

2015



EFL NEWS

ELITE FOOTBALL LEAGUE

2015

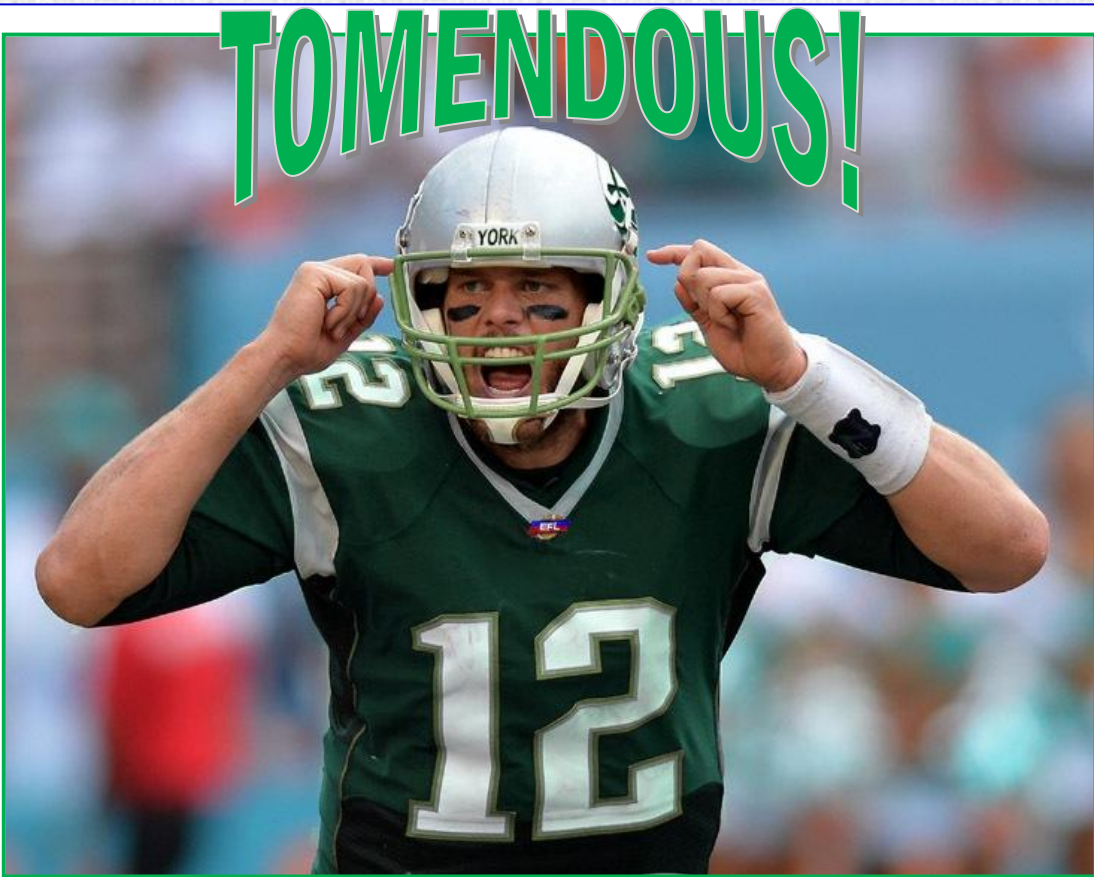
Week Three

Week Three

October 26, 2015



CAR	29	TCT	27	MOH	10	LAK	17	MVM	21	DTL	16	PIC	7	COW	28	SBE	14	SEB	21
ICC	38	VIR	17	CHP	20	BCR	32	CHI	28	GWG	24	MAR	29	YOR	34	AUR	31	SC	34



LATEST EFL NEWS INSIDE

- BRADY IS BACK
- GLADS UPEND LIZARDS
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- MUSTANGS CHARGE FORWARD
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- AND MORE.....

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- SPATS FEATURE, 'ONLY A GAME,' 'ONE THOUSAND WAYS TO WIN,' AROUND THE EFL.'
- JIMMY THE GEEK HAS WEEK 4 LOCKED UP
- THIS WEEK IN THE EFL HISTORY – WEEK THREE OF 2009

Tom Brady of the York Excaliburs takes control in the frantic final minute as he hurries his offence down the field against the Corn Kings. Trailing by a TD, Brady tied the game on a 9-yard TD to James Jones and the Swords won it OT, 34-28. (Story



Who was slick in Week Three?

"BRYLCREEM" THE EFL'S FIRST SPONSOR



Arian Foster
RB
Aurora Mustangs

30 Carries, 170 yards, 2 TDs. Steady ground force in win.



Clay Matthews
OLB
Beaufort County Ravens

4 tackles, 4 sacks. It came against Knights but 4 sacks is 4 sacks.



1-2-0



GAME OF THE WEEK



1-2-0

Cowtown

28

MVP

Tom Brady

34

York

TEAM LEADERS				
Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Flacco	23	34	246	3
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Morris	24	148	6.2	1
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Evans	7	80	11.4	0

Team	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
Cowtown	7	14	7	0	0	28
York	0	7	14	7	6	34

TEAM LEADERS				
Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Brady	24	36	267	3
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Lynch	19	116	6.1	0
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Jones	8	83	10.4	1

Play of the Game

With 0:12 left in regulation, trailing by a TD, York faced 3rd & goal at the Cowtown 9, Tom Brady fired a quick slant to James Jones for a TD. That score tied the game at 28 and York went on to win.

SUMMARY: The game's first series ended with the Excaliburs turning the ball over on downs at the Cowtown 27. From there, **Alfred Morris**, replacing a seriously injured **Todd Gurley**, tore off a 47-yard run to key a TD-drive that ended with **Joe Flacco** hitting **Larry Fitzgerald** for a 15-yard score. It was the first of 3 consecutive TD drives by the Corn Kings that staked them to a 21-7 half time lead. York's defence held Cowtown to a three-and-out to start the 2nd half then **De'Anthony Thomas** turned on the crowd with an 84-yard punt return for a TD to close the gap to 21-14. On the ensuing drive, Flacco responded by going 6 of 9 for 69 yards and a 12-yard TD pass to Fitzgerald, his third of the game, to regain the two-score lead. The Swords came right back with **Marshawn Lynch** gaining 48 yards on 3 carries to set up an 18-yard TD pass from **Tom Brady** to **Kelvin Benjamin**. Cowtown kept rolling offensively, moving the ball efficiently to the York 6-yard line; but an interception by **Micah Hyde** suddenly stopped the Kings dead, keeping the game within reach for late heroics by Brady. The York QB led an 81-yard game-tying TD drive, finding **James Jones** for a 9-yard TD pass with 0:05 left then, in OT, gave Flacco no chance, throwing a game-winning 28-yard TD to Benjamin on the first possession.

QUOTES: "Tom, Kelvin, Marshawn, Giovanni, our safety, what's his name, Mickey? Game balls all around! And Jones too, he only dropped one ball and he caught that biggie at the end of the game to send us to overtime," York coach, **Jay Hammond**.

"This sport is very unforgiving. If you fail to put a game away against a team with a quarterback like Tom Brady, you're going to be punished. The punt return for a TD gave them life and that red zone pick by the safety kept them alive – great play! Brady did the rest," Cowtown coach, **Jim Coghlin**.



ANGRY FAN



titter

HAPPY FAN



Stan Jones @SJCOW550

This is why Joe Flacco's case for elite status always ends in a hung jury. Four great drives then one miserable game-changing pick.



Merlin @MerlinRTchronicle

Forsooth the Master has returned and reclaimed glory for Camelot. Is it a fleeting moment, or harbinger of feats to come?

10-21-2015 Camelot Temp: 68 Wind: 0-5

MVP: Tom Brady

Scoring Summary

1 5:31	Cowtown	TD Flacco 15 pass to Fitzgerald (Novak) (6-73-2:31)	7-0
2 14:51	York	TD Bernard 10 run (Walsh) (10-73-5:34)	7-7
2 8:03	Cowtown	TD Morris 22 run (Novak) (13-80-6:48)	14-7
2 1:14	Cowtown	TD Flacco 13 pass to Fitzgerald (Novak) (9-62-3:24)	21-7
3 13:23	York	TD Thomas 84 punt return (Walsh)	21-14
3 6:06	Cowtown	TD Flacco 12 pass to Fitzgerald (Novak) (14-83-7:11)	28-14
3 3:40	York	TD Brady 18 pass to Benjamin (Walsh) (4-66-2:20)	28-21
4 0:05	York	TD Brady 9 pass to Jones (Walsh) (16-81-4:07)	28-28
5 11:08	York	TD Brady 28 pass to Benjamin	28-34

	COW	YOR
First Downs	25	27
Rushes	28-150	31-164
Passes	34-23-246	36-24-267
Sacked	0-0	1-9
Fumble	0	0
Penalties	6-62	5-40
Turnovers	1	0
Missed Tackles	13	6
Blitzes	22	9
Time	31:04	32:48
Third Down	10-12	7-13
Fourth Down	0-0	1-3
Red Att/Td/Fg	4/3/0	3/3/0
Net Offense	396	422



EFL
ELITE FOOTBALL LEAGUE

QUICK COUNTS!!

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



CANNIBALS	7	7	0	15	0	29
1-2-0					OT	

Marcus Mariota
22 of 35, 377 yards, 4 TDs, 1 INT



CUBS	7	14	7	10	0	38
1-1-1						

Russell Wilson
17 of 26, 235 yards, 3 TDs

Darren Sproles caught the Cannibals off guard with a 17-yard draw for a TD to put the Cubs in front 7-0. But Carthage responded with a 43-yard TD pass from **Marcus Mariota** to **Emmanuel Sanders** to tie it. The teams traded TDs before **Russell Wilson** put his team in front to stay with a 29-yard TD strike to **Mike Wallace**. The Cannibals responded with a drive to the Cubs' 5 yards line, but **Malcolm Jenkins** picked off Mariota in the end zone to stop the threat. The Cannibals never got closer than a TD the rest of the way as the Cubs kept a lid on a determined comeback attempt.



TRIUMPH	0	14	7	6	0	27
2-1-0					OT	

Jay Cutler
28 of 36, 279 yards, 2 TDs, 1 INT



VIOLATORS	7	0	0	10	0	17
0-3-0						

Mark Ingram
23 Carries, 106 yards, 2 TDs

Viriden scored first after an interception of **Jay Cutler** and 36-yard return by **Prince Amukamara** set up a 3-yard TD run by **Mark Ingram**. The Triumph got rolling in the 2nd quarter with a 23-yard pass to **Vincent Jackson** sparking a TD drive that ended with a check down 15-yard TD pass to **Dwayne Allen**. A 13-yard TD pass to Jackson put the Triumph in front and a Cutler sneak into the end zone at the end of a 95-yard drive in the 3rd quarter gave them breathing room. Ingram's 2nd TD of the game briefly made it a one-score game, but a pair **Stephen Gostkowski** FGs put it out of reach.



HELLFIRE	0	7	3	0	0	10
1-2-0					OT	

Andrew Luck
13 of 26, 142 yards



PATRIOTS	14	3	0	3	0	20
3-0-0						

Lamar Miller
22 Carries, 117 yards, 2 TDs

Knile Davis opened with a 79-yard kick return, setting up a quick 16-yard TD pass from **Peyton Manning** to **Andre Johnson** to make it 7-0. On the Pats' next series they went 92 yards in 15 plays, 47 yards on runs by **Lamar Miller**, who finished it off with a one-foot plunge into the end zone to make it 14-0. The Hellfire followed with their own long drive, covering 82 yards in 16 plays to score a TD on a short buck across the line by **Tevin Coleman**. Two strip-sacks of Manning by **Bruce Irvin** and **Whitney Mercilus** kept the Pats' attack in check, but the Hellfire could not capitalize.

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



KNIGHTS
0-3-0

0	7	3	7	0	17
OT					

Le'Veon Bell
35 Carries, 184 yards



RAVENS
2-0-1

10	6	7	9	0	32
OT					

Shaun Hill
19 of 23, 205 yards, 1 TD

Clay Matthews sacked **Teddy Bridgewater** for a 12-yard loss to stop the Knights' opening drive and shorten the field for an opening Ravens' FG. **Shaun Hill** connected with **DeAndre Hopkins** for a 19-yard TD pass and **Cody Parkey** added another FG to make it 13-0 before LA marked the board with a 6-yard TD pass to **Jordan Matthews**. The teams traded FGs to make it 16-10 before Beaufort broke the game open with a **Darrelle Revis** interception that set up a 4-yard TD run by **Karlos Williams**. The Ravens added 9 more points to the cushion before yielding a TD on the game's final drive.



MONARCHS
2-1-0

7	7	0	7	0	21
OT					

Ryan Tannehill
29 of 47, 265 yards, 2 TDs, 1 INT



CONVICTS
2-1-0

7	7	0	14	0	28
OT					

Cam Newton
14 of 19, 244 yards, 3 TDs, 1 INT

Cam Newton struck early for the Convicts, opening the scoring with a 38-yard TD pass to **Eddie Royal**. But Monarchs' corner **Buster Skrine** picked-off Newton at the Chino 47 to set up the tying TD and **Khalil Mack** sacked Newton on 4th and 2 on their next possession to set up the go-ahead score on 21-yard screen to **Chris Ivory**. Newton tied it before the half on another deep pass, 37-yards to **Malcom Floyd**. After a 3rd quarter stalemate, Chino went in front on a tipped 14-yard TD pass to lineman **Kelvin Beachum** and sealed it after a **Leodis McKelvin** interception set up their final TD.



T-LIZARDS
2-1-0

7	6	0	3	0	16
OT					

Drew Brees
24 of 43, 340 yards, 1 TD



GLADIATORS
2-1-0

3	14	0	7	0	24
OT					

LeSean McCoy
28 Carries, 153 yards, 1 TD

A 51-yard bomb and a 16-yard TD pass from **Drew Brees** to **Megatron** gave Durham a 7-3 1st quarter lead. **Richard Sherman** forced a fumble that led to a FG to make it 10-3, but the Glads struck back suddenly with a 30-yard TD pass from **Big Ben** to **Jeremy Maclin** and an 18-yard fumble return for a TD by **Daryl Smith**, giving Gwinnett a 17-13 half time lead. The Lizards pulled within 1 on a FG in the 4th but later missed a 53-yard attempt. With 1:41 left they misfired on 4th & 6 at their 11 then allowed **LeSean McCoy** to score to get the ball back with 1:24 left, but could not score the TD.

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



SPARTANS
1-2-0

0	7	0	0	0	7
OT					

Matt Forte
23 Carries, 110 yards



NORTH STARS
2-1-0

3	17	3	6	0	29
OT					

Josh Brown
5 of 6 FGs, 46 Lg, 2 X-Pts, 17 pts

The Spartans assembled an impressive 12-play, 80-play drive that ended with **Philip Rivers** hitting **Golden Tate** from 19 yards for the go-ahead TD in the 2nd. This was countered by an 80-yard Markham drive that put them back in front on a 4-yard TD run by **James Starks**. Neither offence would find the end zone again, but the Markham defence did when **Cedric Thornton** scooped up a fumble and returned it 23 yards for a TD to make it 17-7. The Stars' defence would shut Pickering down and force 3 more turnovers the rest of the way, setting up 4 more **Josh Brown** FGs in an easy win.



BLUE EAGLES
2-1-0

7	0	0	7	0	14
OT					

Aaron Rodgers
26 of 47, 237 yards



MUSTANGS
3-0-0

14	7	0	10	0	31
OT					

Arian Foster
30 Carries, 170 yards, 2 TDs

Andre Holmes caught a 33-yard pass on the Mustangs' first play from scrimmage to spark an opening drive TD on a 1-yard run by **Arian Foster**. Scarborough answered with an 18-yard TD run by H-back, **Jeff Cumberland**, but the defence soon surrendered another major on a 23-yard pass from **Matt Ryan** to **Brent Celek**. Both offences fell silent until Foster scored from 4 yards out on his 6th straight carry to make it 21-7 at the half. The Eagles drew closer on an 11-yard TD run by **Alfred Blue** in the 4th but Aurora got some insurance on their next drive with an 11-yard TD pass to **Heath Miller**.



SWORDFISH
0-3-0

7	0	7	7	0	21
OT					

CJ Anderson
20 Carries, 113 yards, 2 TDs



REGULATORS
1-2-0

7	17	0	10	0	34
OT					

Tony Romo
24 of 35, 293 yards, 4 TDs

The Fish grabbed the early lead on a 3-yard TD run by **CJ Anderson** but the Regulators washed it away with a wave of three **Tony Romo** TD passes: 54-yards to **AJ Green**, 7-yards to **Tim Wright** and a second to Green from 1-yard out to make it 21-7. **Andy Dalton** hooked up with **Kenny Britt** for a 6-yard TD to start the 2nd half, but a Fish attempt to close within a FG stalled on a failed 4th & 5 at the Regs' 34 yard line. Early in the 4th, **Tamba Hali** forced a Sebastian fumble at the 15 to set up Romo's 4th TD pass of the game, 5-yards to **Jerricho Cotchery**, to put the game out of reach for the Fish.

WEEK THREE

STANDINGS

East	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Charleswood	3	0	0	1	80	26.7	47	15.7	11	2 0 0	2 0 0	3 0 0
Twin Cities	2	1	0	0.667	84	28	71	23.7	4.3	1 1 0	2 1 0	2 1 0
Mohave	1	2	0	0.333	56	18.7	75	25	-6.3	0 1 0	1 1 0	1 2 0
Carthage	1	2	0	0.333	80	26.7	82	27.3	-0.7	1 0 0	1 1 0	1 2 0
Virden	0	3	0	0	45	15	83	27.7	-12.7	0 2 0	0 3 0	0 3 0
West	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Beaufort County	2	0	1	0.833	76	25.3	54	18	7.3	2 0 0	2 0 1	2 0 1
Chino	2	1	0	0.667	86	28.7	66	22	6.7	1 0 0	2 1 0	2 1 0
Mission Viejo	2	1	0	0.667	85	28.3	76	25.3	3	1 0 0	1 1 0	2 1 0
Iowa City	1	1	1	0.5	79	26.3	72	24	2.3	1 0 1	0 1 1	1 1 1
Los Angeles	0	3	0	0	48	16	93	31	-15	0 1 0	0 2 0	0 3 0
North	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Durham	2	1	0	0.667	55	18.3	44	14.7	3.7	1 0 0	2 0 0	2 1 0
Markham	2	1	0	0.667	79	26.3	34	11.3	15	2 0 0	2 1 0	2 1 0
Cowtown	1	2	0	0.333	74	24.7	101	33.7	-9	1 0 0	0 2 0	1 2 0
Pickering	1	2	0	0.333	34	11.3	61	20.3	-9	1 1 0	1 2 0	1 2 0
York	1	2	0	0.333	58	19.3	65	21.7	-2.3	1 1 0	1 1 0	1 2 0
South	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Aurora	3	0	0	1	103	34.3	52	17.3	17	2 0 0	3 0 0	3 0 0
Scarborough	2	1	0	0.667	69	23	66	22	1	1 0 0	1 1 0	2 1 0
Gwinnett	2	1	0	0.667	79	26.3	71	23.7	2.7	1 1 0	1 1 0	2 1 0
South Carolina	1	2	0	0.333	65	21.7	100	33.3	-11.7	1 0 0	1 2 0	1 2 0
Sebastian	0	3	0	0	75	25	97	32.3	-7.3	0 1 0	0 2 0	0 3 0

PASSING

Rk	Player	Team	Att	Cmp	C%	Yards	In	I%	Lg	TD	TD%	Rate
1	Newton,C	CHI	75	45	60	768	3	4	56	8	10.7	113.6
2	Wilson,R	ICC	86	53	61.6	687	0	0	56	6	7	110
3	Roethlisbe	GWG	104	67	64.4	814	3	2.9	63	7	6.7	98.8
4	Manning,P	CHP	101	62	61.4	725	1	1	71	6	5.9	98.8
5	Tannehill	MVM	107	72	67.3	703	1	0.9	43	5	4.7	97.2
6	Romo	SC	110	72	65.5	792	3	2.7	54	7	6.4	96.5
7	Brady,T	YOR	96	61	63.5	599	1	1	44	5	5.2	94.1
8	Cutler	TCT	95	63	66.3	734	3	3.2	73	5	5.3	93.9
9	Flacco	COW	128	81	63.3	895	4	3.1	49	8	6.3	91.8
10	Ryan,M	AUR	112	63	56.3	846	1	0.9	42	5	4.5	91.6
11	Hill,S	BCR	96	63	65.6	636	2	2.1	27	4	4.2	89.6
12	Mariota	CAR	98	58	59.2	761	5	5.1	57	7	7.1	86.3
13	Manning,E	MAR	49	30	61.2	297	0	0	48	1	2	85.2
14	Dalton	SS	121	76	62.8	858	4	3.3	81	4	3.3	81.2
15	Brees	DTL	124	80	64.5	894	3	2.4	53	2	1.6	81.2

RUSHING

Rk	Player	Team	Att	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	McCoy,L	GWG	77	431	5.6	40	1
2	Miller,L	CHP	61	398	6.5	23	1
3	Foster,A	AUR	60	389	6.5	34	4
4	Bell,L	LAK	103	384	3.7	23	1
5	Forte	PIC	66	336	5.1	36	0
6	Anderson,C	SS	60	327	5.5	24	3
7	Hill,J	ICC	44	286	6.5	30	2
8	Gore	SC	51	279	5.5	50	1
9	Gordon,M	TCT	54	275	5.1	26	3
10	Ivory	MVM	47	268	5.7	23	4
11	Lacy	CAR	54	267	4.9	31	2
12	Blue	SBE	58	247	4.3	21	3
13	Ingram,M	VV	53	213	4	15	4
14	Murray,D	CHI	54	206	3.8	16	2
15	Stewart	BCR	48	205	4.3	15	0
16	Lynch,M	YOR	44	203	4.6	33	0
17	Morris,A	COW	34	200	5.9	47	1
18	Coleman,T	MOH	52	175	3.4	12	2
19	Bernard,G	YOR	36	167	4.6	22	1
20	Starks	MAR	26	160	6.2	35	1

RECEIVING

Rk	Player	Team	Att	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	Maclin	GWG	24	409	17	36	5
2	Evans,M	COW	21	237	11.3	19	0
3	Jones,J	MOH	20	416	20.8	99	1
4	Brown,A	TCT	20	227	11.4	22	2
5	Bryant,D	CHP	19	314	16.5	71	3
6	Johnson,C	DTL	19	325	17.1	53	2
7	Kelce,T	CAR	19	224	11.8	41	3
8	Smith Sr.	COW	18	218	12.1	29	2
9	Hilton	DTL	18	215	11.9	40	0
10	Decker	DTL	18	188	10.4	28	0
11	Fitzgerald	COW	17	195	11.5	17	4
12	Allen,K	SC	17	198	11.6	42	1
13	Beckham Jr	SS	17	198	11.6	30	2
14	Jackson,V	TCT	16	279	17.4	73	2
15	Johnson,A	CHP	16	181	11.3	20	1
16	Nelson,J	SBE	16	195	12.2	21	3
17	Thomas,D	PIC	15	182	12.1	27	1
18	Boldin	AUR	15	260	17.3	40	0
19	Floyd,M	CHI	15	328	21.9	51	4
20	Green,A	SC	15	256	17.1	54	3

KICKING

Rk	Player	Team	FGA	FGM	FG%	40	50	Lg	Pts
1	Brown,J	MAR	11	10	90.9	4	1	54	37
2	Succop	CHP	9	8	88.9	1	1	51	32
3	Parkey	BCR	9	9	100	5	1	54	32
4	Dawson	DTL	10	9	90	3	0	49	31
5	Gostkowski	TCT	7	7	100	2	0	48	30
6	Folk	AUR	5	4	80	2	0	48	25
7	Suisham	GWG	6	5	83.3	3	0	47	23
8	Vinatieri	SS	4	4	100	2	1	50	21
9	Janikowski	MOH	6	5	83.3	0	0	33	20
10	Novak	COW	4	4	100	1	0	48	20
11	Bailey,D	CHI	4	3	75	3	1	53	20
12	Zuerlein	ICC	5	3	60	1	0	43	19
13	Carpenter	MVM	5	3	60	3	1	55	19
14	Hauschka	CAR	4	3	75	2	1	51	18
15	Tucker,J	SC	4	3	75	2	0	46	17
16	Nugent	SBE	2	2	100	1	0	40	15
17	Murray,P	LAK	2	2	100	2	2	53	12
18	Scobee	PIC	4	2	50	1	0	41	10
19	Walsh	YOR	3	1	33.3	0	0	36	10
20	Crosby	VV	1	1	100	1	0	44	9



AROUND THE



With Spats McChad

NEW YORK – The EFL’s “Asian Experiment” begins this week with the Taipei Sharks hosting the Pyongyang Sun at the Kaohsiung Stadium in the Republic of China, more commonly, and less controversially, referred to as Taiwan. The football game is one component of this spectacle, but not the most remarkable one. The fact that the Hermit Kingdom is lending its approval and support to an American enterprise based around a uniquely American sport is mind-boggling. I would add that it is also refreshing except that a deeply ingrained suspicion about the motives of **Kim Jong-un** forces me to pause and ask: *what’s in it for him?* Apart from US dollars, a hard-to-come-by commodity in Kim Land, I cannot see the upside for any self-respecting *Juche*-ist to engage in joint economic venture with the hated United States. So, there must be other dynamics at play here that include the possibility that we are entering the ‘rapprochement phase’ of North Korea’s historically wobbly and contradictory foreign policy, or that **Kim Jong-un** is just one crazy mofo.

The fact that South Korea and Communist China have also joined in the fun suggests that, for whatever reasons, they too are willing to suspend their intransigence and distrust toward traditionally hostile neighbours to bring their people, and anyone with a satellite or cable package that includes newly commissioned ESPN-7 network, the opportunity to watch mostly American semi-pro athletes get their shot at fame and a moderate pay-check. The players don’t have to be great – they just have to be there in a shiny uniform on TV representing their sponsor country. The hope is that the glitz and hype of American football culture will catch on and stir positive patriotic feelings in the Asian masses, ultimately generating more sponsors and higher ticket and memorabilia sales. One would think, however, that having more than a few token Asian players on the field would make engendering local Asian patriotism a little easier. There are very few Asian players in EFL Asia, and almost all of those were born in the United States.

This gamble that mainland Asia will follow the post-war Japanese model and embrace American culture is likely to fail miserably without the persuasive power of a nuclear strike to back it up. However if, by some miracle, football in the Far East succeeds, it could be the harbinger of not only a lucrative new market, but of a new golden era of World Peace. Imagine that – the EFL brings football to Asia, peace to the world, but cannot land a team in New York City! How screwed up is that?

ONLY A GAME

The Durham Thunder Lizards are 2-1 and currently lead the North Division. It is a position in the standings that most analysts outside of Durham expect them to still occupy at the end of the season as they have the talent and the experience to stay ahead of weaker competition in the north. Inside Durham, however, the mood is anxious and doubtful after the Lizards dropped a 24-16 decision to Gwinnett this week. The re-fitted Gladiators were always going to be a challenge to take down at the Coliseum, but in defending their home field they did not seize victory as much as Durham appeared to yield it to them.

It was another uninspiring performance by the Dinosaur’s offence. The offensive line struggled ineptly against the moderately effective Gwinnett pass rush. **Mike Daniels** pushed around **Eugene Monroe** whenever the mood struck him, due to the Durham tackle being still dozy from a four-hour all-you-eat breakfast buffet at *Chitlins Country Diner* (conveniently situated next door to the Lizards’ hotel). Monroe got away with about 8 holds more than the 3 that were called on him. In all, Durham offensive linemen were flagged 9 times, 6 of those for holding. Even All Pro center, **Nick Mangold** caught the attention of referee **Ronald Torbert**, getting called three times, once for holding, as fatigue from helping struggling line mate **Jonathan Martin** set in in the second half.

With the line struggles came spotty performances by the skill position players, particularly quarterback **Drew Brees**, who heard footsteps in the pocket a few times when there were none. Trailing 17-16 in the 4th quarter, his sequence of throws at the outset of what was supposed to be the game-winning drive from deep in his own territory with under two minutes remaining was the stuff of a shell-shocked rookie, not the cool and deadly demeanour of a record-holding pro. It was as if **EJ Manuel** had donned a Brees jersey and run out onto the field in his place. On 4th & 6 at the Durham 11, facing a blitz but no pressure, he threw high and behind **Eric Decker** for an incomplete pass. That left the Durham coach with few palatable options. With just 1:35 remaining, he chose to allow **LeSean McCoy** to score from 8 yards out just to get the ball back with a chance to tie it on a touchdown and two-point conversion.

If you are of the school of thought that believes a team ultimately reflects the demeanour and attitude of its coach,

then some of the blame for the Lizards' pedestrian start on offence must rest on the bunched up shoulders and smoldering head of the most inwardly furious coach in the EFL, **George Kaldis**. His tension on the Durham sideline has been palpable since the third pre-season game, when the starting offensive line gave up 3 sacks and 5 pressures in one half of play. As it dawned on him that his veteran and future Hall-of-Fame quarterback, **Drew Brees** was no longer as nimble as he once was and spot starter **Nick Foles'** obsession with his *World of Warcraft* night elf character, Folioth, was keeping him up at night and away from the playbook, he began to fume on the inside. This manifested as a constantly serious look on his face and a slight edge to the tone of his voice.

In the 4th pre-season game against Mission Viejo he put his starting offensive line on the field to give them some extra practice, causing his base stress level to rise a little higher when Foles was sacked on the first play from scrimmage and hurried 6 times in the first three possessions by the Monarchs' future cuts. Over the ensuing week his growing anxiety



Durham coach **George Kaldis** loses it at the Gwinnett Coliseum after an offensive melt down in the Glads' red zone thwarts a chance for his team to take the lead. The Durham offence struggled to find the end zone for the third straight week.

appeared as a perpetually furrowed brow, set jaw, and brief clipped sentences when he spoke. Sometimes he would be short with service people if they didn't quite get his order right the first time.

In Week One against Pickering, the offence moved along at a decent pace against one of the league's more undermanned defences, but invariably had to stop short of the end zone and call on kicker, **Phil Dawson** to salvage points for the effort. As his veteran kicker lined up for his 5th field goal attempt of the day, Kaldis was heard muttering something under his breath as he looked down and sharply kicked a cooler on the sideline. In the following week, colleagues noted that his face was slightly flushed, that he rarely looked people in the eye, and that he had developed an unsettling twitch in his right eye. When ordering food on the road, he would inspect the contents of the bag for long periods before leaving a drive thru and always complained that there not enough napkins or ketchup packets.

In Week Two versus Markham, he overreacted to the rain at Jurassic Park, calling up the Park Warden and loudly berating him for setting the humidity level too high on the climate dial for the park's weather control system. The Warden's denial that such a system existed fell on deaf ears. Kaldis promised to have him fired as he slammed his phone onto his desk. As the Thunder Lizards slogged away in the mud against the inept but stubborn North Stars, Kaldis paced the sideline non-stop for almost the entire second half, only stopping to yell at referee **Carl Cheffers** after a defensive holding call against **Kam Chancellor** wiped out a Lizards' sack and put the Stars closer to the end zone. During the week after narrowly besting Markham, 17-13, Kaldis stopped eating at regular intervals, bingeing at odd hours on loaves of bread and drinking Coke while spending late nights at the drawing board trying to devise better offensive schemes. Friends saw the growth of stubble on his face, withdrew from his breath, noted that he wore the same blue and orange track suit throughout the day – every day, and began to gently ask him if everything was alright. His response was usually a blank stare followed by a forced smile, a sharp, uncomfortable laugh, and a hoarse, *"everything's fine, it's only a game."*

In Week Three at Gwinnett, the Coach Kaldis who showed up on game day was more of his usual self. He was reportedly quite satisfied with a new play he drew up that he had the players practice the day before. He called the play "Destroy Gwinnett" and it was designed "to break their will!" He took the field chuckling under his breath. *"I will wait.... until it's time,"* he kept repeating.

After going three-and-out on their first series and surrendering a field goal to Gwinnett on their second series, Coach Kaldis decided it was time. *"Destroy Gwinnett!"* he barked at **Drew Brees** as the quarterback ran out onto the field.

The Lizards lined up in their basic offence with fullback **Anthony Sherman** in front of **Ahmad Bradshaw** in the I-formation. After a very quick count Brees sprinted back into position, turned without looking, and lofted a high long ball to a spot in the middle of the field where a safety playing in the nickel might have been waiting. But safety **Calvin Pryor**, a run-stopper by preference, was cheating in to guard against the run and never saw the ball's trajectory. He was oblivious to the danger as **Calvin Johnson**, 'Megatron,' exploded toward the spot where the ball would land, two steps ahead of corner **Tim Jennings**, who stumbled trying to track the ball. The

ball was slightly underthrown, however, and Johnson had to pause for it long enough that safety **Morgan Burnett**, who had been shading toward the side of **TY Hilton**, arrived in time to wrap him up and limit the gain to 51 yards. It was a nice result, but not the touchdown Coach Kaldis had envisioned.

“Damn it!” he spat as he pulled off his cap and slapped it against his leg. The strange reaction to a bomb completed for a length more than half the football field caught the attention of some of his players and coaches. They may have been wondering if anything would be good enough for their coach on this day. The Lizards went on to score a touchdown on that drive when Brees caught the Gladiators in tight coverage and threw it over their heads to Johnson in the end zone. Maybe, just maybe, the deadly Durham offence was about to snap out of its funk.

But it was not to be. A holding penalty on **David DeCastro** held Durham to a field goal on their next possession. On the series after that, a flag was thrown at **Nick Mangold** for holding, forcing a punt. And after Monroe was flagged for mugging Daniels on their next series, the Gwinnett defensive end powered through and sacked Brees on the next play, forcing a fumble that ex-Durham corner **Sean Smith** picked up and ran back 18 yards for a touchdown. Gwinnett led 17-13 at half time.

The Thunder Lizards defence controlled the second half and even forced a turnover when **Trent Murphy** caused **Joseph Randle** to fumble at the end of a 23-yard run, but the offence continued to fight itself. Finally, consecutive passes of 26 yards to Johnson and 20 yards to Hilton got them into range for Dawson, who closed the deficit to 1 point with a 30-yard field goal. Then, after stopping Gwinnett on 4th and 4 at the Durham 36 yard line, the Lizards exploded up the field with a 53-yard catch-and-run by Johnson on a short slant from Brees. With the ball at the Gwinnett 11, a go-ahead field goal looked certain and a touchdown likely.

“Okay, okay!” huffed Coach Kaldis as he fixated his eyes on the field, “we’re on the move! We just have to finish it!”

They got off to an apparent good start with a 5-yard run by **Mike Davis**, but a flag flew across the field as he went down at the Gwinnett 6. The call was holding against Durham’s **Jonathan Martin**.

“Damn! I told him not to hold and he f^%&ing holds him!” he cried. “Martin! You stupid idiot!” he yelled as the Durham line got in their stances for the next play. “Get your head out of your ass, you moron!”

At that, Martin lifted his helmet as if to say, *you talking to me?* Another flag flew. It was a false start call on Martin.

“OH JEEZ, are you a total simpleton or what! Get him the f&^k out of there before something else happens,” Kaldis screamed.

Cameron Fleming, the back-up guard, took the field. Facing 1st and 25 at the Gwinnett 26, Brees threw off his back foot incomplete intended for Johnson then promptly faded back to pass again. Sensing an opportunity, Daniels pulled a stunt to his left, side-stepped Fleming, who was looking for someone else to block, and landed on Brees for a 9-yard loss. Seconds earlier it had been 1st and 10 at the Gwinnett 11; now it was 3rd and 34 at the 35. Kaldis threw his arms up in the air, tilted his head back, and yelled: “AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!” at the top of his lungs. He sustained it for some time, the sound becoming lost in the din of the Coliseum crowd roaring their approval. The third down pass also fell incomplete, bringing up a long field goal attempt for Dawson, who hooked it so badly that it might have split the uprights of a goal post set up parallel to the length of the field. It was a predictable and logical finish for a team that had been shooting itself in the foot for most of the game. Gwinnett still led on the scoreboard, by the narrowest of margins, but in the battle of wills this game was all but over at that point. There was, as mentioned, more misery to come for the Thunder Lizards before the loss became official.

A melt down by **George Kaldis** doesn’t measure very high on the K-Scale, the fit-measuring standard based on the epic tantrums of Pickering coach, **Gus Konstantakos**, but that doesn’t mean it doesn’t impact his team. There is no question that the Durham offence, widely predicted to be one of the top three offences in the league, has not yet delivered the big punches expected of a heavyweight. But it is an offence playing tense and tight, like its coach. The season is still young and the defence is playing lights out while the offence works through its adjustments. The sour and dour Kaldis should relax, lighten up and remember his own advice: “it’s only a game.”

A THOUSAND WAYS TO WIN

In an interview recently published in the *Foshan Bright Day People’s News*, the local daily in Foshan, Guangdong Province, China, and re-posted in an English version on the ‘Friendship’ portal of the paper’s web page, Head Coach of the Markham North Stars, **Darrin Jones**, while touring in support of EFL Asia during the summer, is quoted in response to a question from reporter **Kluk Pow-Chin** about Markham’s chances in 2015.

POW-CHIN: “Many people say your team lose this year. How you make Markham champion of lions again this year?”

JONES: “There are a thousand ways to lose a football game, Kluk. Any coach who has been around for a while will tell you that because they’ve seen lots of losses. Most of them spend their time teaching their players how not to lose games – mistakes to avoid, things like that. While they’re focusing on how not to lose, I focus my players on how to win. If there are a thousand ways to lose, there are a thousand ways to win. I teach my players to look for ways to win.”

POW-CHIN: “A win is worth a thousand pictures, you say then in this age of great victory?”

JONES: “Well, ah, yes, Kluk. I am sure there are at least a thousand pictures taken at every football game – win or lose. Some of them are worth a lot of money to people. We hope they’re taking pictures of our wins.”

POW-CHIN: “I bring you to wrap up from the people of Foshan a jade goat for luck. How this make you feel?”

JONES: “I love goats, Kluk, as long as they’re on the other team, if you get my drift!”

The North Stars certainly have a knack for winning in strange ways, a skill they will have to perfect if they plan on making the post-season this year. That we are even talking about a possible post-season berth for Markham, three weeks into the season, is a testament to how the coach who plays 'My Way' by **Frank Sinatra** in the dressing room prior to every game has conditioned the football world to respect his team no matter how uninspiring they look on paper. His secret, never before revealed to Western media, came out in an unguarded moment while basking in the glow of an adoring Chinese Markham fan base.

This week the North Stars found Way to Win No. 59. They sat on the Spartans and hung sticky goobers over their noses with a five-field goal performance by kicker **Josh Brown**, 5 forced fumbles by the defence, an interception and 27-yard return by **Kendrick Lewis**, and a game-changing 23-yard fumble return for a TD by **Cedric Thornton**. On a day when the sieve-like Spartan defence felt emboldened by a chunky, choppy Markham offence, the Stars scored 29 points with the benefit of just one offensive touchdown. The Spartans actually led 7-3 at one point after scoring on a long drive built around the running of **Matt Forte** and capped off with a lovely 19-yard TD pass from **Philip Rivers** to **Golden Tate**. The North Stars countered with a long and dreadful drive of their own, consisting almost entirely of running plays, to regain the advantage on a 4-yard TD run by **James Starks**.

With the Markham offence exhausted after marching 80 yards, the defence took over the arduous task of winning the game. They shut down Rivers the rest of the way, created short fields for their offence with four turnovers, and held the quick-strike Spartans' attack to 234 yards, 13 first downs and just 1 play of 25 yards or more. It was a beautiful win if you like ugly.

AROUND THE EFL

Terrific **Tom Brady** resurfaced after an extended absence to guide the Excaliburs to a dramatic 36-30 comeback overtime win over the Corn Kings in front of a pack of drunks at Camelot in York. The Corn Kings scored TDs on their first 3 possessions, prompting early exits from the stadium and drinking binges by the remainder of the crowd. They looked in complete command until three fateful things occurred – **De'Anthony Thomas** worked his magic with an 84-yard punt return for a TD to start the second half; **Joe Flacco** didn't see **Micah Hyde** lurking behind **Julian Thomas** and threw the ball a little too casually that the York safety picked off to end a Cowtown red zone threat; and **Tom Brady** simply got hot. Which play was bigger: the 9-yard TD pass to **James Jones** to tie the game with 0:05 left, or the perfectly executed 28-yard TD pass to **Kelvin Benjamin** in OT to win it? This is a fighting question in a euphoric York celebrating its first win of 2015.

Despite failing to convert a single third down in 8 opportunities, the **Shaun Hill**-led Ravens' built-to-tye offence continued to chug forward like a slow steam engine, carrying its team to another non-loss, topping winless LA 32-17 at Beaufort County. Both teams applied a heavy dose of the running game by combining for 368 yards on the ground, almost 60% of the total yards in the game. The difference was in the quarterback play and this was a rare day when Hill would win that battle handily. Hill did everything coach **Neil Shannon** could expect; he smartly stretched the field twice in the first half, connecting on passes of 23 and 27 yards to **Randall Cobb**, and 19 yards for a TD to **DeAndre Hopikins**. He did not press the point later and risk getting his team into trouble. The Knights' losing streak, dating back to 2013, climbs to 24, which is a league record.

At Joe Ferguson Stadium in Iowa, spectators caught a glimpse of a possible bright future for Cannibals' QB, **Marcus Mariota**, but the rookie eventually fell in his duel with rising Cubs' star, **Russell Wilson**, 38-29. Mariota made two nice TD throws to keep pace early, but got picked in the Cubs end zone before half time. Wilson made no such error, throwing three TDs without an interception as he out-paced another questionable performance by the Cubs' highly-ranked defence.

At the Big House in Chino, **Cam Newton** continued his mission to bring the long ball back into the Convicts' game plan by completing four deep passes, two of those for touchdowns, in a 28-21 win over the newly tenacious Monarchs. Second year Monarch, **Khalil Mack** is going to be a star some day if he isn't already. He sacked Newton twice on 4th down gambles in Mission Viejo territory to keep the hungry Convicts' offence from running away with the game.

In Aurora, the Mustangs started the game with 5 wide receivers and **Matt Ryan** targeted no. 4 on the depth chart, **Andre Holmes** with his first 3 throws, completing them for 33, 12, and 19 yards. Then they contracted to the heavy set to push the ball over the goal line with **Arian Foster** for the opening touchdown in a 31-14 win over Scarborough. With 22 consecutive wins and counting for Head Coach, **Rich Liotta**, we have not seen the last of this in-your-face, dare-you-to-stop-me style. My excitement about the emergence of **Alfred Blue** in Scarborough last week was tempered by the sight of H-back **Jeff Cumberland** busting his first career carry for an 18-yard TD run. It is possible that my 9-year old niece could run behind the Scarborough front line.

At the Carolina Slammer the Regulators won their home opener 34-21 over the Swordfish on the strength of four TD passes from **Tony Romo**, one of those a 54-yard bomb to **AJ Green**. It was two more picks for **Andy Dalton**, another loss in the turnover battle and another loss on the scoreboard for the Fish. It was also a dangerous day for elite wide receivers as both AJ Green and **Odell Beckham Jr.** went down with injuries that will keep them out of action for multiple weeks.

At **TERRORDOME** in Virden, the Violators struck first after a pick by **Prince Amukamara** set up a quick TD run by **Mark Ingram**. This seemed to wake up a dozy **Jay Cutler**, who was close to perfect the rest of the way, throwing a pair of TD passes to **Dwayne Allen** and **Vincent Jackson** in the 2nd quarter to get the Triumph back on track for the 27-17 win.

And finally, at Patriot Place in Charleswood, the Pats found the end zone twice in the 1st quarter but managed only two field goals the rest of the way as the Hellfire defence made its presence felt in more than just the pass rush to limit the damage in a 20-10 loss. It was a wasted effort, as 18th ranked QB, **Andrew Luck** continues his struggle to live up to his draft slot.

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RECORD VS THE SPREAD AFTER WEEK 3:

19-9-2

JIMMY'S WEEK FOUR PICKS

CHARLESWOOD @ CARTHAGE (line – PATRIOTS by 3)

INJURIES: Charleswood – Marcus Gilbert (OUT), Lane Johnson (OUT); Carthage – Greg Hardy (OUT), David Hawthorne (OUT), Derrick Johnson (OUT) Matt Slauson (OUT).

The long road trip to Samoa and reaction to the mediocre 20-point output last week against the Hellfire have shaved a couple of points off this line. The Pats are the clear favourite, however, and can expect little trouble if their defence is able to squeeze the surprisingly efficient Cannibals' offence. Marcus Mariota is looking like the real deal so far, piloting a Cannibals attack that cannot be brushed aside. If the same could be said of their defence a case could be made for another Cinderella season in Carthage, but the defence is a bit of a wreck. The ball is squarely in Peyton Manning's court to serve up a few early touchdowns to put the Carthage offence on its back foot and avoid an uncomfortable and unpredictable full-blown shootout. With both Pats tackles out of action, there is a rare and modest opportunity for the Cannibals' pass rush to break through. But before you run out and make this your "sleeper" pick of the week, remember that I used the words "rare" and "modest." **PICK: CHARLESWOOD**

TWIN CITIES @ MOHAVE (line – TRIUMPH by 1)

INJURIES: Twin Cities – Bobby Wagner (OUT); Mohave – Allen Robinson (OUT).

The Triumph are still a common favourite to finish the season in a wild card spot, but to say they are a strong 2-1 would be a stretch. The offence is buzzing along as most expected, with rookie Melvin Gordon injecting life into the running game and the constant threat of a Jay Cutler interception sharpening the focus of the unit as a whole. The defence, on the other hand, suffered a humiliation against the Pats and has, generally, not been the stalwart force it was a year ago. There is an opportunity here for Andrew Luck to turn it around and steal a game for his team, but it is no gimme. The Mohave pass rush will have to penetrate and generate turnovers in order for the Hellfire defence to have any success against the high-powered Twin Cities passing attack. Without that, Luck will find himself in a familiar position – passing 50 times against a defence that is pinning its ears back and going after him. A Hellfire upset is not a longshot, but more than a few things have to go right for it to happen. **PICK: TWIN CITIES**

VIRDEN @ BEAUFORT COUNTY (line – RAVENS by 13)

INJURIES: Virden – Kelcy Quarles (IR), Stephen Tulloch (IR), Martavis Bryant (OUT), Amari Cooper (OUT), Mike Scifres (OUT); Beaufort County – Vontaze Burfict (OUT), Evan Mathis (OUT), Nick Fairley (OUT), Mason Foster (OUT), Jairus Byrd (IR).

An offence led by Shaun Hill will not typically give away 13 points to any team, but Virden is not a typical team. The Violators are bad. Furthermore, they are injured. It is safe to say that the passing game will struggle with two starters out and Derek Carr throwing to the remainder. There is only so much even Jamaal Charles can do when the aerial threat is low, so don't expect him to carry the offence to victory all by himself. If the Violators even had an average defence, the threat of Charles combined with the game-managing mediocrity of Hill might make this an attractive underdog pick. However, the Virden defence is also bad and the Ravens have enough premium targets in the passing game to be able to comfortably avoid Vontae Davis' side of the field. Beaufort is banged up as well, but their missing pieces will not factor as significantly into the final outcome of this game. Expect another slow-and-steady performance by Hill and a non-performance by the Virden offence. **PICK: BEAUFORT COUNTY**

IOWA CITY @ CHINO (line – Pick’Em)

INJURIES: Iowa City – None; Chino – Ian Williams (OUT).

The early returns suggest that a tight three-way race is shaping up in the West Division and that both of these teams will be part of that race. There is a rare Week Four playoff feel to this game that has attracted a lot of attention and a lot of disagreement about which team has the edge. With the Convicts even money at home, Vegas obviously likes the Cubs enough to trim away the home field advantage and turn this into a coin flip for outsiders. If there is an inside read on the outcome, it is not obvious to me. This game really could go either way. The Cubs have the edge in talent, but their performance to date, especially of the defence, has not met high expectations. The Convicts have been getting MVP-calibre play from quarterback Cam Newton, who leads the league in passer rating and is tied for top spot in TD passes with 8. His play will have to continue at that pace if the Convicts are going to knock off the Cubs because it is a sure bet, on the other side, that Russell Wilson will not be taking the day off. Expect this to be Game of the Week material with Cam emerging as “the Man” at home. **PICK: CHINO**

MISSION VIEJO @ LOS ANGELES (line – MONARCHS by 1)

INJURIES: Mission Viejo – Joique Bell (QUESTIONABLE), Lardarius Webb (OUT), Luke Wilson (OUT); Los Angeles – Brandin Cooks (OUT), CJ Spiller (OUT).

The Monarchs are playing good football. Let that sink in for a moment – the...Monarchs...are...playing...good...football. Ryan Tannehill is proving to be a reliable custodian of an offence that is using ball control to score and keep the still-developing defence well-rested on the sideline. The Knights are, well, the Knights. There is not much more to be said about them – everyone knows who they are. They always find a way to lose and, in the process, appear worse than their marginal but fledgling talent base. The biggest problem lies with an offence that is as unimaginative as Teddy Bridgewater is incompetent. Le’Veon Bell is wasting his talent in schemes designed to put everything on his shoulders. Bell is good, but not that good. Nevertheless, at some point the bounces will all go the Knights’ way and the defence will put the offence in a position to succeed – the trick is figuring out when that will happen. I have a vision that that time is very near....this week, in fact. **PICK: LOS ANGELES**

YORK @ DURHAM (line – THUNDER LIZARDS by 10)

INJURIES: York – De’Anthony Thomas (OUT); Durham – Corey Wootton (DOUBTFUL), Terron Armstead (OUT), Alex Carter (OUT), Kam Chancellor (OUT), Tyrann Mathieu (OUT).

The first “far out” line of Week Four has the struggling offence of the Thunder Lizards giving away 10 points to a York team one week away a classic Tom Brady comeback. It is counter-intuitive for the “hot read” poolie to accept a spread like this, so a lot of action will gravitate to the Swords. Don’t be fooled. The fundamentals strongly favour Durham irrespective of the indicators flowing from the season’s tiny three-week sample size. The loss of Kam Chancellor in the Durham secondary is a big blow, but one that is cushioned this week by the lack of York receiving threats after Kelvin Benjamin. The combination of Giovani Bernard and Marshawn Lynch in the backfield caused fits for the Corn Kings last week, but that was because they had one eye on Benjamin the whole game. The luxury of Richard Sherman allows Durham to give the York running game all the attention it deserves. On the other side, Von Miller could be a problem for the shaky Durham offensive line, but if he is used like he was last week, which was rarely, Drew Brees will have the time he needs to pick apart the York corners. **PICK: DURHAM**

PICKERING @ COWTOWN (line – CORN KINGS by 2)

INJURIES: Pickering – Damarious Randall (QUESTIONABLE); Cowtown – Todd Gurley (OUT), Koa Misi (OUT).

This is a virtual pick’em line since neither of these teams can be counted on right now to keep the game close once it has taken a bad turn either way. The Spartans were a question mark entering the season and they are performing like one now, with the defence showing better than expected and the offence misfiring badly under an agitated Philip Rivers, who does not look at all like the confident leader who guided the Cannibals to a Gale Sayers berth last year. He has an opportunity to break out against a Corn Kings’ defence that has, by all evaluations, not lived up to expectations. The pass rush, supposedly one of the league’s most promising, has generated only occasional pressure, the corners have been hung out to dry, and the run defence is getting gashed too often for double-digit gains. The offence has been a recent bright spot, but an injury to Todd Gurley and a tendency for Joe Flacco to throw ugly interceptions will have fans on tenterhooks for every drive. The high expectations in Cowtown will put pressure on the players to deliver against a team they should beat. It’s time for them to step up. **PICK: COWTOWN**

MARKHAM @ AURORA (line – MUSTANGS by 5)

INJURIES: Markham – None; Aurora – Chris Polk (QUESTIONABLE), Karlos Dansby (OUT), Julian Edelman (OUT).

There are respected sports analysts who are confidently predicting a Markham upset that would hand Rich Liotta his first loss as head coach of the Mustangs. Such is the mystique surrounding the abilities of Coach Darrin Jones that serious people are prepared to stake their reputations on a ragtag band of mercenaries and journeymen entranced by a near cult-like persona. Let them hang out on a limb. I am not going to stake my reputation on intangibles, no matter how compelling they may appear to the ‘alien abduction’ sympathizers in the sports world, people ready to discount a perfect season as if it were an ephemeral moment in time. If there is a way to dismantle the illusory power of the North Stars on the field without allowing luck to override the natural abilities of the teams, Liotta will find it. And once he has peaked behind the curtain, the Wizard of Dawg will be hard-pressed to hold on to his true believers for very long. Expect the Mustangs’ winning streak to continue. **PICK: AURORA**

GWINNETT @ SOUTH CAROLINA (line – GLADIATORS by 7)

INJURIES: Gwinnett – Dri Archer (OUT); South Carolina – AJ Green (OUT), Dontay Moch (OUT).

It has been an exciting season for the Gladiators so far. They almost lost to Sebastian, almost beat Aurora, and watched as Durham imploded in front of them. One thing is certain: they are better than last year. But how better is the important question begging for an answer as they head to Columbia to face the Regulators. The team that Hal built is another one that entered the season with high expectations and has so far fallen short. This would be a really good time for Tony Romo and Co. to pick up the pace and claim a higher spot in the three-way race for second place in the South Division. However, the absence of AJ Green is a significant handicap against a Glads team that leads the league in net yards per game. Gwinnett is riding a small wave of success that should get them started and allow them to narrowly withstand a Regs 4th quarter comeback. **PICK: SOUTH CAROLINA**

SEBASTIAN @ SCARBOROUGH (line – BLUE EAGLES by 14)

INJURIES: Sebastian – Odell Beckham Jr. (OUT); Scarborough – TJ Yeldon (QUESTIONABLE), Will Hill (OUT).

The Blue Eagles did not look quite ready for the spotlight last week, losing convincingly to the Mustangs, but that does not mean they aren’t capable of hooking the Swordfish and fileting them on the Lake Ontario rocks at Bluffs Stadium. Although Scarborough has an embarrassing history against this sorry franchise, losing 3 times in its 3-year existence, there is a feeling that the Blue Eagles are finally turning their fortunes around after two rough seasons had turned their fans against them and their home field into an advantage for the visitors. Aaron Rodgers is not posting impressive numbers so far, but he has the weapons to pad his stats in a hurry against a Sebastian secondary that has yielded a combined passer rating of 130.5 to opposing quarterbacks and which has surrendered 1,073 yards passing, last in the league. On top of that, Andy Dalton’s saviour, Odell Beckham Jr. is listed as ‘OUT’ for this game, depriving him of his first and only real vertical weapon. The Eagles are a good suicide pool pick this week, but the 14-point line demands a second thought. On second thought, pick the Eagles. **PICK: SCARBOROUGH**



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This Week in EFL History
With Professor
Sterling Smitherman

FROM THE EFL ARCHIVES – The Markham North Stars have a long history of punching above their weight. In Week Three of the 2009 EFL season they caught the league’s attention when they came within 7 yards of stunning the heavily favoured Durham Thunder Lizards on the road, losing a nail-biter, 31-27. A pass from *Donovan McNabb* bounced off the chest of *Bobby Wade* in the end zone as time expired, allowing Durham to escape what would have been a mortifying loss. Coach **George Kaldis** was grim and publicly pessimistic about his team’s future prospects after

the win, proving that not much has changed in the Durham camp six years later.

Week Three marked the sudden departure of **Pierce Roberts** as GM and coach of the Winnemucca Outlaws and the team’s equally sudden and unexpected 10-7 victory over the heavily favoured Cubs at Joe Ferguson Stadium. Under interim coach, **Marshall Dillon**, the Outlaws stunned the home crowd when *David Garrard* hit *Laveranues Coles* for a 4-yard TD strike with 0:30 left in the game. The Cubs were banged up and **Coach Redding** had elected to sit several regulars before the game, proving that not much has changed in the Iowa City camp six years later.

In Gwinnett, the Glads were the first team to face the mad blitzes of Ringgold Defensive Coordinator **Buzz “Hawkeye” Harrigan**. ‘Annihilation-7’ and ‘Annihilation-8’ called for 7 and 8 blitzers respectively. Occasionally they worked, but the Crimson Hawks still lost the game, 20-3.

Week Three was not notable for outstanding individual performances, although Florida running back *DeAngelo Williams* was lauded for his 3 TDs and 141 yards in the Dragons’ 35-16 victory over Garland.