



WEEK SIXTEEN

January 27, 2008



Neil Rackers of the Iowa City Cubs celebrates after kicking a 39-yard field goal to beat Los Angeles, 15-14. Rackers, who had missed 10 earlier field goal attempts this season, kicked 5 out of 6 in Week 16.

RACKERS KICKS CUBS INTO PLAYOFFS!!

STRUGGLING KICKER EARNS REDEMPTION WITH GAME-WINNING BOOT AS TIME EXPIRES



LOS ANGELES

14

5 - 11



IOWA CITY

15

7 - 9

IOWA CITY – In the end, all was forgiven Neil Rackers. The two missed field goals, one in overtime, that had left the door open for a Durham win in Week 1 – forgiven; the missed 44-yard field goal that would have tied the game in the final minute against Kutztown in Week 14 – forgiven; the league-high 11 missed field goals and league-low 68% field goal success rate this season – forgiven. Because, when it mattered – with the season on the line – Neil Rackers delivered.

The much ridiculed Rackers, nick-named “Wreckers” by critical fans and sports writers alike, delivered on 5 of

6 field goals to account for all of his team’s 15 points in their Week 16 showdown against the Los Angeles Knights. The one that mattered most, with the game and a playoff berth on the line, came from 39 yards out as time on the clock ran out to give the Iowa City Cubs a 15-14 victory over their arch rival. The celebration that followed was fueled as much by emotional relief as it was by the exhilaration of the underrated Cubs over-coming long odds and making the playoffs in a year when most expected a basement finish. For Rackers, it was more personal relief, since less than a minute earlier it had looked as if he would, once more, wear the goat horns in a tragic loss at home. But more on that later – first, rewind to the beginning of the game.

Both teams, and their fans, knew that this final match-up of the regular season was, in effect, an early playoff. The

01-24-2008 Temp: 38 Wind: 0-5 Line: Even MVP: Leftwich

2006 Los Angeles (5-11) 0 7 7 0 - 14
2006 Iowa City (7-9) 6 3 0 6 - 15

1 11:40	Iowa City	FG Rackers 19 (9-27-3:00)	0-3
1 1:03	Iowa City	FG Rackers 26 (11-73-6:11)	0-6
2 13:06	Los Angeles	TD Bell 45 run (Lindell) (6-68-2:36)	7-6
2 0:03	Iowa City	FG Rackers 18 (10-59-5:07)	7-9
3 3:10	Los Angeles	TD Carr 2 pass to Jones (Lindell) (14-88-7:13)	14-9
4 9:42	Iowa City	FG Rackers 27 (9-72-4:35)	14-12
4 0:04	Iowa City	FG Rackers 39 (3-27-0:20)	14-15

	LAK	ICC
First Downs	14	24
Rushes	23-123	23-74
Passes	17-12-150	37-26-316
Sacked	1-9	4-21
Fumble	0	2
Penalties	8-64	6-40
Turnovers	0	0
Time	25:58	34:02
Third Down	3-9	3-13
Fourth Down	0-0	1-1
Net Offense	264	369

winner would secure the final playoff spot in the East Division while the loser would go home to watch the post-season play out on television.

It was a day that started well for Iowa City. Dante Hall returned the opening kickoff 61 yards to set up the first of Racker's 5 field goals. Then, to everyone's surprise, Coach Redding pulled starter Jeff Garcia after one series in favour of Byron Leftwich. No, that is not a typo. Leftwich, who had not seen any action until that moment, came on and stunned everyone by directing a field goal drive 73 yards, entirely through the air.

The Knights, however, responded with an efficient 68-yard campaign that netted a touchdown on Tatum Bell's dazzling 45-yard run on a perfectly executed trap play against the Cub's nickel package. Los Angeles suddenly led, 7-6.

Continuing to break with convention, Redding switched *back* to the veteran Garcia to

end the first half. The gambit paid off with another field goal drive that, very possibly, could have been more except that Redding did not want to test the Knight's defense on 4th and goal from the one yard line after Tamba Hali had forced a Garcia fumble on third down and almost taken the ball away. As the first gun shot rang out, the home town Cubs led 9-7.

Iowa City's 'musical quarterbacks' game continued as Leftwich started the second half but could not muster any movement. The Knights came back with the most impressive drive of the day, covering a total of 88 yards as David "and Goliath" Carr was precise through the air. Facing an aggressive Cubbies blitz on second down at the 2 yard line, Carr fired a bullet to Kevin Jones in the right side of the end zone to make the score 14-9 for Los Angeles.

A return to Garcia brought concern instead, as the veteran soon had to leave the game suffering apparent discomfort in his throwing arm. The game, for better or worse, was in the hands of Leftwich, and a Cubs defense that was playing inspired football and managing to limit the Knight's attack. Leftwich led his team to another field goal, to narrow the deficit to 14-12.

The Knights had a chance to go up by 5 points, but Rian Lindell hooked a 46-yard field goal attempt left of the upright, keeping the Cubs within two. Improbably, that miss set up one of the strangest endings you will ever see.

The Cubs responded to the reprieve with a vigorous 13-play drive that finally stalled on the Knight's 5 yard line with 54 seconds remaining in the game. Rackers trotted on to the field for what appeared to be a "sure thing" go-ahead field goal. As bad as the season had been for the Cub's kicker, nobody expected him to miss a 22-yard field goal attempt. Unbelievably, however, the unlucky Rackers hooked it badly and the kick just skimmed by the left upright for a miss. Dead silence engulfed Joe Ferguson Stadium, except for the Knights bench celebrating wildly. But it was not over yet!

With 50 seconds standing between his team and victory, Coach Dohrn went for the throat. Carr attempted a pass on first down that fell incomplete, saving precious time for the home team. Two running plays later and the Knights were punting – giving the ball back to Iowa City on the 49 yard line with only 21 seconds remaining. Leftwich, (who, remember, had not played a down all season until that day), showed veteran-like poise in leading his team on a desperation drive to get into field goal range. First, he hit Kellen Winslow for 16 yards, bringing the ball to the Knight's 33 and forcing him to call his team's final timeout. Then he hit Winslow again on a short out. The tight end somehow rambled to the 22 yard line and got out of bounds with 4 seconds remaining. Did it matter, though? If Rackers couldn't hit from 22 yards under pressure, what were his chances of hitting from 39 yards?

A high snap appeared to signal the end of Iowa City's hopes, but holder Ryan Plackemeier made a nice grab and got the ball down. Rackers stepped forward and brought his leg through the ball. High and straight it sailed, true as a marksman's arrow through the center of the uprights as the gun sounded to end the game. It was, without any doubt, GOOD! Cubs win! Cubs win!

QUOTABLES

“I can’t talk right now. I may never be able to talk again.” – Iowa City kicker, *Neil Rackers*.

“Nothing serious. It was just a classic case of ‘tired arm.’” – Cubs QB, *Jeff Garcia*. (explaining why he left the game)

“Look guys! If we’d completed that pass you’d all be calling me a friggin’ genius right now! They had everyone except the safety at the line. They would have been dead. But we didn’t execute there and that hurt, for sure. Did it cost us the game? That’s for you to decide, I guess. I think what cost us the game was not being able to stop a rookie QB from completing two passes and then allowing their receiver to get out of bounds. That’s what cost us the game – a breakdown in defensive fundamentals!” – Los Angeles coach, *Jeff Dohrn*. (explaining his decision to pass on first down)

“All season, nobody has given us a chance. Well, here we are! In the playoffs! *Sweet!*” – Iowa City coach, *Deron Redding*.

“I don’t know why he put me in there. He just pointed to me on the bench and said, ‘get in there, Byron!’ It took me by surprise. He does shit like that, but you never know when he’s going to do it. It’s kind of crazy!” – Iowa City QB, *Byron Leftwich* (on Coach Redding putting him in to the game)



8 - 8

24

GLADIATORS “GOOD AS GOULD” – COME FROM BEHIND TO BEAT BEARS



8 - 8

27

**29-YARD FIELD GOAL AS TIME EXPIRES LIFTS
GWINNETT INTO POST-SEASON PLAY**

GWINNETT – With a playoff spot riding on the outcome of this game, the crowd at Gwinnett County Coliseum was rollicking with excitement well before the opening kickoff. After a pre-game mock gladiatorial combat that witnessed the bloody slaughter of over two dozen golden-coloured bears, the crowd was frenzied and crying for Kutztown blood. However, the football bears would not fall as easily as the drugged and starved pre-game sacrificial bears. The game was a nail-biter up to the very end.

A sluggish Tony Romo, recovering from a late night of dancing at a Gwinnett nightclub with girlfriend, Jessica Simpson and her father, stumbled on to the field for the first series. After his second pass attempt fell short of its mark, he suddenly ran off the field with his hand over his mouth. Into the locker room he went, not to be seen again during the game.

Into the game, quite unexpectedly, came veteran QB, Kurt Warner. Obviously rusty, his first pass attempt sailed high and the Bears were forced to punt.

01-26-2008		Temp: 54	Wind: 0-5	Line: Even	MVP: Palmer
2006 Kutztown (8-8)	7	3	7	7	- 24
2006 Gwinnett (8-8)	7	10	0	10	- 27

1 7:31	Gwinnett	TD Palmer 3 pass to Gonzalez (Gould) (9-71-4:54)			0-7
1 2:17	Kutztown	TD Johnson 2 run (Kaeding) (10-72-5:03)			7-7

2 12:36	Kutztown	FG Kaeding 50 (5-23-2:13)			10-7
2 9:57	Gwinnett	TD Parker 1 run (Gould) (6-82-2:27)			10-14
2 3:12	Gwinnett	FG Gould 35 (9-39-4:08)			10-17

3 6:32	Kutztown	TD Johnson 5 run (Kaeding) (2-17-0:44)			17-17

4 12:47	Kutztown	TD Johnson 3 run (Kaeding) (7-60-3:11)			24-17
4 6:20	Gwinnett	TD Palmer 14 pass to Wayne (Gould) (13-88-6:16)			24-24
4 0:07	Gwinnett	FG Gould 29 (9-73-3:18)			24-27

		KUT		GWG	
First Downs		22		29	
Rushes		29-135		27-117	
Passes		26-18-208		38-28-331	
Sacked		1-8		2-13	
Fumble		2		1	
Penalties		5-40		6-35	
Turnovers		1		1	
Time		28:11		31:42	
Third Down		3-10		7-10	
Fourth Down		1-1		0-1	
Net Offense		335		435	

The Gladiators drew first blood after moving easily up the field, covering 71 yards in 9 plays. A 3-yard pass from Carson Palmer to Tony Gonzalez brought the crowd to its feet and put the home team up 7-0. But after warming up on the sidelines, the Kutztown back-up QB looked like a different player on the Golden Bear's next series. Hitting Plaxico Burress for passes of 19 and 10 yards while interspersing handoffs to running back, Larry Johnson, Warner led his team to the 2 yard line, where Johnson finished off the drive with a 2-yard scoring plunge, tying the game at 7 apiece.

After stopping the Glads cold on their next series, the Bears added a 50-yard Nate Kaeding field to go up 10-7, but the home team regained the lead when Palmer connected with Reggie Wayne on a 58-yard bomb to set up a first-and-goal at the Kutztown one yard line. After a stubborn Golden Bears defense refused to budge after two downs, Willie Parker punched it in from one yard out, but Coach Katsafanas threw out the red challenge flag when replay appeared to show Parker's knee hitting the ground before the ball crossed the line. The call on the field was upheld due to lack of indisputable evidence to the contrary, and Gwinnett led, 14-10.

Gwinnett increased their lead before the half after a fumble by Marvin Harrison set up the Gladiators in good field position at their own 43 yard line. A short 39-yard drive ended with a 35-yard Robbie Gould field goal and the home team led at the half, 17-10.

The tide turned against Gwinnett in the second half when Willie Parker fumbled after taking a vicious hit from Jason Taylor and lost the ball at his own 17 yard line. Deep in Gwinnett territory, Kutztown took only two plays to put the ball in the end zone – Larry Johnson broke a tackle and burst through the line from 5 yards out for the tying score, making it 17-17. Then, a key sack by defensive end, Amobi Okoye, stalled the Gladiators in their tracks and the Golden Bears started their next possession at their own 30 yard line. A couple of Johnson runs brought the Glads up to the line, setting up a neatly executed 34-yard pass play from Warner to Harrison to bring Kutztown into the Gwinnett red zone. Looking unstoppable, the Warner-led Bears finished it off, keyed by a 15-yard pass to Plaxico Burress and a three-yard touchdown run by Larry Johnson, his third of the game, to make the score 24-17 Kutztown.

Enter: Carson Palmer. Down by a touchdown at the beginning of the fourth quarter and backed up at his own 12, the Gwinnett QB calmly handed the ball off to running back, Chris Henry, who was subbing for a tired Parker. Henry's running gave the Gladiators a needed lift and some breathing room, until the Golden Bear defense finally had enough and stuffed the back-up RB for consecutive losses of 1 and 4 yards! Facing a critical 3rd down and 15 at the Kutztown 39 yard line, Palmer set up in the shotgun and looked downfield. With pass protection holding up, Palmer found Wayne open on a deep curl for 23 yards to keep the drive alive. Four plays, and two false start penalties later, Palmer found Wayne open down the seam in the zone for a 14-yard touchdown pass to tie the game at 24-24.

Kutztown got the ball back at their 20 yard line and moved the ball to near midfield. On 3rd down and 10, the Bears caught the Glads napping with a handoff to workhorse Larry Johnson, who busted one for 20 yards. But the potentially key third down conversion was nullified by a holding penalty to Dan Kreider, setting up 3rd and 20. On the next play, Johnson gained back the 10 yards lost on the penalty, but it was not enough to make Coach Katsafanas consider gambling on fourth down, and Kutztown was forced to punt.

Moorman's punt went out of bounds inside the Gladiator twenty at the 15 yard line, setting up the perfect "Legend-making" scenario for Carson Palmer. The Gladiator QB seemed to relish the limelight, completing 5 of 5 passes on the drive to bring the ball to the Kutztown 12 yard line with 7 seconds remaining in the game.

Enter: Robbie Gould – the EFL's most accurate field goal kicker, who had, just earlier, missed his first field goal attempt of the season – a 50-yarder in the third quarter. With the crowd on its feet, and the players on both sidelines holding their breath, Gould stepped into the kick and booted it clean, drawing it from right to left through the uprights as time expired for the dramatic win and a playoff berth.

QUOTABLES

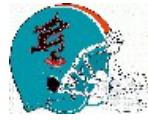
"I knew once we got home, things would finally turn around for us. It was a tough road trip, but it brought us together as a team. Yeah sure, we wanted to kill each other after the loss at Florida, but we were able to turn that murderous instinct around and use it against our opponents here in Gwinnett. It got us through the game today. We wanted to kill the Bears and, even if it was not easy, we did kill them. Now we're going to kill the Patriots!" – Gwinnett QB, **Carson Palmer**.

"People are going to blame Jessica, but that's not fair. As her Dad says to me all the time, 'look at her D-cups, Tony!' I mean, who can blame me? I'm a man who likes big breasts. That football didn't feel the same after last night." – Golden Bears QB, **Tony Romo**. (explaining why he went out the night before the game)

"It's premature to say anything at this stage. I've got to see them for myself." Kutztown coach, **Pete Katsafanas** (when asked if Romo would be disciplined for breaking curfew)

PATRIOTS PULL ONE OUT OF THE FIRE AGAINST DRAGONS

MANNING'S 4TH QUARTER TD PASS TO 'OCHO CINCO' IS THE DIFFERENCE / BRADY TURNS THE BALL OVER 5 TIMES!



8 - 8



12 - 4

14

19

01-24-2008	Temp: 75 Wind:	Line: Even	MVP: Manning
2006 Florida (8-8)	7	0	7 0 - 14
2006 Charleswood (12-4)	0	6	7 6 - 19

1 1:20 Florida	TD Jackson 6 run (Nugent) (11-75-5:21)		7-0

2 12:26 Charleswood	FG Gostkowski 21 (11-68-3:42)		7-3
2 3:27 Charleswood	FG Gostkowski 23 (9-50-4:31)		7-6

3 10:04 Charleswood	TD Manning 12 pass to Johnson (Gostkowski) (6-30-2:08)		7-13
3 5:36 Florida	TD Jackson 20 run (Nugent) (9-80-4:28)		14-13

4 4:50 Charleswood	TD Manning 14 pass to Johnson (2 - failed) (8-72-4:37)		14-19

	FLD	CHP	
First Downs	22	20	
Rushes	28-151	31-83	
Passes	29-18-230	33-23-279	
Sacked	3-25	2-15	
Fumble	3	0	
Penalties	8-50	9-73	
Turnovers	5	0	
Time	30:14	29:46	
Third Down	6-11	4-14	
Fourth Down	0-1	0-1	
Net Offense	356	347	

CHARLESWOOD – It might have been a different outcome without 5 Tom Brady turnovers. But unfortunately for Florida there were 5 Tom Brady turnovers – 3 interceptions and 2 lost fumbles – leading directly to 10 points by the Patriots and a Dragon loss.

Peyton Manning once again overcame a mediocre rushing attack by throwing for 279 yards and 2 TDs, the last a short curl that Chad Johnson ran into the end zone with 4:50 remaining in the game to cap the scoring and win the game for Charleswood.

A late Dragon rally ended in humiliating fashion with a holding penalty, a sack of Brady by Trevor Pryce, and a lame duck ‘Hail Mary’ pass that fell yards from the nearest receiver. Florida hangs on to a playoff spot with the loss, winning the overall tie-breaker in a three-way tie with Gwinnett and Kutztown.

HELLFIRE TORCH SWAMP DOGS

MOHAVE TAKES OUT LATE SEASON FRUSTRATION ON PUPPIES FROM THE WETLANDS



10 - 6



1 - 15

37

7

MEADOWLANDS – The Hellfire and the Swamp Dogs both returned to mid-season form in their final game of the 2007 EFL campaign – the Hellfire, loser of four straight, laid on an ass-whopping while the Swamp Dogs, winners of...well...one, yelped.

With Florida’s loss to Charleswood, the game meant nothing to Mohave in terms of playoff seeding, but that didn’t stop them from starting their first string, mostly because, with their large payroll, they don’t have much of a second string. Still, Mohave was so much in control, that back-up Matt Schaub made his second appearance of the year, giving Marc Bulger a rest in the fourth quarter and throwing a highlight reel 45-yard TD pass to Brian Westbrook in the fourth quarter, just for fun.

Champ Bailey returned an interception for a touchdown in the second quarter, and London Fletcher-Baker had a career day with 12 tackles, 3 interceptions, and a forced

fumble to lead a turnover festival and shut down the Swampie's attack. The Swamp Dogs gave the ball away 7 times, and it almost seemed merciful that the Hellfire scored only 37 points.

Mohave scored early and never looked back, shutting out the home team until the final play, when rookie Jamarcus Russell threw his first EFL career TD pass to another rookie, Dwayne Bowe.

Swamp Dog's starting QB, "Big Ben," sacked 52 times on the year, spoke briefly with reporters after the game before heading home for good. "I am thinking that riding a motorcycle without a helmet can't be as dangerous as playing quarterback for this team," he said.

Hellfire pivot, Marc Bulger, asked to review his performance this year, curtly responded, "I try not to think about this year. Right now, I'm thinking of the playoff game against the Gladiators. Now why don't you guys take a hike!"

01-27-2008 Temp: 72 Wind: Calm Line: Mohave by 7 MVP: **Fletcher-Baker**

2006 **Mohave** (10-6) 10 17 3 7 -37
 2006 **Meadowlands** (1-15) 0 0 0 7 -7

1	9:11	Mohave	TD Bulger 2 pass to Owens (Carney) (12-85-5:46)	7-0
1	5:12	Mohave	FG Carney 29 (6-33-2:40)	10-0
2	9:25	Mohave	TD Bulger 10 pass to Coles (Carney) (7-42-3:23)	17-0
2	6:05	Mohave	TD Bailey 25 interception return (Carney) (0-0-0:00)	24-0
2	0:18	Mohave	FG Carney 35 (11-68-2:02)	27-0
3	4:32	Mohave	FG Carney 24 (14-76-8:46)	30-0
4	9:27	Mohave	TD Schaub 45 pass to Westbrook (Carney) (6-77-2:09)	37-0
4	0:01	Meadowlands	TD Russell 4 pass to Bowe (Tynes) (16-80-3:24)	37-7

	MOH	MSD
First Downs	29	18
Rushes	35-150	19-84
Passes	48-35-351	45-27-280
Sacked	1-6	2-13
Fumble	1	2
Penalties	5-35	8-54
Turnovers	1	7
Time	38:53	21:07
Third Down	7-15	4-11
Fourth Down	0-0	1-2
Net Offense	495	351

HENDERSON BREAKS OPEN SLUGGISH GAME WITH BIG PLAY

*PENNINGTON CONNECTS WITH BACK-UP
 RECEIVER FOR GAME-WINNING 40-YARD TD
 PASS*



9 - 7



13 - 3

10

16

01-27-2008 Temp: 34 Wind:5-15 Rain Line: Even MVP: **Pennington**

2006 **Durham** (9-7) 7 3 0 0 -10
 2006 **Cowtown** (13-3) 0 6 7 3 -16

1	0:12	Durham	TD Rivers 1 pass to Gore (Scobee) (6-16-3:20)	7-0
2	11:27	Cowtown	FG Hanson 38 (10-59-3:45)	7-3
2	5:40	Durham	FG Scobee 46 (6-17-3:31)	10-3
2	0:10	Cowtown	FG Hanson 21 (12-81-5:17)	10-6
3	0:03	Cowtown	TD Pennington 40 pass to Henderson (Hanson,J) (3-52-1:00)	10-13
4	2:36	Cowtown	FG Hanson 18 (9-72-3:42)	10-16

	DTL	COW
First Downs	20	21
Rushes	36-129	24-86
Passes	40-16-179	33-22-291
Sacked	0-0	0-0
Fumble	2	1
Penalties	4-26	6-40
Turnovers	2	2
Time	34:42	25:18
Third Down	5-18	1-10
Fourth Down	6-8	1-2
Net Offense	308	377

COWTOWN – Frank "Dino" Gore made it a perfect season, finishing with 100+ yards rushing for the 16th straight game, and winning the EFL Rushing Title in the process. But his team fell, losing 16-10 in the rain at Tillman Field in Cowtown.

Gore rushed for 113 yards and caught a 1-yard TD pass from Philip Rivers in the first quarter to score Durham's only major of the day and help build a 10-6 half time lead. But the Dinosaurs struggled again, as they have throughout the year, to move the ball late in the game. Cowtown shut out the Lizards in the second half and got a big play from receiver, Devery Henderson to squeeze ahead and win the game. On the last play of the third quarter, Chad Pennington hit Henderson in stride on a long crossing pattern that he carried the rest of the way for a 40-yard TD pass.

Cowtown, at 13-3, finishes with the top record in the EFL

BREES THROWS LATE TD FOR BUCS WIN!

ANCHORAGE FINISHES STRONG AFTER WEAK SEASON



10 - 6



5 - 11

30

31

ANCHORAGE – The Anchorage Buccaneers salvaged a smidgeon of pride in their final game of the season, beating the Chino Convicts on the final play of the game, 31-30. Trailing 30-24, with less than one minute remaining in the game, Drew Brees

01-26-2008 Temp: 70 Wind: Line: Even MVP: **Johnson**

2006 Chino (10-6) 7 10 10 3 - 30
2006 Anchorage (5-11) 14 7 0 10 - 31

1 10:41 Anchorage TD Brees 6 pass to Johnson (Stover) (10-38-4:00) 0-7
1 4:17 Anchorage TD Brees 12 pass to Crumpler (Stover) (13-71-4:54) 0-14
1 1:47 Chino TD Jones 75 punt return (Vinatieri) (0-0-0:00) 7-14

2 14:17 Chino FG Vinatieri 33 (3-6-1:18) 10-14
2 11:48 Anchorage TD Brees 22 pass to Johnson (Stover) (5-67-2:18) 10-21
2 0:28 Chino TD Tomlinson 2 run (Vinatieri) (16-99-7:36) 17-21

3 6:08 Chino TD Tomlinson 1 run (Vinatieri) (12-67-8:00) 24-21
3 1:03 Chino FG Vinatieri 25 (3-3-0:51) 27-21

4 11:56 Anchorage FG Stover 18 (8-64-3:51) 27-24
4 1:19 Chino FG Vinatieri 25 (9-33-2:38) 30-24
4 0:17 Anchorage TD Brees 9 pass to Johnson (Stover) (5-64-0:51) 30-31

	CHI	ANC
First Downs	23	21
Rushes	37-118	31-121
Passes	30-19-188	26-18-223
Sacked	3-19	0-0
Fumble	3	2
Penalties	5-26	4-28
Turnovers	1	2
Time	35:40	24:10
Third Down	5-13	7-11
Fourth Down	2-2	0-1
Net Offense	287	344

showed the kind of grit and determination in rallying his team that Coach Fenton had been looking for all season. But for the star-crossed Bucs, the impressive effort came in a game that didn't matter to either team, long after the Bucs had been eliminated from playoff contention. Moving the ball 64 yards in 51 seconds, Brees made his final pass of the season count, hitting MVP, Andre Johnson in the end zone from 9 yards out to tie the game. Matt Stover came on to kick the extra point for the win.

Vince Young started for the Convicts, completing 14 of 20 passes for 148 yards, 0 Tds and 0 Ints. L.T. was kept in check all day, finishing with 60 yards on 21 carries and dropping well behind Frank Gore in the race for the rushing title.



BRYLCREEM PLAYERS OF THE WEEK

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OFFENSE

WR –Andre Johnson, Anchorage Buccaneers

8 Receptions, 139 Yards, 17.4 Avg., 3 TDs, 34 Long.

Caught winning TD pass with no time left for 31-30 win in Week 16.

DEFENSE

LB –London Fletcher-Baker, Mohave Hellfire

12 Tackles, 1 Def., 1 Forced Fumble, 3 INTs.

Impressive career day – even against the lowly Swamp Dogs.

PASSING

			Att	Cmp	C%	Yards	In	I%	Lg	TD	TD%	Rate
1	Garcia,J	ICC	210	133	63.3	1556	1	0.5	64	12	5.7	102.8
2	McNabb	CHI	312	194	62.2	2732	8	2.6	53	19	6.1	100
3	Carr,D	LAK	470	336	71.5	3404	10	2.1	36	22	4.7	98.6
4	Manning,P	CHP	530	324	61.1	4059	10	1.9	63	31	5.8	96.6
5	Romo	KUT	406	253	62.3	3513	19	4.7	53	29	7.1	94.4
6	Rivers	DTL	443	255	57.6	3343	9	2	41	27	6.1	93.3
7	Brady,T	FLD	478	304	63.6	3577	18	3.8	53	32	6.7	92.9
8	Bulger	MOH	513	298	58.1	3970	15	2.9	65	34	6.6	92.6
9	Palmer,C	GWG	502	301	60	3803	16	3.2	59	28	5.6	88.9
10	Losman	ICC	246	161	65.4	1951	11	4.5	65	12	4.9	87.3
11	Pennington	COW	484	296	61.2	3819	19	3.9	95	25	5.2	86.8
12	Brees	ANC	503	291	57.9	3695	15	3	64	24	4.8	84.4
13	Campbell,J	MSD	163	66	40.5	738	5	3.1	80	4	2.5	50.1
14	Roethlisberger	MSD	328	174	53	2063	25	7.6	52	6	1.8	46.8
15	Schaub	MOH	9	7	77.8	100	0	0	45	1	11.1	150
16	Griese	CHP	1	1	100	8	0	0	8	1	100	139.6
17	Leftwich	ICC	25	18	72	225	0	0	25	0	0	99.6
18	Young,V	CHI	35	22	62.9	277	1	2.9	39	2	5.7	94.6
19	Jackson,T	LAK	3	2	66.7	20	1	33.3	13	1	33.3	85.4
20	Cutler	CHI	151	93	61.6	1145	6	4	37	7	4.6	83.9

RUSHING

			Att	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD			Att	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD	
1	Gore	DTL	343	2131	6.2	58	11	11	McGahee	ANC	174	771	4.4	65	2
2	Tomlinson	CHI	383	1897	5	88	20	12	Brown,R	ICC	192	740	3.9	40	5
3	Parker,W	GWG	349	1777	5.1	70	13	13	Norwood	COW	78	668	8.6	71	2
4	Johnson,L	KUT	407	1769	4.3	47	16	14	Barber	COW	142	653	4.6	23	14
5	Jackson,S	FLD	368	1724	4.7	64	12	15	Jones-Drew	MSD	123	643	5.2	81	2
6	Westbrook	MOH	258	1534	5.9	76	6	16	Lynch,M	MOH	151	636	4.2	49	4
7	Addai	ANC	216	1163	5.4	46	11	17	Bush,R	ICC	161	597	3.7	12	1
8	Jones,T	CHP	290	1057	3.6	30	10	18	Peterson,A	CHP	127	517	4.1	14	2
9	Bell,T	LAK	211	949	4.5	45	4	19	Jacobs	ICC	106	490	4.6	17	4
10	Maroney	COW	167	802	4.8	71	4	20	Jones,K	LAK	118	451	3.8	16	2

RECEIVING

			No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD			No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD	
1	Johnson,A	ANC	98	1483	15.1	44	14	11	Smith,S	LAK	80	961	12	35	2
2	Winslow	ICC	92	1091	11.9	36	9	12	Jackson,S	FLD	77	684	8.9	38	9
3	Boldin	CHI	91	1571	17.3	53	13	13	Glenn,T	LAK	71	888	12.5	36	4
4	Harrison,M	KUT	86	1322	15.4	53	9	14	Gonzalez	GWG	70	779	11.1	30	10
5	Johnson,C	CHP	86	1357	15.8	63	5	15	Heap	LAK	69	625	9.1	27	11
6	Wayne,R	GWG	85	1417	16.7	59	7	16	Cotchery	FLD	67	988	14.7	53	6
7	Driver	CHP	83	1195	14.4	41	10	17	Bush,R	ICC	67	627	9.4	64	2
8	Furrey	COW	81	1128	13.9	42	7	18	Westbrook	MOH	67	662	9.9	45	2
9	Coles	MOH	81	1214	15	51	16	19	Evans,L	ICC	65	1083	16.7	65	7
10	Holt,T	CHI	80	1060	13.3	43	5	20	Owens,T	MOH	64	1202	18.8	64	12

JIMMY'S PLAYOFF PLAYS

SATURDAY

4:00 PM (CBS)

FLORIDA (8-8) @ MOHAVE (10-6) (LINE - HELLFIRE BY 3)

The Dragons played the Hellfire tough during the regular season, splitting the series and winning convincingly at home in Week 12. That loss signaled the start of Mohave's 4-game losing streak that eventually bumped them out of the first seed in the East Division. The Hellfire remember that game and will be looking to prove something. Florida is certainly capable of pulling off an upset here, especially if Mohave continues to play like they did just before they exorcised some anger and frustration with a 37-7 pounding of Meadowlands in the final game of the year. However, this writer thinks the fresh start brought on by the playoffs works in Mohave's favour more than Florida's. The Hellfire also have a significant home field advantage, which should increase their already significant talent edge.

FLORIDA GAME PLAN: Look for Jim Heaton to take some chances on both offense and defense and hope to force a break or two for his team. He has shown that he is willing to roll the dice and gamble the mortgage payment looking for the big pay day. This strategy could easily backfire, but he may have no choice given Mohave's top-rated defense and elite offensive line. Disrupting the comfortable rhythm of the game is Florida's main goal.

MOHAVE GAME PLAN: Bobby Elder can afford to be conservative in both phases of the game because, in terms of talent and skill, he has the better team. If he over-reaches or gambles, especially on defense, he may play right into the Florida game plan, and he has been burned in the past by calling over-the-top blitzes in key situations. The Hellfire need to stay disciplined and balanced, but should also be ready to exploit a weakness when it shows itself. Bulger has to show that he can get it done through the air, or else the Dragon linebackers will zero in on Westbrook.

RESULT: Mohave will have their revenge: *Hellfire 24, Dragons 10.*

PICK: MOHAVE

8:30 PM (NBC)

IOWA CITY (7-9) @ COWTOWN (13-3) (LINE - CORN KINGS BY 7)

The Cubs are the team that nobody wants to face in the first round because they have shown that they really enjoy knocking off the teams that are perceived as "better" than they are. The Corn Kings suffered their first loss of the season at home to these volatile and unpredictable Cubs in Week 2 and it was a humiliating one. They got a measure of revenge in Week 10 at Joe Ferguson Stadium coming out on the top end of a lopsided final score, but even in that game the Cubs showed themselves capable of striking quickly and they never gave up. No matter how you spin it, though, the Corn Kings have clearly demonstrated that they are by far the better team where it really counts come playoff time: in the trenches.

IOWA CITY GAME PLAN: Attack the Corn King secondary and take no prisoners. Goad the defense into taking chances and hope for a big play. On defense, be conservative and patient and hope Pennington shoots himself in the foot.

COWTOWN GAME PLAN: Balanced, conservative attack with occasional "shots" to break the game open. On defense, force the cubs to run the ball.

RESULT: This could be a very close game at the half – the Cubs could even lead at that point - but the Corn Kings at Tillman Field will simply outlast the Cubs in the end. *Corn Kings 27, Cubs 17.*

PICK: COWTOWN

SUNDAY

1:00 PM (CBS)

GWINNETT (8-8) @ CHARLESWOOD (12-4) (LINE – PATRIOTS BY 5)

The Gladiators ambushed the Patriots in Gwinnett to start the season and the Patriots counter-attacked at home in Week 12 to even the series. Gwinnett has the tools on both offense and defense to hang with the Pats, with playmakers on both sides of the ball. The Patriots are tough defensively, although they have not always shown just how tough they are from week to week. Their defense is the key to this game and they will be looking to force Carson Palmer picks and Willie Parker fumbles. The Pat's offense boasts arguably the league's best QB in Peyton Manning, but the running game continues to be a concern. They must establish the run or else they could find themselves in the thick of an upset in their own park.

GWINNETT GAME PLAN: The offense needs to play its game and be assertive without being brash and overly aggressive. Parker, Palmer, Wayne and Gonzalez are all top tier talents and should be given the chance to make big plays. The defense needs to pressure Manning and focus on stopping the air attack.

CHARLESWOOD GAME PLAN: The defense is good enough to take some chances and not get easily burned. Still, they have to resist the urge to "over blitz" or else Willie Parker will make "fast" work of them. The offense will try to establish the run, to take some heat off Manning, but will fall back to Plan 'B' – Manning, Manning, Manning, if that doesn't work.

RESULT: Gwinnet can win this, but they will not, losing a heartbreaker. *Patriots 20, Gladiators 17.*

PICK: GWINNETT

4:30 PM (NBC)

DURHAM (9-7) @ CHINO (10-6) (LINE – CONVICTS BY 2)

Chino has had Durham's number all year and they host this game at The Big House, where they lost only once all season. The Thunder Lizards must feel snake-bitten as they creep into town, trying not to be noticed, hoping to surprise Donovan McNabb and his Posse when their guard is down. The problem for Durham has been simple: they have not figured out a way to stop, or even slow down, Chino's offensive weapons, having surrendered 962 yards and 85 points to the California Prisoners in two regular season losses. The Dinosaurs can move the ball well enough to win if their defense steps up, but if history is any indication, that is a huge *IF*. The Convicts have a prohibitive home field advantage as well, which also works against Durham's fortunes.

DURHAM GAME PLAN: Ball control on offense to keep the ball away from L.T., McNabb, and Boldin. On defense, they must find a way to pressure McNabb and force a bad throw or two, the kind that McNabb has been known to do against *other* teams.

CHINO GAME PLAN: Take to the air early and see if the Thunder Lizards secondary can stop it. L.T. is an ace-in-the-hole if Air McNabb fails to take off. On defense, realize that Gore can't be stopped and that trying to stop him opens up the passing game for hot-and-cold Philip Rivers, who can easily get red hot if unattended.

RESULT: The Thunder Lizards will throw everything they have into this game and it will finally pay off. This will be the first flat out upset of the first round. *Thunder Lizards 34, Convicts 31.*

PICK: DURHAM

LAST WEEK: 2-4-0

OVERALL: 56-40-0