

2011



2011

WEEK TWELVE IN REVIEW

January 1, 2012

DEADLY DUO!



Corn Kings' wide receiver, **Santana Moss** has his eyes focused on the end zone as he dashes 48 yards for a touchdown with 20 seconds remaining in a 17-16 win over the Knights. **Joe Flacco** (inset) looks on as his favourite target crosses the line. The deadly duo has combined for 15 touchdowns so far in 2011, a league-high mark after 12 weeks. (STORY INSIDE)

LATEST EFL NEWS INSIDE

THE GAMES

- RODGERS ON TARGET
- AMAZING ANDRE
- DINOS IN THE MUD
- KINGS SPEAR KNIGHTS
- 'STANGS STING FIRE
- CASSEL LEADS SPARTANS
- BRADY IS BACK!
- GLADS SNATCH A WIN AT VIRDEN

COMMENT

"Shirley Interviewed," a Horrible Game," "Expanding Expansion," "Around the EFL," and more – Spats McChad

PREDICTIONS

'Gladiators or Spartans? Jimmy knows – Jimmy the Geek



Who was slick in Week Twelve?

"BRYLCREEM" THE EFL'S FIRST SPONSOR



Andre Johnson
WR
Death Valley
Undertakers

7 receptions, 218 yards, 3 TDs,
Long 89 in 31-3 win over Markham



Lance Briggs
OLB
Gwinnett
Gladiators

3 Tkls, 1 PD, 2 stuffs, 2 FFs, 1 INT,
in 30-3 win over Virden.

HOZZOZ

HOZZOZ

RODGERS ON TARGET IN CHARLESWOOD!



**SCARBOROUGH
BLUE EAGLES**

24

17

**CHARLESWOOD
PATRIOTS**



BLUE EAGLE OF THE GAME	Team	1	2	3	4	OT	Total	PATRIOT OF THE GAME
Aaron Rodgers	SCARBOROUGH (8-4)	7	0	14	3	-	24	Adrian Peterson
21 of 32, 160 yards, 3 TDs, 1 INT	CHARLESWOOD (8-4)	0	17	0	0	-	17	21 carries, 153 yards, 1 TD

HIGHLIGHT REEL: **Ray Rice** rushed for 74 yards on 16 carries and caught 5 passes for 15 yards

- **Brandon Marshall** had 6 receptions for 59 yards and 1 TD.
- Defensive end, **Justin Tuck** made 10 tackles, 1 run stuff and forced a fumble while **Dwight Freeney** had 3 tackles and 2 sacks.
- **Peyton Manning** completed 19 of 32 for 223 yards for a game day QB rating of 80.6.
- **Justin Smith** made 4 tackles, 1 sack and 4 QB pressures while **John Abraham** made 3 tackles, 1 run stuff and 4 QB pressures.

GAME SUMMARY: In a possible preview of this year's Championship game, the Blue Eagles struck first when **Aaron Rodgers** found **Greg Little** open in the end zone from 7 yards out for a 1st quarter TD. The Patriots responded with a tortuously long drive covering 86 yards in 16 plays and taking over 8 minutes off the clock that finally came to an end when **Adrian Peterson** swept left for 4 yards and a TD to tie it at 7. The Pats tacked on 3 more points to take a 10-7 lead after **DeSean Jackson's** 7th fumble of the season put the ball in the Patriots' hands at the Scarborough 34 yard line. The Pats' defence held the Blue Eagles' offence in check throughout the rest of the 2nd quarter while the offence put together another long drive, this one covering a total of 72 yards, keyed by a 32-yard run by Peterson, to finish with a 14-yard TD run by **Mike Goodson** to give Charleswood a convincing 17-7 half time lead. But the Pats' momentum was checked on the opening possession of the 2nd half when Scarborough defensive lineman **Justin Tuck** stripped the ball from Goodson that **Lofa Tatupu** recovered at the Charleswood 34 yard line. A gamble on 4th down and inches at the Pats' 13 yard line paid off when Rodgers snuck across the 12 for a first down, setting up a 9-yard TD pass to **Jermaine Gresham** three plays later that narrowed the Pats' lead to 3 points, 17-14. After a three-and-out by Charleswood, the Blue Eagles took over at their 42. They converted three third downs, including a 10-yard run by **Ray Rice** on 3rd and 10, en route to the go-ahead TD on 4-yard slant from Rodgers to **Brandon Marshall**. A budding Charleswood drive was cut short at the Scarborough 46 yard line after three straight incomplete passes by **Peyton Manning**, giving the ball back to Scarborough for a field goal drive to take a 7-point lead. Manning drove the Pats into Eagles' territory, but back-to-back sacks by **Terrell Suggs** and **Dwight Freeney** snuffed out the comeback bid.



THE FANS LOVED
Rodgers' end zone marksmanship

THE FANS HATED
13 Charleswood penalties!



FAN RATING



12-27-2011 Patriot Place Temp: 75 Wind: MVP: **Aaron Rodgers**

1 6:10 Scarborough	TD Rodgers 7 pass to Little (Janikowski) (10-79-5:38)	7-0
2 12:52 Charleswood	TD Peterson 4 run (Rayner) (16-86-8:10)	7-7
2 10:14 Charleswood	FG Rayner 28 (8-24-2:23)	7-10
2 1:07 Charleswood	TD Goodson 14 run (Rayner) (7-72-2:52)	7-17
3 8:27 Scarborough	TD Rodgers 9 pass to Gresham (Janikowski) (10-34-5:02)	14-17
3 0:07 Scarborough	TD Rodgers 4 pass to Marshall (Janikowski) (12-58-6:28)	21-17
4 3:59 Scarborough	FG Janikowski 45 (10-68-5:54)	24-17

	SBE	CHP
First Downs	17	22
Rushes	24-108	32-206
Passes	32-21-160	32-19-223
Sacked	1-3	3-20
Fumble	1	1
Penalties	5-40	13-109
Turnovers	2	1
Time	29:18	30:42
Third Down	8-14	6-15
Fourth Down	2-2	2-3
Red Att/Td/Fg	3/3/0	4/2/1
Net Offense	265	409



INJURIES

SCARBOROUGH – Jonathan Stewart (2 games); DeSean Jackson (PG-3rd)

CHARLESWOOD – Channing Crowder (5 games)

QUOTE OF THE GAME

"You always need a win but we really needed this one. On the road against a good team, this may be our turning point." – Scarborough coach, "Jonesey."

JOHNSON 'BREESES' BY NORTH STARS!



**DEATH VALLEY
UNDERTAKERS**

31

3

**MARKHAM NORTH
STARS**



UNDERTAKER OF THE GAME	Team	1	2	3	4	OT	Total	NORTH STAR OF THE GAME
Andre Johnson	DEATH VALLEY (7-5)	7	14	7	3	-	31	Jahvid Best
7 receptions, 218 yards, 3 TDs	MARKHAM (4-8)	0	0	3	0	-	3	93 total yards, 38 rush, 55 rec.

HIGHLIGHT REEL: Drew Brees completed 17 of 25 for 312 yards, 4 TDs and 1 INT, for a game day QB rating of 133.7

- **Kendall Hunter** rushed for 56 yards on 17 carries and caught 3 passes for 24 yards.
- Defensive end **Charles Johnson** recorded his 6th sack of the season and added 4 tackles, 1 deflection, and 5 QB pressures.
- **Clay Matthews** notched his 8th sack of the year and added 2 tackles, 1 deflection, 1 QB pressure and 1 forced fumble.
- **Mark Sanchez** completed 21 of 34 for 206 yards, 2 INTs, for a game day QB rating of 54.3
- **Joe McKnight** rushed for 53 yards on 5 carries before going down to a season-ending knee injury in the 2nd quarter.

GAME SUMMARY: Marching in the first quarter and hoping to grab the early lead, the North Stars gambled for the first down on 4th and 2 at the Death Valley 36 rather than attempt a long field goal. **Mark Sanchez** sailed a pass too high in the flat for **Jahvid Best** and the Undertakers took over. Two plays later, **Drew Brees** and **Andre Johnson** would set the tone for the rest of the day by hooking up for a 62-yard catch-and-run pass play, good for a TD and a 7-0 Death Valley lead. On their next possession, on the first play from scrimmage, Brees found Johnson open downfield for 34-yard connection that vaulted the Undertakers into North Stars' territory. **Kendall Hunter** made a bold gamble pay off with a 3-yard run on 4th down and 1 at the Markham 27 yard line; then, four plays later, Brees hit Johnson in the back corner of the end zone from 11 yards out to give Death Valley a 14-0 advantage. Unable to get into scoring position, Markham's punter, **Donnie Jones** booted a marksman-like coffin-corner kick that set the Undertakers back at their 3 yard line. An over-anxious **Trent Cole**, gunning hard for the safety, jumped offside to give Brees some breathing room at the 8 yard line. On the next play, he hit Johnson in perfect stride as he dashed across the middle in the spot vacated by blitzing linebacker **Scott Fujita**. Johnson picked up a head of steam and blazed all 89 yards to the Markham end zone for his third TD reception of the game. The second half saw the Undertakers' offence back off slightly, but their defence harass and knock down Sanchez, generating a couple of sacks and interceptions to hold Markham to a lone field goal in a comfortable 31-3 win.



THE FANS LOVED
Brees-to-Johnson for 3 TDs!

THE FANS HATED
Sanchez under pressure



FAN RATING

★ 1/2

12-20-2011 The Dawg Pound Temp: 46 Wind: 0-5 None MVP: Andre Johnson

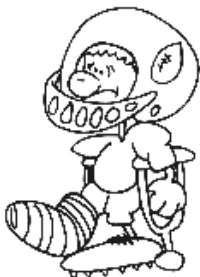
1 5:07	Death Valley	TD Brees 62 pass to Johnson (Kasay) (2-64-1:00)	7-0
2 11:30	Death Valley	TD Brees 11 pass to Johnson (Kasay) (9-70-5:23)	14-0
2 4:54	Death Valley	TD Brees 1 pass to Johnson (Kasay) (4-97-1:23)	21-0
3 7:48	Death Valley	TD Brees 6 pass to Hester (Kasay) (6-18-1:41)	28-0
3 3:54	Markham	FG Akers 45 (7-47-3:42)	28-3
4 11:25	Death Valley	FG Kasay 35 (7-26-3:15)	31-3

	DVU	MAR
First Downs	17	16
Rushes	26-77	25-115
Passes	25-17-312	34-21-206
Sacked	2-8	2-17
Fumble	2	3
Penalties	6-67	10-72
Turnovers	1	3
Time	26:56	33:04
Third Down	3-11	6-15
Fourth Down	2-2	0-2
Red Att/Td/Fg	4/3/1	1/0/0
Net Offense	381	304

INJURIES

DEATH VALLEY – Rob Gronkowski (PG-3rd)

MARKHAM – Scott Fujita (7 games); Joe McKnight (7 games)



QUOTE OF THE GAME

"It is very gratifying to see this team take a bite out of the opposition." – *Death Valley play-by-play announcer, Dracula, conversing in the post-game show with analyst, the late Jack Tatum.*

DURHAM WINS MUD BOWL!



**DURHAM THUNDER
LIZARDS**

20

7

**IOWA CITY
CUBS**



LIZARD OF THE GAME

Philip Rivers

22 of 33, 306 yards, 2 TDs

Team	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
DURHAM (7-5)	3	0	7	10	-	20
IOWA CITY (4-8)	0	0	0	7	-	7

CUB OF THE GAME

Arian Foster

89 total yards, 36 rush, 53 rec.

HIGHLIGHT REEL: **Dwayne Bowe** caught 6 passes for 101 yards and 5 first downs.

- **Antonio Gates** caught 6 passes for 100 yards, 4 first downs and a long catch of 37 yards.
- **Calvin Johnson** made 4 receptions for 55 yards and a 1 TD.
- **Sam Bradford** completed 17 of 24 for 167 yards, 2 INTs and 1 TD, for a game day QB rating of 69.3
- **Larry Fitzgerald** caught 6 passes for 49 yards and 1 TD.
- Return specialist **Michael Spurlock** returned 5 kickoffs for 150 yards and a long return of 44.

GAME SUMMARY: Both **Arian Foster** and **Michael Turner** found yards hard to come by as a steady downpour in Iowa City turned the field at Joe Ferguson Stadium into a bog. As a result, the passing game would be pivotal to the outcome. **Philip Rivers** struck the first blow through the air with a 37-yard completion to **Antonio Gates** on a deep hitch route that put the Lizards inside the Cubs' red zone. Unable to move the ball on the ground on three consecutive carries, the Dinos settled for a 24-yard field goal by **Adam Vinatieri** to take a 3-0 lead in the first quarter. Two missed field goal attempts of more than 55 yards by **Neil Rackers** were the only other scoring opportunities in a first half during which neither team could assemble a drive of 50 yards or more. Durham started the second half and defied the elements with the most impressive drive of the afternoon. **Dwayne Bowe** caught 3 passes for 46 yards and **Tim Tebow** converted a 4th and 1 at the Iowa City 39 yard line to key an 11-play, 64-yard drive finished off by a 13-yard TD pass from Rivers to **Vernon Davis** to make the score 10-0. In the dying seconds of the third quarter and in urgent need of a score, **Sam Bradford** tried to force a ball to **Larry Fitzgerald** in tight coverage and **Devin McCourty** picked it off, returning it 18 yards to the Cubs' 27 yard line. On 3rd and 5, Rivers checked down to **Calvin Johnson** and 'Megatron' charged through a gaping hole in the middle of the secondary for 22 yards and a TD to give his team a 17-0 advantage. When it rains, it pours, and on Iowa City's next possession Bradford went deep to **Mike Wallace**, only to find Durham linebacker **Mike Peterson** 38 yards down field for an interception that he returned 33 yards to the Cubs' 28 yard line. Durham added another field goal and coasted to a 20-7 victory.



THE FANS LOVED
Amphibious Rivers!

THE FANS HATED
Naked Bradford



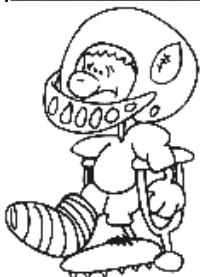
FAN RATING



12-22-2011 Joe Ferguson Stadium Temp: 52 Wind: 0-5 Rain MVP: **Philip Rivers**

1 6:39	Durham	FG Vinatieri 24 (5-45-2:41)	3-0
3 9:17	Durham	TD Rivers 13 pass to Davis (Vinatieri) (11-64-5:35)	10-0
4 14:08	Durham	TD Rivers 22 pass to Johnson (Vinatieri) (3-27-1:06)	17-0
4 6:55	Durham	FG Vinatieri 32 (6-14-2:53)	20-0
4 5:16	Iowa City	TD Bradford 8 pass to Fitzgerald (Rackers) (5-67-1:34)	20-7

	DTL	ICC
First Downs	18	11
Rushes	28-75	23-55
Passes	34-22-306	24-17-167
Sacked	3-15	1-2
Fumble	0	1
Penalties	8-75	5-30
Turnovers	0	2
Time	33:29	26:31
Third Down	5-14	4-14
Fourth Down	1-1	1-1
Red Att/Td/Fg	3/1/2	1/1/0
Net Offense	366	220



INJURIES

DURHAM – None

IOWA CITY – None

QUOTE OF THE GAME

"We just played a very talented team and a head coach with a world of experience. Are we struggling? Yes, of course. Will we fix it? Yes! – Iowa City coach, **Deron Redding**.

KINGS SPEAR KNIGHTS IN FINAL SECONDS!



**LOS ANGELES
KNIGHTS**

16

17

**COWTOWN
CORN KINGS**



KNIGHT OF THE GAME

Jamaal Charles
26 carries, 148 yards

Team	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
LOS ANGELES (9-3)	0	6	7	3	-	16
COWTOWN (10-2)	3	7	0	7	-	17

CORN KING OF THE GAME

Joe Flacco
24 of 32, 339 yds, 1 INT, 2 TDs

HIGHLIGHT REEL: **Santana Moss** made 7 receptions for 105 yards and added 2 TD catches to maintain his league-high standing.

- **Zach Miller** caught 7 passes for 127 yards and a long reception of 52 yards.
- **Brandon Jackson** rushed for 45 yards on 9 carries and caught 5 passes for 29 yards.
- **Josh Freeman** completed 6 of 9 for 54 yards before falling to injury. **Brodie Croyle** went 10 of 18, 96 yards and 1 INT in relief.
- **Roddy White** reeled in 10 passes for 105 yards and 9 first downs against Corn Kings' star corner, **Tramon Williams**.
- **Charles Woodson** made 6 tackles, intercepted a pass and returned it 63 yards, and forced a fumble.

GAME SUMMARY: A frantic final four minutes in the fourth quarter provided a thrilling ending to an already entertaining, tightly contested game. With the Corn Kings trailing 13-10 late in the final period and driving into field goal range, the Knights' **Charles Woodson** made an acrobatic grab on a pass tipped by **Antoine Bethea** and returned it 63 yards to the Cowtown 21 yard line. **Brodie Croyle**, subbing for an injured **Josh Freeman**, brought his team close to the end zone but was stopped at the 2 yard line, setting up a 20-yard **Dan Carpenter** field goal to increase the LA lead to 16-10 with 1:43 remaining in the game. The Corn Kings regained control at their 31 yard line after a 28-yard kick return by **Bernard Scott**, but needed to travel the distance to win. An 18-yard completion to **Kevin Walter** put the Corn Kings in Knights' territory at the 43 yard line but an illegal motion penalty put them back at the 48 with 35 seconds remaining in the game. On the next play, with the safety doubling the tight end, **Santana Moss** got behind Woodson and hauled in a pass from **Joe Flacco** on the run to sprint 48 yards for the TD – his 15th scoring grab of the season. The extra point from **Olindo Mare** was good and Cowtown led 17-16 with 20 seconds remaining. With the wind at his back, Mare tried to boot the kickoff through the end zone but fell short. **Eric Weems** fielded the kick 3 yards deep and returned it 103 yards for an apparent game-winning TD; but **Brian Orakpo** was flagged for an illegal block in the back, bringing the ball back to the Los Angeles 36 with 14 seconds left. With **Jamaal Charles** having a big day, LA opted to pitch the ball to him on their two remaining plays, hoping for a breakaway to get into field goal range or go the distance. But the Corn Kings held him to a total of 18 yards to escape with the win.



THE FANS LOVED

Flacco to Moss saves the day!

THE FANS HATED

Injury to Freeman



FAN RATING



12-23-2011 Tillman Field Temp: 47 Wind: 15-25 MVP: **Joe Flacco**

1 8:08	Cowtown	FG Mare 27 (9-58-5:11)	0-3
2 9:13	Los Angeles	FG Carpenter 24 (14-74-7:41)	3-3
2 6:40	Cowtown	TD Flacco 2 pass to Moss (Mare) (4-81-2:27)	3-10
2 0:05	Los Angeles	FG Carpenter 38 (9-50-1:40)	6-10
3 3:51	Los Angeles	TD Greene 12 run (Carpente,D) (14-74-8:33)	13-10
4 1:51	Los Angeles	FG Carpenter 20 (7-19-2:40)	16-10
4 0:20	Cowtown	TD Flacco 48 pass to Moss (Mare) (4-69-1:23)	16-17

	LAK	COW
First Downs	19	20
Rushes	34-191	15-97
Passes	27-16-150	32-24-339
Sacked	1-2	1-10
Fumble	1	1
Penalties	7-44	6-40
Turnovers	1	1
Challenges	1-1	0-0
Time	32:08	27:52
Third Down	9-16	2-8
Fourth Down	2-2	1-1
Red Att/Td/Fg	4/1/2	3/1/1
Net Offense	339	426



INJURIES

LOS ANGELES – Josh Freeman (PG-2nd)

COWTOWN – None

QUOTE OF THE GAME

“This game was the kind to drive coaches on both sides crazy. The players took over and made things happen. Fortunately, Joe and Santana came through for us again.” – Cowtown coach, **Jim Coghlin**.

MUSTANGS STOMP OUT HELLFIRE!



**MOHAVE
HELLFIRE**

17

40

**GARLAND
MUSTANGS**



HELL PLAYER OF THE GAME

Terrell Owens
9 receptions, 111 yards, 1 TD

Team	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
MOHAVE (1-11)	0	3	7	7	-	17
GARLAND (3-9)	3	28	3	6	-	40

MUSTANG OF THE GAME

Matt Forte
87 yards rushing, 2 TDs

HIGHLIGHT REEL: **Matt Ryan** completed 12 of 15 passes for 119 yards and 1 TD pass.

- **Peyton Hillis** rushed for 66 yards on 16 carries as one member of a four-running back attack that gained 202 yards.
- Defensive end **Cliff Avril** made 6 tackles, recorded 2 sacks, forced a fumble and returned it for a TD to lead the Garland defence.
- **Matt Schaub** completed 27 of 48 for 285 yards, 2 TDs and 1 INT.
- **Benjamin Watson** caught 8 passes for 76 yards while **Hakeem Nicks** was held to 4 catches for 40 yards.
- **Mike Tolbert** struggled to get the ground game working with 7 carries, 16 yards and 2 fumbles.

GAME SUMMARY: Mohave's misery continued with another error-filled performance leading to a blowout loss – this one to the league's lowest-scoring team. A fumble by **Matt Schaub** on his 17 yard line on a botched attempt to run a sweep led to an easy 22-yard field goal by **Robbie Gould** to give Garland an early 3-0 lead. On Mohave's next possession they survived a fumble by **Mike Tolbert** only to roll the dice three plays later on 4th and 3 at the Garland 47. A pass to **Hakeem Nicks** glanced off his helmet and Garland took control near mid field. **Matt Ryan** went to work immediately, connecting on a long slant for 21 yards to **Dustin Keller**; then **Matt Forte** kept the drive alive with a 14-yard draw on 3rd and 7 to the Mohave 15. A second draw by Forte brought up 3rd and 1 at the 6 yard line, where Ryan checked down to a wide open **Jeff King** for six. On Mohave's next possession, Tolbert fumbled again, but this time it was picked up **Cliff Avril** at the 34 yard line and run back for the touchdown to make it 17-0. The Garland landslide gathered more steam on the ensuing kickoff as Mohave kickoff returner, **Jalen Parmele**, fumbled away the ball at the 33 yard line where it was pounced on by **Anthony Spencer**. The Mustangs' offence moved the ball the rest of the way on seven carries and a lone 12-yard pass to **Eddie Royal**, finishing it off with a Forte dive over the goal line from a foot away to make it 24-0. The 28-point 2nd quarter onslaught finally ended after Ryan connected with **Wes Welker** on a 36-yard bomb to the Mohave 22 then Forte carried it the remaining distance on 5 carries to score on a 6-yard dive up the gut. Leading 31-3 at half time, Garland went into protection mode in the 2nd half, chewing up time with the running game and giving up a pair of meaningless touchdowns.



THE FANS LOVED
28-point explosion for the 'Stangs

THE FANS HATED
Many Mohave miscues



FAN RATING

★ 1/2

12-26-2011 The Corral Temp: 69 Wind: 0-5 None MVP: **Matt Forte**

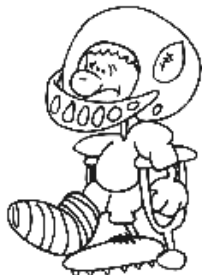
1 4:36	Garland	FG Gould 22 (6-13-2:40)	0-3
2 12:00	Garland	TD Ryan 6 pass to King (Gould) (7-53-3:02)	0-10
2 11:51	Garland	TD Avril 34 yd fumble recovery (Gould) (0-0-0:04)	0-17
2 7:05	Garland	TD Forte 1 run (Gould) (8-33-4:38)	0-24
2 1:51	Garland	TD Forte 6 run (Gould) (7-51-3:50)	0-31
2 0:00	Mohave	FG Bironas 44 (9-59-1:39)	3-31
3 8:12	Mohave	TD Schaub 3 pass to Owens (Bironas) (16-80-6:42)	10-31
3 3:13	Garland	FG Gould 47 (9-46-4:47)	10-34
4 9:26	Garland	FG Gould 33 (15-51-7:33)	10-37
4 5:10	Garland	FG Gould 23 (8-20-3:01)	10-40
4 0:00	Mohave	TD Schaub 4 pass to Cobbs (Bironas) (12-62-1:52)	17-40

	MOH	GDM
First Downs	19	20
Rushes	11-24	52-203
Passes	48-27-285	15-12-119
Sacked	2-10	0-0
Fumble	4	0
Penalties	7-48	7-60
Turnovers	4	0
Time	22:40	37:20
Third Down	4-12	9-16
Fourth Down	2-4	1-1
Red Att/Td/Fg	3/2/0	6/3/3
Net Offense	299	322

INJURIES

MOHAVE – Mike Tolbert (2 games)

GARLAND – Roberto Garza (3 games)



QUOTE OF THE GAME

"It was a nice feeling to kick somebody's ass for once – even if it was just Hellfire ass." – *Garland coach Doug Shirley.*

CASSEL STARS IN DEFENSIVE STRUGGLE!



**PICKERING
SPARTANS**

10

9

**CHINO
CONVICTS**



SPARTAN OF THE GAME
Matt Cassel
23 of 38, 263 yards

Team	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
PICKERING (11-1)	0	7	0	3	-	10
CHINO (5-7)	3	3	0	3	-	9

CONVICT OF THE GAME
Cam Newton
11 of 15, 118 yds, 50 yds rush

HIGHLIGHT REEL: **Darren Sproles** rushed for 42 yards on 5 carries and caught 6 passes for 37 yards.

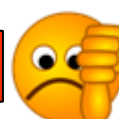
- **Percy Harvin** caught 5 passes for 104 yards and **Anquan Boldin** caught 5 passes for 66 yards to lead Spartans' receivers.
- **Chris Johnson** was held to only 8 yards rushing on 9 carries and 1 reception for 6 yards.
- **Steven Jackson** rushed 15 times for 49 yards while **Steve Slaton** carried 10 times for 47 yards.
- **Chad Ochocinco** caught 3 passes for 62 yards and a long of 49 yard.
- **James Harrison** made 6 tackles, 2 sacks, 1 pass deflected and 1 run stuff to lead the Convicts' defence in a losing cause.

GAME SUMMARY: The Spartans drove 55 yards in the final three-and-a-half minutes of the game to set up a 32-yard game-winning field goal by **Josh Scobee** as time expired to raise their record to 11-1 and hang on to first place overall. As many expected, it was a low-scoring, defensive struggle where turnovers would play a role in the outcome. **Anquan Boldin** fumbled away the ball at the Chino 28 yard line after a 40-yard reception to bring an abrupt end to a promising 1st quarter drive. The Convicts marched the ball back into field goal range after a 25-yard run by back-up **Steve Slaton** brought them into Pickering territory. Four plays later, **Billy Cundiff** drew first blood with a 51-yard field goal to make it 3-0 for Chino. But the Spartans would strike back after getting their a break of their own – **Josh Cribbs** lost the handle on a punt return and lineman **Leroy Harris** jumped on the loose ball to give the Spartans great field position at the Chino 30 yard line. **Matt Cassel** connected with **Percy Harvin** on a long slant for 29 yards on the next play to bring the ball to the Chino one. After butting the Chino line twice to no avail with **Chris Johnson**, Cassel snuck the ball across on a quick count to score what would turn out to be the game's only touchdown. The Convicts scrambled back to within one point as a **Cam Newton's** 17-yard run set up a 35-yard Cundiff field goal before half time. Chino eventually took a 9-7 lead early in the fourth quarter after a 49-yard catch-and-run by **Chad Ochocinco** put them in range for Cundiff's third field goal of the day – this one from 23 yards. With less than six minutes remaining, the Convicts had possession and a chance to run down the clock, but **Pat Williams** broke through for his first sack of the season to help force a 3-and-out that set up the final Pickering drive for the win.



THE FANS LOVED
Matt Cassel's winning ways

THE FANS HATED
Red zone hiccups by Convicts



FAN RATING



12-26-2011 The Big House Temp: 78 Wind: 0-5 None MVP: **Matt Cassel**

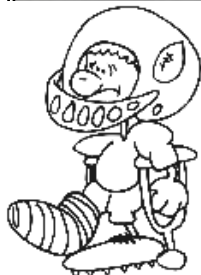
1 5:26 Chino	FG Cundiff 51 (6-39-3:22)	0-3
2 10:03 Pickering	TD Cassel 1 run (Scobee) (4-30-1:30)	7-3
2 0:27 Chino	FG Cundiff 35 (14-70-5:29)	7-6
4 7:17 Chino	FG Cundiff 23 (5-58-2:52)	7-9
4 0:00 Pickering	FG Scobee 32 (13-55-3:34)	10-9

	PIC	CHI
First Downs	14	11
Rushes	19-69	37-146
Passes	38-23-263	15-11-118
Sacked	2-14	2-10
Fumble	2	2
Penalties	4-25	6-55
Turnovers	1	1
Time	27:57	32:03
Third Down	6-15	3-15
Fourth Down	0-0	0-0
Red Att/Td/Fg	2/1/1	2/0/2
Net Offense	318	254

INJURIES

PICKERING – None

CHINO – None



QUOTE OF THE GAME

"Matt really stood up for us today. If Chris is our Leonidas then Matt is our Demophilus. Long Live SPAARRTTAAA!!" – *Pickering coach, Gus Konstantakos, having one of his moments after the game.*

BRADY IS BACK TO KEEP YORK IN PLAYOFF HUNT!



**YORK
EXCALIBURS**

31

14

**SOUTH CAROLINA
REGULATORS**



EXCALIBUR OF THE GAME

Tom Brady

20 of 27, 234 yards, 1 INT, 3 TDs

Team	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
YORK (4-8)	0	10	7	14	-	31
SOUTH CAROLINA (2-10)	0	0	7	7	-	14

REGULATOR OF THE GAME

Richard Seymour

6 tackles, 1 sack, 3 run stuffs

HIGHLIGHT REEL: **Darren McFadden** carried the ball 17 times for 92 yards and caught 2 passes for 18 yards and 1 TD.

- **Brandon Jacobs** carried the ball 11 times for 60 yards and 1 TD.
- **Michael Crabtree** caught 7 passes for 101 yards and 1 TD and **Tony Scheffler** caught 6 passes for 58 yards and 1 TD.
- **Tony Romo** went 25 of 35 for 264 yards, 1 TD and 2 INTs in his first game back after missing 10 weeks.
- **Greg Jennings** had 7 receptions for 101 yards and **Austin Collie** made 7 catches for 52 yards and 1 TD.
- **Frank Gore** rushed for 60 yards and 1 TD on 13 carries.

GAME SUMMARY: A three-touchdown pass performance from **Tom Brady** lifted the Excilibur past the Romo-led Regulators to keep York within striking distance of their conference rivals for a wildcard berth. **Tony Romo's** return from injury after missing 10 weeks did not get off to a great start. After a first quarter drive into the York red zone came up short, a bad snap denied South Carolina a field goal and gave life to the York offence. The Swords marched back 86 yards spurred on by three pass completions to tight end **Tony Scheffler**, the last one for 3 yards and a TD to make the score 7-0 for York. **Graham Gano** added a 34-yard field goal to make it 10-0 mid-way through the second quarter but missed from 30 yards out minutes later after **Chris Carr** picked off Romo in Regulators' territory. Holding a 10-0 lead heading into the 3rd quarter, York gave a chunk of that back after Brady was intercepted by **Bradley Fletcher** near mid-field. Romo completed a 25-yard pass to **Greg Jennings** and **Frank Gore** ran for 11 yards on 2nd and 3 to bring the ball to the 6 yard line. From there, Romo hit **Austin Collie** on a short crossing pattern from 6 yards out for a TD. York answered immediately, using **Darren McFadden** and **Brandon Jacobs** on the ground to set up a deep strike from Brady to **Michael Crabtree** for 32 yards and a TD to make it 17-7 for York. Romo retaliated, going 5 for 6 for 61 yards on the next drive and nicely setting up a 4-yard TD run by Gore to narrow the deficit to 17-14. With the York offence working in all phases, it did not take long for the Excilibur to regain their 10-point advantage. A 19-yard run by McFadden and a 19-yard completion to Crabtree keyed a 9-play, 67-yard drive that ended with a 10-yard TD pass from Brady to McFadden to make it 24-14. Romo could not keep pace with his York counterpart and the Regulators punted, setting up one final TD drive and a convincing 31-14 win for the Excilibur.



THE FANS LOVED

Brady TD hat trick

THE FANS HATED

Romo picks



FAN RATING

★ ★ ½

12-21-2011 Williams-Brice Stad. Temp: 68 Wind: 5-15 None MVP: **Tom Brady**

2 11:12 York	TD Brady 3 pass to Scheffler (Gano) (13-86-7:22)	7-0
2 3:05 York	FG Gano 34 (9-52-5:04)	10-0
3 10:08 South Carolina	TD Romo 6 pass to Collie (Kaeding) (6-49-1:55)	10-7
3 5:44 York	TD Brady 32 pass to Crabtree (Gano) (9-87-4:19)	17-7
4 14:56 South Carolina	TD Gore 4 run (Kaeding) (10-78-5:42)	17-14
4 9:53 York	TD Brady 10 pass to McFadden (Gano) (9-67-4:55)	24-14
4 3:31 York	TD Jacobs 11 run (Gano) (8-47-4:46)	31-14

	YOR	SC
First Downs	24	20
Rushes	35-157	15-77
Passes	27-20-234	35-25-264
Sacked	1-5	3-15
Fumble	1	0
Penalties	4-35	5-35
Turnovers	1	2
Time	34:54	25:06
Third Down	4-9	5-10
Fourth Down	0-0	0-1
Red Att/Td/Fg	5/3/1	5/2/0
Net Offense	386	326

INJURIES

YORK – Von Miller (2 games)

SOUTH CAROLINA – Tracy Porter (PG-2nd)



QUOTE OF THE GAME

"Each game is entirely different. We have been putting in the same effort every week and this week we won with it. Next week, who knows? - York QB, Tom Brady.

GLADS TAKE AWAY WIN AT VIRDEN!



**GWINNETT
GLADIATORS**

30

3

**VIRDEN
VIOLATORS**



GLADIATOR OF THE GAME

Ben Roethlisberger
12 of 25, 160 yards, 1 TD

Team	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
GWINNETT (9-3)	3	21	3	3	-	30
VIRDEN (4-8)	0	0	0	3	-	3

VIOLATOR OF THE GAME

Mike Thomas
8 catches, 108 yards, long 41

HIGHLIGHT REEL:

LeSean McCoy rushed for 51 yards on 10 carries and caught 1 pass for 10 yards.

- **Reggie Wayne** caught 4 passes for 83 yards and a long of 41 and **Jeremy Maclin** caught 2 passes for 41 yards.
- **Robert Mathis** had 3 sacks, 1 pass deflection, 1 stuffed run, and 5 tackles to lead a strong performance by the Gwinnett defence.
- **Eli Manning** completed 21 of 38 for 241 yards, 2 INTs and was sacked 5 times.
- **Julio Jones** caught 7 passes for 83 yards with a long of 21 yards.
- **Paul Posluszny** made 14 tackles and deflected 3 passes and **Carlos Dunlap** made 5 tackles, 3 run stuffs and 1 QB Pressure.

GAME SUMMARY: Late in the 1st quarter, **D.J. Williams** sacked **Eli Manning** and forced a fumble that was recovered by the Gladiators at the Virdean 33 yard line. An 18-yard pass from **Ben Roethlisberger** to **Jeremy Maclin** and a 10-yard run by **LeSean McCoy** put the ball at the 5 yard line then a false start penalty on **Levi Brown** brought it back to the 10. Two plays later, **Ahmad Bradshaw** was breaking the plane over the top of a stacked defensive line from 1 yard out to give Gwinnett a 10-0 lead. The score would be the turning point in a game where the Violators' offence could never get on track against a Glads defence that took **LeGarrette Blount** out of the game early and forced Manning into must-pass situations. But with the game still within reach, Manning found **Mike Thomas** open on a medium hitch that he turned into a 41-yard gain to the Gwinnett 45 yard line. After a sack by **Robert Mathis** set them back, Manning found Thomas for 13 yards to set up 3rd and 1 at the 36 yard line. Blount was stopped for no gain and the Violators decided to go for it on 4th down. **LaDainian Tomlinson** got the call and gained one yard but fell inches short of the first down. Gwinnett turned that around in short order with a crisp drive assisted by a pass interference penalty on **Brandon Flowers** and a 22-yard pass to **Reggie Wayne** to set up a 6-yard scramble for a TD by Big Ben to make the score 17-0. On the first play of their next possession Virdean's Manning looked deep for **Julio Jones**, but finding him covered checked down to Thomas at the 26 yard line. **Assante Samuel** punched the ball out and it was recovered by safety **Tyler Sash**, setting up a 2-yard TD pass from Roethlisberger to Bradshaw to give Gwinnett a 24-0 lead at half time. Sacks, fumbles and interceptions kept the Virdean offence from getting close to mounting a comeback in the second half. A 49-yard field goal by **Lawrence Tynes** after a Bradshaw fumble broke the shutout.



THE FANS LOVED

Big takeaway 'D' by the Glads

THE FANS HATED

Four more Virdean turnovers



FAN RATING

★ ½

12-23-2011 **TERRORDOME** Temp: 74 Wind: Calm None MVP: **Ben Roethlisberger**

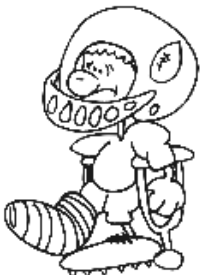
1 2:28	Gwinnett	FG Brown 27 (5-48-3:01)	3-0
2 12:46	Gwinnett	TD Bradshaw 1 run (Brown,J) (8-33-2:24)	10-0
2 2:41	Gwinnett	TD Roethlisberger 6 run (Brown,J) (9-65-4:55)	17-0
2 0:22	Gwinnett	TD Roethlisberger 2 pass to Bradshaw (Brown,J) (4-26-2:13)	24-0
3 9:01	Gwinnett	FG Brown 28 (12-50-5:56)	27-0
4 14:20	Virdean	FG Tynes 49 (4-8-1:46)	27-3
4 4:00	Gwinnett	FG Brown 45 (4--14-1:33)	30-3

	GWG	VV
First Downs	15	11
Rushes	36-134	13-9
Passes	26-12-160	38-21-241
Sacked	1-11	5-25
Fumble	2	5
Penalties	6-45	5-37
Turnovers	1	4
Time	32:20	27:40
Third Down	4-15	2-13
Fourth Down	1-1	0-2
Red Att/Td/Fg	7/3/3	0/0/0
Net Offense	283	225

INJURIES

GWINNETT – Troy Polamalu (2 games)

VIRDEN – Corey Webster (1 game-QUESTIONABLE)



QUOTE OF THE GAME

"We can play even better. We didn't make the most of our chances on offence. We did enough, but we can do more. I expect more of myself." *Gwinnett QB, RBen Roethlisberger.*

EFL STANDINGS

East	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Charleswood	8	4	0	0.667	256	21.3	236	19.7	1.7	4 2 0	3 0 0	5 1 0
Viriden	4	8	0	0.333	179	14.9	237	19.8	-4.8	3 3 0	2 1 0	3 3 0
York	4	8	0	0.333	210	17.5	274	22.8	-5.3	1 5 0	1 2 0	2 4 0
Mohave	1	11	0	0.083	160	13.3	328	27.3	-14	1 5 0	0 3 0	0 6 0
West	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Los Angeles (y)	9	3	0	0.75	292	24.3	170	14.2	10.2	6 0 0	3 0 0	6 0 0
Death Valley	7	5	0	0.583	314	26.2	281	23.4	2.8	2 4 0	2 1 0	4 2 0
Chino	5	7	0	0.417	211	17.6	170	14.2	3.4	3 4 0	0 3 0	1 5 0
Iowa City	4	8	0	0.333	240	20	261	21.8	-1.8	2 3 0	1 2 0	3 3 0
North	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Pickering	11	1	0	0.917	289	24.1	199	16.6	7.5	5 0 0	2 1 0	5 1 0
Cowtown	10	2	0	0.833	337	28.1	184	15.3	12.8	6 1 0	2 1 0	4 2 0
Durham	7	5	0	0.583	267	22.3	216	18	4.3	4 1 0	1 2 0	3 3 0
Markham	4	8	0	0.333	153	12.8	246	20.5	-7.8	3 4 0	1 2 0	2 4 0
South	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Gwinnett	9	3	0	0.75	287	23.9	192	16	7.9	3 3 0	2 1 0	5 1 0
Scarborough	8	4	0	0.667	243	20.3	210	17.5	2.8	3 3 0	3 0 0	4 2 0
Garland	3	9	0	0.25	148	12.3	263	21.9	-9.6	2 4 0	1 2 0	1 5 0
South Carolina	2	10	0	0.167	181	15.1	300	25	-9.9	1 5 0	0 3 0	0 6 0

(z)-clinched Division

(y)-clinched wildcard

PASSING

Rk	Player	Team	Att	Cmp	C%	Yards	In	I%	Lg	TD	TD%	Rate
1	Brees	DVU	357	239	66.9	2785	8	2.2	89	27	7.6	106.2
2	Flacco	COW	398	260	65.3	3215	6	1.5	66	26	6.5	105.7
3	Freeman	LAK	355	227	63.9	2247	4	1.1	65	20	5.6	95.8
4	Newton	CHI	179	116	64.8	1205	3	1.7	51	8	4.5	92.1
5	Roethlisberger	GWG	235	135	57.4	1706	4	1.7	78	12	5.1	90.1
6	Campbell, J	SC	330	217	65.8	2147	5	1.5	52	11	3.3	88.8
7	Rodgers	SBE	348	224	64.4	2205	5	1.4	53	12	3.4	87.6
8	Cassel	PIC	200	109	54.5	1558	3	1.5	78	8	4	87
9	Manning, P	CHP	381	250	65.6	2583	11	2.9	56	13	3.4	84.4
10	Rivers, P	DTL	345	212	61.4	2595	11	3.2	62	12	3.5	82.9
11	Brady, T	YOR	373	220	59	2270	6	1.6	88	11	2.9	79.7
12	Schaub	MOH	387	230	59.4	2419	9	2.3	53	8	2.1	74.9
13	Bradford	ICC	325	183	56.3	2438	15	4.6	70	11	3.4	72.3
14	Ryan, M	GDM	428	253	59.1	2451	9	2.1	61	6	1.4	71.1
15	Manning, E	VV	391	238	60.9	3082	25	6.4	91	11	2.8	68.4
16	Sanchez	MAR	274	151	55.1	1649	9	3.3	55	4	1.5	64.3

RUSHING

Rk	Player	Team	Att	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD	Rk	Player	Team	Att	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	Foster, A	ICC	261	1382	5.3	72	7	11	Jacobs, B	YOR	121	630	5.2	59	9
2	Peterson, A	CHP	233	1187	5.1	74	10	12	Rice, R	SBE	191	618	3.2	38	1
3	Charles	LAK	207	1099	5.3	28	5	13	Ivory	MOH	107	552	5.2	44	1
4	Johnson, C	PIC	256	1029	4	58	10	14	Tolbert	MOH	158	525	3.3	31	5
5	Jackson, S	CHI	231	866	3.7	47	2	15	Forte	GDM	113	509	4.5	59	4
6	McCoy, L	GWG	146	771	5.3	40	3	16	Jackson, B	COW	95	498	5.2	42	2
7	Jones-Drew	COW	171	770	4.5	29	4	17	Gore	SC	101	487	4.8	56	2
8	Bradshaw	GWG	164	680	4.1	20	5	18	Newton	CHI	76	447	5.9	46	5
9	McFadden, D	YOR	144	651	4.5	39	6	19	Mendenhall	DVU	139	442	3.2	21	3
10	Turner, M	DTL	167	645	3.9	78	2	20	Best	MAR	142	432	3	35	3

RECEIVING

Rk	Player	Team	No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD	Rk	Player	Team	No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	White, R	LAK	94	924	9.8	33	9	11	Watson, B	MOH	54	569	10.5	52	4
2	Moss, S	COW	73	1160	15.9	66	15	12	Miller, Z	COW	54	702	13	52	6
3	Witten	CHP	71	681	9.6	22	8	13	Marshall, B	SBE	51	601	11.8	53	3
4	Wayne	GWG	65	1016	15.6	47	10	14	Gonzalez	LAK	48	412	8.6	29	6
5	Thomas, M	VV	63	1030	16.3	91	4	15	Edwards, B	DVU	48	627	13.1	81	4
6	Bowe	DTL	57	800	14	49	8	16	Royal, E	GDM	47	416	8.9	18	0
7	Jennings, G	SC	57	751	13.2	41	5	17	Bryant, D	VV	46	660	14.3	51	4
8	Owens, T	MOH	56	560	10	36	2	18	Jenkins, M	YOR	46	459	10	27	2
9	Cooley	SC	55	475	8.6	34	1	19	Crabtree	YOR	46	636	13.8	88	3
10	Fitzgerald	ICC	55	543	9.9	35	3	20	Johnson, A	DVU	45	689	15.3	89	8

TACKLES

1	Henderson, EJ	SC	111	8	Urlacher	YOR	92	15	Spikes, T	MAR	83
2	Lewis, R	DVU	105	9	Posluszny	VV	90	16	Cole, T	MAR	80
3	Mayo	DVU	102	10	Whitner	ICC	90	17	Dansby	GDM	79
4	Barber, R	PIC	101	11	Johnson, D	COW	90	18	Ruud	CHI	74
5	Beason	CHP	96	12	Willis, P	ICC	85	19	Atogwe	PIC	74
6	Jones, D	MOH	95	13	Brackett	VV	84	20	Williams, D	GWG	72
7	Timmons	YOR	93	14	Laurinaitis	GWG	83	21	Tulloch	COW	72

KICKING

Rk	Player	Team	FGA	FGM	FG%	40	50	Lg	Pts
1	Brown, J	GWG	36	32	88.9	12	1	53	119
2	Mare	COW	29	24	82.8	5	0	49	109
3	Carpenter, D	LAK	28	25	89.3	5	1	55	106
4	Cundiff	CHI	27	26	96.3	7	2	55	95
5	Kasay	DVU	21	19	90.5	9	3	52	92
6	Vinatieri	DTL	24	21	87.5	4	0	43	91
7	Scobee	PIC	24	19	79.2	4	1	50	89
8	Rackers	ICC	32	22	68.8	10	5	56	88
9	Janikowski	SBE	26	18	69.2	9	3	55	81
10	Akers	MAR	22	21	95.5	5	0	49	75
11	Tynes	VV	27	18	66.7	8	4	58	71
12	Gould	GDM	24	19	79.2	6	1	53	70
13	Bironas	MOH	17	16	94.1	4	0	48	64
14	Gano	YOR	13	9	69.2	2	1	50	52
15	Kaeding	SC	13	9	69.2	2	0	44	40
16	Gostkowski	CHP	8	6	75	2	0	45	36
17	Rayner	CHP	7	7	100	0	0	38	34
18	Buehler	SC	3	2	66.7	0	0	39	11

INTERCEPTIONS

Rk	Player	Team	No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD	Rk	Player	Team	No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	Williams, T	COW	4	78	19.5	33	1	11	Hall, L	DVU	3	2	0.7	2	0
2	Godfrey	COW	4	45	11.3	38	1	12	Briggs, L	GWG	3	3	1	3	0
3	Rodgers-Crom	DTL	4	158	39.5	67	1	13	Harris, C	CHP	3	48	16	27	1
4	Haden	PIC	4	119	29.8	52	1	14	Matthews	MAR	2	10	5	10	0
5	Polamalu	GWG	4	31	7.8	14	0	15	Thomas, T	COW	2	37	18.5	37	1
6	Tillman	MAR	3	70	23.3	43	0	16	Ayers	MAR	2	7	3.5	4	0
7	Winfield	MAR	3	58	19.3	34	1	17	Atogwe	PIC	2	60	30	60	1
8	Cason	PIC	3	26	8.7	26	0	18	Bullitt	CHP	2	99	49.5	76	1
9	McCourty	DTL	3	32	10.7	18	0	19	Harris, D	PIC	2	6	3	6	0
10	Moore, W	DVU	3	37	12.3	37	0	20	Joseph, J	PIC	2	25	12.5	13	0

SACKS

1	Harrison, J	CHI	8	8	Houston, L	DTL	6	15	Abraham	CHP	6
2	Matthews, C	DVU	8	9	Johnson, C	DVU	6	16	Williams, D	GWG	6
3	Woodley	SBE	8	10	Williams, M	ICC	6	17	Anderson, M	COW	5
4	Mathis, R	GWG	8	11	Cole, T	MAR	6	18	Tuck	SBE	5
5	Ware, D	DVU	7	12	Umenyiora	LAK	6	19	Suh	SBE	5
6	Orakpo	LAK	7	13	Suggs	SBE	6	20	Starks, R	COW	5
7	Allen, J	DTL	6	14	Edwards, R	PIC	6	21	Smith, J	CHP	5



AROUND THE



With Spats McChad

GARLAND – With playoff races heating up in both Conferences and classic match-ups taking place in Charleswood and Chino drawing national sports media to those centres, Yours Truly was on Lone Star Air flight 001.5 to Garland, sitting next to a crying baby and an overweight cowboy who had brought his own lunch on board the plane and who spent two hours of the flight chewing with his mouth open and crowding me with his fat arm. Although there were only 19 people on the flight, there was no place to move to get away from “burrito breath.” An undisclosed “incident” in the baggage compartment had apparently not been serious enough to cancel the flight, but had forced all of the luggage to be tied down to the seats in the passenger section of the plane. So, with my sense of touch, hearing and smell under perpetual assault, I closed my eyes to avoid having to look at the hairy mole on the stewardess’s nose and thought, *what could be worse?* It occurred to me right away – I was about to find out at the Corral this week as the 2-9 Mustangs hosted the 1-10 Hellfire.

My assignment to the EFL outback to cover the league’s two worst teams was Mr. Finchley’s punishment for me, in *his* opinion, destroying two journalistic series he had conceived while smoking House of Lords stogies in his Manhattan office. Although it was not my fault that the Knights’ perfect season ended when I first appeared to cover their run at a perfect season; nor was it my fault that Cam Newton threw two interceptions at the worst times against the crappy Violators to spoil my ‘Rookie to the Rescue’ feature focusing on the resurrection of a lost season in Chino; Mr. Finchley found in me a convenient scapegoat.

Adding a slightly uncomfortable twist, I was also told to seek an interview with Garland coach, Doug Shirley, whose coaching philosophy and game-day decision-making I had devoted much criticism to this year. How would the “Grandmaster of Garland,” as he was once dubbed by the Garland press during his first heady year as owner of the former Colorado Thundersnow, receive a relentless critic such as me?

DOUG SHIRLEY INTERVIEWED

It turned out that the Garland coach, a truly revered local football icon, did not even know who I was. He had never read my column, nor had he read anyone else’s.

“I don’t read the sports section,” chuckled Shirley as he sat back comfortably in his office at The Corral with his hands behind his head. “I don’t subscribe to Social Media or the Internet and I don’t watch the news – except for the weather of course. Wouldn’t want to be caught with my head down during tornado season!” he laughed loudly at this last comment, as if it happened to others and was funny when it did.

“Aren’t you interested in knowing what people think about you and your team? Could you not learn something from it?” I asked.

“Too much information, Spits,” he shook his head as he mispronounced my first name. “This information age you folks in the media like to promote is the *disinformation age*, in my view. How can a man think for himself when everyone else is thinking for him – telling him what to do, how to do it?” Shirley seemed quite comfortable in his own skin, and not the least bit threatened by my line of questioning, or the knowledge that I had been critical of his coaching decisions.

“But don’t you think you can learn from another’s perspective?” I asked, somewhat baffled that a man who had made a substantial fortune in the used book trade would reject discourse.

“Of course, we can all learn from each other – at the right time. But I don’t tell writers how to write and I don’t think writers, even the smart ones, really know how to coach a football team. I learn from other coaches and from my players.” He looked quite serious as he spoke this last sentence. “Sure, our team’s record is not very good this year, but it’s not about our record – *this year.*” He placed strong emphasis on the last two words.

Doug Shirley has a strong following in north eastern Texas. There are, of course, a growing number of fans who are unhappy that the Mustangs seem to have regressed in their past two seasons, but the majority of those are in the more populous urban centres of Dallas and Houston. The people of Garland are fiercely proud of Shirley and defend him as family. I am sure if they were aware of me and my column, I would have had a rough time finding an establishment to

serve me breakfast.

It became quite clear as I listened to this man that, while he acknowledged my right to an opinion, that opinion was completely irrelevant to him. Further, he did not seem to need to justify to me, or anyone else, his development of the 'Swiss 4-3,' his refusal to blitz, his team's many 4th down follies, and his often counter-intuitive play-calling. So, what *did* matter to Coach Shirley, if not winning? As the conversation wound down I think I got my answer in an off-handed comment he made as I rose to shake his hand.

"Enjoy your time in Texas, Spots. There is plenty to explore off the beaten track if you have a few extra days. I can give you some suggestions that you may find more interesting than the Dallas malls."

For Doug Shirley and his staff, coaching is about testing his players, his opponents and, more importantly, the boundaries of the game itself. How well a defence performs over the course of 16 games when it refuses to blitz, even once, is something we would never know but for pioneers like Shirley, who are not afraid to step off the beaten track and explore the game's potential. And who knows today how well his various experiments will serve him and his team *next year* – when the time is right.

A HORRIBLE GAME

Whatever may be in store for Garland in the future, at the moment they are playing a type of game that only a football mother could love. Even in stunning victory, the Week 12 contest against Mohave was agonizing to watch. The Mustangs scored more points in one half of football against the Hellfire than they had scored in the previous four games combined, but they did it thanks largely to back-to-back Mohave fumbles in an 8-second span. Garland erupted, in the most un-explosive manner possible, for 28 points in the second quarter to put them on the gloating side of a 40-17 blowout. When added to a first quarter field goal, the 31 points they had accumulated by half time eclipsed by 1 the 30 total points they had collected against Pickering, Iowa City, Virden and Markham over the previous four games.

However, this grandiose offensive display should not be viewed necessarily as the turning point for the Garland franchise that many had hoped for. Realistically, it should be recognized for what it is: one lame hamster getting the better of another lame hamster to gain access to the exercise wheel for a turn, or two, before falling off. The Mohave players looked unmotivated before the game and completely disinterested by half time.

The lone truly noteworthy point was the complete about-turn in offensive strategy by Doug Shirley's squad. Prior to this game his team had rushed the ball 31% of the time and were last in the league in points scored. This week, they ran the ball 52 times, or 77% of the time, for 203 yards and tallied 40 points, or 37% of their season total of 108 heading into the game. Now, this amazing result is unlikely to re-occur simply because the Mustangs may decide to run the ball more in the future; unless their future opponents also continue to turn the ball over four times a game like Mohave did in this mis-match. However, the fact that the Mustangs *can* run the ball effectively will only help **Matt Ryan** and the passing game to be more effective.

BRADY VERSUS ROMO – NO KAILJU MOVIE

This week's EFL Sunday Night game was billed as a "monster match-up" of two "star" quarterbacks - **Tom Brady** versus **Tony Romo**. Never mind that Brady's team was a disappointing 3-8, flirting with playoff elimination, and Brady himself was ranked 11th among starting quarterbacks heading into the contest; the leader of the Swords is considered a "star" by the Conventional Media and a million mindless sports fans, most of whom could not read my column even if they knew where to find it.

I was the first writer to dare to call out Brady as a 'poser' and for that I have been ridiculed by the likes of **Russ Flont** of ESPN, **Merlin the Magician** of the Camelot Crystal Ball Standard, and ignored completely by football heavyweights **Peter Queen** of Sports Illustrated and **Arthur Artish** of Pro Football Weekly. Not that I care, but they can all go and play with Tom Brady's balls if they love him that much. I am sure that my much more sophisticated readership understands that I am bound by my personal code to report my opinions honestly and faithfully while being as fair as possible, and that I try to make sense of what I *see*! What I see right now is that **Tom Brady** is currently being out-performed by a rookie in Chino, a back-up in South Carolina, a guy who had no college career to speak of in Pickering, and most embarrassing of all, **Philip Rivers** in Durham, among others. So forgive me if I refuse to pay homage to '**Tom Terrific**' because he led the Florida Dragons to their first Gale Sayers trophy in 2008. That was then, this is now. This year's edition of Brady is such a disappointment that, should he lead his team on a miraculous winning streak and finish the season with a playoff berth, he will have done no more than control the damage already inflicted on his reputation. To fully erase it, nothing less than a Championship berth for York will do.

As for **Tony Romo**, his star is of the falling kind: it attracts attention and all the wishing in the world, but its glory is brief. Romo's flashiness has earned him a following and it is true that when he is on his game he can carry much more than his own weight. Having missed 10 weeks, it was easy to attribute South Carolina's pathetic record to his absence, even though **Jason Campbell** was ranked 6th in the league among starting quarterbacks when he was sent back to the bench. With each missed game and each Regulators' loss, the 'Legend of Romo' grew. It grew to the point where the City of Columbia held a parade in his honour to escort him into Williams-Brice Stadium for Week 12. So the table was upset, and the reputations of the opposing quarterbacks over-inflated to the point of bursting, in the hype leading up to this game. You just knew it could not live up to it all.



The EFL officially awarded expansion franchises for 2012 to the **Commonwealth Colonials** and the **Twin Cities Triumph** at a ceremony in Canton last week. The existing 16 teams are now voting to decide if they will double the number of expansion franchises to four in the coming year as interest in the league grows. Still no word on whether or not New York City will get a team.

Sometimes you can tell from just one play early in the game that it is not going to go well for a team. Such a play came with 3:33 remaining in the first quarter after Romo had driven the Regulators to the York 13 yard line with a perfect touch pass to **Chris Cooley** for 33 yards. With the entire crowd and a national TV audience sensing that a "triumphant return" moment was approaching for **Tony Romo**, the drive suddenly fizzled, starting with a brilliant counter-move by the Excalibur's defence. In a play not seen very often from the Yorkies, defensive coordinator **Mel Tucker** dialled up a four-man blitz that caught the South Carolina line by surprise. Under pressure, Romo was forced to rush a pass to **Austin Collie** and threw it at his feet. In an effort to counter the sudden York aggression, the Regulators called a screen on the next play, but it did not fool **Brian Urlacher**, resulting in a completion for a loss. On third down, Romo tried to force a ball across the middle to **Frank Gore** that was almost picked off by Urlacher. The Regulators had to settle for a field goal attempt, which was disappointing enough under the circumstances. But the bubble of optimism popped completely on the telling play of the day when long-snapper **Ryan Pontbriand** snapped the ball three feet over holder **Brian Moorman's** head to scuttle the field goal attempt.

South Carolina came away with no points and much embarrassment. From that point on, York took full control for most of the game. Except for an interception on a nice read by Regulators' corner, **Bradley Fletcher**, Brady looked to be in vintage 2008 form, throwing for 234 yards and 3 TDs while **Darren McFadden** and **Brandon Jacobs** ran interference on the ground. The Yorkies came away with a desperately-needed 31-14 win on the road against a team that is no longer an easy out. **The Brady Redemption Watch** continues next week against Chino in a game with significant playoff implications.

EXPANSION EXPANDING?

In Canton last week the EFL Directors announced the awarding of two expansion franchises for the 2012 regular season to the **Commonwealth Colonials** and the **Twin Cities Triumph**. With the EFL rapidly gaining popularity at the expense of the SFL and the radically weird, flash-in-the-pan Tex-Mex Football League; the league office also announced that a further vote will be held among the existing 16 franchises to expand the current round of expansion by an additional two teams.

League spokesman, **Cogswell Cogs II**, told reporters, "There is considerable interest from all areas of the country, and Canada as well, in the acquisition of EFL franchises. It is safe to say that we could fill more than four expansion team requests, but in the interests of preserving the competitive and elite quality of the EFL product, the Board of Directors' position is that expansion by four teams strikes a proper balance between the desire for league growth and the maintenance of the high competitive standards that have made the EFL the best professional football league on the Continent. The decision of the Board requires ratification by the membership to proceed, of course. In any case, I am happy to announce the current two-team expansion, which will proceed in any event."

It would appear that the EFL, while looking to consolidate its position in North America, also has an eye across the Atlantic with the awarding of the Commonwealth franchise to **Will Blandford** of Norfolk, Virginia. Blandford, primary owner of Commonwealth Limited, has partnered with British billionaire, **Richard Bransen** in a deal that will stabilize the financial underpinning of the team and the league while promoting exposure to the English market. In an 'EFL Focus' exclusive, Virginia writer **Robert C. Lee** describes the business arrangement in more detail. [see back page]

The awarding of the Twin Cities franchise to **Guy Williams**, owner of the 'Birdie Burger' fast food chain is the league's second attempt to gain a foothold in a major Midwest commercial centre. The previous Chicago bid fell through when the EFL hastily cancelled expansion plans in 2011 in an effort to avoid contraction. Expanding to Minneapolis-St.Paul, home of the former Minnesota Vikings of the defunct NFL, is viewed by the league as a significant step into larger television markets. Unfortunately, the league is still silent on the prospect of entering the largest TV market of them all, New York City.

Not much is known about **Guy Williams**, but his creation, 'Birdie Burger,' – a fast food chain pledged to fight epidemic obesity on the American Continent with such offerings as Ostrich burgers, cucumber-garlic fries and "Soygurt shakes" while at the same time "keeping America on the Go" with "top flight fast service," – is rapidly gaining popularity on the West Coast from San Diego to Vancouver. Oddly enough, there is only one 'Birdie Burger' in the entire State of Minnesota, the original one located next to the St. Paul's Farmer Market.

Results of the league membership vote on "expanding expansion" will be available by the end of the week, but where these additional franchises would go is a guessing game for those outside the loop. The league is keeping secretive about who the bidders are for the prospective additional franchises, but rumours have a team returning to the Florida area to appease angry fans caught in the crossfire of the conflict surrounding the **Florida Dragons**, and another team going to Hawaii. We'll wait and see.

THE TRUTH HURTS...AND IT'S FUNNY TOO!

With wins few and far between for the South Carolina Regulators, their Week 11 overtime loss to Cowtown is receiving the type of scrutiny in the Media and from the public usually reserved for playoff games. The decision to have **Jason Campbell** kneel without running a play in the final two minutes of regulation when the Corn Kings had all of their timeouts remaining generated so much talk show traffic and editorial comment in Columbia that Regulators' coach **Hal Corson** was forced to go on the record with **Johnny Rebb** of The State to explain what happened. The truth was so completely ridiculous that it literally stunned everyone into temporary silence. With permission from The State, I have reprinted the portion of the article that had me spitting up my coffee on Thursday morning:

Johnny: "Coach, Frank Gore was having a good game against the Corn Kings. He broke a long TD run early and seemed to still be strong late in the game. What prompted the decision by Dennis Green to have Jason Campbell take a knee with over a minute left in the game and Cowtown with all its timeouts remaining?"

Coach Corson: That was a mistake. It shouldn't have happened. But we've only won two games this year. You saw how animated the sideline was when we were up by three with only 1:42 remaining. Our discipline and communication broke down. Players and coaches were jumping around like maniacs on the sidelines. Jason misinterpreted some of that gesturing as a signal to take a knee. After he did that and the Corn Kings called a timeout, we realized we could force them to burn all their timeouts before they ever got the ball. So we kept doing it to cover up our mistake and make it look like some innovative new strategy.

Honesty is an admirable quality, but when an admission like that turns you and your team into the subject of ridicule it's natural to wish you'd told a little white lie or two in retrospect. In the wake of this frank and open disclosure, **Jason Campbell** was benched, **Tony Romo** brought back early from injury, and **Dennis Green** was given his walking papers. The sacrifice may have been just enough blood to stop calls for Corson to resign as head coach.

AROUND THE EFL

Since returning from a 4-game injury, **Andre Johnson** has 5 TD catches and has accumulated 336 yards on 16 catches for an average of nearly 20-yards per reception. This week he averaged 31 yards per catch and scored three times in leading the Undertakers to a 31-3 deep-sixing of Markham at the Dawg Pound. Johnson's return has coincided with a sudden rebirth of the Undertakers' offence, which has buried opponents beneath 72 points of offence in two games. The surging offence and a suddenly effective defence have fans in Death Valley talking championship again. But before the zombies in Death Valley get reborn with excitement at the prospect of a late-season run at the West Division crown, consider that this two-game mini-streak has come against Mohave and Markham – teams that are a combined 5-19 after 12 weeks. Feeding well off the half-living carcasses of the Mohaves and Markhams of the league is a good sign, of course, but not *the* definitive sign that Death Valley is anything more than the league's hungriest vulture. The next two weeks will be the watershed mark for the Undertakers as they host Charleswood and visit Los Angeles: if they can win one or both of those games, it will be time to re-examine their pedigree.

Arian Foster may be the most important player to his team. Evidence to support that theory came this week as the Cubs fell 20-7 to Durham. With the rain in Iowa City wreaking havoc on the running game, **Sam Bradford** was forced to carry the offensive load against Durham and was short-circuited by the effort. The record-setting pace of **Mike Wallace** was rudely interrupted by a Durham secondary that lay in wait for him with little to fear from the league's leading rusher. Bradford was picked off twice and Wallace went without a reception for the first time this year. I don't believe it was coincidence that this happened on a day when Foster did very well just to earn 3.3 yards per carry. Ironically, Durham's 20-7 victory may have bolstered Foster's MVP bid if other writers are paying attention to the subtleties.

The Week 12 match-up between the Knights and the Corn Kings was an entertaining game. It was an exciting offensive fight with enough good defence by both teams to keep the points total at a relatively low 33. The wind at Tillman Field and key injuries to both teams kept either from getting comfortable in its game plan and made this contest one that really could have gone either way. The Knights were missing their best defender, corner **Nnamdi Asomugha** while the Corn Kings were missing a key component of their offence, running back **Maurice Jones-Drew**. But the most devastating blow came in the 2nd quarter when **Josh Freeman** was hammered for a loss by linebacker, **Matt Roth** on a sweep play. Freeman left the game with concussion-like symptoms and never returned. As a result, the Knights could not get far enough ahead on the scoreboard, leaving an opening for the amazingly deadly passing tandem of **Joe Flacco** to **Santana Moss**. Their 15th TD hook-up of the season gave Cowtown a thrilling 17-16 victory in the dying seconds.

With **Chris Johnson** held to just 8 yards on 9 carries, **Matt Cassel** stepped into the limelight with a 263-yard passing performance in Pickering's 10-9 edging of Chino at The Big House. The Spartans' QB also scored the game's only touchdown on a quarterback sneak in the 2nd quarter and executed a back-breaking 10-yard bootleg to bring the Spartans into comfortable range for **Josh Scobee's** game-winning field goal as time expired. Pickering continues to find ways to win - following the path least resistance each week to score just enough points to get ahead, and getting big plays from their bend-not-break 'D' to stay ahead.

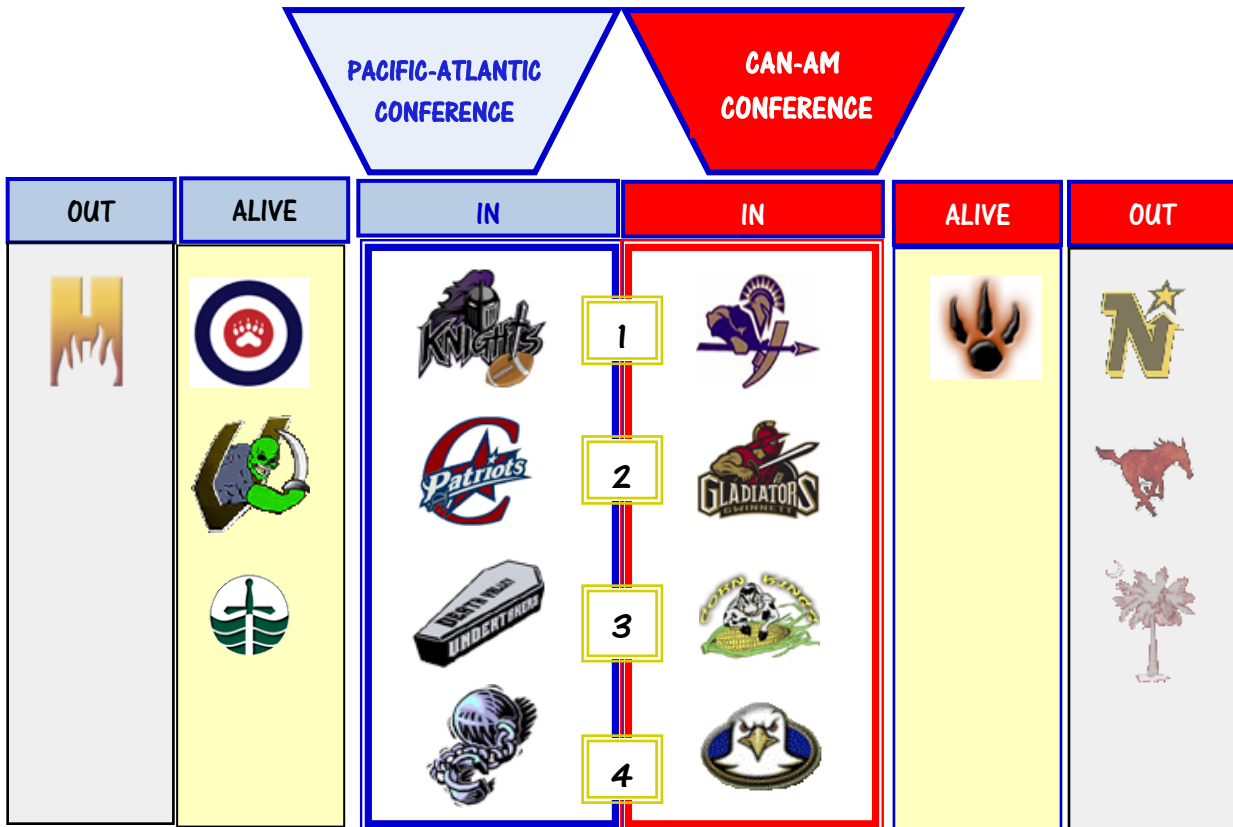
The Blue Eagles put it all together on the road against the Pats in a 24-17 victory that saw key contributions in all phases of the game. But the key performance came from their quarterback. Facing intense pressure all day from the Charleswood pass rush, **Aaron Rodgers** made the plays that mattered most with 3 TD passes. Rodgers and the Blue Eagles may be starting peak at the right moment, which will make the race for the South Division and the Conference championship one to watch.

BUG THE BOOKIE!

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



PLAYOFF PICTURE AT A GLANCE



JIMMY'S Week THIRTEEN PICKS

CHARLESWOOD @ DEATH VALLEY (line – UNDERTAKERS by 4)

If you are wondering how Death Valley, with the league's worst ranked defence and an inefficient running attack, is 7-5 and in control of their playoff destiny, then look no further than defensive takeaways. Unable to stop opponents from moving, the Undertakers rob them. Their hit-and-run tactics, the sole antidote for a sick defence, have caused more turnovers, 21, than any other team and have given them a healthy surplus of 8 in the category many analysts consider to be the most crucial stat of all: turnover ratio. When matched, in the inhospitable conditions of the Graveyard, against a Pats team that has an annoying tendency to give the ball away, the possibility of Peyton Manning and Adrian Peterson seriously outgaining the Undertakers but still losing by a touchdown, or more, does not seem in the least unrealistic. It actually seems highly probable to me. On the other side, Drew Brees will have to dodge John Abraham and throw away from Ed Reed to avoid the same turnover fate destined for the elder Manning. If he can do that and find a running back to carry the load on the ground, this could end up being the much-needed big win this gloomy group of golems in Death Valley needs in order to be taken seriously in the post-season prognosis. **PICK: DEATH VALLEY**

MOHAVE @ IOWA CITY (line – CUBS by 9)

How does a 4-8 team with a give-away problem get to be a nine-point favourite? Have that 4-8 team host the Hellfire; that's how. Mohave plumbed the depths of shame last week when they were pummelled 40-17 by Garland. Whatever happens at Joe Ferguson Stadium this week could not be any more humiliating than that, but some cynical observers remain open to the possibility that things have not yet bottomed out for the league's most cursed team. The Cubs' highly potent offensive weapons were neutralized last week by the rain and the Durham defence, but expect a return to top form this week for Arian Foster and Mike Wallace against a defence that gives away points in the red zone like no other. Finding something good to say about the Hellfire defence is next to impossible. While they have given up fewer pass completions than any other team that is because opponents are constantly seduced into running the ball against the weakest defensive line in football. As for those completions, too many of them go for touchdowns. Fortunately for the Mohave offence, the Cubs' defence is far from performing up to expectations either, so the prospects of a good, old-fashioned shootout are high. Weather permitting, I envision a first half full of offensive fireworks for both teams followed by undisputed Iowa City rule in the second half. **PICK: IOWA CITY**

LOS ANGELES @ VIRDEN (line – KNIGHTS by 2)

The suspiciously low point spread is a product of ignorant bettors paying too much respect to the Virden tendency to play over their heads and defy certain football truisms. If give-aways can turn a good team into a poor performer in the standings, then what happens when a bad team gives the ball away at a record-setting clip? If that team is Virden, then apparently it means its offence will move the ball more and its defence will stop its opponent more to make up the difference, while battling chronic injury-problems on top of it all. At 4-8, Virden is about where they should be in terms of wins and losses, apparently unaffected by a league worst (by far) -16 give-away to take-away ratio. It's true that the Violators are an enigma and therefore a dangerous team to bet against, but I think this is the game where it all catches up to them. Both Corey Webster and Owen Daniels are question marks to play because of injury and Eli is healthy, which should be a concern to fans curious to see what Matt Stafford can deliver. But it's easy to forget that the Violators are in the middle of a stumbling, bumbling race for the final wild card berth in the PAC, so now is not the time for an experiment at quarterback. The Knights are coming off a tough loss at Cowtown last week and can hear the plodding footsteps of the Undertakers behind them. They need a win and will not be fooling around. If Josh Freeman can stay healthy for the entire game, it will be not be close. This is my "lock-pick" for Week 13. **PICK: LOS ANGELES**

CHINO @ YORK (line – EXCALIBURS by 1)

Tiny cracks are beginning to appear in the Cam Newton-led Chino attack as teams prepare better game plans for the highly talented, but young quarterback who is learning on the job under the pressure of great expectations. This week he will take on a defence that has shown vulnerability to both the run and the pass and that will be missing two important pieces from the edges of their defence – Von Miller and Calvin Pace. All of the Convicts starters are healthy so they will be putting their best foot forward in Camelot. On the other side, the question is whether Tom Brady is really back to former championship form; or was last week's performance in South Carolina a mere flashback to by-gone days, that will be overcome by the reality of declining skills and a questionable supporting cast against one of the toughest defensive units in the league. Matt Cassel's 263-yard passing performance last week against this same Chino squad, when Chris Johnson had been completely nullified by the 'Great Wall of Chino,' proved that the Convicts' secondary is vulnerable. With time to throw, Brady is capable of shredding a secondary of Chino's calibre even without run support. However, without a true Number One wide receiver to distract the attention of the Chino safeties, it would be unwise to rely completely on the passing game. As tough as it will be, the Yorkies will need to find a way to work Darren McFadden and Brandon Jacobs into the attack. The one-point spread is well-chosen here – the Swords will win a close one.

PICK: YORK

GWINNETT @ PICKERING (line – Pick'em)

The 'EFL Game of the Week' this Thursday night promises to be a brutal chess match and a likely preview of the Conference Championship Game. The Spartans will enjoy home field advantage and an almost completely healthy slate of starters to take on an immensely talented opponent that is just beginning to put it all together. The Gwinnett defence is gelling into an elite unit capable of containing the run and shutting down the pass, but they will be missing their leader, Troy Polamalu. It is a significant loss, but the defence will still pose a tough, but not insurmountable, challenge for the offensive genius of Gus Konstantakos. The Glads' offence is picking up steam each week, but they are not yet where they want to be in terms of red zone efficiency and protecting the quarterback. If Big Ben can avoid the untimely interception, he and the "dash & bash" running back tandem of LeSean McCoy and Ahmad Bradshaw should be able to hang some points on the board against a defence that bends a lot and relies on the take-away. Bo Scaife is out, which is more important than one would think. As the only pass-catching threat remaining at tight end, with Dallas Clark out for the year, his absence will slow down the Gwinnett attack slightly, but not enough to make a difference in the outcome. **Pick: GWINNETT**

SCARBOROUGH @ DURHAM (line – THUNDER LIZARDS by 4)

To their chagrin, the league's most talented team finds itself out of first place for the first time in four years and fighting for a wild card berth against this very Thunder Lizards squad. The importance of the Blue Eagles' win at Patriot Place last week cannot be over-stated – a road win against a play-off bound team was exactly what they needed to ignite passion in a tumultuous season that has had more than its share of disappointments. Durham is in a similar position – thwarted to this point in its playoff run by self-inflicted wounds and an unpredictable, superior performance by their Division rival, Cowtown. The only certain thing about Durham and Scarborough is that both are better than their records. Unfortunately for one of these underachievers, the disappointment and frustration will continue after Week 13, barring a tie, which would ensure frowning faces on both sidelines. Durham has no injuries to report while Scarborough is missing their best offensive lineman, Logan Mankins. The key to game for the Blue Eagles may very well be the return of Darrelle Revis. The league's top shutdown corner will create pressure for Philip Rivers, and that usually means give-aways. **Pick: SCARBOROUGH**

MARKHAM @ SOUTH CAROLINA (line – REGULATORS by 4)

With the North Stars officially eliminated from the playoff race the only reason anyone outside of Columbia and Markham would want to tune in to this game was taken away. Not even a top draft pick is at stake here since both teams are bad, but not bad enough to cross the "Mohave Line" of incompetence. Accustomed to meaningless games, Darrin Jones' crew relishes the spoiler role; but in this case there is nothing to spoil – a debilitating string of injuries to South Carolina starters ruined their season long ago. This week, the Regulators are miraculously healthy, which should take care of any question about which team will win. For one game at least, Hal Corson's squad will look like champs. **PICK: SOUTH CAROLINA**

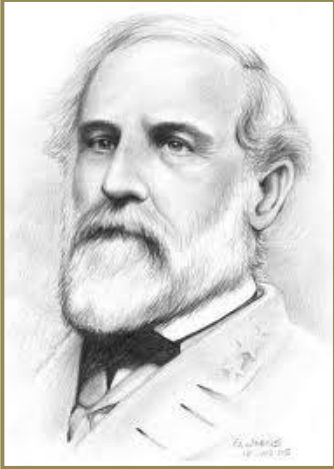
COWTOWN @ GARLAND (line – CORN KINGS by 9)

The 10-2 Corn Kings have been remarkably good, but they have also been lucky. A great individual play by Santana Moss knocked off the Knights last week in the dying seconds of a game they probably should have lost; while a brain fart by the Regulator coaching staff ensured enough time remained on the clock for Joe Flacco to rescue his team from an embarrassing home loss to South Carolina in Week 11. So, when I see a 9-point spread in favour of a road team that has been playing with a horseshoe firmly planted up its posterior recently, I see an opportunity. Now, I realize we are talking Garland here, but last week's performance against Mohave showed that there is still hope for this offence to turn itself around in the final weeks and save Doug Shirley his job. While Cowtown is no Mohave, they have shown they are vulnerable to the run. If Garland can move the ball on the ground and eat up time, it could be a low-scoring game and an advantage for the Mustangs in the point spread battle. With the Corn Kings overdue for bad game, it could even be an upset. **PICK: GARLAND**

EFL FOCUS

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

COMMONWEALTH



THE VIRGINIAN

SERVING THE COMMONWEALTH SINCE 1616

Robert E. Lee is perhaps, next to Thomas Jefferson, the most famous Virginian in the history of the United States. He continues to serve the people of Virginia through his weekly sports column, written in his memory by his great great great grandcousin twice removed, **Robert C. Lee.**

YES, VIRGINIA, YOU NOW HAVE A FOOTBALL TEAM!

BY ROBERT C. LEE

RICHMOND – It is official! An expansion franchise was awarded to William Blandford, primary owner and majority partner of Commonwealth Limited. Joining him on this venture is British billionaire, Richard Bransen. Mr. Bransen was welcomed aboard as part-owner with Mr. Bransen. Mr. Bransen expressed only one stipulation following his investment: the team's training camps are to be held in England. William agreed to that citing, "American football is gaining popularity in various parts of the world and England is no exception. I think it'd be great for both the league and our team. I mean how great is it for these future players to have a chance to train for a few weeks overseas?"

ABOUT Mr. BLANDFORD

Mr. Blandford is a native Virginian, born in Norfolk and growing up in Virginia Beach and Chester. Minus a four-year turn in the U.S. Army he has lived his entire life in Virginia. Pulling from the state's rich history in the United States, especially the Revolutionary War, he drafted his franchise's nickname: the Commonwealth Colonials. "I wanted a team the entire state would feel a part of, and how better than to not name it after a city or part of Virginia, rather the entire state."

A relative newcomer to the world of wealth, Mr. Blandford gained his fortune via creating numerous smart phone apps like 'Crazy Squirrels', 'Squirrel Zapper' and 'Name That Song'. Some further wealth was gained in an unexpected and brief marriage to Ivanka Trumpp. "Hey, who could blame me ... a pretty cool few days," quipped Blandford. After the marriage was annulled and he received a nice settlement, he wisely invested his wealth in the European stock market.

Fortune literally smiled on him as most of his investments boomed. Finally, bored with designing software and investing, he sold the rights to his many smartphone applications and the majority of his stocks. Mr. Blandford always wondered why Virginia wasn't more heavily considered for professional sports franchises, so when the NFL folded and the EFL started to show longevity, William applied for an expansion franchise. "Football is my favorite sport and Virginia has a rich tradition of turning out some football legends, like Bruce Smith, Lawrence Taylor and current players Ronde Barber and Thomas Jones. I know this state and its citizens can and will support a professional football team."

For a stadium, Mr. Blandford agreed to terms with the University of Virginia and for the time being they'll use Scott Stadium, which lies in the scenic Charlottesville area. "It's a well-run facility and Charlottesville is an ideal location as it's not too far from Richmond, Norfolk or the D.C. area. It holds over 60,000 people and will work while we work to build a stadium in the outlying areas."

Next up for him is finding his coaching staff and then building his plan to build a good foundation for what he hopes will be "a team that Virginia will rally to, support and take a lot of pride in."