and despite the sold out crowd giving the home team a 15 minute standing ovation after the game, there was a sense of disappointment in the air - that the following Fan Appreciation portion of the evening would be nothing more than the same letdown. You see fan appreciation night in Markham usually resembled the team on the field itself : conservative , dull , lethargic , and generally wasting everyone's time and consisted of cheap beer - which you had to drink from the nozzle of the keg , 3 legged pony rides, hot dog eating contests and bad Canadian music .. We in Markham have only heard of such EFL folklore that suggests other cities may actually have more robust nights of fanfare as in Fan Execution night in Virden ,Chino and Death Valley , in Sebastian - " No Cage Shark hunting " charters are booked for season ticket holders or in Pickering , they have something called the Olympics ...

Thus expecting to hear no more than Anne Murray , Gordon Lightfoot , comedian Martin Short and a handful of local bad artisans , it just seemed the wrong way to wind down such a successful regular season. So when the PA announcer addressed the fan base as the house lights were dimmed " Ladies of all sizes and Gentleman , boys , girls ...may I direct your attention to the centre stage " .... ( Im thinking here we go again ) Please welcome SHANIA TWAIN accompanied by DJ DEADMOUSE !!! The Dawg Pound went absolutely bonkers ! It was banana's, complete bedlam , fans were jumping for joy ,the dual star combo of Twains sexy looks and vocal cords were a perfect fit for new local icon DJ Deadmouse's brand of background house music and had fans dancing in the stands all night long ...The duo performed their own rendition of Markham Football classic Fight songs such " Move those sticks " , " Death to Pickering " and " Hail to the Fat Lady " ...soggy hot dogs were replaced with proper sausage on a bun , beer served in real cups and free North star lapels handed to every fan ...

It seemed finally Pro Football in Markham had come of age and as I was about leave the stadium in the wee hours , with the party still going strong , I looked up to row 54 in the North Section of the stadium , which was a symbol of everything that stood wrong for Markham football over the past 4 years , I noticed it was empty ...where could the " Fat Lady of Row 54 " be ( who is considerably slimmer these days ) , then something hit me , like a puck to the porkchops , it had dawned on me that I had finally figured out the old sports adage " Its never over till the Fat Lady sings " ..... Low and behold , if you can just envision , Twain , Deadmouse , with the Fat Lady in the Middle - then truly Markham has had its best season and fan appreciation night ever !