

# 2014



# EFL NEWS

ELITE FOOTBALL LEAGUE

# 2014

Week Two

Week Two

October 26, 2014



CHP	0	VIR	20	MOH	20	SCB	48	LAK	19	MAR	6	DTL	31	COW	26	GWG	7	SEB	20
TCT	34	CAR	28	MVM	37	ICC	34	CHI	27	PIC	17	YOR	7	SBE	23	AUR	37	SC	27



## Kings Rule!

Alfred Morris (left) follows a block by Ryan Wendell to score a TD that would tie the game at 20-20. The Corn Kings went on to upset the Blue Eagles 26-23.

### LATEST EFL NEWS INSIDE

- SLUGGS SLUG CUBS IN ROOKIE COACH DEBUT
- KINGS ARE GOLDEN IN SCARBOROUGH
- LIZARDS AND SPARTANS REBOUND
- MONARCHS WIN!
- MUSTANGS TRAMPLE GLADS
- CANNIBALS DINE AT HOME
- SKY HIGH PATS CRASH AND BURN
- ROMO RIGHT THE REGS
- AND MORE.....

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- SPATS FEATURE, 'SHOCK AND AWE IN IOWA,' 'COACHING FOR DUMMIES.'
- JIMMY THE GEEK
- THIS WEEK IN THE EFL



Who was slick in Week Two?

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



**Knowshon Moreno**  
RB  
Santa Clara  
Banana Slugs

24 Carries, 133 rush yards, 71 rec yards, and 5 TDs led offensive blitz.



**Jerrell Freeman**  
ILB  
Scarborough  
Blue Eagles

12 tackles, 1 BQ Pressure, 1 fumble recovery for TD.



2-0-0

# Cowtown

26

MVP

Mike Evans

23



1-1-0

# Scarborough



## GAME OF THE WEEK

### TEAM LEADERS

Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Flacco	17	28	217	1
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Morris	24	124	5.2	1
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Evans	6	109	18.2	1

Team	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
Cowtown	9	11	3	3	-	26
Scarborough	3	17	3	0	-	23

### TEAM LEADERS

Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Rodgers	22	42	250	1
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Rice	15	75	5.0	0
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Jackson	9	87	9.7	0

### Play of the Game

Facing 4<sup>th</sup> and 6 at the Cowtown 30 with 0:17 left in the game and needing a FG to tie, Scarborough went for it rather than attempt a FG into the wind. The pass fell incomplete, ending the game.

**SUMMARY:** The Corn Kings struck first when rookie **Marcus Smith** took down **Aaron Rodgers** in the end zone for a safety. But **Joe Flacco** was picked off by **Marcus Gilchrist** on the next play, setting up a short FG by **Jay Feely** to erase the 2-0 lead. Cowtown regained the lead when another rookie, **Mike Evans**, snagged a medium hitch and galloped the rest of the way for a 46-yard TD catch. A pick by **Trumaine Brock** set up a 44-yard FG by **Nick Novak** to give the Corn Kings a 12-3 lead. The Blue Eagles struck back suddenly with a 54-yard TD pass to **Brandon Marshall** and a 21-yard fumble recovery for a TD by **Jerrell Freeman** in a 1:30 span to make it 17-12. Cowtown rebounded with an 80-yard drive, finding the end zone on a 4-yard run by **Alfred Morris** and making the 2-point convert to take a 20-17 lead. But the Eagles tied it up at 20 with seconds left in the 2<sup>nd</sup> to cap a crazy 1<sup>st</sup> half. The teams traded FGs in the 3<sup>rd</sup> then Feely missed on a 33-yard attempt that would have given Scarborough the lead in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. Cowtown fell 1-yard short of being able to run out the clock and settled for a 25-yard FG with 1:52 remaining. That set up a desperation drive with no timeouts that ended when Scarborough attempted and failed to convert 4<sup>th</sup> & 6 at the 30 rather than try a 47-yard FG into a heavy wind.

**QUOTES:** "People are going to second-guess me, I guess. I felt we had a chance to give Jay a better chance to make a kick into that wind coming off the lake. They blitzed and we didn't pick it up, forcing Aaron to throw early. I take responsibility for it!" – Scarborough coach, **Chris Dickinson**.  
 "I was a little surprised they went for it there. We had to pull a couple of our special teams guys off the field. It was a do-or-die moment so I sicked the dogs on the QB and Ryan got penetration, forcing that throw that Kayvon batted away. This was a huge win for us!" – Cowtown coach, **Jim Coghlin**.



HAPPY FAN



titter

ANGRY FAN



**Stan Jones @SJCOW550**

Never thought this team would be 2-0 at this point and alone at the top of the North Division.



**RoFo @RoFoFoMayor**

Gutsy call! Is @ChrisD on crack or something?

10-22-2014 Bluff's Stadium Temp: 69 Wind: 15-25 None MVP: Mike Evans

#### Scoring Summary

1 11:35	Cowtown	Safety Smith	2-0
1 9:51	Scarborough	FG Feely 20 (4-3-1:22)	2-3
1 9:00	Cowtown	TD Flacco 46 pass to Evans (Novak) (2-60-0:51)	9-3
2 13:04	Cowtown	FG Novak 44 (6-24-1:54)	12-3
2 9:33	Scarborough	TD Rodgers 54 pass to Marshall (Feely) (7-77-3:25)	12-10
2 8:01	Scarborough	TD Freeman 21 yd fumble recovery (Feely)	12-17
2 4:32	Cowtown	TD Morris 4 run (2 - Fitzgerald) (8-80-3:29)	20-17
2 0:18	Scarborough	FG Feely 33 (12-59-4:04)	20-20
3 6:22	Scarborough	FG Feely 27 (9-42-4:10)	20-23
3 0:02	Cowtown	FG Novak 30 (11-68-6:15)	23-23
4 1:52	Cowtown	FG Novak 25 (11-54-4:43)	26-23

	COW	SBE
First Downs	20	15
Rushes	33-178	24-121
Passes	28-17-217	42-22-250
Sacked	1-5	3-18
Fumble	3	1
Penalties	3-30	6-40
Turnovers	2	1
Missed Tackles	5	10
Blitzes	22	18
Time	29:31	30:29
Third Down	1-9	8-18
Fourth Down	0-1	1-2
Red Att/Td/Fg	3/1/2	4/0/3
Net Offense	390	353



**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!



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

**Sammy Watkins**  
8 Receptions, 89 yards



<b>TRIUMPH</b>	14	14	3	3	0	<b>34</b>
2-0-0						

**Jay Cutler**  
17 of 26, 149 yards, 4 TDs

The Triumph scored on their first two possessions, holding the ball for 11 minutes in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter and setting the tone for the rest of the game. **Jay Cutler** connected on TD passes of 12 and 18 yards to **Vincent Jackson**, 10 yards to **Kendall Wright**, and 8 yards to **Antonio Brown**, all in the 1<sup>st</sup> half. After leading the Triumph to a FG to open the 3<sup>rd</sup>, Cutler got the day off and **Johnny Manziel** got his first EFL action in relief. The Pats' offence never got on track; their longest possession of 8 plays ended when **Da'Norris Searcy** picked off **Blake Bortles** to set up Cutler's 4<sup>th</sup> TD pass of the half.



<b>VIOLATORS</b>	3	3	14	0	0	<b>20</b>
0-2-0						

**Matt Stafford**  
24 of 52, 382 yards, 1 TD



<b>CANNIBALS</b>	14	0	14	0	0	<b>28</b>
2-0-0						

**Eddie Lacy**  
24 Carries, 101 yards, 3 TDs

The Cannibals capitalized on a fumbled punt return by **Marcus Sherels** then drove 75 yards on their next possession to score two quick TDs on runs of 13 and 8 yards by **Eddie Lacy**. Virden answered with 2 FGs and a 92-yard drive from their 9 yard line that came up empty when **Matt Stafford** fumbled in the red zone. The Violators started the 2<sup>nd</sup> half with a TD drive to come within 1, but the Cannibals scored TDs on back-to-back drives to make it 28-13. Virden closed the gap to 8 points with a 29-yard TD pass to **Julio Jones**, but could not break through the Cannibal defence in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter.



<b>HELLFIRE</b>	10	3	0	7	0	<b>20</b>
0-2-0						

**Andrew Luck**  
14 of 24, 233 yards, 2 TDs, 2 INTs



<b>MONARCHS</b>	3	3	10	21	0	<b>37</b>
1-1-0						

**Ryan Tannehill**  
23 of 31, 258 yards, 3 TDs, 1 INT

Long drives yielded only two FGs for the Monarchs while the Hellfire matched those and found the end zone on a 15-yard TD pass from **Andrew Luck** to **Robert Woods** to stake Mohave to a 13-6 half time lead. The Monarchs tied the game on an 8-yard TD pass from **Ryan Tannehill** to **DeMarco Murray** to open the 2<sup>nd</sup> half then took the lead after a failed 4<sup>th</sup> and 6 for Mohave near midfield opened the door for a Monarchs' FG. An interception and 37-yard return by reserve safety **DeJon Gomes** was decisive, sparking a runaway 21-point outburst by the Monarchs in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter.

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



<b>KNIGHTS</b>
0-2-0

7	3	6	3	0	<b>19</b>
OT					

**Ryan Mathews**  
32 Carries, 133 yards



<b>CONVICTS</b>
2-0-0

7	14	3	3	0	<b>27</b>
OT					

**Cam Newton**  
161 pass yds, 39 rush yds, 2 TDs

Knights' linebacker **Brian Orakpo** spotted his team to a 7-0 lead with a pick-six on the first pass of the game by **Cam Newton**, but the Convicts came right back and scored the equalizer on a 9-yard TD pass to **Greg Olsen**. LA managed a 49-yard **Rian Lindell** FG to retake the lead, but surrendered it back on Newton's 1-yard dive into the end zone. A 73-yard end-around by **Marvin Jones** at the two-minute warning set up an **Adrian Peterson** 2-yard TD run for a 21-10 Chino half time lead. LA's offence won the 2<sup>nd</sup> half FG battle 3-2, but fell short of the comeback they needed to win.



<b>NORTH STARS</b>
1-1-0

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

**James Starks**  
11 Carries, 76 yards



<b>SPARTANS</b>
1-1-0

0	3	7	7	0	<b>17</b>
OT					

**Peyton Manning**  
20 of 31, 238 yards, 2 TDs

A 58-yard punt return by **Jacoby Jones** set up a 29-yard **Josh Brown** FG, giving Markham an early edge. The Spartans' offence failed to click early, but the defence lifted them by stopping Markham on 4<sup>th</sup> and inches at the Pickering 4 yard line. A defensive 1<sup>st</sup> half ended with **Josh Scobee** tying it with a 35-yard FG. The Stars drove 64 yards to a 44-yard FG and the lead early in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half, but the Spartans charged back with an 80-yard drive for a major with **Peyton Manning** hitting **Pierre Garcon** from 10 yards. **Dontari Poe** recovered a fumble at the Markham 4 to set up the final Spartans' TD.



<b>T-LIZARDS</b>
1-1-0

7	14	3	7	0	<b>31</b>
OT					

**Fred Jackson**  
32 Carries, 158 yards, 1 TD



<b>EXCALIBURS</b>
1-1-0

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

**Marshawn Lynch**  
13 Carries, 61 yards, 1 TD

**Fred Jackson** rushed for 37 yards on the Durham's opening drive, scoring on a 7-yard run to give the Lizards a 7-0 lead. They extended that lead to 14-0 in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter when **Drew Brees** capped off a 94-yard drive with a sneak across the goal line. **Marshawn Lynch** broke a 31-yard run and scored 7 plays later to bring York within a TD, but Durham regained the two-score advantage with a 15-yard TD pass to **Eric Decker** to cap an 80-yard drive. **Tom Brady** was stymied through the air, passing for just 42 yards on the day. Rookie RB **Carlos Hyde** got his first pro score on a 28-yard run.

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



**SLUGGS**  
2-0-0

0	21	10	17	0	<b>48</b>
OT					

**Knowshon Moreno**  
24 Carries, 133 yards, 4 TDs



**CUBS**  
0-2-0

10	10	7	7	0	<b>34</b>
OT					

**Russell Wilson**  
17 of 25, 311 yards, 3 TDs, 1 INT

After spotting the Cubs to a 10-0 lead the Sluggs scored TDs on three straight possessions to take a 21-20 lead into half time. The Cubs regained the lead on a 25-yard TD pass from **Russell Wilson** to **Mike Wallace** to open the 3<sup>rd</sup> but the Sluggs crept back with a FG and 13-yard TD run by **Stevan Ridley** to make it 31-27. The Cubs drove deep into Sluggs territory but came up short on 4<sup>th</sup> and 3 at the 9. A long counter drive resulted in **Knowshon Moreno's** 4<sup>th</sup> of 5 TDs on the day. A **Jairus Byrd** pick snuffed out the Cubs' comeback, leading to a FG and a late exchange of meaningless TDs.



**GLADIATORS**  
0-2-0

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

**LeSean McCoy**  
24 Carries, 121 yards, 1 TD



**MUSTANGS**  
2-0-0

13	17	7	0	0	<b>37</b>
OT					

**Matt Ryan**  
13 of 19, 134 yards, 2 TDs

Three Glads' turnovers in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter, two by **Ben Roethlisberger** on sack fumbles in their own territory, led to 13 easy points for the Mustangs. Anxious to get back in the game, the Glads gambled and lost on 4<sup>th</sup> and 1 at the Aurora 45, leading to 3 more points for Aurora. On the next offensive play **Patrick Peterson** picked off Big Ben and returned it 27 yards for a TD to make it 23-0. A 52-yard pass from **Matt Ryan** to **Julian Edelman** set up a 3-yard TD pass to Edelman to make it 30-0 at half time. **Brandon Boykin** made it 37-0 on a 43-yard pick-six to cap a day of misery for Gwinnett.



**SWORDFISH**  
0-2-0

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

**Zac Stacy**  
18 Carries, 98 yards



**REGULATORS**  
1-1-0

10	3	7	7	0	<b>27</b>
OT					

**Tony Romo**  
25 of 41, 233 yards, 3 TDs, 1 INT

**Tony Romo** found **Greg Jennings** for a 9-yard TD pass to open the game then a botched 4<sup>th</sup> down gamble by the Swordfish at their 41 led to an easy FG by **Justin Tucker**, giving the Regs a 10-0 lead before Sebastian had made a 1<sup>st</sup> down. The Fish closed in with a goal line sneak for a TD by **Andy Dalton** and took the lead on an 18-yard interception return for a TD by **Rahim Moore**. The Regs regained control with an 80-yard drive ending with a 5-yard TD pass to **AJ Green**. The Regs finished it when **Mike Mitchell** picked off Dalton, setting up **Brendan Pettigrew** for a 13-yard TD catch.

## WEEK TWO

# STANDINGS

East	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Twin Cities	2	0	0	1.000	65	32.5	25	12.5	20	1 0 0	2 0 0	2 0 0
Carthage	2	0	0	1.000	69	34.5	41	20.5	14	1 0 0	1 0 0	2 0 0
Charleswood	1	1	0	0.500	21	10.5	54	27	-16.5	1 0 0	1 1 0	1 1 0
Mohave	0	2	0	0.000	45	22.5	68	34	-11.5	0 1 0	0 1 0	0 2 0
Virден	0	2	0	0.000	40	20	49	24.5	-4.5	0 0 0	0 2 0	0 2 0
West	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Chino	2	0	0	1.000	63	31.5	54	27	4.5	2 0 0	2 0 0	2 0 0
Santa Clara	2	0	0	1.000	83	41.5	47	23.5	18	1 0 0	2 0 0	2 0 0
Mission Viejo	1	1	0	0.500	50	25	55	27.5	-2.5	1 0 0	0 1 0	1 1 0
Iowa City	0	2	0	0.000	69	34.5	84	42	-7.5	0 1 0	0 2 0	0 2 0
Los Angeles	0	2	0	0.000	40	20	68	34	-14	0 1 0	0 1 0	0 2 0
North	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Cowtown	2	0	0	1.000	61	30.5	51	25.5	5	1 0 0	1 0 0	2 0 0
Durham	1	1	0	0.500	46	23	27	13.5	9.5	0 0 0	1 1 0	1 1 0
Markham	1	1	0	0.500	26	13	32	16	-3	1 0 0	1 1 0	1 1 0
Pickering	1	1	0	0.500	45	22.5	41	20.5	2	1 0 0	1 1 0	1 1 0
York	1	1	0	0.500	48	24	57	28.5	-4.5	0 1 0	0 1 0	1 1 0
South	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Aurora	2	0	0	1.000	84	42	34	17	25	1 0 0	2 0 0	2 0 0
Scarborough	1	1	0	0.500	53	26.5	43	21.5	5	0 1 0	1 0 0	1 1 0
South Carolina	1	1	0	0.500	54	27	67	33.5	-6.5	1 1 0	1 1 0	1 1 0
Gwinnett	0	2	0	0.000	24	12	67	33.5	-21.5	0 1 0	0 2 0	0 2 0
Sebastian	0	2	0	0.000	46	23	68	34	-11	0 1 0	0 1 0	0 2 0

# PASSING

#	Player	Att	Cmp	C%	Yards	In	I%	Lg	TD	TD%	Rate	
1	Griffin II	SCB	50	35	70	554	0	0	65	4	8	133.3
2	Wilson, R	ICC	52	35	67.3	505	1	1.9	45	5	9.6	122.7
3	Cutler	TCT	67	44	65.7	503	2	3	33	8	11.9	115.2
4	Brees	DTL	59	46	78	514	0	0	45	2	3.4	114.3
5	Ryan, M	AUR	54	36	66.7	416	1	1.9	52	5	9.3	112.9
6	Rivers, P	CAR	64	45	70.3	725	3	4.7	75	4	6.3	109.2
7	Tannehill	MVM	48	31	64.6	352	1	2.1	29	3	6.3	98.6
8	Brady	YOR	39	18	46.2	279	0	0	55	3	7.7	96
9	Rodgers, A	SBE	71	45	63.4	532	1	1.4	54	3	4.2	94.3
10	Flacco	COW	66	41	62.1	507	3	4.5	46	5	7.6	92.2
11	Luck	MOH	65	43	66.2	505	2	3.1	77	3	4.6	92.1
12	Newton, C	CHI	67	47	70.1	474	3	4.5	27	4	6	91.3
13	Stafford, M	VV	81	44	54.3	687	0	0	36	2	2.5	90.9
14	Manning, P	PIC	79	49	62	536	3	3.8	41	5	6.3	87.3
15	Romo	SC	83	49	59	525	3	3.6	62	5	6	82.7

## RUSHING

#	Player	Team	Att	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	Spiller	ICC	44	372	8.5	55	2
2	Moreno	SCB	47	251	5.3	24	5
3	Morris, A	COW	46	215	4.7	21	1
4	McCoy, L	GWG	49	202	4.1	29	1
5	Tate, B	VV	24	190	7.9	41	2
6	Murray	MVM	36	190	5.3	28	1
7	Jackson, F	DTL	38	174	4.6	15	1
8	Johnson, C	PIC	39	168	4.3	18	0
9	Mathews, R	LAK	41	167	4.1	19	0
10	Peterson, A	CHI	40	166	4.2	15	2
11	Rice, R	SBE	29	161	5.6	54	0
12	Lynch, M	YOR	31	151	4.9	31	2
13	Lacy	CAR	39	134	3.4	13	4
14	Luck	MOH	11	124	11.3	42	1
15	Starks, J	MAR	18	106	5.9	21	0
16	Newton, C	CHI	12	106	8.8	25	1
17	Stacy	SS	20	102	5.1	17	1
18	Wilson, R	ICC	10	96	9.6	30	2
19	Gore	SC	26	89	3.4	12	0
20	Choice	TCT	20	88	4.4	10	0

## RECEIVING

#	Player	Team	No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	Jones, J	VV	17	288	16.9	34	2
2	Brown, A	TCT	16	195	12.2	33	3
3	Watkins, S	CHP	15	222	14.8	71	1
4	Garcon	PIC	15	162	10.8	19	3
5	Jackson, D	SBE	15	183	12.2	30	1
6	Wayne	GWG	15	220	14.7	46	1
7	Woodhead	CHI	14	141	10.1	25	2
8	Green, A	SC	14	185	13.2	21	2
9	Gordon, J	CAR	13	315	24.2	75	1
10	Graham, J	MOH	13	154	11.8	39	0
11	Wright, K	TCT	12	121	10.1	14	3
12	Johnson, A	SCB	12	167	13.9	40	1
13	Colston	MAR	12	110	9.2	17	0
14	Bryant, D	VV	12	213	17.8	30	0
15	Thomas, D	PIC	12	181	15.1	41	1
16	Thomas, P	SS	12	71	5.9	22	0
17	Evans, M	COW	11	157	14.3	46	2
18	Olsen	CHI	11	104	9.5	19	2
19	Boldin	AUR	10	194	19.4	48	3
20	Hilton	DTL	10	103	10.3	19	0

## KICKING

#	Player	Team	FGA	FGM	FG%	40	50	Lg	Pts
1	Folk	AUR	7	7	100	4	2	55	30
2	Feely	SBE	8	6	75	2	0	49	23
3	Bailey, D	CHI	5	5	100	1	0	49	21
4	Prater	MOH	6	6	100	2	1	56	21
5	Carpenter	MVM	7	5	71.4	1	0	44	20
6	Tucker, J	SC	6	4	66.7	1	0	40	18
7	Gostkowski	TCT	3	3	100	2	0	49	17
8	Henery	SCB	3	2	66.7	0	0	38	17
9	Dawson	DTL	4	4	100	2	1	57	16
10	Vinatieri	SS	4	4	100	1	0	48	16
11	Crosby	VV	5	4	80	1	0	40	16
12	Hauschka	CAR	4	2	50	1	0	43	15
13	Zuerlein	ICC	3	2	66.7	0	0	39	15
14	Novak	COW	3	3	100	1	0	44	15
15	Brown, J	MAR	4	4	100	1	0	44	14
16	Walsh	YOR	2	2	100	1	0	45	12
17	Lindell	LAK	2	2	100	1	0	49	10
18	Suisham	GWG	1	1	100	0	0	30	6
19	Janikowski	PIC	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
20	Scobee	PIC	1	1	100	0	0	35	3



# AROUND THE



## With Spats McChad

NEW YORK – It did not take long for the haters to take a run at me for failing to predict the Division winners in my Week One column. “*What wrong with the Great Spatskin? Realizing you SUCK sucks, don’t it?*” writes ‘Stan the Cubs Fan,’ from, I presume, a negligently supervised prison internet system somewhere in Iowa. “*Afraid to put your precious and failing reputation on the line again, Spats after missing on the WORLD CHAMPS?*” writes ‘Donald’ from, I presume, his mother’s basement in a Charleswood suburb.

It’s no surprise that those taking a run at me this year are mostly from the “Cockeye” State and the capital of the Canadian Outback. The Cubs took the West Division last year and the Patriots wrestled away the East on their way to a Championship, defeating my prediction of Chino and Virden respectively. It is also no surprise that the fine people of Markham (The Fat Lady excepted) and Aurora have nothing but nice things to say about me after I accurately predicted their division crowns in 2013.

Well, I’m not writing this column to kiss anybody’s behind, especially one that may have been forcefully breached more than once by ‘Big Daddy’ in the Iowa State Penitentiary showers. My track record speaks for itself and I am certainly not afraid to go on the record, as any fair-minded reader will readily acknowledge.

The fact is that my annual predictions failed to appear last week due to an innocent oversight called “forgetfulness” – brought on by the distractions of the sudden nuclear strike on Death Valley and the mysterious fly-by-night relocation of the Garland Mustangs to a small Canadian cottage country community. Trust me, it was not intentional and I was immediately made aware of the oversight by my editor, Mr. Finchley, who gleefully fined me for failing to abide by my contract. So here it is, one week late, my flawless predictions for the 2014 EFL season:

### ***THE GREAT SPATSKIN***

The clamour and interest around my Division predictions this year baffles me. I suspect that a jealous few of you hope that, to distinguish myself from the common rabble, I will go out on a limb and make a “bold” (read “stupid”) prediction that will backfire. I am not so dumb, people. The top teams are the top teams; there is little doubt which ones will rise to the top of their divisions during the regular season. Only in the North Division is there serious doubt, where Durham and Pickering will battle all year long for local supremacy. A tight battle could also develop in the East between Carthage and Twin Cities, but that fanciful thought might be the product of wishful thinking by my secret inner Triumph fan (I like their uniforms). For the record, here are your 2014 Division winners:

**EAST – Carthage Cannibals:** in his second year removed from the pressure of unrealized hopes in Durham, **Philip Rivers** appears to have regained his confidence and is out to prove something. Re-energized by a new environment and a new diet, Rivers has the game to carry a flawed team to the top of a Division of flawed teams.

**WEST – Santa Clara Banana Sluggs:** the shocking turn of events in Death Valley and relocation to Santa Clara has some analysts re-thinking their position on this pre-season juggernaut and cautiously predicting Chino to be the ascendant power in the West. If anything, the California weather will make this team even more powerful. Can you say “steamroller?”

**NORTH – Durham Thunder Lizards:** while neither the Lizards nor Spartans looked like prospective champions in Week One, one of them is sure to face down Aurora for a ticket to the Final. Look for Durham to prevail in head-to-head contests against their neighbour rival and rule the North by the final week.

**SOUTH – Aurora Mustangs:** the Mustangs’ defence will be a turnover machine in 2014, helping out an offence that does not need much help to begin with. Not even **Doug Shirley** could screw this up. Bonus prediction: **JJ Watt** will win Defensive MVP.

### ***SHOCK AND AWE IN IOWA***

For the second consecutive week the Iowa City Cubs were at the centre of the league’s biggest fireworks display and for the second week they were outgunned. This time they fell 48-34 to the laughable-looking but fearsomely aggressive Banana Sluggs. As if trying to overcome their uniforms, the former Undertakers pressed hard on the attack, using multiple formations and mixing the pass and run effectively to keep the Cubs’ defenders off balance – nothing particularly new there for anyone who has closely followed the offensive powerhouses built by **Chris Worthley**. What stood out in this rehabilitated version of



the ‘Men In Black’ was the ferocity of the defence under the direction of **Major Cooper Gerow**. To the untutored eye it often looked like 11 flailing and frantic barbarians had gone berserk on the football field for the first time, not quite grasping the rules but keenly aware that their job was to attack the guys in blue. The fact that these maniacs were dressed in lavender pastel trousers with ‘salmon’ trim just made it all the more surreal to watch.

If you thought you saw **Robert Mathis** blitzing a lot you were right. If you thought **Vontaze Burfict** played like a beast run amok after escaping from the zoo, bingo again. It was an energetic and raw performance by a group of players that had been carefully kept in check for the past two seasons by an offensive genius who had grown to distrust the blitz as a strategy – who, in fact, had stopped attempting to devise any strategy at all for his defence. Well, that approach seems to have changed



**King Ferraro** in full regalia walks through a crowd of “subjects” on his way into the Royal Coliseum for the Monarchs’ season opener against the Hellfire. His team surprised the visitors, 37-20, prompting the man who would be King to launch a megalomaniacal diatribe against sports media in general and Spats McChad in particular.

in a big way with “Major Meltdown” in charge. “We don’t call it the ‘defence’ anymore,” Major Gerow explained in his first post-game press conference as head coach. “We call it ‘Offence 2.’ To a military man, going on the defensive means losing the war! Anybody on my ‘Offence 2’ squad who calls it *defence* is spending time in the ‘hole.’ And don’t ask me what that is, it’s classified information!” He added as one reporter attempted to ask him that very question.

The aggressive strategy drew the immediate attention of **Severin Handfottner Jr.** of ‘Coaches Call.’ He wrote:

*“The Banana Sluggs blitzed 51 times against the Cubs, an unheard of amount these days. Gradually, over the years, EFL coaching staffs have moved away from the blitz as a dominant strategy and focused on coverage schemes. This was not the case on Sunday at Joe Ferguson Stadium. The results might cause some defensive coordinators to re-think their approach, and others to stay entrenched in conservatism.”*

The Cubs were able to make some big plays as a result of the mayhem, largely due to the shiftiness and improvisation skills of quarterback **Russell Wilson**. But the blitzing eventually took its toll, causing 4 holding penalties by the offence and occasionally forcing errors. It also wreaked psychological havoc, conditioning the Cubs to expect the blitz even when it wasn’t coming. At least that was the explanation offered by commentator **Phil Mimms** after Wilson threw a game-changing interception with 5 minutes left in the game.

“When you spend so much time running away from pressure, you come to expect it every play,” Mimms commented as replay showed Wilson trying to force a ball into tight coverage. “The Sluggs dropped back in coverage and rushed three, but Russell focused on his primary target and got rid of the ball too quickly. Jairus Byrd read his eyes and jumped in front of it.”

A dishevelled and downcast **Deron Redding** took responsibility for the loss after the game: “We were not prepared for their game plan and that is on me, folks. Don’t blame the players, they fought hard out there. Russell was a real warrior on the field. I let them down by not preparing for this game. If you want to blame somebody, blame me. My head hasn’t been where it should be, but that will change beginning some time real soon.”

Few coaches could get away with such a *‘mea culpa’* and survive to coach another day. But the effusive Redding has a way of inspiring those around him when things are going well, and making even hardened critics feel sorry for him when fortunes take a downturn. Although they are 0-2, it’s still early in the season and the Cubs have faced the best in the west and held their own. Don’t be surprised if the post-game pressers in Iowa City get more upbeat in the coming weeks.

#### **COACHING FOR DUMMIES**

At Bluff’s Stadium this week, beleaguered Scarborough owner **Chris Dickinson** added to the now long list of reasons why, for his personal safety, he should move away from his home town for a period long enough to allow the local lynch mob to cool off. Having gone through three coaches in three years without success on the field, Dickinson decided in the off-season to take charge of the team personally. That might have been a bigger mistake than hiring his high school buddy ‘Jonesey’ to coach Season One

of the Dickinson Era.

With former NFL coach **Rich Kotite** as his personal “Coach Trainer” and a copy of *Football Coaching for Dummies* tabbed in all the right spots, Dickinson thought himself a genius after dispatching the tired gaggle from Gwinnett in Week One. One week later he is looking for a place to hide from the incessant barrage of fan outrage after his controversial decision to go for it on 4<sup>th</sup> & 6 at the Cowtown 30 yard line, trailing by a field goal with 17 seconds left in the game and no timeouts. If you did not catch the Corn Kings’ 26-23 upset of the Blue Eagles, you might want to pause and let that scenario sink in for a few moments.....

If the call *sounds* downright crazy to you then you can rest assured that you are probably a healthy, well-adjusted and knowledgeable football fan who is capable of carrying an intelligent conversation about the sport at your local watering hole while under the influence of alcohol. If you think it sounds like a cool idea, you might want to apply for a job with the Blue Eagles staff and make some money off your idiocy. While there are invariably times when most fans think they can coach their favourite team better than its real coach, in Dickinson’s case it is probably *true*.

Now, to be fair (and I am always fair), the call was not quite as bad as it sounds. The Eagles were driving into a stiff wind and kicker **Jay Feely** had already missed a 33-yard attempt into that same wind. With 17 seconds left, it was *possible* to make the first down and step out of bounds and give Feely a better shot. But the question is less about *possibility* and more about *probability*. Is Feely not an NFL kicker? Was the earlier miss the kind that happens to all NFL kickers occasionally, or was it a direct result of the nasty wind? His counterpart on the opposite sideline, **Nick Novak**, had made a 44-yarder into that same wind in the first half without apparent difficulty. Is Novak that much better than Feely?

Could Feely have made a 47-yarder? Was his chance of doing so better than the chance of **Aaron Rodgers** completing a 7-yard sideline pass against 6 defensive backs in the face of an all-out blitz? We’ll never know; and that “never-knowing” part opens up a can of controversy that will dog poor old “Dickie” for the rest of what fans can only hope will be a very short career as head football coach. Chris D is a likeable owner, but, if this game is a reliable indication, a budding disaster as a head coach.

On the other side of this strange game is Corn Kings coach **Jim Coghlin**, who appears to be as surprised as anybody with a football IQ in the double digits that his supposedly rebuilding team is 2-0 and sitting all alone at the top of the North Division. Is this an early sign of another Cinderella Season for the team that habitually turns into a pumpkin in the post-season?

“We are taking one game at a time,” Coghlin said, boringly. “It’s hard to win in this league and we’ll take what we can when we can and see what happens in the end,” he added even more uninterestingly. There was more to the interview that was even less informative, so I will spare you the recap and move on to the next stunning Week Two development.....

### **THE KING AND I**

Mad King Chris is back and more demented than ever. The Monarchs’ first win of the season came early this year, prompting a more bellicose than usual proclamation of His Highness’ intent to conquer the league, and squash Yours Truly in the process. A full transcript of his mad rant is available on the final page of this publication for those of you who enjoy watching freak shows.

To celebrate their home opener, the Monarchs took down the Mohave Hellfire by the impressive score of 37-20. It was an upset that showcased the few areas of strength the Monarchs possess and exposed the usual problems with the Mohave offensive line and ill-timed aggressiveness. Exactly how big of an upset it was will become apparent as the season progresses, but to hear **Chris Ferraro** talk about it now one would think Goliath had been slain all over again, but this time by a giant David only *perceived* to be smaller by the willfully blind ignoramuses in the Media – of which I am just one – but the *main* one apparently.

To set the record straight, I never predicted a 2-14 finish for Mission Viejo. I prefer to focus my column on winners, meaning that I give the Monarchs scant attention and don’t waste my mental energy trying to figure out whether they will win 2, 3, or 4 games while acting out their natural role as league doormat. That prediction was made by the so-called *Football Oracle* through the medium of **Jimmy the Geek**, a guy who makes his living by knowing precisely how bad the Monarchs are. If I was forced to make such a meaningless prediction, I would have to consider that the Monarchs face the Knights twice this year, giving them a couple of easy wins right off the bat. And, as we have just seen, knocking off a perpetual basket case like Mohave is certainly within reach of the Mad King’s purple legions. But who cares....really?

In an attempt to bring this article back to football and away from a study in abnormal psychology, I will simply say that the main point to bring away from this contest is that if you bet the mortgage on Mohave emerging as an underdog candidate for that fourth playoff spot that most analysts agree is up for grabs in the PAC then you better start to worry. **Andrew Luck** is the leading rusher on the team by almost three times more than the highest running back, **Montee Ball**. This is another sign, if you needed it, that Luck is a rare talent who, nevertheless, may never gel in **Bobby Elder’s** devil-may-care offensive scheme.

### **HAPPY IN HELL**

At Admiral Byrd Field in Carthage, Samoa, commonly known as the Killing Field, a grim-faced **Lance Barrate** watched his finely tuned offense log 500 yards of offence, but score just 20 points, as Virden dropped their second game in a row, 28-20, to the Cannibals. Not that a stern countenance is unfamiliar or not to be expected in the overall demeanour of a coach who runs the league’s most unfriendly franchise, but the uncommonly bleak and mirthless expression that pervaded all of his interactions on the sidelines during this contest suggest that he was really, really not happy – even for a naturally grim guy. Even the tiny blue shrunken heads adorning the goal posts in Carthage failed to catch his eye and elicit that droll grin, as they had when he first set eyes on them last year and promptly had his picture taken beside them.

The most likely explanation for Barrate's game-long dark funk is that, if it is logically possible to have a turning point occur within the first two minutes of a sixty-minute game, the game seemed to turn very early when **Marcus Sherels** fumbled away a first-possession punt at his own 40 yard line. The Cannibals jumped all over the second chance to score first and found the end zone quickly on two sharply executed plays: a 27-yard pass to **Josh Gordon** and a 13-yard TD run by **Eddie Lacy**. Barrate showed little overt reaction to the blunder and subsequent score by his opponent. He did not even bother to yell at Sherels – an omission he was never guilty of last year in 15 encounters with a post-interception **Matt Stafford**. It was as if he had expected it, or something like it, and he confirmed that in his very short post-game press conference:

“We are getting used to this type of setback and we plan for it in practice. ‘What-we-are-going-to-do-when-Marcus-fumbles-the-punt’ is one of the scenarios we practice,” he explained dryly to a riveted audience of reporters. “We of course plan for post-interception Matt and post-fumble Matt. Unfortunately, we were not prepared for ‘fumble-fingers’ Tate in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter this afternoon. We had no answer for that one and that’s on me,” he added, joining the swelling list of contrite post-game coaches who readily take the blame for their team’s losses when addressing the media. (Did they all attend the same conference in the off-season or something?)

The cloud currently hanging over the Virden franchise is only partly because they have an anti-social nickname and play their home games in a renovated insane asylum. It is also because the coach has allowed misfortune to become part of the culture in the Violators’ locker room, creating a negative cycle of subconscious self-inflicted wounds. Barrate would do well to take a page from Deron Redding’s latest publication, titled *‘Happy in Hell – How I Survived the 2012 Season,’* a handbook on staying positive regardless of the circumstances.

#### **AROUND THE EFL**

At the Big House in Chino, the Convicts overcame a pick-six by the Knights’ **Brian Orakpo** on **Cam Newton**’s first pass of the day and chugged to a 27-19 victory on the legs of running back **Adrian Peterson** and wide receiver **Marvin Jones**, who pulled off a 73-yard end-around to the LA 2-yard line to set up the Convicts’ third touchdown. Although not Cam’s best day through the air, his team showed versatility in using the ground game to put down a determined Knights team that rode **Ryan Mathews** like a rented mule to keep the score respectable.

At Thermopylae Stadium in Pickering, the ‘Glorious General’ (as **Peyton Manning** is being called by the ‘300 Spartans Club’ a group of elite local boosters) directed an unconvincing 17-6 besting of the Markham North Stars. The two teams slogged their way to a 3-3 1<sup>st</sup> half draw, thanks largely to a classic “Never Surrender!” moment, when the Pickering defence stopped Markham on 4<sup>th</sup> & inches at their own 4 yard line. Manning finally came alive late in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, connecting on a 41-yard bomb to **DeMaryius Thomas** then exploiting man coverage to hook up with **Pierre Garçon** for a 19-yard TD pass to make it 10-6. The Spartans held on for dear life after that until Markham’s **James Starks** fumbled away the ball inside his own red zone. That set up a 4-yard TD pass to **Craig Stevens** that gave the Spartan Faithful room to breathe and therefore air with which to bellow. It was not exactly the flashy debut Pickering fans, or **Gus Konstantakos**, had hoped for from Peyton, but it was enough to prompt a loud group bellowing of “Never Surrender!” “SPAAARRTTAAA!” and the drunken standby, “AAARRRGHHH!”

At idyllic Camelot in York, it was a beautiful day – the kind of day that prompts families to go out for picnics and career criminals to take the day off. A sellout crowd was in attendance to enjoy a fine game of football but instead were forced to watch a 31-7 stomping of the home team by the visiting Thunder Lizards. They struck on their first drive, with **Fred Jackson** bursting through the middle of the line for a 7-yard TD run then **Drew Brees** snuck a ball across the goal line from one foot away to make it 14-0. With seconds left in the 1<sup>st</sup> half, Brees connected with **Eric Decker** for a 15-yard TD pass to make the score 21-7 at half time. From there Durham went into clock-run mode, adding 10 points. While all eyes in Durham were on Brees to see how he would fare after getting roughed up at the Dawg Pound last week, the sight that made York fans want to avert their eyes was the sight of **Tom Brady** completing just 6 passes for 42 yards and no touchdowns. Granted, **Richard Sherman** and **Kam Chancellor** are no fun to play against, but they aren’t so good that a future hall-of-famer like Brady should not be able to complete a pass to his primary receiver. But somehow, that happened. Good luck with that receiving corps, Tom!

At the Carolina Slammer in Columbia, the home crowd got to welcome home **Jadeveon Clowney**, but he wasn’t wearing garnet on this occasion. Instead he was decked out in the white and sea blue trim of the Sebastian Swordfish, a team that has not, until this day, garnered much interest from the Carolina fan base, or any other fan base, including their own. Clowney was mostly silent, but **Rahim Moore** made some noise with a pick-six off **Tony Romo** that, for a moment in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, had Sebastian out front 17-13. But Romo ultimately came to the Regs’ rescue, throwing a pair of TD passes in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half to win 27-20.

At Minneapolis, the “New Patriots” came up embarrassingly short against the Triumph, dropping a 34-0 decision just one week after taking the league by storm with an upset of Virden. It was the first shutout of the year in the EFL and could be one of several more to be suffered by the Pats before the end of the year. **Blake Bortles** is in for a very long season.

Finally, in cottage country, the Aurora Mustangs shut down the Gladiators, 37-7 in a game that yielded less than 450 yards of offence between the two teams. The Mustangs did not have to travel far to score. Six turnovers by Gwinnett, four lost fumbles and 2 **Big Ben** interceptions made a game that promised to be easy for the home team even easier.

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### JIMMY'S WEEK THREE PICKS

#### **SANTA CLARA @ CHARLESWOOD (line – BANANA SLUGGS by 12)**

**INJURIES:** Santa Clara – None; Charleswood – Anthony Spencer (OUT).

Riding the emotional high of their opening day miracle win over Virden, the Pats came down to earth last week by getting shut out at Twin Cities. Now that's more like what we expected from Blake Bortles and his all-rookie offence. The Pats have not scored in the first half yet this season and it is hard to imagine them snapping that gloomy trend against what might be the most dangerous defence in the league. The Sluggs will certainly bring pressure and there is not much standing between Robert Mathis and the rookie pivot. The Santa Clara offence might be unstoppable for a good defence, so the merely mediocre Charleswood defenders can expect to get pushed around by twin steamrollers Evan Mathis and Larry Warford and give up lots of yards. News that this game is sold out after their surprising week one win might be just enough to inspire the Pats to force a Sluggs punt or two. **PICK: SANTA CLARA**

#### **TWIN CITIES @ VIRDEN (line – TRIUMPH by 3)**

**INJURIES:** Twin Cities – Doug Martin (OUT), Henry Melton (OUT); Virden – Aldon Smith (OUT).

The 0-2 Violators start a three-game home stand against a major divisional rival after dropping two games on the road to start the season. It is only under such circumstances that any team is glad to see **TERRORDOME**, the most inhospitable stadium in the league now that the Graveyard is no more. The Triumph is favoured here based entirely on its 2-0 record as there are no good fundamental reasons to give Guy Williams' crew an edge on the road against the current third ranked offence in the league and a talented defence that is still taking too much heat for letting Sammy Watkins beat them in Charleswood. However, the fact remains that Twin Cities shut out the team that embarrassed Virden in that Week One debacle, thus earning the favourite tag here. Good for me, I say. I know better than to let that freak outcome affect my evaluation of the talent. Unquestionably, the Triumph passing game is to be respected, but the running game is in serious trouble with Doug Martin on the sideline. The Violators have a talented and deep secondary capable of making it tough on an offence that cannot use the play action to slow down the pass rush. On the other side, the Triumph defence has not had to deal with a full service offence this year. They will have their hands full facing Jamaal Charles and Ben Tate in the backfield and Dez Bryant and Michael Floyd on the edges. This one is a no-brainer. **PICK: VIRDEN**

#### **CARTHAGE @ MOHAVE (line – CANNIBALS by 9)**

**INJURIES:** Carthage – None; Mohave – Robert Woods (OUT).

The Hellfire are labouring under their usual slow start to the season while the Cannibals are so far justifying the out-on-a-limb predictions that they would emerge from obscurity to be a contender this year. Philip Rivers is efficient and Eddie Lacy is doing just enough to keep his team ahead of the competition with 4 touchdowns. But if Carthage is to continue its march to the final four in the PAC the defence will have to step up and show it can stop a good offence. Last week they surrendered 500 yards to the Violators and only survived due to timely turnovers. The Mohave offence is not in the same league as Virden's, but Andrew Luck is a good quarterback and he has weapons in the passing game. The less than stellar Hellfire offensive line offers opportunities for the so-far silent Greg Hardy to get on the sack board. For the Hellfire, a brisk pass rush does not appear to be enough to compensate for a combustible secondary that has been torched two weeks running. Expect Philip Rivers to take some deep shots early to set the tone. It is time for Mohave to win a game, but I don't like the match-ups for them here. But can they beat the spread? Sure. **PICK:**

**MOHAVE**

## **IOWA CITY @ LOS ANGELES (line – CUBS by 12)**

**INJURIES:** Iowa City – Sio Moore (PROBABLE); Los Angeles – Le'Veon Bell (OUT), Andre Brown (OUT), Mike Brown (OUT), Shonn Greene (OUT), Spencer Larsen (OUT).

The Cubs have been involved in two barn-burners to start the season with the result that they currently have the top-rated offence and the worst-rated defence in the league. The truth is that the Cubs are neither the best offence nor the worst defence, and after this game one ranking will rise and the other will fall. The Knights have been relying on Ryan Mathews to move the ball because the quarterback tag team of Sam Bradford and Mike Glennon cannot find their wide receivers. The Knights' defence has Pro Bowl talent in the front seven but the corners are incapable of covering high quality wide receivers, making it difficult to pressure the passer; defensive stud Robert Quinn is still sackless after two weeks. This line is large for a visiting favourite but worth every point. The Cubs will work out some frustration at the Knights' expense. **PICK: IOWA CITY**

## **CHINO @ MISSION VIEJO (line – CONVICTS by 1)**

**INJURIES:** Chino– John Conner (OUT), Roddy White (OUT); Mission Viejo – None.

This line started at 5 points and has dropped like a rock since it was posted. Bettors are entranced by the broadside delivered to the media by the excitable Monarchs' owner following his team's pounding of Mohave in Week Two. It appears that amateur bettors are willing to put their money on Chris Ferraro knowing something about his team that the odds-makers don't. Well, let them. That means more opportunities for those of us who know better. The Monarchs are no longer the laughing stock of the league defensively, but they are still capable of eliciting a few chuckles. In this game there may be a few belly laughs on deep balls to Jarius Wright interspersed with raised eyebrows if Cameron Jordan or Olivier Vernon can get to Cam Newton. When Mission Viejo has the ball they could find traction in the running game with DeMarco Murray following guard Josh Sitton against a Chino line that has lost some muscle in the short game. It will depend on whether or not the Convicts can grab an early lead; if they do, the Monarchs will struggle to come from behind; if not it could be an interesting game. **PICK: CHINO**

## **GWINNETT @ MARKHAM (line – NORTH STARS by 10)**

**INJURIES:** Gwinnett– Bjoern Werner (OUT); Markham – Michael Griffin (OUT).

The Gladiators may turn out to have the worst defence in the league when the season is over, but right now it is performing at a top five level thanks to a run defence that has given up just 2.8 yards per carry and a team total of 285 yards per game. This was accomplished against a couple of good offences in Scarborough and Aurora, so credit Dave Birdsall and his defensive coordinator for getting the most out of meagre resources. The North Stars are no longer in that category, but Darrin Jones is accustomed to getting the most out of his own meagre resources as well. With their glory years behind them and prospects for playoff contention dim, Markham and Gwinnett will be playing for coaches' pride in just the third week of the season. The obscenely high betting line is largely a product of Markham's week one win over Durham, their first place finish last year and the home field advantage. But the Stars also have distinct advantages; such as actual wide receivers, good defensive linemen and a pass rush that can penetrate most of the league's offensive lines. The Glads have a handful of noble stars standing alone, on the road. In a hostile house, there will be no friends to motivate them. **PICK: MARKHAM**

## **PICKERING @ DURHAM (line – THUNDER LIZARDS by 2)**

**INJURIES:** Pickering – None; Durham – Calvin Johnson (QUESTIONABLE).

Both of these giants are off to slow starts, but the pressure of expectations is stronger in Pickering, where a ton is riding on Peyton Manning. Although both teams have running games in theory, the pass is king in both teams' game plans. The Thunder Lizards departed from that game plan last week and found success against a York team with no passing game. The Spartans under Peyton Manning are theoretically capable of wiping out a painstaking ground game with one well-placed throw down the seam to DeMaryius Thomas. So too are the Lizards. The big question here is whether or not Calvin Johnson will be able to play; it literally makes the difference between victory and defeat for Durham. If he cannot go, Durham will want to control the ball as much as they can on the ground and set up the play action pass to draw blood. If Megatron can go, Durham will be content to fight an air war and trust that defenders Richard Sherman and Dominique Rodgers-Cromartie will tip the balance in their favour. Both coaches are stubborn and will stick to their game plans, making it easier to predict an outcome after the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter has played out. But before then, it's anybody's guess. My guess is that wildcard Nick Foles starts. **PICK: DURHAM**

## YORK @ COWTOWN (line – EXCALIBURS by 2)

**INJURIES:** York – Geno Atkins (OUT); Cowtown – Ryan Clady (OUT), Terrence Newman (OUT), Cecil Shorts III (OUT).

The odds-makers see through the early Corn Kings' surge to the top of the North Division and have rightfully pegged the Swords as narrow road favourites here. Cowtown ambushed a cocky Spartans' squad with a bold game plan and held on long enough in Scarborough to allow the Blue Eagles to beat themselves, as they so often do. None of that has made the Corn Kings a sudden dark horse to challenge the powers in the North, of which York is a middling one, capable of knocking off anybody on any given Sunday. The caution flag for York fans is the dismal performance by Tom Brady last week against the Thunder Lizards, which was astounding even coming against the best secondary in the game. Expect Brady to bounce back from that, but his limited targets at receiver will continue to restrain him and necessitate a big dose of Marshawn Lynch. **PICK: YORK**

## AURORA @ SEBASTIAN (line – MUSTANGS by 18)

**INJURIES:** Aurora – None; Sebastian – None.

Get used to lines like this one in the lop-sided South. These teams may be in the same Division, but they are not in the same league. Having said that, the gigantic spread does not necessarily mean the Mustangs will hang 37+ points on the Swordfish like they have against their previous two opponents. Matt Ryan could have one of his mediocre days and the Mustangs could still beat the spread through total domination of Andy Dalton and that band of no-names and has-beens behind him at the skill positions. The challenge for JJ Watt and Co. will be maintaining focus more than winning the battles in the trenches. I like the Swordfish versus the spread here because the Mustangs will quite likely get bored and lose interest. **PICK: SEBASTIAN**

## SOUTH CAROLINA @ SCARBOROUGH (line – BLUE EAGLES by 6)

**INJURIES:** South Carolina – Rob Housler (OUT); Scarborough – None.

One of these two teams is likely to grab the fourth playoff spot by season's end, making every face-to-face match-up between them critical. After easily knocking off Gwinnett, the Blue Eagles got too cute with Cowtown and stumbled to an unexpected home loss in Week Two. The Regulators rebounded from a drubbing against the Mustangs but did not look like top contenders in defeating Sebastian at home. Neither of these teams look like they are ready for the playoff limelight yet but the winner of this contest will take a big step forward in the process. The Scarborough defence has not held up as expected against the run, but it is too early to say if that is a sign of a chronic problem or just the result of facing LeSean McCoy and Alfred Morris in back-to-back weeks. Frank Gore is in that same league, but he has not been on track so far, which has put pressure on Tony Romo. The Blue Eagles' offensive line is reviving Ray Rice's teetering career but has not been able to prevent Aaron Rodgers from holding the ball too long. Both teams can do better to justify the high hopes and demands held by their fans. Scarborough fans are on edge after last week's controversial finish, making the home field less of an advantage. **PICK: SOUTH CAROLINA**



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

FROM THE EFL ARCHIVES – The volatility created by the collapse and hasty replacement of two of the initial four expansion teams posed a serious threat to EFL stability. In order to sell the EFL game to the new markets, the league decided to throw the four teams together in the same division for the first year. This would guarantee a playoff berth for at least one of the new teams and promote competition. It was a good arrangement for the one expansion team that had attempted to build a winner – the Death Valley Undertakers/Pickering Spartans – but it meant

that a better team would miss out on the post-season and the accompanying revenue. The other three expansion teams were not particularly impressive, even for expansion teams, and did not have a chance at a winning season even in a weak division.

Once the reality sunk in, the arrangement was highly criticized – but it was too late to turn back. It looked like the Spartans would be the favourite to earn the league's first and only "subsidized" playoff berth.

In the other Divisions, the consensus top team in the league, the Florida Dragons, appeared to be a lock to win the South Division, with Tom Brady at the helm, over a strong Gwinnett team led by Carson Palmer. The Charleswood Patriots, regarded as a near equal to Florida, appeared to have an even stronger grip on the top spot in the North Division, with Peyton Manning calling the signals, over token resistance from Durham and Cowtown. In the other "normal" division, the West, fans and writers liked the Cubs, with a defence led by Patrick Willis and Mario Williams in their prime, over the Convicts and Buccaneers. These favourites were well-picked, but there turned out to be some real surprises behind them.



PROCLAMATION  
FROM THE THRONE  
OF  
HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS

**KING FERRARO**

*Delivered by Royal Herald to His Highness  
Michael S. Hickenbottom*

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE MONARCHS 37-20 UPSET VICTORY OVER THE HELLFIRE, I JUMPED ONTO THE FIELD TO TRY AND CATCH UP WITH A FEW MONARCHS BEFORE THEY HIT THE SHOWERS. I FIRST FOUND GAME MVP RYAN TANNEHILL. HERE IS HOW THE CONVERSATION WENT:

MSH - RYAN, CONGRATULATIONS ON THE VICTORY. AFTER LAST WEEK'S HORROR SHOW THAT WAS A LOSS TO THE BANANA SLUGGS, YOU CAME BACK FIRING ON ALL CYLINDERS THIS WEEK. 23-FOR-31, 258 YARDS AND 3 TOUCHDOWNS, HOW DOES THAT MAKE YOU FEEL?

RT - THANKS, MICHAEL. I HAVE TO BE HONEST, IT FEELS REAL GOOD. THINGS HAVE BEEN CRAZY AROUND HERE. WE ONLY WON 3 AND 5 GAMES IN OUR FIRST TWO SEASONS, AND A LOT OF PEOPLE DON'T KNOW IF THE "MAD KING" CHRIS FERRARO IS CAPABLE OF TURNING THIS NEW FRANCHISE INTO A WINNER.

MSH - ARE YOU REFERRING TO SPATS McCHAD?

RT - IT ISN'T JUST SPATS, BUT JIMMY THE GREEK, AND REALLY ANYONE WHO FOLLOWS THE EFL. NO ONE PAYS MUCH ATTENTION TO US. NO ONE TAKES US SERIOUSLY.

MSH - DO WINS LIKE THIS MAKE YOU FEEL LIKE YOU'RE MAKING SOME NOISE?

RT - IT'S A START. THE HELLFIRE MIGHT NOT BE BOUND TO WIN THE GAYLE SAYERS TROPHY, BUT THEY ARE A LEGITIMATE COMPETITOR IN THIS LEAGUE. AND WINS LIKE THIS MAKE US REALIZE WE MIGHT BE CRAZY ENOUGH TO BECOME A COMPETITOR AS WELL.

MSH - LET'S NOT JUMP AHEAD OF OURSELVES JUST YE...

RT - I'M SERIOUS. SO IS DeMARCO, CAMERON, KHALIL, AND JOE. THERE'S SOME REAL TALENT, AND WE EXPECT THE LEAGUE START TAKING NOTICE. THANKS, MICHAEL.

I THANKED TANNEHILL AND HE LEFT, BUT I TURNED AROUND TO FIND MYSELF BEING STARED DOWN BY TEAM OWNER, "MAD KING" CHRIS FERRARO. HE SAID, "HICKENBOTTOM, GIVE ME THAT MICROPHONE!"

"YES, YOUR HIGHNESS," I REPLIED.

CF - THAT IS CORRECT. YOU SHALL NOT STAND ON MY FIELD IN THE MIDDLE OF HIS MAJESTY THE KING'S ROYAL COLISEUM AND NOT ADDRESS ME BY MY PROPER TITLE. NOW, BE GONE, SO I MAY ADDRESS ONE OF MY DISSIDENT PEOPLE, SPECIFICALLY, LORD SPATS McCHAD. McCHAD. WE MAY HAVE HAD OUR DIFFERENCES IN THE PAST. BUT I AM WILLING TO LET BYGONES BE BYGONES, AND INVITE YOU NEXT WEEK TO KING'S LANDING FOR OUR EPIC BATTLE WITH THE CRIMINALS FROM CHINO. I BELIEVE THIS IS OUR OPPORTUNITY TO SIT DOWN TOGETHER AS KING'S AND LORD'S OF THE ELITE FOOTBALL LEAGUE SHOULD DO. I WILL BREAK OUT A BOTTLE OF GOUT DE DIAMANTS AND SOME ALMAS IRANIAN CAVIAR SO WE MIGHT DISCUSS THIS ALLEGED SLANDERING OF MY MONARCHS YOU DID IN THE SEASON PREVIEW. A 2-14 RECORD? A D+ FOR THIS CAREFULLY CONSTRUCTED OFFENSE LED BY DeMARCO MURRAY, JOE STALEY, BEN GRUBBS, AND RYAN TANNEHILL? A C FOR A DEFENSE WITH TWO ELITE PASS RUSHERS IN CAMERON JORDAN AND OLIVIER VERNON? I'M...I'M...SO...ANGRY! FORGET THE CHAMPAGNE AND CAVIAR. FORGET THE INVITATION TO KING'S LANDING. IF ANY OF MY ROYAL GUARDSMEN FIND YOU, ANYWHERE, I WILL HAVE YOU ARRESTED FOR THIS MOCKERY OF THE MONARCHS AND THE ELITE FOOTBALL LEAGUE. THIS IS AN OUTRAGE! GUARDS! SEIZE HIM!