

# 2014



# EFL NEWS

ELITE FOOTBALL LEAGUE

# 2014

Week Sixteen

Week Sixteen

February 8, 2015



CHP	0	TCT	17	LAK	7	ICC	3	SCB	7	MAR	3	PIC	23	SEB	13	AUR	41	GWG	16
VIR	27	CAR	35	MOH	28	MVM	17	CHI	20	DTL	31	YOR	17	COW	31	SBE	3	SC	13

# BOWLERAMA!



**Eddie Lacy**

## LATEST EFL NEWS INSIDE

- LACY BOWLS OVER TRIUMPH
- DURHAM STOMPS ON STARS TO CLINCH THE NORTH
- CHINO BEATS SLUGGS BUT STAYS PUT IN WEST DIVISION
- MUSTANGS ARE PERFECT
- KNIGHTS ARE PERFECT
- GLADIATORS FINISH STRONG WITH UPSET AT COLUMBIA
- AND MUCH MORE.....

### Also in this issue

- SPATS FEATURE, 'DOCTOR McCHAD'S POST SEASON POST-MORTEM,' 'FINGERS & FIRES,' 'AROUND THE EFL.'
- JIMMY THE GEEK
- THIS WEEK IN EFL HISTORY

*Eddie Lacy* of the Carthage Cannibals bowls his way through the defence of the Twin Cities Triumph on a 19-yard rumble in 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter action in Carthage. Lacy would score from 2 yards out on the next play to give his team an early 14-10 lead. (STORY INSIDE).



Who was slick in Week Sixteen?

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



**Eddie Lacy**  
RB  
Carthage Cannibals

32 Carries, 156 yards, 3 TDs. He carried the heavy load vs Triumph.

OFFENSE



**Rashad Johnson**  
S  
Carthage Cannibals

2 Tackles, 2 PD, 2 INTs. 2 picks in 2<sup>nd</sup> turned the game around.

DEFENSE



11-5-0

# Twin Cities

## 17

### MVP

Eddie Lacy

## 35

# Carthage

13-3-0



# GAME OF THE WEEK

### TEAM LEADERS

Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Cutler	26	39	372	2
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Vereen	7	28	4.0	0
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Brown	9	154	17.1	2

Team	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
Twin Cities	10	0	7	0	-	17
Carthage	7	14	7	7	-	35

### TEAM LEADERS

Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Rivers	19	24	276	2
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Lacy	32	156	4.9	3
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Gordon	6	101	16.8	2

### Play of the Game

Facing 4<sup>th</sup> & 13 at the Carthage 32, the Triumph decided to go for it. Cannibals' safety **Rashad Johnson** picked off the pass and returned it 44 yards to set up a momentum-changing TD.

**SUMMARY:** It was raining in Carthage for the game that would decide the winner of the East Division. But the rain did not slow down either offense. The Cannibals got on the board quickly with a 19-yard TD pass from **Philip Rivers** to **Josh Gordon** capping a 4-play, 80-yard drive. But the Triumph soon scored the equalizer on a 9-yard TD pass from **Jay Cutler** to **Antonio Brown**. Carthage drove back but a fumble by **Eddie Lacy** at mid-field set up a short go-ahead FG drive to put the Triumph in front. But it would be their last lead of the game. Lacy busted runs of 16 and 19 yards before finishing off an 84-yard drive with a 2-yard TD run. Then **Rashad Johnson** picked off Cutler and returned it to the Twin Cities 33; three plays later Carthage was in the end zone on a 9-yard TD pass to Gordon. The Triumph got one last shot at the end zone before half time but Cutler was picked in the red zone by Johnson, his second of the quarter, to end the threat. Rivers took to the air in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, going 5 of 5 for 83 yards to set up Lacy's 2<sup>nd</sup> TD of the game. A huge 65-yard TD catch by Brown got the Triumph back in striking distance, trailing 28-17 then a fumbled snap by Rivers set up a Triumph drive to the Cannibals' 1. But an incomplete pass on 4<sup>th</sup> down snuffed out the scoring chance and Carthage ran out the clock.

**QUOTES:** "This was a great team effort today. The two picks by Rashad were really big for us, but Eddie, Josh and Phil all stepped up and put the pressure on them. Josh had two guys on him almost the whole game and he did great. – Carthage Coach, **Ken Main**.  
 "It was a team effort out there. People might want to blame Jay for the interceptions or they might want to blame me for going for that long 4<sup>th</sup> down. That's okay. We're all ready to take responsibility for this loss. We'll come back at them here next week!" – Twin Cities coach, **Guy Williams**.



### ANGRY FAN



### titter

### HAPPY FAN



**Molly @Mollyqerim**

The sad part is they have to stay on this island for another week and try again in 6 days.



**Mak'e Ti'iti'i @firewarrior**

Cutler fears our mighty warrior king David. See him see his doom on every play. This is a great day.

02-04-2015 The Killing Field Temp: 69 Wind: 0-10 Rain MVP: **Eddie Lacy**

#### Scoring Summary

1 13:06	Carthage	TD Rivers 19 pass to Gordon (Hauschka) (5-80-1:46)	0-7
1 8:39	Twin Cities	TD Cutler 9 pass to Brown (Gostkowski) (11-80-4:27)	7-7
1 0:45	Twin Cities	FG Gostkowski 38 (7-31-3:00)	10-7
2 10:33	Carthage	TD Lacy 2 run (Hauschka) (10-84-5:06)	10-14
2 6:24	Carthage	TD Rivers 9 pass to Gordon (Hauschka) (3-33-1:33)	10-21
3 5:47	Carthage	TD Lacy 9 run (Hauschka) (6-92-3:46)	10-28
3 1:28	Twin Cities	TD Cutler 65 pass to Brown (Gostkowski) (2-75-0:43)	17-28
4 1:50	Carthage	TD Lacy 24 run (Hauschka) (13-94-6:04)	17-35

	TCT	CAR
First Downs	19	24
Rushes	18-54	36-154
Passes	39-26-372	24-19-276
Sacked	3-25	0-0
Fumble	0	2
Penalties	6-50	3-15
Turnovers	3	2
Missed Tackles	6	4
Blitzes	14	21
Time	30:25	29:35
Third Down	6-12	8-11
Fourth Down	0-3	1-1
Red Att/Td/Fg	4/1/1	4/4/0
Net Offense	401	430



**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!



**PATRIOTS**

3-11-0

0	0	0	0	0	0
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OT

**0**

Blake Bortles

7 of 25, 33 yards, 1 INT



**VIOLATORS**

7-9-0

7	10	0	10	0	27
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**27**

Ben Tate

45 Carries, 203 yards, 2 TDs

In a meaningless season finale the Violators dominated the time-of-possession and the score sheet by a fine defensive effort and the running of **Ben Tate**. The back-up running back opened the scoring with a 3-yard dive for a TD in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter and ended it with a 5-yard TD run off tackle in the 4<sup>th</sup>. In between **Matt Stafford** hit **Justin Blackmon** for a 12-yard TD pass and **Mason Crosby** kicked a pair of short FGs. The Pats managed only 128 yards of total offence as rookie **Blake Bortles** struggled all afternoon. **Vontae Davis** held rookie **Sammy Watkins** to just 1 catch for 8 yards in the game.



**GLADIATORS**

5-11-0

3	10	3	0	0	16
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OT

**16**

LeSean McCoy

32 Carries, 185 yards



**REGULATORS**

8-8-0

3	7	3	0	0	13
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**13**

Tony Romo

17 of 31, 174 yards, 1 TD

A check down from **Ben Roethlisberger** to **Bruce Ellington** turned into a 33-yard pass play that set up a 17-yard TD pass to **Reggie Wayne** to break a 3-3 tie in the 2<sup>nd</sup>. The Regs countered with a 16-play, 72-yard drive to tie it at 10 on a 9-yard TD pass from **Tony Romo** to **Earl Bennett**. But the Glads finished off the 1<sup>st</sup> half with a 28-yard **Shaun Suisham** FG to take a 13-10 lead at half time. A 46-yard FG by the Regs' **Justin Tucker** tied it again but the Glads grabbed the lead for good with 27-yard Suisham FG. With a chance to tie it in the 4<sup>th</sup> at the Glads' 26, the Regs went for 4<sup>th</sup> & 2 and failed.



**SWORDFISH**

4-12-0

3	7	0	3	0	13
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OT

**13**

Andy Dalton

17 of 32, 208 yards, 1 TD, 1 INT



**CORN KINGS**

8-8-0

7	7	6	11	0	31
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**31**

Joe Flacco

23 of 40, 332 yards, 3 TDs, 1 INT

With the Swordfish up 3-0 and driving for another score, **Tramaine Brock** picked off **Andy Dalton** at the Cowtown 4 and returned it 40 yards. Soon **Mike Evans** was in the end zone on a 51-yard TD pass from **Joe Flacco**. Sebastian replied with a 23-yard TD pass to **Nate Washington**, but a 61-yard drive with 1:09 left in the 1<sup>st</sup> half ended with Flacco finding **Cecil Shorts** for a 7-yard TD pass to give Cowtown a 14-10 lead. The Corn Kings' defence dominated the 2<sup>nd</sup> half after stopping the Fish on 4<sup>th</sup> and 2 early in the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Dalton was sacked 8 times, twice in the end zone for a record 2 safeties.

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



**KNIGHTS**  
0-16-0

0	0	0	7	0	7
				OT	

**Mike Glennon**  
24 of 39, 154 yards



**HELLFIRE**  
4-12-0

7	14	7	0	0	28
				OT	

**Andrew Luck**  
13 of 24, 176 yards, 3 TDs, 1 TDr

The Knights got the ball first but stalled at the Mohave 35 after failing to convert 4<sup>th</sup> and inches. The Hellfire responded with a 7-play drive featuring 2 passes for 40 yards to **Harry Douglas** and finishing with a 16-yard TD pass from **Andrew Luck** to **Jimmy Graham**. The Mohave offence rolled on to two more TDs in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter while the Knights' offence stalled. A 19-yard TD pass to **Hakeem Nicks** opened the scoring in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half to make it 28-0 Hellfire. **Le'Veon Bell** punched it into the end zone early in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter to break the shutout but not save the Knights from finishing 0-16.



**MUSTANGS**  
16-0-0

7	17	17	0	0	41
				OT	

**Matt Ryan**  
20 of 25, 317 yards, 4 TDs



**BLUE EAGLES**  
3-13-0

0	3	0	0	0	3
				OT	

**Aaron Rodgers**  
24 of 41, 157 yards, 3 INTs

**Matt Ryan** threw 3 TD passes to 3 different receivers and **Nick Folk** added a chip shot 20-yard FG to give Aurora a 24-3 lead at half time. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> half a quick 3-and-out by the Eagles to start the 3<sup>rd</sup> set the Mustangs up in good field position, resulting in a 15-yard TD pass to FB, **Bruce Miller** to make it 31-3. **Aaron Rodgers** proceeded to turn the ball over 4 times in his subsequent 4 possessions trying to lead a comeback, throwing 3 interceptions and losing the ball on a sack by **JJ Watt** to set up 10 more easy points in the 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Mustangs became the 2<sup>nd</sup> team in history to finish 16-0.



**SPARTANS**  
12-4-0

14	6	0	3	0	23
				OT	

**Peyton Manning**  
25 of 37, 276 yards, 2 TDs



**EXCALIBURS**  
7-9-0

0	3	7	7	0	17
				OT	

**Tom Brady**  
23 of 43, 199 yards, 1 INT

The Spartans' D held York on 4<sup>th</sup> and 1 at their 35 yard line, setting the stage for a 65-yard drive and an 11-yard TD pass from **Peyton Manning** to **Pierre Garçon** to open the scoring. **Demaryius Thomas** hauled in a 32-yard TD to make it 14-0 then, after an exchange of FGs, a red zone pick of **Tom Brady** by **Johnthan Banks** led to a half-ending FG by **Sebastian Janikowski** to make it 20-3. A 17-play TD drive for York in the 3<sup>rd</sup> halved the Spartans' lead then a Manning fumble led to a TD run by **Giovani Bernard** to pull York within 3. The Spartans added another FG then held off Brady to hang on.

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



## NORTH STARS

8-8-0

0	0	0	3	0	3
				OT	

James Starks

11 Carries, 59 yards



## T-LIZARDS

12-3-0

3	21	0	7	0	31
				OT	

Fred Jackson

23 Carries, 146 yards, 1 TD

**Fred Jackson** carried 5 straight times for 55 yards and a TD to account for all of the yards and points on Durham's opening TD drive to make it 10-0. That set off a flurry of scoring as **Nick Foles** put the Lizards in early command, 24-0, with TD passes of 16 yards to **Calvin Johnson** and 15 yards to **Antonio Gates**. The Lizards' defence manhandled the Stars' offence, limiting them to a single 1<sup>st</sup> down in the 1<sup>st</sup> half. The 2<sup>nd</sup> half was uneventful until a shovel pass to **Andre Ellington** went for 44 yards to set up a shutout-breaking FG for the Stars. The win clinched the North for Durham.



## SLUGGS

12-4-0

0	0	0	7	0	7
				OT	

Matt Flynn

16 of 31, 286 yards, 1 TD, 1 INT



## CONVICTS

12-4-0

7	6	0	7	0	20
				OT	

Adrian Peterson

20 Carries, 108 yards, 1 TD

Back-up Sluggs' QB **Matt Flynn** struggled while the Convicts held on to the ball for over 21 minutes in the 1<sup>st</sup> half, building a 13-0 lead on a 6-yard TD scramble by **Cam Newton** and two 33-yard FGs by **Dan Bailey**. After a scoreless 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, a short cross to **Danny Woodhead** turned into a 46-yard pass play that set up a 1-yard TD run by **Adrian Peterson** to make it 20-0 Chino early in the 4<sup>th</sup>. Santa Clara then drove to the Chino 9 but **Alshon Jeffery** fumbled away the ball at the 3. The Sluggs got on the board late with a 37-yard TD pass to **Andre Johnson** but could score no more.



## CUBS

9-7-0

0	10	3	0	0	13
				OT	

Russell Wilson

114 pass yds, 1 TD, 64 rush yds



## MONARCHS

6-10-0

0	0	7	10	0	17
				OT	

Mike James

31 Carries, 123 yards, 1 TD

A 28-yard run by **Russell Wilson** at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> led to a **Greg Zuerlein** FG to break a 0-0 deadlock. **Dan Carpenter** missed two FGs to keep the Monarchs off the board early while **Darren Sproles** snared a 9-yard TD catch to give the Cubs a 10-0 lead. The Cubs opened the 2<sup>nd</sup> half with a FG then marched to Mission's 42, where they failed on 4<sup>th</sup> & 2, setting up a Monarchs' TD drive with **Mike James** scoring from 3 yards. A 6-yard TD pass to **Kenbrell Thompkins** gave the Monarchs a 14-13 lead then **Dee Milliner** intercepted Wilson to set up the clinching 52-yard FG with 0:17 left.



# STATS



## FINAL STANDINGS

East	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Carthage (z)	13	3	0	0.813	508	31.8	409	25.6	6.2	7 1 0	7 1 0	10 2 0
Twin Cities (y)	11	5	0	0.688	406	25.4	335	20.9	4.4	6 2 0	6 2 0	9 3 0
Viriden	7	9	0	0.438	448	28.0	420	26.3	1.8	5 3 0	2 6 0	4 8 0
Mohave	4	12	0	0.250	401	25.1	478	29.9	-4.8	2 6 0	3 5 0	4 8 0
Charleswood	3	13	0	0.188	226	14.1	446	27.9	-13.8	3 5 0	2 6 0	2 10 0
West	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Santa Clara (z)	12	4	0	0.750	509	31.8	373	23.3	8.5	7 1 0	7 1 0	11 1 0
Chino (y)	12	4	0	0.750	447	27.9	319	19.9	8.0	7 1 0	7 1 0	9 3 0
Iowa City	9	7	0	0.563	450	28.1	412	25.8	2.4	5 3 0	3 5 0	6 6 0
Mission Viejo	6	10	0	0.375	321	20.1	398	24.9	-4.8	4 4 0	3 5 0	5 7 0
Los Angeles	0	16	0	0.000	194	12.1	486	30.4	-18.3	0 8 0	0 8 0	0 12 0
North	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Durham (z)	12	4	0	0.750	515	32.2	302	18.9	13.3	7 1 0	7 1 0	10 2 0
Pickering (y)	12	4	0	0.750	462	28.9	370	23.1	5.8	6 2 0	5 3 0	8 4 0
Markham	8	8	0	0.500	318	19.9	316	19.8	0.1	4 4 0	4 4 0	6 6 0
Cowtown	8	8	0	0.500	388	24.3	402	25.1	-0.9	4 4 0	3 5 0	5 7 0
York	7	9	0	0.438	328	20.5	360	22.5	-2.0	3 5 0	1 7 0	4 8 0
South	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Aurora (z)	16	0	0	1.000	545	34.1	170	10.6	23.4	8 0 0	8 0 0	12 0 0
South Carolina (y)	8	8	0	0.500	363	22.7	384	24	-1.3	4 4 0	5 3 0	6 6 0
Gwinnett	5	11	0	0.313	298	18.6	433	27.1	-8.4	1 7 0	4 4 0	5 7 0
Sebastian	4	12	0	0.250	311	19.4	488	30.5	-11.1	2 6 0	2 6 0	2 10 0
Scarborough	3	13	0	0.188	298	18.6	435	27.2	-8.6	0 8 0	1 7 0	2 10 0

(z)-clinched division

(y)-clinched wildcard

## PASSING

#	Player	Team	Att	Cmp	C%	Yards	In	I%	Lg	TD	TD%	Rate
1	Manning, P	PIC	482	318	66	4324	9	1.9	80	42	8.7	115.7
2	Rivers, P	CAR	506	333	65.8	4869	13	2.6	75	36	7.1	110.0
3	Newton, C	CHI	466	334	71.7	3461	5	1.1	56	26	5.6	106.9
4	Foles	DTL	248	154	62.1	2050	2	0.8	57	16	6.5	106.4
5	Ryan, M	AUR	601	407	67.7	4627	12	2.0	76	43	7.2	106.1
6	Brees	DTL	286	204	71.3	2335	5	1.7	66	15	5.2	105.7
7	Cutler	TCT	358	240	67	2853	12	3.4	65	30	8.4	105.1
8	Griffin III	SCB	385	242	62.9	3348	5	1.3	73	22	5.7	104.3
9	Wilson, R	ICC	404	266	65.8	3188	8	2.0	69	21	5.2	98.9
10	Stafford, M	VV	501	308	61.5	4368	15	3.0	80	26	5.2	94.5
11	Luck	MOH	560	336	60	4065	9	1.6	77	28	5	92.3
12	Smith, A	MAR	389	235	60.4	2408	3	0.8	48	20	5.1	92.1
13	Romo	SC	618	389	62.9	3957	11	1.8	71	29	4.7	89.4
14	Flacco	COW	590	361	61.2	4270	21	3.6	80	34	5.8	87.6
15	Glennon	LAK	284	177	62.3	1553	2	0.7	55	7	2.5	82.1
16	Roethlisberger	GWG	508	304	59.8	3420	14	2.8	63	20	3.9	81.6
17	Dalton	SS	544	315	57.9	3445	11	2.0	74	21	3.9	81.2
18	Manziel	TCT	233	143	61.4	1514	6	2.6	45	8	3.4	81.0
19	Tannehill	MVM	497	301	60.6	2979	13	2.6	51	20	4	80.0
20	Brady	YOR	495	279	56.4	3382	13	2.6	73	18	3.6	78.7

## RUSHING

#	Player	Team	Att	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	McCoy, L	GWG	363	1638	4.5	56	10
2	Johnson, C	PIC	331	1554	4.7	35	5
3	Morris, A	COW	295	1538	5.2	48	6
4	Charles, J	VV	287	1425	5.0	51	12
5	Forte	AUR	272	1341	4.9	66	15
6	Lynch, M	YOR	291	1336	4.6	48	11
7	Lacy	CAR	296	1313	4.4	57	19
8	Moreno	SCB	253	1262	5.0	36	21
9	Peterson, A	CHI	251	1252	5.0	90	16
10	Gore	SC	246	1200	4.9	56	10
11	Murray	MVM	233	1026	4.4	62	9
12	Bell, L	LAK	283	1017	3.6	44	2
13	Jackson, F	DTL	180	954	5.3	70	18
14	Ivory	CHP	221	897	4.1	50	6
15	Spiller	ICC	170	888	5.2	55	5
16	Ellington	MAR	152	762	5.0	43	4
17	Ball, M	MOH	147	702	4.8	50	6
18	Blount	CAR	165	695	4.2	24	6
19	Tate, B	VV	151	677	4.5	41	7
20	Newton, C	CHI	105	673	6.4	55	6

## RECEIVING

#	Player	Team	No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	Brown, A	TCT	110	1256	11.4	65	17
2	Bryant, D	VV	105	1775	16.9	69	11
3	Green, A	SC	98	1265	12.9	71	9
4	Johnson, A	SCB	95	1363	14.3	53	6
5	Edelman	AUR	94	902	9.6	52	15
6	Boldin	AUR	91	1622	17.8	76	17
7	Wright, K	TCT	91	901	9.9	35	8
8	Garcon	PIC	89	1240	13.9	71	19
9	Jackson, D	SBE	86	1200	14.0	60	8
10	Douglas, H	MOH	85	1019	12.0	42	8
11	Thomas, D	PIC	84	1468	17.5	80	12
12	Gordon, J	CAR	83	1554	18.7	75	10
13	Graham, J	MOH	83	1202	14.5	77	8
14	Woodhead	CHI	82	720	8.8	46	4
15	Olsen	CHI	81	736	9.1	36	7
16	Hilton	DTL	78	961	12.3	53	6
17	Watkins, S	CHP	78	1072	13.7	71	6
18	Jackson, V	TCT	77	1391	18.1	57	11
19	Jeffery	SCB	76	1250	16.4	65	13
20	Forte	AUR	76	553	7.3	41	4

## KICKING

#	Player	Team	FGA	FGM	FG%	40	50	Lg	Pts
1	Zuerlein	ICC	47	43	91.5	14	4	52	172
2	Crosby	VV	40	35	87.5	10	5	54	152
3	Folk	AUR	33	28	84.8	15	7	55	149
4	Prater	MOH	38	32	84.2	8	3	56	137
5	Dawson	DTL	27	25	92.6	9	2	57	137
6	Bailey,D	CHI	35	28	80	13	2	52	135
7	Henery	SCB	28	23	82.1	8	1	50	131
8	Hauschka	CAR	28	23	82.1	9	2	53	130
9	Novak	COW	28	25	89.3	10	3	56	116
10	Brown, J	MAR	31	27	87.1	12	5	53	114
11	Feely	SBE	33	27	81.8	8	3	52	112
12	Tucker, J	SC	30	23	76.7	11	3	54	111
13	Vinatieri	SS	28	24	85.7	8	4	54	105
14	Walsh	YOR	27	21	77.8	7	3	54	98
15	Carpenter	MVM	25	20	80	7	2	53	97
16	Gostkowski	TCT	15	15	100	6	0	49	94
17	Suisham	GWG	23	20	87	6	0	47	94
18	Bironas	CHP	20	17	85	6	2	53	76
19	Janikowski	PIC	8	7	87.5	0	0	38	71
20	Lindell	LAK	20	16	80	6	2	59	68



# AROUND THE



## With Spats McChad

NEW YORK – The EFL's eighth regular season ended with the league's 20 teams settling rather anti-climactically into their pre-ordained spots in the standings. The few surprises were of relatively minor importance in the big picture. The Knights finished the season without a win, but they finished in last place, as had been expected. The Regulators limped somewhat pathetically to an 8-8 finish, but grabbed the final wildcard spot as predicted. The Blue Eagles were shockingly inept in fulfilling expectations that they would fail to realize **Chris Dickinson's** delusions of grandeur. The Corn Kings held a share of first place in the North Division at the season's mid-way point, but soon fell off the playoff map like the Coyote chasing the Roadrunner off a desert cliff. All in all, things ended close to the way the majority of pundits had predicted. But only one pundit got everything right.

If you were to check the Week Two edition of EFL News you will find that *The Great Spatskin* nailed all four Division winners. Not only that, but I accurately predicted that Durham would win their head-to-head battles against the Spartans; that Carthage would have to fight off Twin Cities; and that Chino was the only serious competition to the Banana Sluggs in the West. I could have said more, but why ruin the fun for you?

Of course, nobody – not even me – is perfect. There were a few outcomes that I did not foresee. For instance, I did not think that **LeSean McCoy** would win the rushing title while toiling for terrible Gwinnett. I did not think that **Matt Stafford** would single-handedly wreck the Violators' season, even if I did expect him to damage it a little. I also would have predicted the Patriots going winless before the Knights. There were other, smaller outcomes that did not quite align with my predictive genius. But I also predicted that not everything I predicted would come true. So in that respect I was, as predicted, flawless.

### FINGERS AND FRIES

At The Killing Field in Carthage, the Cannibals clinched their first division title with a convincing 35-17 victory over Twin Cities. The outcome was a combination of the Cannibals' offence taking what the Triumph defence gave them and the Cannibals' defence taking what **Jay Cutler** gave them; which turned out to be three interceptions. The turnovers derailed the Triumph game plan on both sides of the ball. But that did not stop Coach **Guy Williams** from following through on his defensive plan to take Carthage wide receiver **Josh Gordon** out of the game. He had Gordon double-covered for almost the entire contest, letting up only at the end when the Cannibals were clearly running out the clock. In order to do this without allowing the other receivers to run completely free, he deployed 5 corners against the Cannibals' basic pro set, which created a mismatch on the ground that Coach **Ken Main** and running back **Eddie Lacy** were prepared to exploit. Lacy rushed for 156 yards and 3 touchdowns to lead the Carthage attack.

This slowing down of the Carthage offence by tying one hand behind the back of their most dangerous receiver might have worked had it not been for Cutler's miscues and an ultra-aggressive coaching call that went bad. Cutler's first interception snuffed out a second-quarter drive that had already entered field goal range. Facing 4th and 13 at the Carthage 32, **Guy Williams** amazingly decided to keep his offence on the field. Cutler tried to force the ball to **Antonio Brown** but it was batted up by **Keenan Lewis** and intercepted by safety **Rashad Johnson**, who returned it 44 yards to the Triumph 33 yard line. Three plays later, **Philip Rivers** fit the ball through a tight window to a double-covered Gordon for a 9-yard touchdown pass. That was the score that made it a two-score game, 21-10, advantage Carthage. Although there remained plenty of time left to play, running the ball with Lacy at that point became a much more comfortable option for **Ken Main** than it would have been in a back-and-forth shootout - the kind of game most analysts had predicted. The Triumph tried to hold up their end of the shootout, but their quarterback shot himself in the foot more often than he nailed a target in the Cannibals' end zone. Meanwhile, Lacy ground the Twin Cities defence into the dirt while Rivers found Gordon anyway, for 101 yards and 2 touchdowns on 6 catches, as well as **Emmanuel Sanders** and **Danny Amendola** for a combined 8 snares and 120 yards.

Cutler is being assigned most of the blame for the Triumph defeat due to his interceptions. With 5 interceptions in one-and-a-half games against Carthage, people are calling it the 'Cannibal Curse.' But of the three he threw in the season finale, only one of them led to Carthage points. The red zone pick at the end of the 1st half probably took at least a field goal off the board and the one at the beginning of the 2nd half was inconvenient, but the Triumph defence made it harmless by holding the Cannibals to a three-and-out. The more egregious error for Cutler was the delay of game penalty he took on 4th and goal at the





A gloomy-looking Twin Cities QB, **Jay Cutler** looks on from the bench as his defence tries to slow down the Cannibals; traces of sauce from all-you-can-eat 'Fingers & Fries' remain on his face from a night of gorging.

Carthage 1 with 8:33 left in the 4th quarter and the Triumph trailing 28-17. That turned a play with options into a certain passing down. The Cannibals shut down the play with 7 defensive backs hanging tight with the receivers and the subsequent throw to **Kendall Wright** was batted away by **Kyle Arrington**. The Cannibals took possession after that stand and put the game away with a 94-yard touchdown drive powered by Lacy, fittingly ending with the Carthage running back bowling through an exhausted Twin Cities' defence for a 24-yard touchdown run.

The Triumph quarterback once again looked "a little out of it," in the words of TV commentator **Phil Mimms**. "This is not the Jay Cutler we saw take apart the Violators three weeks ago," he said, referring to the 31-7 bludgeoning of Virden at Twin Cities in Week 13.

Cutler does indeed look a little drowsy throughout the game. The Triumph deny that he was injured. But if a breaking story from *Deathspun* is true he may have been "under the influence." The substance in question, however, is not alcohol or illegal narcotics or anything found on the league's banned substances list. The substance is *King Pu Pu's Fiery Hard Warrior Power Sauce*, the "secret ingredient" in the 'Sauced-Up Fingers & Fries' happy hour special at the Tradewinds Hotel Bar near Carthage where the Triumph were staying.

An independent agency hired by the Triumph is now investigating the possibility that Cannibal agents may have been involved in "setting up" Jay Cutler the night before the game by having staff at the hotel offer free fingers and fries with every order of a pitcher of *Vailima Lager*. Of course, there is nothing illegal about

the hotel's promotional offer, but the league could intervene if evidence surfaces that the Cannibals knowingly participated in a scheme to incapacitate the Triumph quarterback the night before the game.

*Deathspun* believes it knows the score and alleges that only **Jay Cutler's** table (that he was sharing with **Johnny Manziel**, **Tyler Eifert** and lineman **Joel Bitonio**) was getting the special, that his servings of sauced up fingers were abnormally large, and that a quartet of extremely attractive waitresses in grass skirts and palm leaf tops may have continued "working" long after the bar closed, in **Johnny Manziel's** room, where Cutler was seen on security video heading towards around 3:00 am. The *King Pu Pu* line of sauces lays claim to the discovery of the secret of the stamina and virility of the Ancient Polynesian Kings. The company adds into their sauces a proprietary mixture of naturally sourced ingredients native to the island that once nourished the royal family of Samoa. '*Fiery Hard Warrior Power Sauce*' reportedly produces an effect somewhat like swallowing a handful of viagra with a shot of 'Five Hour Energy,' and it tastes great too. It also produces a tequila-grade headache afterwards. In addition to suspicions of what was in the sauce, the question of whether the "fingers" were, as naturally assumed, *chicken* fingers, or some other kind of fingers, has yet to be determined. Tellingly, there are "chicken fingers" on the menu but the daily special card read "fingers." In a place with a history of, shall we say, eating its own, this creates some disturbing possibilities to consider.

The game's outcome means that the Triumph will have to stay on the island and face the Cannibals in the quarter finals. Apparently, despite his difficulties in the season finale, Cutler looked upbeat after the loss and could not wait to "get back to the hotel, rest up, recharge and prepare for our big game. God I'm hungry!"

#### CAUSE AND EFFECT

The Aurora Mustangs rose to a perfect 16-0 by eviscerating the Scarborough Blue Eagles 41-3 at Bluff's Stadium. They became only the second team in EFL history to finish a perfect regular season and, fittingly, they did it against the direct descendants of the Florida Dragons – the only other team to achieve such a feat. There were pre-game hopes that the Blue Eagles would step up and grab some notoriety by becoming the only team to hand the Mustangs a loss this year. These hopes were based on unscientific

concepts such as "karma," "home field advantage" and "pride" overcoming common sense. But a less wistful and more detached statistical analysis would have clearly revealed that the laws of cause and effect were likely to rule in favour of the team that had been building up for the past three years over the one that had been breaking down. The few Scarborough fans willing to attend a meaningless game were in a surly mood, making home field advantage a laughable concept. As for pride, the Eagles had amply demonstrated that they had none. Or if they did, it was long lost after repeated beat downs; including a humiliating season sweep at the fins of the Swordfish.

The disparity in the balance of power between these teams can be illustrated in their respective opening drives: The Mustangs drove 80 yards down the field, hardly noticing a holding penalty on **Max Unger**, to score first on a 29-yard touchdown pass from **Matt Ryan** to a wide open **Riley Cooper**. The Eagles started with Mustangs' linebacker **Erin Henderson** ruining an **Aaron Rodgers** audible by ignoring his play action fake and sacking him for a 13-yard loss on the opening play. All you need to know about this game is contained in those two drives. The Mustangs' offence charged up and down the field at will and their defence relentlessly attacked and stuffed the Scarborough offence. They forced Aaron Rodgers into four turnovers – 3 interceptions and a lost fumble. **Matt Ryan** threw four touchdown passes to surpass **Peyton Manning** for the season lead with 43. He could have had more but did not attempt a single pass over the final 24 minutes of the game.

Scarborough coach, **Chris Dickinson**, who was calling in the plays by BlackBerry PIN from a secret remote location, did not appear for the post-game press conference for safety reasons. He did, however, issue a press release by e-mail informing the media that he would be holding a press conference the following day to make an announcement. My source inside the Scarborough front office informs me that Dickinson is planning to fire the entire coaching staff (except himself) and all of the trainers, including his childhood drinking buddy, locker room prankster and self-styled team 'Entertainment Director' **Marty "MJ" Jacobson**. Cutting ties with his old high school gang would be a serious move for Dickinson – the first serious move in four years of circus mayhem on the Scarborough Bluffs.

At the happier sideline on the cold and windswept field at Bluff's Stadium a temperate **Rich Liotta** chose his words with care as he answered a local sideline reporter's question about how he felt after coaching his team to a perfect season. Liotta smiled and simply said: "Ask me that question after the Gale Sayers Game."

#### ***THE BAD AND THE UGLY***

Although a review of game film of the Winnemucca Outlaws from the 2008 season might tell a different story, the 2014 Los Angeles Knights are now, at 0-16, officially the worst team in EFL history after dropping their season finale 28-7 at the Fiery Depths in Mohave.

Despite season-long difficulties for the underachieving Hellfire, the Knights were in tough from the start to prevent such an ignoble end to a fruitless season. The "little offence that couldn't" didn't again, as **Mike Glennon** failed to tear apart the secondary that so many quarterbacks before him had brutalized throughout the year. A tentative but forward-moving opening drive hit a fork in the road at the Mohave 35. Facing 4th and inches Coach **Jeff Dohrn** decided to run a play instead of attempting a field goal. Glennon faked a handoff, sprinted outside and threw just slightly off-target to **Brandin Cooks**, who was covered tightly by corner **Dwayne Gratz**. "Dwayne *who?*" you ask. Exactly! Dwayne Who! It's easy to second-guess the play call and the decision to go for it but I won't because it doesn't matter. The Knights simply failed to execute another play in a season full of such bumbling – they would have failed regardless of the call.

On the other side, **Andrew Luck** played like the quarterback **Bobby Elder** drafted three years ago to lead his team to the Promised Land. Luck oversaw touchdown drives on three of his first four possessions, with the fourth ending in a missed field goal by **Matt Prater**. With Mohave leading 21-0 at half time, this game was all but over unless the Knights were able to do something drastic to break free from the grip of the most boring game plan ever devised. Yes, a game plan even *more* mind-numbing than **Darrin Jones** at his most conservative could devise. The Knights moved away from their standard pro set just once; and that was to move into the two-tight end set on that foreboding 4th down miss in the 1st quarter. In fairness to Glennon (who might have trouble igniting a fire while operating a blowtorch near an uncapped propane tank), he could hardly be expected to find open receivers consistently, especially Knights receivers, when so few of them were running around in the Mohave secondary. For all its difficulties in pass coverage, Mohave's front seven does not give opposing QBs a lot of time in the pocket. The Mohave coverage played at close or medium depth for the entire game but not once did the Knights try to stretch the field with a long throw that might have caused them to back off.

Later, Coach **Jeff Dohrn** was at a loss trying to explain the gigantic goose egg under the 'W' column after a full regular season: "I thought this team had some wins in them," he said dejectedly afterwards. "I don't have much to say. We just didn't get the job done. We will do better next year, I promise you that."

*Oooohhh....that* was bold! When you can't do any worse, telling people you'll do better will cause the media and fans to call off the dogs immediately, I'm sure. 0-16 is always a firing offence in Coach World, but Dohrn is likely to keep his head even after piloting this wreck of a team. The thing working in favour of Dohrn keeping his job is that nobody who is anybody in LA knows how bad the Knights really were this year. If Round Table Stadium is no longer the place to be seen, nobody who needs to be seen takes much notice of what goes on there. Plus he has a coveted Championship ring.

As long as we are on the subject of coaches who could be fired, the stress of an ugly season appears to be weighing on Mohave coach **Bobby Elder**, who failed to realize his modest and final hour vow to finish the year with 5 wins. There was no joy

in victory in the season's final week as an agitated Elder trash-talked his opponent before the game and let his assistant call all the plays while he listened to **Taylor Swift** on his headphones and paced the sideline waving a large sheet of white paper with the words 'CUT LIST' scribbled at the top. To the tune of the famous hit song he danced in front of the player's benches pointing to players at random then at the sheet while singing: "*I got a blank space, baby, and I'll write your name!*"

### **SOUTHERN DISCOMFORT**

At the Carolina Slammer the Gladiators looked like the team going to the playoffs in upending the Regulators 16-13. This would have been an upset of monumental proportions if Markham had managed to pull off a miracle against the Dinosaurs. But with Durham taking care of business at home this game reverts back to being a simple upset and an ugly 8-8 finish for the team that must now face an even uglier end to a once promising-looking season with a post-season trip to Aurora to face the 16-0 Mustangs.

If the Regs' final regular game is any indication, it could be a very rough Quarter Final for **Hal Corson's** crimson cowboys. Despite serious difficulties containing rushing crown winner **LeSean McCoy**, the Regulators were in a position to attempt a game-tying field goal, facing 4th and 2 at the Gwinnett 26 with 3:07 left on the clock. It would have been a 44-yarder into the wind, but well within the range of kicker **Justin Tucker**. Instead – in a vote of confidence for the ability of his offence to get 2 yards and, if it didn't, a vote of confidence in his defence to hold off the Gladiators – Corson kept his offence on the field. The fact that his defence had not come close to stopping the shifty McCoy all day didn't seem to enter into the equation; nor did the fact that 2 yards is *a lot* farther than 1 yard in a short yardage power situation – which is how the Regs handled the fourth down gambit. They brought in a second tight end and paired up **Frank Gore** with **Marcel Reece** in the backfield. The Glads responded with a 4th linebacker and crowded their safeties into the box. **Tony Romo** vacantly surveyed the defence, head turning, mouth moving, but glazed eyes fixed ahead. No thought, apparently, to audible to **AJ Green**, who was giving him the look from the right sideline. **Jason Kelce** snapped the ball and Romo handed it off to Gore. He ran straight into a charging **James Laurinaitis**, who had busted through the gap between Kelce and guard **Kevin Zeitler**. The Glads' rising star linebacker wrapped up Gore for a loss, like a late Christmas present for Coach **Dave Birdsall** – a tiny consolation gift after a season of frustration.

With faint hope remaining, the Regs needed to hold the Glads to a three-and-out. Instead they surrendered a quick first down to **Big Ben** on a 17-yard pass to **Stedman Bailey** and after the two-minute warning finally put a collar on the elusive McCoy. But on 3rd and 10, with South Carolina looking again for McCoy, Big Ben connected once more with Bailey for another 17-yard pass to all but put the game away for Gwinnett. A smattering of boos could be heard from the crowd, such a rare occurrence in Columbia that they had the effect of a smack upside the head for the Regulators' coach.

A misty-eyed Corson offered a heartfelt apology in the post-game press conference: "I want to apologize to all South Carolina fans for this loss. I take full responsibility for making an incredibly dumb call with the game on the line. Two incredibly dumb calls actually. Heck, maybe more than that, I can't recall. I just black out at those moments and do whatever pops into my head. Anyway, I'm sorry guys. I'm really, really, really sorry!" An uncomfortable silence followed as reporters, who genuinely like **Hal Corson**, tried to think of a follow up to that completely disarming *mea culpa*.

### **AROUND THE EFL**

At Jurassic Park in Durham the Thunder Lizards summarily dispatched the North Stars 31-3 to clinch the North Division title. I cannot recall a more anti-climactic or lop-sided meaningful game. The viewer was treated to one quarter of the Durham offence moving cautiously while the Markham offence stood still before **Fred Jackson** and **Nick Foles** joined forces to hammer home 21 2<sup>nd</sup>-quarter points for a 24-0 half time lead. The entire Markham offence looked like a nag on its last legs, mustering just 5 first downs and 141 yards of offence with 44 of those coming on one trick play. Brutal!

On Sunday night at Camelot, the scoreboard-watching Spartans lost some of their pre-game spunk after learning of the Dinos' dumping of listless Markham. **Peyton Manning** held up his end with a couple of touchdown passes, **Chris Johnson** ran for 110 yards, and **Demaryius Thomas** made the highlight reel catches, but it all felt empty as they dully finished off York 23-17.

At **TERRORDOME** in Virden the Violators turned to back-up running back **Ben Tate** to finish off a disappointing season. Tate carried the ball 45 times, tying a league single-game record, gaining 203 yards and scoring 2 touchdowns in a 27-0 walkover of the Patriots. The Pats' offence never crossed mid-field the entire game until the very last play from scrimmage: A 7-yard run by **Lamar Miller** against a 7-defensive back set that was no doubt run for the single purpose of crossing mid-field so they could say they had been there. Both teams looked to have packed it in from the very start. A traumatized **Blake Bortles** went through the motions in automaton-like fashion, completing just 7 passes for a season-low 33 yards. He was hardly blitzed but felt the pressure all afternoon, whether it was there or not. Extensive off-season therapy may be required to regain his confidence and poise.

The Convicts earned the right to play the Banana Sluggs again by knocking them off 20-7 at the Big House in Chino. This time, however, the game will be up the road in Santa Clara, where the Sluggs will enjoy a home field advantage – sort of. This contest was indistinguishable from a pre-season game, with the Sluggs back-ups looking sluggish against a spirited Chino team unsure of why it was playing in a spirited fashion.

With Monarchs' star **DeMarco Murray** out with what doctors are referring to as "fatigued leg syndrome" back-up **Mike James** got the start in the backfield and did a pretty good imitation of Murray, but without the fumbles. James carried the ball 31 times for 123 yards and scored the touchdown that would get the Monarchs back in the game, leading to an eventual 17-13 upset of the Cubs at HMK Royal Coliseum in Mission Viejo.

And finally, at Tillman Field in Cowtown, the Corn Kings set a single-game record for safeties while reeling in the

Swordfish 31-13. Rookie linebacker *Marcus Smith* notched his second safety of the season and *Brett Keisel* his first on back-to-back Swordfish series in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. *Andy Dalton* was sacked 8 times as the Corn Kings's defence dominated the last 3 quarters.

#### **DR. McCHAD'S POST-SEASON POST-MORTEM**

We tend to focus on the winners at this time of the year. But with victory there is always defeat (unless you are one of those namby-pamby types who claim "moral" victories) and another, sadder story to be told. As the only certified Sports Coroner I am aware of, it is my solemn and important responsibility to examine why the fallen fell. What caused their hearts, minds and sinews to fail where others survived, to be defeated later? Here, dear Readers, are my findings:

**IOWA CITY (9-7)** – Cause of Death: *Fatal Arrhythmia*. The Cubs were a heart attack waiting to happen. For 14 weeks they owned the top performing offence in football as Russell Wilson led a deadly 4<sup>th</sup> quarter attack to compensate for the failings of a feeble defence. It seemed like they were always racing to catch up; maintaining a frenetic pace week after week. In the final three weeks of the season it all caught up with them. Elimination by Chino led to total collapse versus Mission Viejo in the final week.

**MARKHAM (8-8)** – Cause of Death: *Boredom*. Win or lose, fan or foe, it was rarely fun to watch the North Stars play. A spirited loss to Pickering in Week 12 rekindled memories of the glory years when 250+ yards passing were commonplace. But Week 13 brought a return to the spirit-sucking grind and, with it, a loss of will. Eventually, off-tackle runs for 4 yards became indistinguishable from each other; medium passes for 10 yards the same. Players forgot where they were playing, even what week it was. Lost and unaware that they were still in a playoff race in the final week, they curled up, went to sleep and never woke up.

**COWTOWN (8-8)** – Cause of Death: *Flaccuations*. The Corn Kings had been given five weeks to live by most pre-season prognostications; they carried various genetic defects that would make survival in their division unlikely. So it was shocking that they led the North Division after 9 weeks, causing a small but vocal minority to whisper Joe Flacco's name in MVP discussions. Sadly, Cowtown finally succumbed to those defects, mainly the 'Flacco Flaw' – a tendency to throw way too many interceptions.

**YORK (7-9)** – Cause of Death: *Unknown*. Sometimes, a team that looks healthy isn't. York was such a team, but pinpointing a single cause of demise is difficult. On paper all the readings came back normal but through the course of 16 weeks the team often performed just short of expectations due to key injuries on defence, nagging injuries at wide receiver, and sometimes for no apparent reason. Like the guy at work who hasn't looked himself for a while, York simply failed to show up for work one day.

**VIRDEN (7-9)** – Cause of Death: *Staff Infection*. This year's incarnation of the Violators suffered the same fate as the one last year. The silver arm of Matt Stafford was like a magic bullet through the heart of his team's playoff hopes, with giveaway after giveaway scuttling all progress. Injections of talent strong enough to boost a team like the Knights into contention had little or no effect on the swelling abscess at quarterback. By the 7<sup>th</sup> week it was too late to operate. After a short recovery, Virden expired.

**MISSION VIEJO (6-10)** – Cause of Death: *Smart Bombs*. The Monarchs showed strength in the trenches this year, presenting an obstacle that opponents could no longer ignore with impunity. But seeing no air power and few air defences enemies, who could, attacked the Monarchs through the air with deadly effect. Opposing quarterbacks smart-bombed the Monarchs into submission with deadly accuracy while Ryan Tannehill rat-tat-tatted away with his Vickers until all was lost.

**GWINNETT (5-11)** – Cause of Death: *KIA*. The Gladiators of 2014 were an inconvenient team. The remnants of a contender peppered the roster but in a year of Mustangs' supremacy they promised to be wasted. And so began the rebuild that deprived the Glads of almost every player of immediate use. Starved of talent, Big Ben and LeSean McCoy led the weekly charge into enemy lines without support fire. They fought nobly, winning the odd battle along the way, before succumbing to overwhelming odds.

**MOHAVE (4-12)** – Cause of Death: *Stroke*. The Hellfire never promised to be true contenders in 2014 but they did expect to improve their standing. A Week 5 loss to the Patriots raised the blood pressure in this organization and led to an 8-game losing streak that killed any hope of a post-season berth.

**SEBASTIAN (4-12)** – Cause of Death: *Natural Causes*. Building a team around Andy Dalton carries certain risks. One of those is that your team will be horrible if you fail to surround him with plenty of talent. The other is that it may be horrible anyway. As long as Andy is on the Swordfish we may never know the answer to the latter, but we can prove the former. Other debilitating qualities like no running back, a fragile defensive line, and ocean buoys in the secondary, make an early demise for the Fish natural.

**CHARLESWOOD (3-13)** – Cause of Death: *Suicide*. Like most suicides, the question most often asked afterwards is: "Why?" It is not like the Patriots, coming off a Championship victory with most of their team intact, were forced into this situation. They were the team that had everything – a Championship ring, the league's offensive MVP, arguably the best quarterback in football. But all of it was apparently not enough to inspire the will to continue and attempt a repeat. Sadly, we will never know why.

**SCARBOROUGH (3-13)** – Cause of Death: *Broken Neck*. Like the bird that flies into your living room picture window and breaks its neck, the Blue Eagles never saw this coming. Bold pre-season predictions of a post-season berth were undercut by an upside down off-season plan that cut players deemed liabilities before securing assets. Add in the annual big but useless trade with Markham and the message to the body of the team that the head had no idea what it was doing was received loud and clear.

**LOS ANGELES (0-16)** – Cause of Death: *Bell's Palsy* Le'Veon Bell might turn into a good running back some day but right now he ain't Barry Sanders. Nevertheless, Bell became the centerpiece of a broken offence that the best running back in history might not have been able to carry. "1-2-3-Break!" became more than a post-huddle chant; it became the mantra for a three-and-out offence that gave its defence no hope of being all that it could be. 0-16 is hard to do. But the Knights were bad enough to pull it off.

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## PLAYOFF PICTURE AT A GLANCE

		PACIFIC-ATLANTIC CONFERENCE		CAN-AM CONFERENCE	
OUT	ALIVE	IN	IN	ALIVE	OUT
		1			
		2			
		3			
		4			

## JIMMY'S QUARTER FINALS PICKS

### PACIFIC-ATLANTIC CONFERENCE

**TWIN CITIES @ CARTHAGE (line – CANNIBALS by 5)**

**INJURIES:** Twin Cities – Bobby Wagner (OUT); Carthage – TJ McDonald (OUT), Harrison Smith (OUT);

I cannot think of a previous incidence of a first round playoff game repeating the exact circumstances of the final game of the regular season. But here we are, one week after Carthage hosted Twin Cities in a winner-take-all fight for the East Division, watching Carthage again hosting Twin Cities – this time for a winner-take-all ticket to the Conference Championship. This week the Triumph don't have to make the long trip to Micronesia, which is a plus. On the minus side, they have yet to solve the problem of Jay Cutler versus the Carthage defence. The Cannibals swept the regular season series by a combined score of 66-36, but the total

offensive yardage differential narrowly favoured the Triumph, 752-748. The key stat in their two regular season match-ups is a +5 turnover differential in favour of Carthage. In addition to a net takeaway gain for the Cannibals, there was a qualitative advantage in the circumstances of those turnovers as well – with almost all occurring in critical situations. The result was two Carthage victories that looked to be pretty easy. But the reality is that these teams are closely matched. The Triumph finished the season with a -4 turnover differential while the Cannibals finished at +8, but take away the influence of Cutler's turnovers in head-to-head play and the difference shrinks to a statistically insignificant +1/+3 in favour of the Cannibals. While Carthage has the most efficient offence in the league, their defence can be summed up by the stage name: 'Lavonte David and Friends.' Without David ruling the field this match-up might be taking place at Minneapolis or maybe not at all. Even with David's All-Pro efforts, the Cannibals have surrendered 409 points, an embarrassing number not in the typical division-winning class. Without the turnovers this is a game up for grabs. The Triumph offence is every bit as dangerous from a distance as is that of the Cannibals, if not more so, but Carthage has proven that it can grind it out if they need to with bulldozers Eddie Lacy and LeGarrette Blount in the backfield. This game could end up hinging on which team has the lead heading into the second half. Carthage is better equipped to protect a lead with its offensive weapons but less suited to coming from behind, especially if Josh Gordon receives the attention he garnered in the season finale. It is very hard to beat one team three times in a season, especially one the calibre of Twin Cities. I expect to see a barn-burner (take the "over" on this) and a Twin Cities triumph when the dust settles. **PICK: TWIN CITIES**

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

**INJURIES:** Chino – Jarvis Jenkins (OUT). Santa Clara – Robert Griffin III (QUESTIONABLE), Jake Long (QUESTIONABLE), Rob Gronkowski (DOUBTFUL), Brandon Williams (DOUBTFUL), Andrew Whitworth (OUT).

Just one week ago the Convicts were certifying Matt Flynn's status as a back-up by holding him to a single meaningless touchdown in a contest made symbolic for them by the Triumph loss at Carthage. This week the struggle is real. Fans of the Banana Sluggs can be excused for thinking the team has been cursed by its former owner. It looked for most of this season that the talent on the team would carry it virtually uncontested to a West Division title. But well-publicized troubles in the front office and coaching instability created ruts and detours on the road to the playoffs, resulting in a Week 16 fall to the no.2 seed in the Conference. To top off the challenges of fate, RGIII and tackle Jake Long are listed as "questionable" for this game while Rob Gronkowski is "doubtful." Andrew Whitworth, the stalwart at left tackle, is definitely "out," meaning rookie Taylor Lewan will see the field again after looking very much like a rookie the week before. It is hard to get a gauge on the likely outcome of this contest when there are so many critical unknowns. One has to think that every effort will be made to put RGII on the field. But even if he plays, will he be fit to play? And if he is not, is Matt Flynn prepared to be better for having seen what the Chino defence is capable of? The Convicts are the least sexy of the big name teams this year and they might prefer it that way. Cam Newton is a high end dual threat who can get the job done in both phases, but the success of the Chino offence is fragile nonetheless; and highly dependent on Cam. Adrian Peterson remains a force, but is he still enough of one to break through a front seven anchored by Gerald McCoy and Vontaze Burfict? I expect this game to boil down to the defences, regardless of who starts at QB for the Banana Sluggs. In that regard, the Sluggs are talent-laden but inconsistent while the Convicts have veteran leadership but lack that primal pop. This will be a brutally-contested defensive struggle that will see the Sluggs stars rise to the occasion and prop up a battered but still dangerous offence. **PICK: SANTA CLARA**

## **CAN-AM CONFERENCE**

### **SOUTH CAROLINA @ AURORA (line – MUSTANGS by 16)**

**INJURIES:** South Carolina – Chris Cook (DOUBTFUL), Kyle Van Noy (OUT); Aurora – Arian Foster (OUT).

Remember the last line of my prediction for the Twin Cities-Carthage game? While it is, generally speaking, hard to beat any team three times in a row, it is much less difficult when the team with two wins heading into the third is Aurora and its opponent is South Carolina. After earning the distinction of scoring the most points in a single game against the Mustangs this season – 27 points in Week 1 – the Regulators followed that up with a big donut in Week 15 in a mortifying 30-0 loss. If Week 1 was the best the Regs could do and Week 15 was the worst, the likely outcome of this game should be about 38-14 Mustangs, comfortably wider than the absurdly high spread of 16 points. No playoff team should ever be a two-digit underdog. But this game is exceptional for the fact that this Aurora team is one of the most dominant teams in EFL regular season history and the Regulators are turning out to be the best of the posers in a ring of incapable contestants for the fourth playoff spot in the Can-Am. Somebody

has to play the Mustangs to get them to the Conference Championship Game and it might as well be South Carolina. This could still be a good battle if Tony Romo brings his unconscious game to “Candlestick Park.” Letting his natural talent flow, unfettered by conscious thought, might be the only way to defeat a defensive machine that has surrendered fewer points than any other in EFL history. AJ Green versus Patrick Peterson will be a match-up to watch as will Keenan Allen versus Brandon Boykin. On the other side, Matt Ryan leads the league in touchdown passes and must see attractive possibilities against a secondary led by corner Sam Shields. South Carolina has Luke Kuechly and Tamba Hali starring at linebacker but the team’s overall defensive posture remains passive and unlikely to interfere with the Aurora passing game. Factor in intangibles, such as a shaky regular season finish for South Carolina and a “we’re not worthy” mindset at the coaching level and the Regs will be lucky to get out of this game with meaningful points, let alone a win. **PICK: AURORA**

## **PICKERING @ DURHAM (line – THUNDER LIZARDS by 6)**

**INJURIES:** Pickering – None; Durham –None.

Peyton Manning was imported to the Spartans for one reason only: to win a Championship. The fact that he was unable to win a Division will not be held against him if he can fulfill that primary purpose. Drew Brees was similarly brought to Durham to win a Championship. The fact that Nick Foles proved to be a more careful evaluator of which of his receivers were open was a stroke of good fortune rather than a product of design. The sharing of a championship-calibre Durham team between two dissimilar quarterbacks has both Foles and Brees on edge, as if at any moment one could be voted off the island by the coach, the fans, or the offensive line. Neither Brees nor Foles may like being relegated to occasional starter, but the platoon system is not changing any time soon, especially if it is working. The Thunder Lizards’ brain trust is too sophisticated to throw away its assets in a Championship year for the sake of keeping one of its quarterbacks comfortable. Whether the result of the platoon system or not, the Dinos are the ascendant team heading into the post-season having won eight or their last nine games, including a 41-24 snuffing out of the Spartans in Week 13. While everything seems to be clicking for Durham at the moment, it is a delicate balance. Expect Nick Foles to get the start here, despite his lack of playoff experience, because of his ball control. Foles versus Peyton Manning, on its face, does not look like an even match-up. But Foles has solid support in the passing game, with Calvin Johnson, TY Hilton and Antonio Gates matching up well against Pierre Garçon, Demaryius Thomas and Jordan Cameron. Veteran running back Chris Johnson was a workhorse this year, finishing second in the league in rushing and second in carries but the Lizards ball-carriers, Fred Jackson and Reggie Bush, offer versatility and fresher legs heading into the post-season. These offensive powerhouses were no. 3 and no. 4 in efficiency, with Durham edging out Pickering in yards-per-play but boasting a comfortable advantage in points scored, with 515 over the Spartans’ 462. This game will come down to which defence steps up strongest. If the season is anything to go by, the Lizards’ ‘D’ should suppress Manning just enough. **PICK: DURHAM**



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

FROM THE EFL ARCHIVES – The big news in a slow Week 14 news week was the LA Knights upsetting the Iowa City Cubs by the lop-sided score of 23-7 to clinch a playoff berth. The Cubs had already wrapped up the West Division, prompting Coach Deron Redding to rest starter Jeff Garcia in favour of JP Losman. But when Losman started the game throwing back-to-back interceptions that were both returned to inside his own 10 yard line, his coach had seen enough and hurried Garcia into the game. This attempt to patch the leak didn’t work and Garcia went on to have his worst outing of the year.

The Mohave Hellfire (10-4) also clinched a playoff berth with a 27-14 win over Gwinnett (7-7). Terrell Owens turned 2 short passes into long gainers for TDs, earning him Offensive Player of the Week honours. Trent Cole also had 2 sacks and forced a fumble that led to a TD and an early Mohave lead.

With the Expansion Division (East) teams rarely winning outside their division, the playoff picture in the PAC had come into focus early, with all spots decided by Week 14. The Spartans, at 6-8, had already clinched their division over runner-up Markham (4-10).

In the Can-Am Conference, the Florida Dragons and Charleswood Patriots had cemented their holds on their respective divisions, but one wildcard remained to be determined. The Kutztown Golden Bears (8-6) got the upper hand over Cowtown (7-7) by stuffing Durham 22-3. The Bears took advantage of 5 Durham turnovers. Meanwhile the Corn Kings were rattled by the Patriots 33-10 as Peyton Manning popped them for 275 yards passing and 2 touchdowns.

Josh Cribbs returned a kick 89 yards for a TD to turn the momentum in a 37-17 Chino win over Anchorage.