

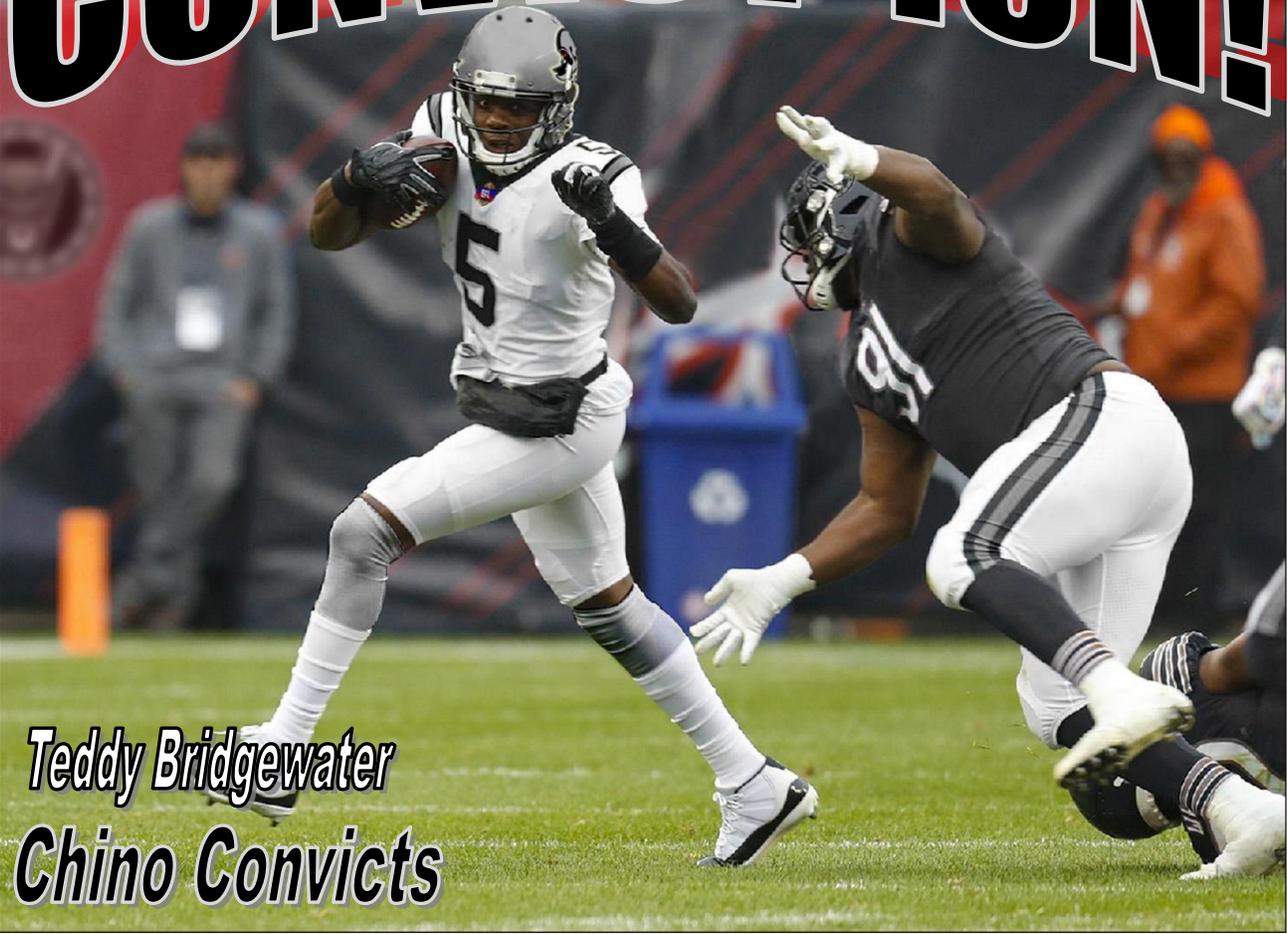
WEEK 12



Shooting for the Stars in our 15th Season!

December 26, 2021

CONVICT-ION!



Teddy Bridgewater
Chino Convicts

Chino quarterback *Teddy Bridgewater*, wearing a throwback white and grey uniform from 2007, avoids *Deatrich Wise Jr* of the Assassins on his way to a 13-yard scramble in 2nd quarter action in Las Vegas. The Convicts' back-up delivered a clutch performance when his team needed it the most, leading his team to a 27-10 win. (Story inside)

EAST



CENTRAL



WEST



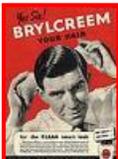
NORTH



COASTAL



SOUTH



Who was slick
in Week
Twelve?

“Brylcreem” THE
EFL’S FIRST SPONSOR



Kirk Cousins
QB
Sebastian
Swordfish

23 of 27, 390 yds, 4 TDs, 1 INT.
Deadly efficient in back-to-the-wall win.



Jonathan Jones
DB
Brooklin
Hawks

3 T, 3 PDs, 1 INT (0yds), 1 FR. Shut
down Erieau in 2nd half to seal win.


36
29

Drew Brees hit **Chase Claypool** on a 10-yard slant for a TD with 1:11 left in the 4th quarter to lift the Bombers over the Triumph in a back-and-forth game. The Triumph led 14-7 early in the 2nd on TD runs by **Clyde Edwards-Helaire** and **Melvin Gordon III**, but back-to-back runs of 34 and 13 yards, the latter for a TD, by **Elijah Mitchell**, and a 56-yard TD pass to **M. Valdes-Scantling** had the Bombers in front 21-20 at halftime. Trailing 28-23, **Mitch Trubisky** scrambled for a 9-yard TD run with 2:23 left in the 4th for a 29-28 Triumph lead, but a 46-yard KR by **Andre Roberts** set up the winning drive.

12-29-2021 Wilhalla Stadium Temp:70 Wind:Calm

Line:BRX by 1 MVP:Mitchell

HFA:

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 Bruxelles (4-7-1)	0	21	7	8	36
2021 Twin Cities (3-9)	7	13	0	9	29

Passing

BRX: Brees 22/20 214 Yds 3 TDs

TCT: Trubisky 33/22 236 Yds

Rushing

BRX: Mitchell 17/127 2 TDs, Williams 9/59

TCT: Gordon III 19/107 TD, Trubisky 5/50 TD, Edwards-Helaire 7/17 TD

Receiving

BRX: Claypool 7/74 TD, Valdes-Scantling 6/101 TD, Collins 3/29 TD, Mitchell 3/10

TCT: Golladay 7/65, Moore 6/86, Gordon III 4/13, White 2/10, Bryant 1/5, Trautman 1/-1

Defense

BRX: Phillips 2-Sks FF 2-Tk, Walker 10-Tk, Slay 9-Tk, Fuller 9-Tk, Omenihu Sk FF

TCT: Alexander 2-FF 7-Tk, Wagner 13-Tk, Moseley 8-Tk

Injuries

BRX: Howard 5, Robinson 2

TCT: Moore 1, Brown 1

Misc

BRX: Claypool 2-F 1 Lost, Walker 1-Safety

TCT: 35:19 TOP, Brooks 1-FR, Hopkins 3/3 FG 46 Lg


21
28

DeShaun Watson located **Alvin Kamara** wide open down field for a 40-yard completion to set up Kamara's 3-yard draw for a TD to give the Pats a 28-21 lead in the 4th. That would turn out to be the winning score as the Charleswood 'D' held off a strong push by the Derailers at the end, finally tackling **Lamar Jackson** short of the yard marker at their own 36 on 4th down with 0:39 left. Buffalo led 14-7 at the half on TD runs by Jackson and **Mike Davis**, but the Pats regained the lead with Kamara scoring on 13-yard TD pass and a 15-yard TD run to start the 3rd. Davis' 2nd TD run tied it early in the 4th.

12-26-2021 Temp:75 Wind:Calm

Line:CHP by 9 MVP:Kamara

HFA:ON(0)

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 Buffalo (4-8)	7	7	0	7	21
2021 Charleswood (11-1)	7	0	14	7	28

Passing

BUF: Jackson 37/27 165 Yds

CHP: Watson 26/19 247 Yds 2 TDs

Rushing

BUF: Jackson 17/127 TD, Davis 8/33 2 TDs, Sanders 1/20, Woods 2/12, Johnson 1/11

CHP: Kamara 13/42 2 TDs, Watson 4/35, Dobbins 3/11

Receiving

BUF: Davis 9/67, Sanders 8/59, Gage 5/16, Woods 4/24, Booker 1/-1

CHP: Kamara 7/74 2 TDs, Smith-Schuster 5/75, Kelce 3/48, Cooper 2/26, Metcalf 1/19

Defense

BUF: Jackson 8-Tk

CHP: Samuel Jr. 12-Tk, Darby 11-Tk, Lawson Sk FF 3-Tk, Richardson Sk 3-Tk

Injuries

BUF: Tate 4, Williams 1, Tartt 1

CHP: Ozigbo 2, Mills 1

Misc

BUF: 2/5 4th Dn

CHP: 4/4 Red Zn



With top receiver, **Keenan Allen** out, the Wrecking Balls turned to their running back, **David Montgomery** and he delivered with 120 yards rushing, including a 10-yard TD run in the 1st quarter that made it 10-0 and a 56-yard score in the 4th to seal the deal. **Matt Stafford** threw a TD pass to **Drew Sample** to round out the scoring. New Jersey played near flawless defence, picking off **Mac Jones** twice, one to set up the third of 3 **Chris Boswell** FGs and the other to end the Crusaders' their final drive and best chance for a TD. Peg City was held to just three long field goals by **Younghoe Koo**.

12-27-2021 Temp:72 Wind:Calm Line:PCC by 5 MVP:Montgomery HFA:ON(0)

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 New Jersey (6-6)	10	13	0	7	30
2021 Peg City (0-12)	0	0	6	3	9

Passing

NJ: Stafford 22/18 160 Yds TD
 PCC: Jones 35/12 120 Yds 2 Int

Rushing

NJ: Montgomery 22/120 2 TDs, Gallman Jr. 7/36, McKissic 1/7, Stafford 1/1
 PCC: Bell 14/73, Hubbard 11/44, Aiyuk 1/8, Jones 2/8

Receiving

NJ: Sample 5/39 TD, Samuel 4/42, McLaurin 3/38, Montgomery 2/10, Chark Jr. 2/28
 PCC: Higbee 3/23, Aiyuk 3/53, Shenault Jr. 2/21, Hubbard 1/4, Ingold 1/5

Defense

NJ: Bradberry Int 6-Tk
 PCC: Vigil 15-Tk

Injuries

NJ: Hooper 2, Breeland 2, Alexander 1
 PCC: Sutton 4, Barkley 3, Godchaux 1, Okudah 1, Owusu-Koramoah 1

Misc

NJ: Boswell 3/3 FG 53 Lg
 PCC: Koo 3/3 FG 53 Lg



The Coyotes scored TDs on their first 5 possessions, 3 of those assisted by short fields set up by Virden fumbles in their own territory. Cobb County took the game's opening drive 75 yards for a 7-yard TD pass from **Ryan Tannehill** to **Brandin Cooks**, then capitalized on fumbles by **Ezekiel Elliott**, **Patrick Mahomes** and **Pharoh Cooper** to add TD passes of 7 yards to **Julio Jones** and 20 yards to **Adrian Peterson** and a 1-yard TD run by **Matt Breida**. They added a fifth TD on a Tannehill scramble with 0:18 left in the 2nd to make it 35-7 at the half. Virden was unable to mount a comeback.

12-24-2021 Temp:53 Wind:0-10 None Line:CB by 4 MVP:Tannehill HFA:ON(0)

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 Virden (7-5)	0	7	6	0	13
2021 Cobb County (8-4)	21	14	3	3	41

Passing

VV: Mahomes 23/16 177 Yds 2 TDs Int
 CB: Tannehill 13/10 144 Yds 3 TDs

Rushing

VV: Elliott 13/59, Mahomes 5/36, Ingram II 5/33
 CB: Peterson 29/109, Tannehill 4/42 TD, Harris 3/24, Breida 3/9 TD

Receiving

VV: Chase 9/105, Hockenson 3/56 TD, Elliott 1/4, Brown 1/10 TD, Green 1/4
 CB: Cooks 4/52 TD, Jones 3/41 TD, Peterson 1/20 TD, Cook 1/23, Pittman Jr. 1/8

Defense

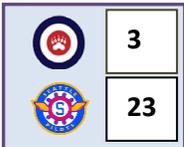
VV: Nnadi 11-Tk
 CB: Lawrence 2-Sks 2-FF 6-Tk, White 12-Tk, Nelson Int 6-Tk, Martinez FF 7-Tk

Injuries

VV: Buggs 3, Johnson 2, Atkins 1, Barr 1
 CB: Ridgeway 1, Jones 1

Misc

VV: Elliott 2-F 1 Lost, Mahomes 1-F Lost, Cooper 1-F lost
 CB: Martinez 1-FR, Thuney 1-FR, White 1-FR, McManus 2/2 FG 41 Lg



Kareem Hunt broke a 36-yard run to set up a 22-yard TD pass from **Gardner Minshew II** to **Denzel Mims**. That broke a 3-3 tie in favour of Seattle, with 5:50 left in the 1st half. Surprisingly, that would turn out to be enough to secure the upset. The Pilots' defence dominated the Cubs, sacking **Russell Wilson** 5 times and holding him to 175 yards passing. **Marshon Lattimore** forced the game's only turnover, a fumble by **AJ Brown**, that turned into a 59-yard TD pass to **Robby Anderson** to wrap-up the scoring. The Cubs turned the ball twice on downs in the 4th in a comeback bid.

12-29-2021 Kingdome Temp:70 Wind:Calm Line:SEA by 5 MVP:Minshew II HFA:ON(4)

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 Iowa City (7-5)	0	3	0	0	3
2021 Seattle (3-9)	3	7	7	6	23

Passing

ICC: Wilson 27/20 174 Yds
SEA: Minshew II 25/21 252 Yds 2 TDs

Rushing

ICC: Conner 9/41, Wilson 4/39
SEA: Akers 16/48 TD, Hunt 4/39, Brown 3/16, Minshew II 4/9, Mack 1/2

Receiving

ICC: Beasley 5/53, Lockett 5/42, Conner 4/11, Brown 4/56, Dissly 1/6, McKinnon 1/6
SEA: Anderson 6/105 TD, Hunt 5/43, Lamb 3/23, Mims 2/34 TD, Akers 2/6, Renfrow 1/20

Defense

ICC: Tomlinson Sk 8-Tk, Singleton 11-Tk, Hill Sk 4-Tk, Pierre-Paul Sk 3-Tk
SEA: Jack Sk 8-Tk, Peters 2-Sks 2-Tk, Lattimore FF 6-Tk

Injuries

ICC:
SEA: Deguara 4

Misc

ICC: Brown 1-F Lost
SEA: 35:17 TOP, Jenkins 1-FR



In a West showdown between bitter rivals the Convicts put together TD drives of 75 and 79 yards and added a FG to give Chino a 17-3 half time lead. **Teddy Bridgewater** found **Michael Gallup** for a 24-yard TD pass on the game's opening drive and **Justin Jackson** ran it in from 2 yards on the final drive of the 1st half for the big scores. The 2nd half saw continued dominance by the visitors' defence. Vegas managed just 1 TD off an interception by **Jordan Fuller** that led to a **Dalvin Cook** TD run. Back-to-back deep passes to **Marvin Jones Jr**, the second a 24-yard TD pass, put the game away.

12-30-2021 Temp:74 Wind:Calm Line:LV by 9 MVP:Bridgewater HFA:ON(0)

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 Chino (7-4-1)	7	10	3	7	27
2021 Las Vegas (8-4)	3	0	0	7	10

Passing

CHI: Bridgewater 28/23 234 Yds 2 TDs Int
LV: Herbert 38/22 176 Yds Int

Rushing

CHI: Bridgewater 8/55, Jones II 5/30, Jackson 12/21 TD, Byrd 1/16, Abdullah 4/6
LV: Cook 12/48 TD, Herbert 3/7

Receiving

CHI: Gallup 10/97 TD, Jones Jr. 4/58 TD, Jackson 3/39, Byrd 2/17, Higgins 2/17
LV: Thomas 11/105, Cook 4/17, Watkins 3/22, Humphries 2/21, Beck 1/0, Pascal 1/11

Defense

CHI: Jackson Int 11-Tk, Bostic Sk 3-Tk
LV: Leonard 2-FF 10-Tk, Fuller Int 11-Tk

Injuries

CHI: Hall 3
LV: Griffin 2

Misc

CHI: Butker 2/2 FG 38 Lg
LV: Fairbairn 1/2 FG 29 Lg



With COVID-19 wreaking havoc on both rosters, **Drew Lock** made his first start for the Blue Eagles against a Durham team missing five starters. After **Josh Allen** capped Durham's first series with his first of 3 TD runs on the day, Lock tied the game on an 11-yard TD pass to **Jamison Crowder**. Then a pick by **Logan Ryan** set up an Eagle go-ahead FG to make it 10-7. But Allen ran it in from 7 yards out before the half to re-capture the lead. A **Tyrann Mathieu** pick in the 3rd set up a 14-yard TD pass to **Antonio Gibson** to make it 21-13. The Lizards ran away with it from there.

12-28-2021 The Eagle's Nest Temp:35 Wind:Calm None Line:DTL by 12 MVP:Allen HFA

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 Durham (11-1)	7	7	7	14	35
2021 Scarborough (2-9-1)	0	10	3	7	20

Passing

DTL: Allen 26/13 165 Yds 2 TDs Int
 SBE: Lock 27/14 146 Yds 2 TDs 3 Int

Rushing

DTL: Gibson 16/94, Allen 10/58 3 TDs, Mattison 9/47, Edmonds 2/15
 SBE: Johnson 8/53, Carson 9/46, Lock 3/23

Receiving

DTL: Gibson 4/47 TD, Waller 3/41, Boyd 3/40 TD, Eskridge 2/23, Edmonds 1/14
 SBE: Crowder 4/50 2 TDs, Robinson II 3/48, Eifert 2/14, Dallas 2/6, Carson 2/13

Defense

DTL: Mathieu 2-Int 5-Tk, Warner 9-Tk
 SBE: Ryan Int FF 4-Tk, Jones Sk 6-Tk, Lawson 8-Tk, McLendon Sk 3-Tk

Injuries

DTL:
 SBE: Gaskin 5, Uzomah 3, Phillips 2, Kiser 1, Dantzler 1

Misc

DTL: 10 Runs 10+ yds
 SBE: Crosby 2/2 FG 44 Lg



The Swordfish came out bold and stayed strong. After converting a 4th & 3 from their own 32 on the game's opening drive, **Kirk Cousins** found **TY Hilton** underneath and he raced 62 yards for the opening TD. Cowtown kept pace early until, trailing 21-14 late int the 2nd, they failed to convert on 4th & 1 at the Sebastian 9. The Swordfish would capitalize on a **Deontae Harris** fumble in the 3rd with a TD drive off a short field to take a 31-14 lead. From there it was a race that Cowtown could not win, as a 67-yard TD pass to **Jalen Reagor** and a TD run by **Jonathan Taylor** finished off the rout.

12-28-2021 Tillman Field Temp:33 Wind:0-10 None Line:COW by 7 MVP:Cousins HFA:ON(

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 Sebastian (5-6-1)	7	14	17	7	45
2021 Cowtown (6-6)	6	8	7	7	28

Passing

SS: Cousins 27/23 390 Yds 4 TDs Int
 COW: Garoppolo 24/17 216 Yds 2 TDs, Fitzpatrick 14/8 73 Yds, Mills 3/2 12 Yds

Rushing

SS: Taylor 17/71 2 TDs, Chubb 11/37, Cousins 2/8, Perine 1/2
 COW: Murray 11/62 TD, Gurley II 7/41 TD, Fitzpatrick 1/13, Gore 2/7, Garoppolo 2/4

Receiving

SS: Reagor 6/126 TD, Ebron 6/76 TD, Akins 4/57 TD, Hilton 3/99 TD, Marshall Jr. 2/20
 COW: Evans 6/61 2 TDs, Lazard 5/54, Cephus 4/63, Lewis 3/55, Toney 3/26, Gurley II 2/6

Defense

SS: Yiadom 11-Tk, Gholston Sk 6-Tk, Ragland Sk 5-Tk, Wilkins Sk FF Tk, Tuttle Sk
 COW: Davis III Int 6-Tk, Smith 9-Tk

Injuries

SS: Cashman 3, Wallace 2, Wilkins 1
 COW: Harris 5, Chinn 1, Mayowa 1

Misc

SS: 4/4 4th Dwn, Peoples-Jones 2/35 PR 25 Lg, Tuttle 1-FR
 COW: Harris 2-F 1 Lost



Austin Ekeler punched the ball into the end zone from 1-yard out on Brooklin's 2nd series of the 3rd to put the Hawks in front to stay, 14-10. The Caddies answered with a punt to the Brooklin 9, from where the Hawks drove back to go up 21-10 on the 2nd TD pass of the day to **DeAndre Hopkins**. **Kyler Murray** was picked-off by **Jonathan Jones** on the next play, setting up a Brooklin FG and a 24-10 lead that would end up standing. Erieau got off to a quick start, leading 10-0 on a 17-yard TD pass to **Hunter Henry** after a Brooklin turnover on downs, but could not hold the edge.

12-27-2021 Hawkeye Park Temp:34 Wind:0-10 None Line:BRH by 8 MVP:Hopkins HFA:ON(3)

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 Erieau (3-9)	3	7	0	7	17
2021 Brooklin (7-5)	0	7	7	13	27

Passing

ERI: Murray 31/19 188 Yds TD Int
BRH: Carr 35/24 234 Yds 2 TDs Int

Rushing

ERI: Vaughn 6/51, Murray 5/41 TD, Hines 4/18, Ruggs III 1/18, Moss 6/13
BRH: Ekeler 18/101 TD, Scott 2/8, Carr 1/8, Jefferson 3/5

Receiving

ERI: Hines 5/23, Henry 4/42 TD, Conley 3/30, Higgins 3/44, Moss 2/24, Ruggs III 1/14
BRH: Hopkins 10/126 2 TDs, Ekeler 5/19, Gronkowski 4/49, Engram 3/29, Scott 1/3

Defense

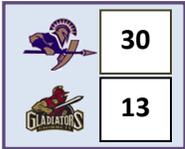
ERI: Poole Int 12-Tk
BRH: Campbell FF 7-Tk, Jones Int 3-Tk

Injuries

ERI: Hurst 2, Waddle 2, Gilmore 1, Garrett 1, Glasgow 1, Smith 1
BRH: Cobb 3, Tate 2, Tuitt 1

Misc

ERI: 12 MT, Conley 1-F Lost, Sloman 1/2 FG 30 Lg
BRH: Jones 1-FR, Bullock 2/2 FG 33 Lg



Philip Rivers connected with **Calvin Ridley** for an 18-yard TD pass to cap the opening drive of the 2nd half and give the Spartans a 16-7 cushion large enough to conquer the Gladiators. Rivers would throw his third TD of the game on Pickering's ensuing drive, hitting Ridley again from 47 yards out to round off a perfect 158.3 passer rating on the day. After an 80-yard drive that spanned over 10 minutes and ended in a **James Robinson** TD run, the Glads' offence was shut down until a TD in the 4th made it 23-13. But **D'Andre Swift's** 13-yard TD run with 4:49 left sealed the victory.

12-30-2021 Heinz Field Temp:37 Wind:5-15 None Line:PIC by 1 MVP:Rivers HFA:ON(3)

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 Pickering (6-6)	7	3	13	7	30
2021 Georgia (3-8-1)	0	7	0	6	13

Passing

PIC: Rivers 22/18 282 Yds 3 TDs
GEO: Roethlisberger 34/21 136 Yds TD

Rushing

PIC: Sanders 19/83, Swift 1/13 TD, Rivers 2/4, Sermon 3/1
GEO: Robinson 20/85 TD, Jacobs 5/35

Receiving

PIC: Ridley 6/142 2 TDs, Mooney 4/51, Brown 4/59 TD, Sanders 2/10, Swift 1/10
GEO: Snead IV 9/54 TD, Bernard 3/19, Fells 2/12, James 2/15, Landry 2/16, Robinson 2/11

Defense

PIC: Schobert 12-Tk, Okwara Sk 6-Tk
GEO: Edmunds 8-Tk, Moreland 8-Tk

Injuries

PIC: Roby 2, Shepard 1
GEO: Ertz 1, Fuller V 1, Ingram III 1

Misc

PIC: Zuerlein 1/1 FG 25 Lg
GEO: 5/5 4th Dwn



A 43-yard FG by **Jason Myers** in the 1st quarter was all the offence Budapest would need as the defence shut down and shutout the Pink Panthers. The North Stars followed up that opening score with three consecutive TD drives, with TD passes from **Aaron Rodgers** of 5 yards and 12 yards to **Nelson Agholor** at the book ends and a 19-yard TD run by **Jeff Wilson Jr** in the middle to account for the major scoring. The Stars geared down in the 2nd half, adding a FG and a safety by **Lavonte David** to round out the scoring. Budapest held the ball for 38:36 as Oshawa managed just 6 1st downs.

12-27-2021 Ferenc-Liszt Intl Temp:63 Wind:10-20 None Line:BUD by 18 MVP:Rodgers HF

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 Oshawa (2-9-1)	0	0	0	0	0
2021 Budapest (12-0)	10	14	3	2	29

Passing

OSH: Ryan 22/11 93 Yds
 BUD: Rodgers 29/22 237 Yds 2 TDs Int

Rushing

OSH: Drake 16/52, Singletary 2/4
 BUD: Patterson 9/66, Wilson Jr. 10/58 TD, Felton 11/24, Taylor 1/18, Patterson 7/11

Receiving

OSH: Adams 6/51, Edelman 3/34, Atwell 1/5, Reynolds 1/3
 BUD: Diggs 8/64, Patterson 5/62, Jefferson 5/81, Hollister 2/13, Agholor 2/17 2 TDs

Defense

OSH: Peterson Int 6-Tk, Ward 9-Tk, Reddick 8-Tk
 BUD:

Injuries

OSH: Onyemata 1
 BUD:

Misc

OSH: 14 MT
 BUD: Myers 2/2 FG 43 Lg



Baker Mayfield found **Tyreek Hill** from 18 yards out to cap a 75-yard scoring drive and give the Irish a 10-3 lead early in the 2nd. That sparked a 20-point quarter fueled by a York turnover on downs at their own 34 and an interception of **Tom Brady** by **TY Hilton**, both setting up short fields for the second of **Rodrigo Blankenship's** 4 FGs and a 15-yard TD pass to **Adam Thielen**, the second of Mayfield's TD passes. Trailing 23-3, York turned the ball over on downs three times and Brady was picked off by **Marcus Epps** trying to get back in it in the 2nd half but were unable to score again.

12-27-2021 Mgr McClancy Mem Sta Temp:37 Wind:0-5 None Line:EE by 5 MVP:Mayfield H

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 York (7-5)	3	0	0	0	3
2021 East Elmhurst (9-3)	3	20	3	3	29

Passing

YOR: Brady 37/23 183 Yds 2 Int
 EE: Mayfield 25/16 203 Yds 2 TDs

Rushing

YOR: Henry 14/42, Brady 4/11
 EE: Mostert 13/57, Jones 16/50, Michel 4/13, Mayfield 3/9

Receiving

YOR: St. Brown 8/69, Ford 5/34, Henry 2/5, Hamilton 2/17, Williams 2/12, Smith 1/19
 EE: Hill 5/95 TD, Thielen 3/39 TD, Mostert 3/16, Jones 2/15, Everett 1/9, Robinson 1/19

Defense

YOR: Holcomb FF 9-Tk, Jewell 12-Tk, Buckner Sk 5-Tk, Clayborn Sk 3-Tk
 EE: Hilton Int 6-Tk, Vernon Sk 4-Tk, Barrett Sk 4-Tk, Elder 8-Tk

Injuries

YOR: Teller 3, Apple 1, Henderson 1
 EE:

Misc

YOR: 1/5 4th Dwn, Gould 1/1 FG 38 Lg
 EE: Blankenship 4/5 FG 52 Lg



STATS



WEEK TWELVE

STANDINGS & STATS

EFL 2021 - Week 12 Standings

East	W	L	T	Pct	Stk	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Cobb County	8	4	0	.667	W2	331	27.6	239	19.9	7.7	5 1 0	2 1 0	7 2 0
New Jersey	6	6	0	.500	W1	228	19.0	266	22.2	-3.2	2 5 0	1 2 0	5 4 0
Bruxelles	4	7	1	.375	W1	316	26.3	365	30.4	-4.1	2 3 0	1 2 0	3 5 1
Buffalo	4	8	0	.333	L2	247	20.6	285	23.8	-3.2	3 3 0	2 1 0	4 5 0
Central	W	L	T	Pct	Stk	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Charleswood	11	1	0	.917	W9	306	25.5	238	19.8	5.7	6 0 0	4 0 0	8 1 0
Viriden	7	5	0	.583	L1	345	28.8	316	26.3	2.4	3 3 0	3 1 0	5 4 0
Twin Cities	3	9	0	.250	L4	237	19.8	296	24.7	-4.9	1 5 0	1 3 0	2 7 0
Peg City	0	12	0	.000	L12	168	14.0	350	29.2	-15.2	0 6 0	0 4 0	0 9 0
West	W	L	T	Pct	Stk	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Las Vegas	8	4	0	.667	L3	310	25.8	224	18.7	7.2	4 2 0	3 1 0	7 2 0
Chino	7	4	1	.625	W1	291	24.3	279	23.3	1.0	2 3 1	3 1 0	6 2 1
Iowa City	7	5	0	.583	L1	326	27.2	316	26.3	0.8	5 1 0	1 3 0	5 4 0
Seattle	3	9	0	.250	W2	241	20.1	289	24.1	-4.0	2 4 0	1 3 0	1 8 0
North	W	L	T	Pct	Stk	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Durham-y	11	1	0	.917	W7	408	34.0	181	15.1	18.9	5 0 0	3 1 0	8 1 0
Cowtown	6	6	0	.500	L1	295	24.6	295	24.6	0.0	4 2 0	1 3 0	5 4 0
Sebastian	5	6	1	.458	W1	395	32.9	410	34.2	-1.3	2 4 0	2 1 1	3 5 1
Scarborough	2	9	1	.208	L3	229	19.1	366	30.5	-11.4	2 4 1	1 2 1	2 6 1
Coastal	W	L	T	Pct	Stk	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Budapest-y	12	0	0	1.000	W12	360	30.0	141	11.8	18.3	6 0 0	4 0 0	9 0 0
York	7	5	0	.583	L2	277	23.1	275	22.9	0.2	4 2 0	2 2 0	5 4 0
Brooklin	7	5	0	.583	W4	302	25.2	293	24.4	0.8	4 3 0	1 3 0	5 4 0
Pickering	6	6	0	.500	W2	224	18.7	253	21.1	-2.4	0 5 0	1 3 0	4 5 0
South	W	L	T	Pct	Stk	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
East Elmhurst-y	9	3	0	.750	W5	285	23.8	204	17.0	6.8	3 2 0	3 0 0	7 2 0
Georgia	3	8	1	.292	L1	283	23.6	341	28.4	-4.8	1 5 0	0 2 1	1 7 1
Erieau	3	9	0	.250	L4	215	17.9	300	25.0	-7.1	1 5 0	2 1 0	2 7 0
Oshawa	2	9	1	.208	L5	246	20.5	343	28.6	-8.1	1 5 1	0 2 1	1 7 1

y-Clinched Division
z-Clinched Wildcard

EFL 2021 - Week 12 Passing Leaders

			Att	Cmp	C%	Yards	In	I%	Lg	TD	TD%	Rate
1	Rodgers,A	BUD	380	273	71.8	3568	3	0.8	75	31	8.2	125.0
2	Garoppolo	COW	134	97	72.4	1152	1	0.7	54	10	7.5	120.0
3	Cousins	SS	376	264	70.2	3482	10	2.7	76	35	9.3	119.1
4	Mahomes	VV	399	262	65.7	3778	6	1.5	72	34	8.5	118.4
5	Watson,D	CHP	356	239	67.1	3189	3	0.8	75	28	7.9	118.1
6	Wilson,R	ICC	356	256	71.9	2931	6	1.7	66	26	7.3	113.6
7	Allen,J	DTL	415	278	67.0	3375	5	1.2	75	32	7.7	112.5
8	Tannehill	CB	331	212	64.0	2792	7	2.1	55	27	8.2	109.0
9	Brees	BRX	306	192	62.7	2527	5	1.6	75	23	7.5	107.0
10	Mayfield	EE	323	216	66.9	2509	3	0.9	48	20	6.2	106.9
11	Roethlisbe	GEO	384	268	69.8	2638	5	1.3	60	24	6.3	104.3
12	Carr,D	BRH	417	260	62.4	3055	6	1.4	73	27	6.5	100.2
13	Herbert	LV	437	300	68.6	3197	8	1.8	76	22	5.0	98.9
14	Trubisky	TCT	258	163	63.2	1858	5	1.9	69	15	5.8	96.0
15	Stafford	NJ	413	277	67.1	3029	8	1.9	75	18	4.4	95.0
16	Minshew II	SEA	218	145	66.5	1457	6	2.8	62	13	6.0	93.8
17	Brady	YOR	375	246	65.6	2912	13	3.5	84	21	5.6	93.3
18	Bridgewater	CHI	293	210	71.7	2133	8	2.7	75	11	3.8	93.3
19	Fitzpatric	COW	234	160	68.4	1618	7	3.0	52	11	4.7	91.1
20	Rivers,P	PIC	312	193	61.9	2301	4	1.3	87	11	3.5	90.8
21	Ryan,M	OSH	408	258	63.2	2521	6	1.5	57	19	4.7	89.9
22	Jackson,L	BUF	430	288	67.0	2601	7	1.6	60	16	3.7	88.7
23	Burrow	SBE	330	190	57.6	1908	4	1.2	59	17	5.2	86.3
24	Murray,K	ERI	348	210	60.3	2037	9	2.6	67	9	2.6	74.6
25	Jones,M	PCC	390	213	54.6	2299	15	3.8	80	14	3.6	68.1

EFL 2021 - Week 12 Kick Return Leaders

EFL 2021 - Week 12 Punt Return Leaders

			No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD				No	Fc	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	Roberts,A	BRX	22	761	34.6	50	0	1	Grant,J	CHI	27	7	373	13.8	62	1
2	Harris,D	COW	18	549	30.5	76	0	2	Peppers	ERI	19	6	239	12.6	22	0
3	Johnson,D	SBE	16	458	28.6	41	0	3	Harris,D	COW	25	8	280	11.2	20	0
4	Rodgers,I	CHP	17	484	28.5	45	0	4	Erickson	BUF	17	11	161	9.5	24	0
5	Agnew	SEA	23	650	28.3	68	0	5	Proche	DTL	29	11	273	9.4	39	0
6	Duvernay	TCT	20	551	27.6	49	0	6	Spencer,D	NJ	20	4	182	9.1	25	0
7	Homer	YOR	16	429	26.8	38	0	7	Peoples-Jo	SS	18	6	159	8.8	25	0
8	Scott,B	BRH	17	424	24.9	40	0	8	Cooper,P	VV	15	11	129	8.6	41	0
9	Ballentine	SS	17	381	22.4	35	0	9	Moore	EE	20	14	166	8.3	17	0
10	Abdullah	CHI	16	354	22.1	36	0	10	Taylor,T	CHP	27	5	221	8.2	27	0
11	Webster,N	NJ	17	373	21.9	35	0	11	Roberts,A	BRX	18	2	146	8.1	29	0
12	Atwell	OSH	22	465	21.1	38	0	12	Raymond	CB	17	4	133	7.8	22	0
13	Carter,D	BUF	25	510	20.4	48	0	13	Hill,K	SBE	21	5	146	7.0	25	0
14	Cannon	BUD	7	236	33.7	42	0	14	Hardman	LV	20	14	53	2.7	13	0
15	Adderley	VV	3	89	29.7	33	0	15	Toney	COW	1	0	15	15.0	15	0
16	Patterson	BUD	12	324	27.0	39	0	16	Lamb	SEA	5	3	74	14.8	38	0
17	Lewis,D	LV	13	339	26.1	43	0	17	Hines	ERI	2	0	24	12.0	16	0
18	Hubbard	PCC	4	103	25.8	29	0	18	Cole Sr.	SEA	11	2	123	11.2	20	0
19	Hill	DTL	9	218	24.2	38	0	19	James,R	GEO	3	3	28	9.3	14	0
20	Hines	ERI	3	72	24.0	29	0	20	Renfrow	SEA	5	5	44	8.8	20	0
21	Peoples-Jo	SS	1	22	22.0	22	0	21	Tate,G	BRH	4	16	35	8.8	19	0
22	Barner	PIC	10	219	21.9	39	0	22	Atwell	OSH	10	3	87	8.7	22	0
23	Johnson,D	CB	6	131	21.8	28	0	23	Johnson,D	GEO	9	5	78	8.7	18	0
24	Carter	ICC	13	283	21.8	33	0	24	Barner	PIC	6	14	48	8.0	14	0
25	Waddle	ERI	14	300	21.4	31	0	25	Rodgers,Am	BUD	13	19	90	6.9	20	0

EFL 2021 - Week 12 Rushing Leaders

			Att	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	Henry,D	YOR	259	1150	4.4	48	10
2	Gordon III	TCT	185	990	5.4	45	3
3	Cook,D	LV	186	911	4.9	49	9
4	Robinson,J	GEO	182	908	5.0	52	7
5	Jackson,L	BUF	145	900	6.2	41	10
6	Jones,A	EE	173	857	5.0	39	6
7	Drake	OSH	161	850	5.3	53	6
8	Chubb,N	SS	167	836	5.0	47	8
9	Taylor,J	SS	145	796	5.5	52	8
10	Murray,K	ERI	114	741	6.5	32	11
11	Harris,D	CB	111	704	6.3	35	3
12	Sanders,M	PIC	137	669	4.9	25	2
13	Elliott,E	VV	159	656	4.1	28	7
14	Mitchell	BRX	131	628	4.8	34	7
15	Montgomery	NJ	170	626	3.7	56	3
16	Conner	ICC	104	616	5.9	47	1
17	Carson	SBE	119	614	5.2	27	3
18	Jones II	CHI	131	569	4.3	26	5
19	Edwards-He	TCT	92	541	5.9	46	7
20	Harris	ERI	129	537	4.2	37	1
21	Gibson	DTL	106	513	4.8	28	2
22	Wilson,R	ICC	64	462	7.2	30	4
23	Gurley II	COW	112	461	4.1	37	9
24	Swift	PIC	105	450	4.3	38	9
25	Williams,J	BRX	87	440	5.1	20	0
26	Peterson,A	CB	116	437	3.8	16	2
27	Johnson,Da	BUD	76	421	5.5	34	4
28	Wilson Jr.	BUD	79	418	5.3	30	4
29	Akers	SEA	89	413	4.6	52	5
30	Davis,M	BUF	99	412	4.2	25	5
31	Jacobs,J	GEO	100	411	4.1	27	2
32	Tannehill	CB	44	410	9.3	43	9
33	Ekeler	BRH	71	402	5.7	21	1
34	Scott,B	BRH	71	389	5.5	25	1
35	Murray,L	COW	85	383	4.5	41	1

EFL 2021 - Week 12 Receiving Leaders

			No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	Adams,D	OSH	85	926	10.9	57	11
2	Hopkins,D	BRH	79	1081	13.7	54	13
3	Diggs,S	BUD	76	919	12.1	66	7
4	Lockett	ICC	70	852	12.2	66	8
5	Allen,K	NJ	68	640	9.4	35	8
6	Gallup	CHI	67	882	13.2	75	7
7	Evans,M	COW	67	905	13.5	41	12
8	Jefferson	BUD	67	1095	16.3	75	8
9	Gage	BUF	64	623	9.7	41	3
10	Chase	VV	64	1270	19.8	72	11
11	Hill,T	EE	63	944	15.0	44	10
12	Waller	DTL	63	830	13.2	43	10
13	Woods,R	BUF	61	591	9.7	60	7
14	Anderson,R	SEA	60	780	13.0	59	6
15	Claypool	BRX	58	997	17.2	75	13
16	Johnson,D	GEO	56	546	9.8	50	7
17	McKissic	NJ	55	455	8.3	29	1
18	McLaurin	NJ	54	732	13.6	75	5
19	Kupp	DTL	53	894	16.9	75	6
20	Kelce,T	CHP	53	793	15.0	54	9
21	Cooks	CB	53	767	14.5	52	9
22	Sanders,E	BUF	53	548	10.3	37	4
23	Moore,D	TCT	50	861	17.2	69	6
24	Robinson,A	SBE	49	605	12.3	51	4
25	Thielen	EE	49	580	11.8	30	6
26	Aiyuk	PCC	49	670	13.7	58	4
27	Brown,A	ICC	49	851	17.4	54	5
28	Cooper,A	CHP	49	720	14.7	75	6
29	Godwin,C	BRX	47	764	16.3	56	7
30	Boyd,T	DTL	47	616	13.1	53	6
31	Fant	BUF	46	487	10.6	44	0
32	Samuel,C	DTL	46	416	9.0	34	2
33	Landry	GEO	45	440	9.8	38	5
34	Fitzgerald	LV	45	443	9.8	19	1
35	Hockenson	VV	45	485	10.8	34	7



AROUND THE



With Spats McChad

NEW YORK – We are about to enter the Year of the Tiger – Black-Water Tiger to be exact – and that has me excited. According to the Chinese masters, the Water Tiger of 2022 implies caution, growth, development, challenge, creation and planning. What does this mean for the EFL and the world?

Certainly, we have already hit the ‘*caution*’ button, even before the official start of Black-Water Tiger Year on February 4, 2022. Our response to **OMICRON** speaks of an abundance of, practically unrestrained, caution. Nevertheless, our willingness to continue restricting liberties and stifling growth (in anything other than Amazon and the drug industry) in the name of the mildest flavour yet of COVID-19 will be seen by most as the prudent course.

This caution will make way for ‘*growth*’ and ‘*development*,’ suggesting that the pandemic will be winding down in 2022. Perhaps the one thing that all of us, vaccinated or not, who are not on the Board of Pfizer, can agree on is that the unwinding of the pandemic is the best possible news for the coming year. As long as this does not mean some kind of dystopian ‘Build Back Better’ world of fake meat, electronic money, vaccine passports (just because) and microchips, I can hardly wait for the supply chain to come back online and for people to be working and building again.

Will this be easy after the world economy has been shaken to its core and trillions of freshly printed, worthless dollars circulate in America, unable to buy anything outside of our borders? No, of course not! That’s where ‘*challenge*’ comes in. We are going to have to rise to it and find a way back to something as closely as possible resembling the Golden Age of exploitive wealth creation that we enjoyed in the recent past.

The challenge will be the ‘*creation*’ of a wealth asset out of nothing that will enable this country to compete again at the highest level on the world stage. The US Dollar’s status as the world’s reserve currency is in jeopardy as sanctions that we impose on our enemies compels them to find ways around use of the dollar, creating a whole new economy in the process that will lock us out by design. That means our brains, the best in the world despite the public-facing idiocy of our political class suggesting otherwise, will be busy ‘*planning*’ a way back to greatness, making 2022, the Year of the Black-Water Tiger, a springboard for a resurgence of our society.

All of this bodes well for the EFL and its plans to consolidate its hold on North America and beyond. A thriving, unfettered economy can only be good for the sport and the rampant commercialism and betting interests that drive it. (Please see the transcript of ‘*This Week with your Budapest North Stars*’ podcast in ‘EFL Focus’ where I was recently a guest of host, **Peter Lakatos**, for more of my thoughts in EFL expansion past, present and beyond).

So, raise a glass this New Year’s Eve to the Year of the Black-Water Tiger! Even though it doesn’t start until February 4th, getting a head start on progressing out of this pandemic is worth a toast.

BACK WHERE I BELONG

Chino coach, **Rob Nazar**, by all accounts, took his team’s 36-10 loss to the Assassins in Week Eight abnormally hard. A coach known for his toughness, irrepressible and oftentimes irreverent spirit since the earliest years of the EFL, was noticeably depressed and by his team’s poor performance in that game. It was an uncharacteristic departure from his usual reaction following a bad loss.

In the past after bad games, he had always rolled with the punches, punished the players with extra drills, broken them down, then built them up again in time for the next game. But not this time.

Nazar took public responsibility for the loss, as he always did, but this time he seemed to mean it. Instead of running three-a-days on Monday, he gave his players the day off, justifying it flippantly to the media with the one-liner, “it’s only Peg City!” in reference to the team they would face in Week Nine. Although there was only so much a team like the Crusaders could do with such bulletin board material; that he had thrown such a disrespectful line away so casually and thereby put his team in jeopardy, was another sign that Coach Nazar was not in his usual frame of mind. That he had not emphasized the threat to his players of letting down their guard against a perceived weaker opponent that was, despite their record, a professional football team capable, in the theoretical universe at least, of winning on any given Sunday, was another departure from protocol.

Coach **Rob Nazar** was having a “dark night of the soul” moment.

The coach shut himself in the film room, coming out only for meetings and to watch practice and, of course, the games. He observed his team strain mightily to scrape out a win over the Crusaders. The team without a victory yet in 2021 wore decals on the

backs of their helmets that read: IT'S ONLY US! It was an illegal action that the Peg City coach was willing to pay the fine for – anything to inspire his team in some way. It proved not to be enough. But that it had not drawn a sneering remark from the Chino coach had been noted as another out-of-character reaction – or curious non-reaction.

He stood, statuesque, gazing out at the field and showing no emotional reaction as his players battled to a nail-biting draw against the Bombers the following week. His post-game address was brief, not particularly informative and filled with banalities. Fatigue etched his face as he delivered his responses in a tranquil monotone.

Strangely, it was only after the Convicts were blown away, 52-10 by the Thunder Lizards in Week Eleven that Coach Nazar looked like his old self again. After the game, he was edgy and sarcastic in responding to questions about the ineffectiveness of his team's offence that had gained only 9 first downs and 162 yards in the game. He needled reporters, tipped his hat to the Durham coach, defended his players to a point but also laid it out there that he would not tolerate another no-show this year, and especially against the hated Assassins next week.

The next day, he ran a grueling practice in pads, in contravention of the recent COVID agreement with the EFLPA, and dared his players to complain. He had *that look* about him that his veterans knew not to mess with. He yelled angrily at and spoke encouragingly to his players throughout the week and addressed the media fulsomely after practices. He led practices, rather than watching his assistants run them, and he directed the film sessions. He was engaged again.

Something had happened either during or before the Durham game that had snapped the Chino coach out of his melancholy. He carried a self-assured look and posture that local Chino media had not seen in years. In his Thursday practice report, **Quentin San Pedro** of the *Chino Champion* wrote:

“Coach Nazar swore at me today before taking questions. I cannot repeat what he said but he said it in that half-joking way of his that suggested playful familiarity while at the same time warning all reporters in the room not to mess with him. It reminded me of the old days. By that, I mean the really old days; the year we won the Championship. I have never been so happy to be called an ____.”

At some point mid-week before the long-awaited re-match against the Assassins, Las Vegas coach, **Anthony Holguin's** “people” reached out to Coach Nazar's “people” to negotiate what would be on the line in the coming game. The Chino and Las Vegas coaches would not speak directly as they loathed each other. They delegated such discussions to intermediaries.

The two sides laid it out: They had done the Blackout Game, pitting their uniforms against each other; and they had done the Battle of the Dark Lords, testing their philosophies of evil on the field. Holguin's people assumed that the Chino coach would not want a re-match of the Dark Lords battle, as several memes of **Rob Nazar** as **Darth Sidious** breaking his light sabre on a Gatorade cooler had gone viral and remained prevalent on the Web, providing a source of constant embarrassment for the Chino coach.

The Las Vegas side suggested a High Noon-style gunslinger showdown between “black hats,” for the right to take out “white hat” **Deron Redding** and his Cubs. They were, after all, in the West Division and the West was turning into the wild west this year. The Chino side, liking the idea, agreed in principle and took the proposal back to their coach.

According to sources inside The Big House at the time, Nazar flipped out at the suggestion. After letting loose a stream of curses he picked up his phone and called the Las Vegas coach directly, something he had not done since “welcoming” him to the league in the summer before the 2020 season.

Exactly what was said between the two enemy coaches remains unknown. But Nazar was heard to remark when he emerged from his office afterwards that there would be no more “silly games,” that this contest would be *'mano a mano.'*

And so, when the Convicts took the field this Sunday at the Assassin's Den, they ran out in their throwback visitor's uniforms from the original 2007 EFL season, the first time they had done so since the EFL's 10th anniversary season in 2016. The FOX TV cameras, anticipating some kind of theatre for the game, zeroed in on the opposing coaches as they came onto the field. To everyone's surprise neither looked out of the ordinary.

“And here is Assassins' coach, Anthony Holguin pacing the sideline in his signature all-black outfit,” observed play-by-play announcer, **Albert Kenny**. “I'm a little surprised that he isn't dressed up as a ninja or something for this division showdown against the Convicts, Jonathan.”

“I am too, Kevin,” replied colour analyst, **Jonathan Vilma**. “I'm even more surprised, if you look at the other sideline, to see Coach Nazar decked out in his old lucky windbreaker.”

The camera switched to the Chino sideline, where a stony-faced **Rob Nazar** stood stalk still, surveying the opposite sideline where the Assassins players mingled in their platoons as game time fast approached. He was wearing a grey sleeveless windbreaker adorned with the 2007 Convicts' logo – a shadowy red-eyed demonic visage in a grey helmet with spiked lightning bolts for a facemask. In the only season it had been used the Convicts had won the EFL Championship. The following year they switched to their “iconic” ball & chain logo, which was replaced last year with the current skull & crossbones.

“I guess you would remember that lucky windbreaker, Jonathan, from a distance anyway,” Kenny acknowledged, knowing that his booth mate had played seven seasons in the EFL, including that inaugural season, and would have faced the Chino coach.

“Yes, I do, Albert,” Vilma replied. “I played for the Gladiators that first year but I'll never forget my first time at the Big House in Chino. What a place that was! It was the biggest stadium in the league at the time, I think it still is the biggest. And I remember Coach Nazar cussing up and down that sideline. You could hear him across the field with the crowd screaming like crazy. It was something! Nobody thought they were good enough to win the championship that year, but they went out and won it. They were a mean team that



Chino coach, **Rob Nazar** wearing his “lucky windbreaker” from the 2007 season, flashes a toothy grin as his Convicts deliver one of their most clutch performance of the year.

never quit. They surprised a lot of people, but not themselves.”

In many ways, the Week Twelve match-up between the Convicts and the Assassins was reminiscent of that golden year for the Chino franchise. The old units helped set the atmosphere, but the circumstances coming into the game were similar to those in the second half of 2007, when the Convicts found themselves battling Durham for the second seed in the West Conference. **Donovan McNabb** was the starter for the Convicts that year, but injuries had kept him off the field as much as he was on it. Chino had to rely on **Jay Cutler** to keep the season from slipping away, the same way the team was now relying on **Teddy Bridgewater** to keep them in the playoff race with the injury to **Dak Prescott**.

Bridgewater had “bridged” the gap somewhat, going 3-4-1 in his 8 starts heading into Week 12. But few expected him to be able to hold up on the road against the first-place Assassins and their no.3-ranked defence. His start against Las Vegas in Week Eight had been disastrous. With the Convicts believed to be demoralized after the Durham beat down, and about to face a team that was by all accounts preparing to put the boots to them when they were down, few people gave Chino even a puncher’s chance at hanging around in this game.

How wrong the doubters were!

With an invigorated **Rob Nazar** stomping up and down the sidelines, alternately chewing out and pumping up his players, yelling continuously at the referees even when the calls went his way and punctuating his theatrics with a big smile, a hearty laugh, a fierce scowl and a curse word vocabulary that would make a sailor envious, the energy on the visitor’s sideline never dipped.

By contrast, his opponent on the opposite sideline, the black-clad Chief Assassin himself, **Anthony Holguin**, looked haughty and stiff as he moved around sparingly. He appeared to be waiting for something to happen. His air was not quite as confident as it had been when he had been wearing the armour of Sauron and cleaving benches

with his bastard sword. Two losses in a row had perhaps taken a bite out of his confidence, leading him to a false sense of over-confidence that his team, that had been ranked tops in the Conference after Week Nine, could not fall a third straight time to a beat-up squad in as rough shape as the Convicts.

However, it was clear from the opening drive that there was a new energy animating the Convicts that the Assassins coach had not seen before. He studied it anxiously as it fueled an 8-play, 75-yard opening drive that featured smashmouth running by **Ronald Jones II** and a dagger thrust on the final play in the form of a deep strike delivered with precision from Bridgewater to **Michael Gallup** for a 24-yard touchdown pass.

“That’s what I’m talking about! That’s what I’m talking about!” Nazar barked as he greeted the offence returning from the field after the score. He added some good-natured profanity that cannot be printed. He was like a big, shockingly foul-mouthed kid.

It was now the Assassins’ turn. They moved methodically up the field, converting a third down near mid-field and getting a pass interference call on **Chauncey Gardner-Johnson** on a pass intended for **Adam Humphries** to enter the Chino red zone. The penalty call triggered the Chino coach, who angrily and loudly accused referee **Ron Tobert** of racism for calling a penalty on his black defensive back against the white wide receiver.

Tobert, one of two black referees in the EFL, looked back at him as if to say, “really?” Unabashed, Nazar shot back, “Yeah, I’m talking to you, Ron! That was a racist call! You know it and I know it! Now, clean it the f*^k up!”

Two plays later, it was third and 1 at the Chino 11-yard line. **Justin Herbert** dropped back against a total run commit by the Convicts’ defence and fired over the middle to Humphries. Caught out of position, Gardner-Johnson grabbed Humphries’ jersey in desperation and pulled himself in the way of the pass, almost picking it off. Humphries threw his arms up in the air, calling for a flag. Tobert reached toward his back pocket but caught himself.

“Humphries wants a flag, but he’s not going to get it,” TV announcer **Albert Kenny** called as the officials brought the ball back to the line of scrimmage.

“Well, I’m not sure how you miss that,” **Jonathan Vilma** weighed in. “I mean, Gardner-Johnson can’t get in position to pick that ball if he doesn’t pull himself into the path of the ball by grabbing Humphries’ jersey. But he’s not going to get the call and now coach Holguin has a decision to make.”

That decision, whether to go for it on 4th & 1 at the Chino 11, was one that more and more EFL coaches these days would see as a no-brainer opportunity to maximize the return on good field position by going for it. The Assassins coach was not necessarily one of those. He was in the middle of the league when it came to 4th down attempts. But his evil nature lent him the image of being aggressive, so it came as a surprise when he stared blankly at the Chino sideline and sent his field goal unit onto the field.

It was not the wrong decision. It certainly never would have been questioned as little as two years ago. But in the middle of the biggest fourth down fad in pro football history, in a grudge match between two division rivals where prudence was not necessarily a virtue, with his second-year quarterback giving him that go-for-it look and the Chino coach practically daring him to do it by motioning with his arms to “bring it on,” Holguin’s decision to kick the field goal seemed like a retreat in the moment, rather than a sober and rational move. It was the first quarter. A field goal could end up being important. No reason to roll the dice. But just like analytics cannot measure the human aspect of a moment – the players’ mood, the roar of the crowd, the weather, the “gut” feeling – prudence is not always prudent. **Ka’imi Fairbairn** drilled the 29-yard field goal without trouble, but the Assassins would soon be in a lot of trouble.

With the irascibly gregarious Chino coach egging them on, the Convicts systematically took control of the game on both sides of the ball. **Donte Jackson** notched his 4th interception of the year on the Assassins’ next possession, setting up a **Harrison Butker** field goal. Then **Justin Jackson** burrowed through the line for a 2-yard touchdown run to complete an 11-play, 79-yard drive that consumed the heart of the 2nd quarter and sent the Convicts into the locker room with a 17-3 lead.

We don’t know what either coach said to his team in the locker room during the break, but whatever speeches may have been made did not alter the trajectory of the contest established over the first 30 minutes. The Assassins went five-and-out on their opening series of the 2nd half and the Convicts followed up with a field goal drive too make the score 20-3.

It was only when the officials got the word from New York that people were tuning out the late Sunday game that things started to change. Convicts’ tackle **Charles Leno Jr** was flagged for ticky-tack holding on back-to-back plays to bring up 1st & 30, creating the opportunity for safety **Jordan Fuller** to get aggressive and jump the short in-route for an interception at the Chino 44. The turnover set up a short drive and a 6-yard touchdown run by **Dalvin Cook**. The Convicts lead had been reduced to 10 points.

The questionable holding calls and the subsequent Assassins’ drive did not noticeably phase the Chino coach. He responded the way he used to in the old days, railing loudly at the refs, patting Leno Jr on the head and assuring him that he did nothing wrong and telling his team that they had to play the officials now as well as the Assassins, but adding that he had confidence they could handle it.

The offence did not respond immediately. They went three-and-out against a swarming Assassins’ defence buoyed by the touchdown drive off of their turnover. Las Vegas took over with a chance to alter the momentum but were thwarted by a drop by **Jerry Jedy** on 3rd & 5 at the Chino 27. Still, the Assassins had moved the ball and were in position to make it a one-score game. But Fairbairn shanked the 45-yard attempt, not even coming close, and that reprieve was all the Convicts’ offence needed.

Showing uncommon boldness with Bridgewater at quarterback, Nazar called back-to-back long passes, both complete to **Marvin Jones Jr** for 22 and 23 yards, the latter for a touchdown, to all but clinch the game with 3:54 left in the fourth quarter.

As animated as Nazar had been throughout the entire game, he suddenly became stern and reserved. No high fives, no fist pumps, not a fraction of an inch of a smile. It was his way of telling his team, it was not time to celebrate. It was time to seal the deal.

Playing as if it was a tie game and not a 17-point lead, the Convicts’ ‘Lockdown Crew’ came after Herbert as if the season was on the line. After an incomplete pass on 3rd & 11 from his own 39, Holguin could see the writing on the wall. Knowing his opponent would go in for another score if he tried the 4th down and failed, he waved the white flag and punted, signalling the effective, if not the technical, end of the game.

With 2:26 left and the ball at their own 26, up by three scores, there was time left for a gesture. Simulating a middle finger at his opponent, the Convicts tried to go deep on their first play from scrimmage but nobody was open and Bridgewater scrambled for 19 yards to bring up the two-minute warning. It wasn’t over, however, Nazar called two more passes, enough to gain one more first down, before finally letting go of his mission to remind his opponent that two could play at rubbing noses in the dirt. As if not wanting to completely stoop to the tactic that had so incensed him in his opponent, he had his quarterback kneel for the final two snaps to run out the clock. Final score: Chino 27, Las Vegas 10.

In the aftermath of this surprising Chino victory there was a relative normalcy to the post-game proceedings that belied the bitterness of the relationship between the coaches.

Assassins’ coach, **Anthony Holguin** conceded defeat somewhat grudgingly, but ultimately gave the Chino quarterback, **Teddy Bridgewater**, credit for playing the “game of his life,” while bemoaning injuries and lost opportunities that hurt his team’s chances.

Chino coach, **Rob Nazar**, on the other hand, did not mention the other team or its coach at all. He focused on his own team, lavishing praises on his quarterback and his defence. The ‘Lockdown Crew’ “brought their keys today” he said, using a familiar expression from the early years that he had not used often in the past decade.

Beat reporter, **Quentin San Pedro** posed the question foremost on the minds of Convicts’ fans: “Coach Nazar, you and your team looked different today than they have looked over the past four weeks. What happened this week to change the attitude for you and your team here today?”

“Thanks for the question, Quentin,” Nazar began. “We didn’t do anything differently today in terms of strategy. We knew what we are dealing with on the other side. I think the difference is that we, starting with me, took a look in the mirror and back in time to that first season of the EFL. We weren’t supposed to win it all that year. Our quarterback was injury-prone. Sometimes we didn’t look very

good at all. But in the end, we fought through it. Pacman was a big spark who ignited our never-say-die spirit. Every player, to a man, carried that with him onto the field down the stretch that year. Looking back at the old film reminded me that I didn't care as much about the outcome in those good old days – nobody expected us to win. I care only that we played hard and gave ourselves a fair shot. So, we re-set our focus this week on playing hard! Defying the odds. No gimmicks! We are who we are. I'm not Darth Sidious, I'm 'the Warden!' I felt this week and today like I am back where I belong."

It was an astonishing public bearing of his soul by the Chino coach, but it resonated. It was true that he had been guilty of resorting to gimmicks recently to give his team a competitive advantage. Those included dressing up like a *Star Wars* villain, creating an all-black uniform, and putting a random skull & crossbones on the side of his players' helmet that had nothing to do with his team's nickname just to enhance his villainous image. Fortunately, just in time to possibly save his season, he recalled the simple truth that play on the field creates image, not the other way around. And although resorting to wearing throwback uniforms for this game could be seen as a gimmick, to the Chino coach it was simply a reminder to his team of why that 2007 team came to be known by the fans and media in Chino as the *First Champions*. Now, the rest of the league remembers as well.

AROUND THE EFL

Apart from the great upsets in the West Division, this week was a dreadfully uncompetitive one, hardly worth my time to even comment on. But I am paid by the word, so here it goes:

At Kingdome in Seattle, the joy of watching agony replace hubris on the faces of players that thought they had one in the bag was enough to motivate the Pilots to rise above their record and upend the Cubs by the shocking score of 23-3. The contest that was supposed to vault the Cubs into first place in a best-case scenario Chino victory over Las Vegas, instead kept them in third place, despite the Chino victory, and again raised concerns about **Deron Redding's** fitness as coach a mere one week after a three-game winning streak had him being toasted in Iowa as the "rock" that kept the Cubs franchise together. Yes, fans, and the media who respond to them, are that fickle. This week, however, the naysayers have plenty of fodder with which to feed doubt in the viability of this year's edition of the Cubs. The Seattle secondary was money in coverage and the front seven took advantage, with 5 sacks of **Russell Wilson** and 4 knock downs. The Pilots dared the Cubs to run the ball and the strategy ultimately worked, as they took away opportunities that the Cubs thought they had in the passing game. In the other direction, **Gardner Minshew II** flashed sniper-like accuracy at key moments. He hit **Denzel Mims** for a 22-yard touchdown pass in a sea of Cubs defenders for what would turn out to be the winning score, and later threaded the needle to **Keelan Cole Sr** for a 12-yard conversion on 3rd & 12 to sustain their second touchdown drive to make it 20-3. Minshew was so effective that Seattle media are now openly questioning the competence of Coach **Mitch Gangwish** in failing to recognize Minshew's attributes. They forget that **Trey Lance** was the MVP in their only two previous wins. Apparently, a process is ongoing in Seattle to determine their QB1 of the future and that process has resulted in a lost season but a lot of important tape going forward. Meanwhile, the Cubs are left to ponder how in the hell they could have allowed this game to get away from them.

At Patriot Place in Charleswood, the Patriots rebounded for 21 points in the second half then held off a late push to overcome the Derailers 28-21. Buffalo, as usual, went all out from the start, running consecutive wide receiver runs to sustain the game's opening touchdown drive and going for it on 4th down in unnecessary situations early in the game with a lead, then failing. The Derailers seem to play entire games as if they were two-minute drills with the game on the line. At 4-8, that strategy has not appeared to be as effective as it might be when the game is actually on the line. Anyway, the Derailers' offensive philosophy was ultimately a sideshow in a game decided by the Pats' patience and superior talent. **Alvin Kamara** turned a broken play into the key play of the game, gathering in a check down from **DeShaun Watson** for a 40-yard gain that set up the winning touchdown, a 3-yard TD run by Kamara early in the fourth to make it 28-21. The Charleswood defence did the rest. **Carl Lawson** sacked **Lamar Jackson** on the game's final drive to set up a difficult situation that ultimately resulted in a turnover on downs to end the game. The Pats have...*not...quite...*clinched their division and the no.1 seed in the Conference, but they are very close.

At Tillman Field in Cowtown, the Swordfish maintained their mastery over the Corn Kings by completing a season sweep of their rivals with a convincing 45-28 victory. **Kirk Cousins** found the holes in the coverage while the offensive line held off the Cowtown pass rush, resulting in 390 yards and 4 TD passes. The Corn Kings did manage to pick off one of those passes, preventing the Sebastian overall tally from reaching 52 points. Thank goodness for small mercies. The impressive Swordfish running backs did not light up the highlight reel – apart from **Jonathan Taylor's** 2 TD runs, both from inside 5 yards – but their very presence kept the Corn King pass rush from fully committing to the quarterback, resulting in a mostly unmolested pocket for the Sebastian ace behind center, who currently tops the leader board in TD passes with 35 and ranks 3rd in passer rating with 119.1. The win puts Sebastian back in serious discussion for a wild card berth while it knocks the Corn Kings out of the playoff circle, for now.

At Wilhalla Stadium in Minneapolis a refreshingly lively game unfolded to entertain Minnesotans but unfortunately for the home team it ended in a 36-29 victory for the visiting Bombers. The Triumph would have deserved a better fate had they not already thumbed their noses at Fate by declining to develop the no.1 pick in the draft. The mysterious 'Triumph Plan,' if there is one, is a discussion for the post-season, however. In this contest, **Drew Brees** was a magnificent 20 of 22 for 214 yards and 3 TD passes for a game day passer rating of 146.8. His running backs, **Elijah Mitchell** and **Jamaal Williams**, combined for 186 yards on 26 carries and 2 touchdowns while the Bombers defence, usually horrible, was merely bad and held the Triumph to 3 field goals that would have been touchdowns for most other teams. **Ken Main's** desperados stay alive for another week, while the Triumph still have four games to play.

At Coyote Field in Cobb County the Week 12 shocks continued as the home team of the same name as its field ran all over the Violators 41-13, with the assistance of 4 Virden turnovers and a 109-yard rushing game by **Adrian Peterson**. It was like old times again

for Peterson. The Coyote game plan called for a heavy dose of “workhorse” and the man ranked second in the list of running backs with most carries in a single season, 406, got the call to tote the rock 29 times. It was an easy decision for Coach **Eron Osman**. He looked across to the Virden sideline, saw there were just 5 defensive linemen dressed for the game, and decided to take the ball out of **Ryan Tannehill's** hands and attack the weak spot while not putting the team needlessly in harm's way. This remarkably conservative strategy was made possible by three Virden giveaways in their first four possessions, including a muffed punt by **Pharoh Cooper**, that allowed the Coyotes to build a 28-0 lead before Virden had registered its second first down. The short fields opened the door for Tannehill to notch 3 TD passes in just 13 attempts. Surprisingly, the lop-sided start did not push the Violators into all-pass mode. **Patrick Mahomes** had one of his quieter days, completing 16 of 23 for 177 yards, 2 TDs and a pick. Virden coach **Lance Barrate** remembered that **Ezekiel Elliott** was on his team and refused to panic until it was too late. By mid-way through the 4th quarter there was no longer a point in panicking and Virden took a very long, symbolic knee by helping the Coyotes run down the clock. The loss drops Virden out of a wild card spot; while the Coyotes squeak into the no.2 seed in the Pacific Conference with this win and the Assassins' loss to Chino.

At Hawkeye Park in Brooklin, the Hawks turned up the dial both offensively and defensively in the second half to rise up and take down the Cadillac, 27-17 in front of another sellout crowd in the northeast GTA. The strong finish nudged the post-game questions away from a controversial early decision by Hawks' coach, **Tom Jones** to go for it on 4th & 1 from his team's own 34, trailing 3-0 in the 1st quarter. They missed, of course, giving the rickety Erieau offence a much-needed short field to set up the game's first touchdown on a 17-yard hitch from **Kyler Murray** to **Hunter Henry**. That made it 10-0 at the time and allowed the temperamental Caddies to nurse a 10-7 lead at half time. Being Erieau, they let the home team off the hook eventually. Having lost **Myles Garrett** early in the game, the Cadillac line wore down in the 2nd half. Brooklin took the lead for good on their second series of the 3rd quarter, when consecutive passes of 20 yards to **DeAndre Hopkins** and 23 yards to **Rob Gronkowski** set the stage for **Austin Ekeler**, who covered the remaining 20 yards in 5 straight carries, the last one into the breach from half a yard out for the touchdown. From that point, it was just a matter of star defensive back, **Jonathan Jones** taking charge of the secondary with an interception, 3 passes defended and a fumble recovery to help frustrate the Erieau comeback attempt. Hopkins recorded double-digit catches for the third time in four weeks, hauling in 10 passes for 126 yards and 2 touchdowns, while Ekeler pitched in with 101 yards rushing and a touchdown to star for the home team offence. The Hawks swoop into the wildcard spot vacated by Cowtown with the win while the Caddies are probably eliminated (but I'll have to do the math first).

At Monsignor McClancy Memorial Stadium in East Elmhurst, the Irish added to the spirit of lop-sidedness in Week 12 by slow-cooking the Excaliburs, 29-3. A 20-point 2nd quarter built on turnovers and inept York offensive play basically decided this game early. After falling behind 10-3 early in the 2nd quarter, **Tom Brady** failed to execute his trademark sneak on 4th & inches from his own 35, leading to a chip shot **Rodrigo Blankenship** field goal. He then threw a pick right into the hands of **Mike Hilton**, who returned it 32 yards to set up a late TD pass from **Baker Mayfield** to **Adam Thielen** to make the score 23-3 at half time. The York offence marinated in its own juices in the second half, with Brady throwing another pick and the offence turning it over three times on downs to post a goose egg in their comeback attempt. The Irish clinched the South Division and the no.3 seed with the win and have four weeks to twiddle their thumbs waiting for the post-season to arrive.

At Heinz Field in Pittsburgh, the Spartan team most of us expected to see in 2021 finally showed up, made to order, as they rolled up the Gladiators 30-13. **Philip Rivers** finished with a perfect passer rating in moderate action, completing 18 of 22 for 282 yards and 3 TDs, while **Miles Sanders** ground out the tough yards, gaining 83 yards on 18 carries to lead a 101-yard rushing attack. On defence the Spartans limited the Glads' passing game to a total of 124 yards and a lone TD in the 4th quarter. The longest pass of the day for **Big Ben** was a 13-yard out to **Willie Snead IV**. Don't look now, but the Spartans may be getting ready to peak at the right time.

At the Eagle's Nest in Toronto, a COVID-19 depleted Durham roster had to work for a 35-20 victory over Scarborough. The Lizards were aided by Scarborough missing **Joe Burrow**, who was also out due to COVID, which meant the inexperienced **Drew Lock** got to experience the Durham secondary in his first action of the season. It wasn't *all* bad for the youngster. The Blue Eagles actually led until the final minute of the 1st half. Lock threw a touchdown pass to tie the game at 7 in the 2nd quarter then a pick of **Josh Allen** set up a chip shot Scarborough field goal to make it 10-7. Allen scrambled into the end zone from 7 yards out with 0:48 left, however, to give Durham a 14-10 locker room lead. The game started to unravel for Scarborough, beginning with a **Tyrann Mathieu** interception in the 3rd quarter, his second of the game, that set up Durham's third touchdown. From there the Blue Eagles never stood a chance. The Lizards' win positions them to grab the no.1 seed if they can knock off mighty Budapest next week.

On a windy day in Budapest, the wind seemed to blow in just one direction as the North Stars overwhelmed the pink Panthers 29-0. There were those who thought the prideful Pink Panthers would dig deep and rise to the occasion this week against the league's no.1 powerhouse, but I was not one of those. After last week's bitter loss to Virden, the team was too emotionally drained to give anything extra after a flight across the ocean to Central Europe. Oshawa started well on defence, but their offence, that could barely move, kept putting it back on the field. Things got so bad for the visitors that **Kenyan Drake** took a safety when he was tackled by **Lavonte David** behind the line on a pitch to make it 29-0. After that, both teams ran out the clock.

And finally, at True North Field in Winnipeg, the Wrecking Balls survived the most feared 0-12 team in history by delivering a 30-9 spanking of the Crusaders. **David Montgomery** had his best game of the season, rushing for 120 yards and 2 TDs on 22 carries to lead the half-hearted charge. This was another one of those half games where the dramatic arc of the action mostly resolved itself in the first two quarters, turning the final two quarters into one long denouement. It is tough to watch a game like that, especially when you know the team trying to come from behind has no track record of ever accomplishing such a feat with an overwhelmed rookie quarterback. **Mac Jones** had a season-low 21.1 passer rating in completing just 12 of 35 passes for 120 yards and 2 interceptions.

BUG THE BOOKIE!

JIMMY THE GEEK GIVES YOU HIS PICKS
FOR WEEK THIRTEEN EFL ACTION

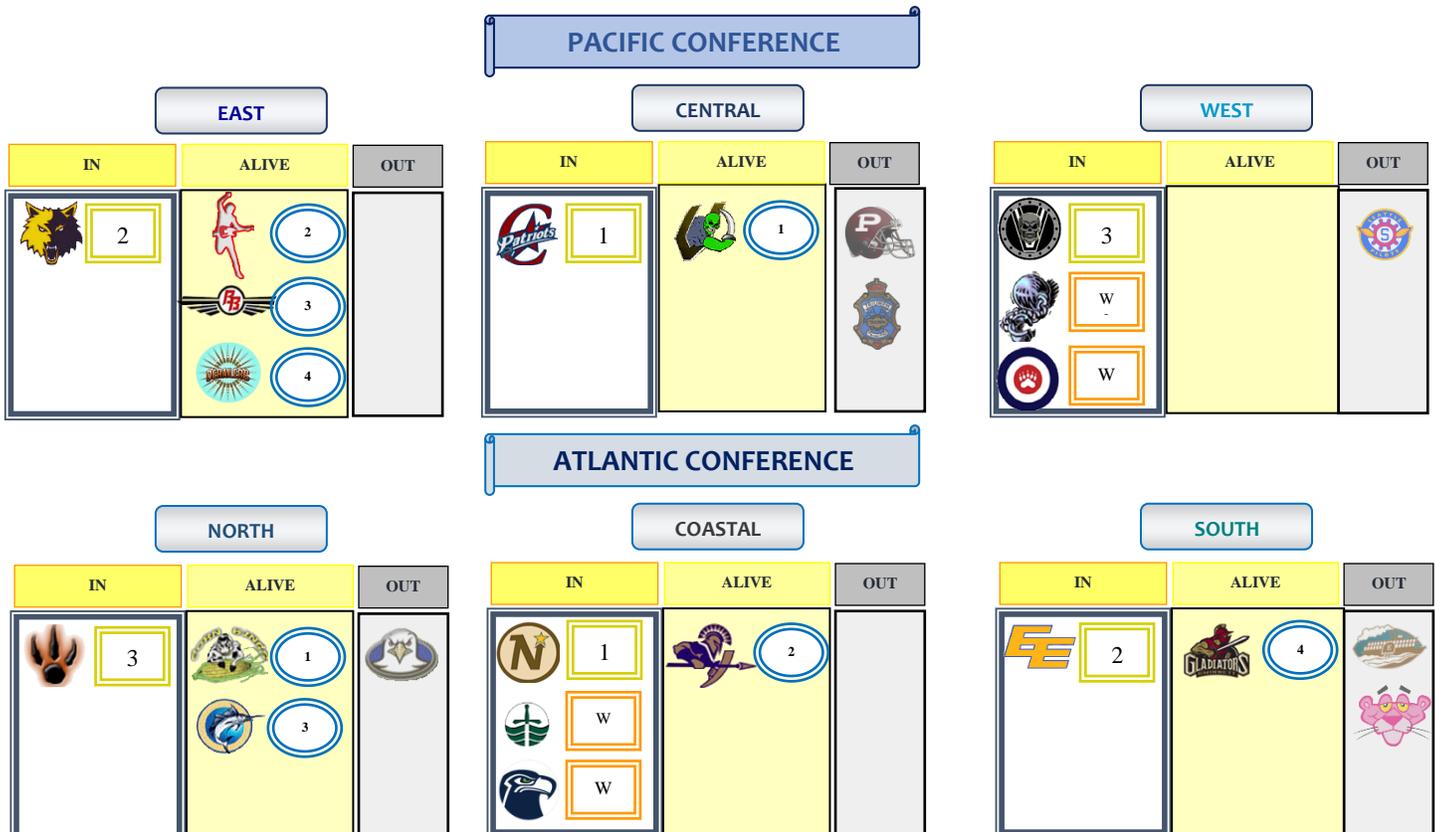
Your source for fantasy and on-line betting solutions



RECORD VS THE SPREAD AFTER WEEK 12:

81-58-5

PLAYOFF PICTURE AT A GLANCE



Jimmy's WEEK THIRTEEN PICKS

GAMES TO WATCH

BUDAPEST @ DURHAM (line – NORTH STARS by 2)

INJURIES: Budapest – J.J. Taylor (QUESTIONABLE); Durham – None.

The game that will likely decide the no.1 seed and home field advantage in the post-season has finally arrived! Through 12 weeks these two colossi have been stomping on the opposition in ways that only elite teams can. Off or on their game, they almost always find a way to win. Apart from their Week Five setback against Cowtown – a game where they had the ball in position to win in the game's final minute before disaster struck – the Thunder Lizards have been perfect and have displayed the defensive dominance that analysts expected, while their offence can blow away an opponent with sheer aerial madness. Josh Allen has upped his game and now commands a top tier passing attack that is notable for its consistency, especially compared with last year's erratic effort. The running game is not as prominently featured, but it no longer needs to be. On the other side, Aaron Rodgers is flashing his MVP credentials in every outing, with only one comparatively off game so far, in Week Five, against East Elmhurst. But it was a win, nonetheless. Their perfect streak has experts around the league boldly predicting a perfect season...if they can get by the giant dinosaur standing in their way. The Stars are favoured, as a perfect team should be. But Durham has the defence to force Rodgers to be crafty again. It won't be simple pitch-and-catch if the pressure gets through. The weakness on the right side of the Budapest line is waiting to waver against the

top-ranked Durham pass rush. The running-back-by-committee on the North Stars will have to play more than a clock-burner role to keep it honest. On the other side, Josh Allen will need to be smart with his deep shots, as Minkah Fitzpatrick is a game-changer waiting to happen. This contest will come down to in-game adjustments and secondary players shining. Budapest boasts the edge in the former, while Durham, with more depth, the latter. Expect the home field, wet or dry, to play a key role. **PICK: DURHAM**

LAS VEGAS @ CHARLESWOOD (line – ASSASSINS by 2)

INJURIES: Las Vegas – Yannick Ngakoue (QUESTIONABLE), Shaquill Griffin (OUT); Charleswood – Brandon Linder (QUESTIONABLE), Terrell Edmunds (OUT), Jalen Mills (OUT), Devine Ozigbo (OUT).

Had this game been scheduled in Week Ten, I could understand favouring the visitors here. The Sand Sages appear to be hitching their line-setting wagon to the power rankings, where the Assassins, despite a three-game slide, still rank two above the prudent, unadventurous Pats, who just survived the Derailers last week. For a team with just one loss, the Pats rank remarkably low in some key categories such as rushing offence, rushing defence, takeaways and third down stop percentage. DeShaun Watson does take care of the ball at an elite level, which helps explain why the Pats haven't lost more games. The Assassins, on the other hand, live off of turnovers, a suffocating run defence, and hold their own in most other categories across the board. Dalvin Cook is well-positioned for a good game against a Pats line playing soft against the run. Vegas will need it, as Justin Herbert has fallen off his hot pace the past three weeks. Questions abound about the receiving corps, so they have something to prove against a secondary that is merely competent, not great. The Pats are the better team, but their workaday pace may catch up to them against the hungrier team. **PICK: LAS VEGAS**

VIRDEN @ CHINO (line – CONVICTS by 4)

INJURIES: Virden – Maik Hooker (DOUBTFUL), Isaiah Buggs (OUT), Anthony Barr (OUT), Geno Atkins (OUT), Parris Campbell (OUT), Lane Johnson (OUT); Chino – PJ Hall (OUT), Ronald Jones II (OUT), Christian McCaffrey (OUT).

Dak Prescott is back but some think it might be better for Chino to stick with Teddy Bridgewater after his clutch performance against the Assassins last week. Such a thought is short-sighted as Prescott needs to be back in form if the Convicts hope to survive the barnyard dog fight in the West and go anywhere in the post-season. Currently holding the first wild card, the Convicts are facing their principal out-of-division competition in the Violators, who are nursing a severe thrashing at the hands of the Coyotes. Virden's injury situation is the best it's been in many weeks, but they are missing their best linebacker on a defence that has been falling like a rock in the rankings. The Violators are at the point of relying entirely on their no.1 passing attack and those special Leonard Williams and Marcus Peters moments on defence to give them a fighting chance on Sundays. Chino notched an impressive character win against the Assassins after getting tarred and feathered by Durham the week before and is showing scrapper traits. Chino is ascending, Virden descending. **PICK: CHINO**

GAMES OF NOTE

BROOKLIN @ COWTOWN (line – HAWKS by 2)

INJURIES: Brooklin – Ronnie Harrison Jr. (QUESTIONABLE), Xavier McKinney (QUESTIONABLE), Randall Cobb (OUT), Clelin Ferrell (OUT), Golden Tate (OUT), Stephon TUITT (OUT); Cowtown – Kendrick Bourne (QUESTIONABLE), Mo Alie-Cox (DOUBTFUL), Jeremy Chinn (OUT), Deonte Harris (OUT), Benson Mayowa (OUT), Eric Saubert (OUT).

The Hawks' win over Erieau last week moved them into the wildcard spot the Corn Kings had previously occupied. Cowtown can reclaim that spot here with a win, or fall further behind with a loss. The Corn Kings have been quite unpredictable this year, having played the role of giant killer, basement dweller and everything in-between. I am not ashamed to admit that I am hesitant to guess how they will match up against a Hawks team that is rising fast and riding a four-game win streak, especially now that the Corn King QB situation is up in the air. Brooklin has the momentum and a healthy Austin Ekeler to add to an offence getting more cohesive every week as Derek Carr realizes that it's okay to throw to DeAndre Hopkins when he's covered. The Hawks' stud will face a challenge going up Darius Williams, but not a deal-breaking one as long as Ekeler and Evan Engram get their chances. The Corn Kings looked confused on defence last week, which is a bad sign for a team that needs an effective TJ Watt and back end to succeed. **PICK: BROOKLIN**

SEBASTIAN @ YORK (line – EXCALIBURS by 5)

INJURIES: Sebastian – Jadeveon Clowney (PROBABLE), Matt Feiler (PROBABLE), Terrace Marshall Jr (QUESTIONABLE), Odell Beckham Jr (DOUBTFUL), Blake Cashman (OUT), Levi Wallace (OUT), Christian Wilkins (OUT); York – Khari Willis (QUESTIONABLE), Rasul Douglas (DOUBTFUL), Eli Apple (OUT), Corey Davis (OUT), Lawrence Guy (OUT), CJ Henderson (OUT), Wyatt Teller (OUT).

The Swordfish ended a four-game losing streak with an impressive offensive outburst against Cowtown last week. They are now back in the playoff race and hoping to build on that momentum. They face a York team that has struggled the past three weeks and no more so than last week against the Irish. Injuries to their receiving corps have blunted the sharpness of the passing threat, allowing teams to focus

on Derrick Henry, who has averaged 70 yards per game over their losing streak. That is not bad for an average back, but when the offence runs through a power back like Henry it is not enough, especially when the passing game is faltering. The Swords aren't getting much help from their defence, although it is still capable of generating turnovers. They will need a few against a Swordfish attack that found its fins again last week and has many ways to move the ball. Don't expect York to keep up. **PICK: SEBASTIAN**

BUFFALO @ COBB COUNTY (line – COYOTES by 10)

INJURIES: Buffalo – Noah Fant (DOUBTFUL), Derek Barnett (OUT), Jaquiski Tartt (OUT), Auden Tate (OUT), Quinnen Williams (OUT); **Cobb County** – Jared Cook (DOUBTFUL), Julio Jones (OUT), Hassan Ridgeway (OUT).

The Derailers began their three-game road swing with a fine offensive effort against the Pats last week but came up short. They are all but out of the playoff race, the 4th-ranked team chasing the two wildcards in the Pacific. They need a monumental collapse by the five teams in front of them and win-out to squeak in. While highly improbable, don't expect the team that has gone for it on 4th down more than any team other than the Swordfish to lay down here, nor for their opponent to take them lightly. The Coyotes are on the verge of applying a stranglehold on the East and sit in the no.2 seed thanks to a better record than Las Vegas in common games. Every division game is important as they look to secure the second tie-breaker over New Jersey. They are coming off a lambasting of Virden and are brimming with confidence. The Derailers won the last match-up between these teams because Marty Booker helped Lamar play keep-away and the defence forced the game's only turnover. Don't expect an exact repeat, but Buffalo will keep it close. **PICK: BUFFALO**

NEW JERSEY @ BRUXELLES (line – WRECKING BALLS by 3)

INJURIES: New Jersey – Keenan Allen (DOUBTFUL), Kwon Alexander (OUT), Bashad Breeland (OUT), Austin Hooper (OUT); **Bruxelles** – Ifeadi Odenigbo (DOUBTFUL), Chris Godwin (OUT), O.J. Howard (OUT), A'Shawn Robinson (OUT).

New Jersey is within striking distance of a wildcard berth, or a division title if they can put together a string of wins and get some help down the stretch. With the Bombers fading away, this is a team New Jersey has to beat, as the competition doesn't get any easier in the season's final three weeks. Not that Bruxelles will be easy. They are staring at elimination and that acute consciousness of their own mortality could force a clarity of focus that has been missing most of the season. Drew Brees can see endless golf courses on the horizon and would prefer a few more strolls along the gridiron barking "hut" before calling "fore" all day. Victory might not be enough to stay in the playoff hunt, but it gives them a chance. The Wrecking Balls rolled over the Crusaders last week running the ball. That formula could work again this week against the league's worst team at defending the run. With Keenan Allen listed as 'doubtful' and Chris Godwin 'out,' expect a healthy dose of the run on both sides, which will allow the Bombers' great O-line to shine. **PICK: BRUXELLES**

SCARBOROUGH @ PICKERING (line – SPARTANS by 8)

INJURIES: Scarborough – Justin Jones (PROBABLE), Cameron Dantzler (OUT), Dante Fowler Jr (OUT), Myles Gaskin (OUT), Micah Kiser (OUT), Darius Phillips (OUT), CJ Uzomah (OUT). **Pickering** – Darqueze Dennard (PROBABLE), Bradley Roby (OUT), Sterling Shepard (OUT).

The Spartans are winners of two straight after snuffing out the Glads last week and are ready to roll into the playoffs with a strong finish if they can maintain a balanced attack and not put the entire load on Philip Rivers. Meanwhile, the Blue Eagles have nothing left apart from figuring out ways to mess up the plans of teams like the Spartans for simple *schadenfreude* and little else. If they plan on doing that with Drew Lock leading the charge, opponents have little to fear. We'll see if Joe Burrow comes off the COVID list for this game, which would give Scarborough their only shot at pulling off an upset or beating the spread. The Scarborough attack is not worthy of the word, but Burrow's arm offers a faint hope of making progress against a defence ranked fourth in yards surrendered through the air. On the other side, Rivers is coming off his best game in years and will have a banged up Blue Eagles' secondary to target when Miles Sanders isn't gashing the porous Scarborough run defence. By all rights the Spartans should win this one handily at home. **PICK: PICKERING**

HOLIDAY LEFTOVERS

SEATTLE @ TWIN CITIES (line – PILOTS by 1)

INJURIES: Seattle – Josiah Deguara (OUT); **Twin Cities** – Antonio Brown (OUT), D.J. Moore (OUT).

The Pilots that some reputable analysts projected to be relevant in the West have finally appeared and are sporting a two-game winning streak. It comes about nine weeks too late to generate enthusiasm for this year, but the quarterback carousel does provide an interesting sideshow for next year. Last week, Gardner Minshew II flashed 'franchise QB' potential in leading Seattle to a stunning victory over the Cubs. That the Pilots won was not too surprising, as they have the Cubs' number it seems. It was the dominance of the defence against one of the more high-powered offences in the league and the efficiency of the offence that shocked. The Triumph played well in a loss to Bruxelles last week but few people, including their fans, care anymore, as long as the Messiah watches in street clothes from the press box. With Twin Cities out of the playoffs for second straight year, it is hard to understand what the goals are in Minneapolis to keep the players and fans focused. Not knowing for certain who will be at QB for either team, I'll roll with the hot hand. **PICK: SEATTLE**

OSHAWA @ ERIEAU (line – CADILLAC by 4)

INJURIES: **Oshawa** – Dallas Goedert (DOUBTFUL), Denico Autry (QUESTIONABLE), D.J. Jones (OUT), David Onyemata (OUT); **Erieau** – Andy Janovich (PROBABLE), Najee Harris (QUESTIONABLE), Desmond King II (QUESTIONABLE), Myles Garrett (OUT), Stephon Gilmore (OUT), Graham Glasgow (OUT), Maurice Hurst (OUT), Malcolm Smith (OUT), Jaylen Waddle (OUT).

The humiliations keep piling up for the team formerly known as the Mustangs. They are in the middle of a five-game losing streak and were shutout by Budapest last week. This week they are more than a field-goal underdogs to the Cadillac, a team that might have struggled to score a field goal against the Mustangs a couple of years ago. Back in Week One, when prospects were optimistic for both teams, the Caddies turned in an impressive showing on both sides of the ball in “upsetting” the Pink Panthers. Now they are favoured, despite being losers of four in a row. There are few concrete answers as to why Oshawa has failed so utterly to meet expectations, so understanding how they are going to overcome the Vegas odds here, apart from just playing better football, is an exercise too demanding to tackle right now. I simply look at all the key injuries on the Erieau side and see another slide into the ditch for the home team. **PICK: OSHAWA**

PEG CITY @ IOWA CITY (line – CUBS by 11)

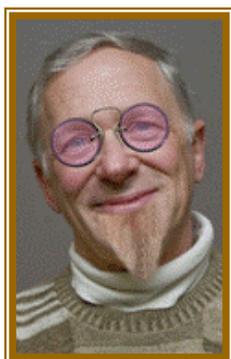
INJURIES: **Peg City** – Chandler Jones (PROBABLE), Tarik Cohen (QUESTIONABLE), Saquon Barkley (OUT), (OUT), Davon Godchaux (OUT), Chris Jones (OUT), Jeff Okudah (OUT), Jeremiah Owusu-Koramoah (OUT), Courtland Sutton (OUT); **Iowa City** – Jason Peters (QUESTIONABLE), Donovan Wilson (QUESTIONABLE), Fletcher Cox (DOUBTFUL).

The Cubs were embarrassed by the Pilots last week and took a big hit in the standings in the process. Although still in a playoff spot, they are holding on to it by a tie-breaker and are now third in the race for the West division title. They should have no problem this week, however, at home against the worst team in the league. But then, I thought the same thing last week when the Cubs faced one of the other worst teams in the league then got smoked. It can't happen two weeks in a row, especially against a team like the Crusaders, who are not just bad, but banged up and bad. Two more interceptions thrown by a beleaguered Mac Jones turned what might have been a humdrum Jersey victory into a rout. Facing a frustrated Cubs team on the road will be even worse. **PICK: IOWA CITY**

GEORGIA @ EAST ELMHURST (line – IRISH by 12)

INJURIES: **Georgia** – Albert Okwuegbunam (PROBABLE), Zach Ertz (OUT), Will Fuller V (OUT), Melvin Ingram III (OUT), Diontae Johnson (OUT); **East Elmhurst** – Anthony Sherman (PROBABLE), Adam Thielen (QUESTIONABLE).

East Elmhurst clinched the division last week and is creeping up the power rankings, where they sit at no.3, ahead of several pre-season favourites. The Irish owe their surge partly to their weak division, but after rag-dolling York last week people are starting to think they are simply a good team on their own merits. This week they are heavily-favoured against a Glads team with just one signature win to its credit, over Virden, but that still seems much better than its 3-8-1 record. The defence can't keep up but they play hard and the offence, when healthy, is potentially dangerous even if they don't always deliver. Injuries come into play here, as two of their top receivers are out and they are facing the league's top rushing defence in the Irish. Still, not ready to cavalierly take such a spread. **PICK: GEORGIA**



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

FROM THE EFL ARCHIVES – By the end of Week 12 of the 2015 EFL season, two teams remained winless: Virden was blown out 38-10 by the Cannibals and Sebastian fell 34-20 to Gwinnett. Both dropped to 0-12 on the season, causing critics to moan once more about parity, or lack thereof, that had created two such lowly have-nots to go with embarrassingly rich teams like Charleswood, Durham and Aurora. A look at the standings from Week 12 shows a wide range of records, with only the West Division showing any semblance of competitive balance.

It was in the West where Week 12's game of the

week took place. Arguably the most talented team in the league, the Beaufort County Ravens, found themselves trailing the spirited but largely bungling LA Knights, 24-17 in the 4th quarter. But Ravens' star QB, **Robert Griffin III** completed his last 7 passes, 2 for TDs to **DeAndre Hopkins** and **Randall Cobb**, to pull out the win and hold on to first place due to a tie-breaker over Iowa City in the wacky West.

The offensive performance of the week came from **Tony Romo** of the Regulators, who completed 19 of 22 for 266 yards and 5 TD passes to execute the Excaliburs, 49-24, raising themselves up and dropping York down to 6-6. With Cowtown surprising Pickering, 38-10, there were now five teams in the Atlantic Conference with 6-6 records and one at 7-5. It was this logjam in the race for the 3rd and 4th seeds that had defenders of the league claiming parity had, in fact been achieved. Critics substituted the word “parity” for “mediocrity.”

The defensive performance of the week was put in by Iowa City cornerback, **Corey Graham**, who picked off **Ryan Tannehill** twice to keep the Monarchs in their place in a 42-13 hammering.

Believe it or not, the league's top passer after twelve weeks was **Jay Cutler** of Twin Cities, with a 110.0 passer rating.

EFL FOCUS

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

BUDAPEST



Editor's Note: Have you ever wondered what football talk radio is like in a foreign country like Hungary? The expansion of North American professional football to Central Europe brought many questions and few answers when it first occurred at the beginning of the 2017 EFL season. That was the year two EFL franchises suddenly uprooted themselves from their birthplaces and moved “across the Pond” to colonize the Old World with a new version of the oldest sport. The locations chosen, Bruxelles and Budapest, were even more curious. The local population had not been clamouring for the EFL. In fact, the vast majority of Belgians and Hungarians would not have known what the EFL was when their respective Sports Ministries announced triumphantly that a pro franchise was coming to town. An adjustment period would be inevitable and eventual failure had to be considered likely more than not.

We are now in the fifth year since the EFL outgrew its continental boundaries in North America and the Bruxelles Bombers and Budapest North Stars are still there. Something must be going right. To get a feel of what that is, **EFL Focus** brings you partial transcripts of the most recent weekly English podcast show called, “*This week with your Budapest North Stars,*” hosted by local play-by-play commentator, **Peter Lakatos** and North Stars beat reporter **Attila (the) Hun**.

In the first segments captured, Lakatos interviews North Stars’ coach **Darrin Jones** after his team’s 29-0 Week 12 win over the Pink Panthers. In the second segment, Lakatos interviews EFL freelancer, **Spats McChad**. This second segment is a rare find, as the notorious EFL beat reporter does not give many interviews, preferring to let his articles “do the talking.”

Enjoy!

Podcast Segment I – Picking up a Discussion with Budapest HC Darrin Jones

Commentator Peter Lakatos: Coach Jones, a few more questions before we let you go: You face Durham, in Durham in Week 13. pundits say this is a preview of conference championship game. What are you expecting and preparing most for?

Darrin Jones HC: First of all, I’m sure a few other teams will have a say what transpires down the stretch. As for Durham, from what I have seen, this is the team to beat in our conference. They have the number 1 pass rush, LB Warner is a true 3 down all pro and their secondary is always ball-hawking – but I think what impresses most around the EFL about Durham is the maturity of QB Josh Allen – we’re not sure how to stop him and that offense – and they not have not even unleashed their talented backfield

Commentator Attila Hun (mumbling): Send him [Allen] 2 bottles of Palinka – the Plum flavour. That will have him seeing 2 Minkah Fitzpatrick’s!

Darrin Jones HC: Yeah, well, that local drink is strong for sure, but it will take more than a few alcoholic shots to their star players for us to have a chance to win. Last year, certainly, we snuck into Durham and won an ugly one – while we were +2 in the turnover battle, we did next to nothing offensively, so I think we will have show more this time around to hang around in this game

Commentator Peter Lakatos: Tell us about the growing fan base and how that is helping the team win on the field and help convince players to come here to play

Darrin Jones HC: The interesting part this is not just a local Budapest team anymore, we have fans coming from all parts of Hungary and Central Europe, they fill the Airport stadium every home game now and its great to see

Commentator Peter Lakatos: Last question Coach, the Budapest Organization has faced increased scrutiny about the strict COVID protocols for teams coming here and being tested during the actual game itself – do you see this an unfair competitive edge?

Darrin Jones HC: Hey it's the same for both sides, the league and local government set the guidelines, but I know this keeps coming up and frankly I am tired of hearing about. Certainly, I know where this stems from, starting with comments from the Brooklin Hawk HC during last year's Quarter final playoff game – I think it was a bunch of “*bull-szar*” then and I think the same now. In the end and I think every team has some type of “home field advantage” when it comes down to it – whether its travel distance, the language , extra stadium security, the turf , the weather, the narrow stadium entrances, fans(convicts) in the stands, stocks of corn on the sidelines– whatever it might be - I do believe Home field means something in the EFL and we like every other time try to use these factors to our advantage – that's why the official EFL Website” posts Home Field Advantage(HFA) analytics before each EFL week.

Commentator Peter Lakatos: Well thanks, Coach for your time and remember fans this segment was brought to you by your local Budapest Szex Shops, where you can find one on every corner.

Podcast Segment II – Discussion with EFL Beat Writer, Spats McChad

Commentator Peter Lakatos: Now our next guest, I admit is making a rare exception when it comes to speaking to teams in the EFL, he of course is Spats McChad , lead columnist for *the EFL Newsletter*. Welcome Spats to “this week with your Budapest North Stars”, how are you doing today?

Spats McChad: Sziaplitz vogy vogalam veled sprakchunzer plat, Peter! My Hungarian is a little rusty but I just started taking an online course so I can travel there one day and see the North Stars play on that airstrip of theirs. I'm doing well, thank you, but I admit my stomach is a little upset after digesting the Week 12 games. Lots of blowouts, division races are already done in the Atlantic Conference. A lot of bad wild card contenders. I could go on...

Commentator Peter Lakatos: Well, your Hungarian is not so bad, Spats, but you don't have to worry about that because this is an English talk show. We do speak English here in Budapest, you know. But let's get right into the first question: I know you were apprehensive a few years backs about 2 of the 24 EFL franchises being in Europe, has anything changed? And do you think a franchise like Budapest or even in Bruxelles can be here the long run?

Spats McChad: I guess my main concern back in 2017 when all of this happened was that I felt the EFL had not fully established itself in North America, so why the heck are they moving franchises to Europe? I could understand moving the Cannibals off the island of Samoa because that location was always doomed to failure. But to move the team to Bruxelles? *Really?* Where did that come from? I mean, I know where it came from, the new part-owners are Duvel-Moortgat. But you'd think they might want to get a better return on their investment by putting the team in a major centre like Chicago or Dallas-Fort Worth. As for Budapest – don't take this the wrong way Peter – most Americans don't even know where Budapest is. Or where Hungary is, for that matter. I'm not saying they shouldn't. I'm just saying that it's not exactly a renowned destination in mainstream America and, frankly, Hungarians are crazy about soccer, not football. And then you have one of the more successful EFL franchises uprooted from its home in Markham, alienating thousands of fanatically loyal fans in Canada and even more in Foshan Province of China, all to plant some magic football-shaped beans in a central European country that didn't even get the EFL in the local cable package. It didn't make sense then and it is still hard to wrap my head around it. Although, to answer the first part of your question: Yes, I think the success of the North Stars on the field recently and the steadiness of Coach Darrin Jones on the sideline and in the community has changed my outlook. Do I think it will succeed long term? The success on the field has to

continue for a few years more, I am guessing, to establish solid roots that will allow stability in leaner years. Look at Bruxelles. We are just now seeing attendance at Bombers' games dropping along with their record. And it's not just due to COVID, although that plays a role more there than it does in the United States. Belgians are not going to be loyal to a team that doesn't win and make them look good, especially when they are indifferent to the sport itself. But I'll give you this: I think the chances of football surviving long term in Budapest are greater than in Bruxelles. We'll see.

Commentator Peter Lakatos: Would you like to see the EFL expand any more, regardless of location?

Spats McChad: Of course, I'd like to see the EFL expand. But I really think it has to expand first to those types of places in North America that I mentioned earlier, to stabilize the core market. They also need to move some teams out of Southern Ontario and Manitoba to encourage a greater following across the whole continent. I realize the EFL has been limited to some degree by the rival pro leagues and the still ongoing fallout from the Federal Prosecutor's case against the defunct NFL – a lot of money cannot be legally invested in the league. But they are still doing remarkably well, all things considered. It just goes to show that Americans and Canadians have an insatiable appetite for football. I thought the Gladiators' temporary move to Pittsburgh was an intriguing development. We probably don't know the whole story about that yet.

Commentator Attila Hun: Rumour has it one of the European teams has been vying to host the EFL Championship Game in the next few years – and rumour has it – you would not be in favour of it? Any truth to this?

Spats McChad: People are putting words in my mouth because they know I wasn't overly supportive of expansion to Europe. But I actually think it is important for the success of the current experiment that the Championship be played in one of the European cities. There was talk of Bruxelles before COVID-19 shut everything down. With the continuing uncertainty around the pandemic, nobody is ready to seriously re-start that conversation. Again, don't take this the wrong way, Peter, but I think Budapest is probably the last place the EFL would consider hosting the Gale Sayers Game. Personally, I love a stadium with character and that Airport strip you've converted into a stadium looks like it has a lot of character. But character is not near the top of the list of things the EFL is looking for in a championship venue. They want the game at places like True North Field. If the North Stars build a new stadium, maybe they have a chance to land the championship. But not right now.

Commentator Peter Lakatos: Well Spats, we appreciate a few moments of your time, I know you are a busy man, especially at this time of year ... We look forward to hopefully seeing you in the part of the world in the future

Spats McChad: Kvaly pltn-waly futzinkli tay po minden jot, Peter! I look forward to the day, hopefully not in the too distant future, that I can actually join you in person at the Airport Stadium for a few rounds of Sorpronil! It was a pleasure.

Commentator Peter Lakatos: well that's it folks for another weekly edition of "This week with your Budapest north Stars," we looking forward to checking in and talking your calls after week 13s anticipated matchup versus Durham – until then be safe - "Viszontlatarasa"