

WEEK 10



EFL

ELITE FOOTBALL LEAGUE



Shooting for the Stars in our 15th Season!

December 12, 2021

FLYING HIGH!



DeAndre Hopkins
Brooklin Hawks

Brooklin wide receiver *DeAndre Hopkins* leaps high to snare a pass from *Derek Carr* in double coverage in 1st quarter action in Brooklin. The catch converted 3rd & long and set up the Hawks' first touchdown in a 23-10 win over division rival York. Hopkins has been hot over a two-game win streak that has the Hawks back in the race. (story inside)

EAST



CENTRAL



WEST



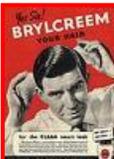
NORTH



COASTAL

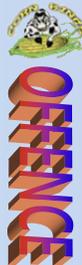


SOUTH



*Who was slick
in Week Ten?*

**“Brylcreem” THE
EFL’S FIRST SPONSOR**



Mike Evans
QB
Cowtown Corn
Kings

15 Rec., 206 yds., 2 TDs, 11 FD.
Caught all 15 targets in blowout.



James Bradberry
CB
New Jersey
Wrecking Balls

7 T, 1 INT (0yds). Made game-clinching pick in end zone in win.



27
27
Drew Brees connected deep for TD passes of 60 and 21 yards to **Chase Claypool** and underneath to **Chris Godwin** for a 38-yard catch-and-dash to put the Bombers in front, 24-10, heading into the 4th. **Teddy Bridgewater** led Chino back, scoring on a 2-yard bootleg and a 14-yard RPO off right tackle on back-to-back drives to send the game to OT. **Harrison Butker** capped the first drive of OT with a 48-yard FG to give the Convicts the lead. Bruxelles responded with 64-yard drive and the equalizer by **Matt Prater** from 29 yards. One final push from Chino fell short at the 45 as time expired.

12-07-2021 Temp:76 Wind:0-10 None Line:CHI by 6 MVP:Claypool HFA:ON(0)

	1	2	3	4	5	Tot
2021 Bruxelles (3-6-1)	3	14	7	0	3	27
2021 Chino (6-3-1)	0	10	0	14	3	27

Passing

BRX: Brees 31/21 230 Yds 2 TDs, Goff 4/3 82 Yds TD
 CHI: Bridgewater 46/31 260 Yds

Rushing

BRX: Fournette 10/64, Mitchell 12/59, Williams 6/26, Goff 1/1
 CHI: Jones II 19/91 TD, Bridgewater 9/46 2 TDs, Jackson 2/5, Abdullah 2/4

Receiving

BRX: Godwin 9/133 TD, Claypool 4/114 2 TDs, Fournette 3/4, Williams 2/16, Mitchell 2/10
 CHI: Jones Jr. 10/95, Byrd 6/61, Jones II 4/19, Jackson 3/16, Patrick 3/30

Defense

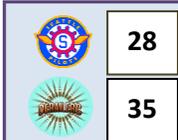
BRX: Fuller FF 13-Tk, Grant 13-Tk, Ebukam Sk 7-Tk, Ogbah 8-Tk
 CHI: Smith FF 8-Tk, Jackson 10-Tk, Bostic 9-Tk

Injuries

BRX: Howard 6, Robinson 4, Flowers 2, Godwin 2, Wynn 1
 CHI: Hall 5, McCaffrey 2, Prescott 1, Mason 1

Misc

BRX: Brees 1-F Lost, Prater 2/4 FG 42 Lg
 CHI: Smith 1-FR, Butker 2/2 FG 48 Lg



28
35
 Seattle return man **Jamal Agnew** fumbled the opening kick-off and **Bradley Chubb** recovered. **Lamar Jackson** then ran it in from 2 yards to open the scoring for Buffalo. **Trey Lance** put his legs in motion, rushing for 43 yards on 5 carries including a 13-yard TD run to even the score. That set off a series of matching scoring drives that continued until the Derailers took the lead to stay in the 3rd on a 6-yard check down TD to **Mike Davis**. After Lance failed to counter, **Gardner Minshew II** took over and was picked off, setting up a TD to **Robert Woods** to make it 35-21 and ensure the win.

12-09-2021 New Era Stadium Temp:46 Wind:0-5 None Line:BUF by 4 MVP:Jackson HFA:0

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 Seattle (1-9)	7	7	7	7	28
2021 Buffalo (4-6)	7	14	7	7	35

Passing

SEA: Lance 12/9 152 Yds, Minshew II 13/9 107 Yds TD Int
 BUF: Jackson 40/29 303 Yds 3 TDs

Rushing

SEA: Lance 8/74 TD, Akers 3/39 TD, Brown 2/18 TD, Hunt 4/13, Minshew II 1/9
 BUF: Jackson 18/63 2 TDs, Davis 6/27, Booker 4/19

Receiving

SEA: Lamb 4/64 TD, Anderson 4/116, Mims 3/16, Hunt 3/28, Renfrow 2/16, Cole Sr. 2/19
 BUF: Fant 10/124, Woods 8/44 TD, Gage 5/87 TD, Tate 3/27, Davis 3/21 TD

Defense

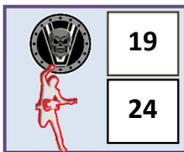
SEA: Jackson 13-Tk, Jack Sk 7-Tk, Lattimore 8-Tk, Wright FF 5-Tk
 BUF: Donald 2-Sks 3-Tk, Addison Sk FF 4-Tk, Tartt Int 5-Tk

Injuries

SEA: Deguara 6
 BUF: Barnett 1, Mercilus 1, Chubb 1

Misc

SEA: Agnew 1-F Lost
 BUF: 36:49 TOP, 5/5 4th Dwn, Chubb 1-FR



New Jersey corner **James Bradberry** intercepted **Justin Herbert** in the end zone with 1:16 remaining in the 4th to preserve a 5-point lead and hand the Assassins their 2nd loss. The Wrecking Balls posted 17 points in the 2nd on a FG and **Matt Stafford** TD passes of 9 yards to **Keenan Allen** and 29 yards to **DJ Chark Jr.** then went silent as Las Vegas clawed into the lead on a 1-yard TD run by **Trayeon Williams** late in the 3rd. NJ regained the lead on Allen's second TD catch then the 'D' took over. **Zach Cunningham** stuffed Williams on 4th & inches the drive before Bradberry's heroics.

12-09-2021 Stone Pony Shore Temp:71 Wind:5-15 None Line:LV by 7 MVP:Stafford HFA:0

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 Las Vegas (8-2)	3	9	7	0	19
2021 New Jersey (5-5)	0	17	0	7	24

Passing

LV: Herbert 44/30 289 Yds Int
 NJ: Stafford 32/24 223 Yds 3 TDs

Rushing

LV: Williams 15/98 2 TDs, Lewis 2/6
 NJ: Montgomery 15/60, Gallman Jr. 4/13, McKissic 2/3

Receiving

LV: Fitzgerald 8/79, Jeudy 7/110, Thomas 4/23, Watkins 3/40, Williams 3/10
 NJ: Allen 11/88 2 TDs, Chark Jr. 4/59 TD, McKissic 3/30, McLaurin 2/26, Hooper 2/17

Defense

LV: Surtain II 12-Tk, Leonard 9-Tk
 NJ: Bradberry Int 7-Tk, Cunningham 10-Tk, Breeland 10-Tk, Hyder Sk 4-Tk, Newsome II

Injuries

LV: Ngakoue 1
 NJ:

Misc

LV: Fairbairn 2/2 FG 38 Lg
 NJ: Boswell 1/1 FG 34 Lg



A facemask penalty called on Coyote CB **Steven Nelson** as he tackled **Cole Beasley** put the Cubs into field goal range in OT, helping to set up a 30-yard game-winning FG by **Justin Tucker**. The Cubs led 20-7 late in the 3rd on TD passes of 66 and 11 yards from **Russell Wilson** to **Tyler Lockett** and a pair of Tucker FGs. **Ryan Tannehill** got the Coyotes back in it on back-to-back scrambles of 23 and 14 yards, the last for a TD to end the 3rd and on a naked bootleg of 14 yards for a TD with 0:34 left in the 4th to send the game to OT. They fell short, going 3-and-out on their one OT series.

12-08-2021 Temp:50 Wind:0-5 None No Line MVP:Lockett HFA:ON(0)

	1	2	3	4	5	Tot
2021 Cobb County (6-4)	0	7	7	6	0	20
2021 Iowa City (6-4)	10	7	3	0	3	23

Passing

CB: Tannehill 47/24 263 Yds TD Int
 ICC: Wilson 35/26 304 Yds 2 TDs

Rushing

CB: Tannehill 9/90 2 TDs, Breida 14/24, Peterson 6/8
 ICC: Conner 17/65, McKinnon 9/25, Carter 2/5

Receiving

CB: Pittman Jr. 10/127, Parker 6/71 TD, Peterson 4/29, Cooks 2/21, Breida 1/8
 ICC: Lockett 11/186 2 TDs, Conner 4/16, Brown 4/53, Beasley 3/29, McKinnon 3/20

Defense

CB: Martinez 19-Tk, Payne Sk FF Tk, White 9-Tk, Nelson 9-Tk
 ICC: Johnson 12-Tk, Rhodes Int 3-Tk

Injuries

CB: Ridgeway 4
 ICC: Peters 2

Misc

CB: Nelson 1-FR
 ICC: Wilson 1-F Lost, Tucker 3/3 FG 39 Lg



13

40

The Triumph opened with a sharp 7-play, 75-yard drive ending with a 10-yard TD run by **Melvin Gordon III** to take a 6-0 lead. From that point on the game belonged to Virden. **Royce Freeman** capped a 76-yard scoring drive with a 5-yard TD run to give the Violators a 7-6 advantage then **Michael Badgley** and **Patrick Mahomes** took advantage of two Triumph turnovers on downs to post 10 more points before the half. Virden opened the 3rd with a TD pass to **Gabriel Davis** then made it an easy rout with a **Ja'Marr Chase** TD catch and Freeman's second TD run, as the Triumph refused to punt.

12-08-2021 TERRORDOME Temp:66 Wind:Calm None Line:TCT by 7 MVP:Mahomes HFA:ON(4)

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 Twin Cities (3-7)	6	0	0	7	13
2021 Virden (6-4)	7	10	17	6	40

Passing

TCT: Beathard 21/13 148 Yds TD
 VV: Mahomes 32/21 297 Yds 3 TDs

Rushing

TCT: Gordon III 29/171 TD, Edwards-Helaire 5/7
 VV: Ingram II 12/45, Freeman 7/33 2 TDs, Mahomes 2/18

Receiving

TCT: Moore 5/88 TD, White 4/40, Bryant 2/14, Gordon III 2/6
 VV: Hockenson 8/73, Chase 6/134 2 TDs, Green 3/53, Davis 2/25 TD, Ingram II 1/4

Defense

TCT: Ford 2-Sks 3-Tk
 VV: Moehrig 10-Tk, Trevathan 9-Tk

Injuries

TCT: Brown 3, Brown 2, Golladay 1
 VV: Johnson 4, Atkins 3, Campbell 2, Ximines 1, Bryant 1, Thomas 1, Osemele 1

Misc

TCT: White 1-F Lost, Gordon III 1-F Lost, 0/5 4th Dwn
 VV: Harris Jr 1-FR, Bolton 1-FR, Badgley 2/2 FG 53 Lg



34

10

The Patriots came out strong with **DeShaun Watson** hitting TD shots of 49 yards to **DK Metcalf** and 21 yards to **Jakobi Meyers** on the Pats' first two drives. The Crusaders slowed the pace with a long FG drive then caught a break when **Juju Smith-Schuster** fumbled away the ball near mid-field and **Mac Jones** capitalized with an 18-yard TD pass to **Brandon Aiyuk** to trail 14-10. The Pats took back the momentum with a long drive before the half that ended with a 9-yard TD pass to **Travis Kelce**. The Pats' defence controlled the 2nd half to shut down the Pegs and hand them their 10th loss.

12-06-2021 Temp:72 Wind:Calm Line:CHP by 7 MVP:Watson HFA:ON(0)

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 Charleswood (9-1)	14	7	10	3	34
2021 Peg City (0-10)	0	10	0	0	10

Passing

CHP: Watson 29/20 363 Yds 4 TDs
 PCC: Jones 20/15 113 Yds TD Int

Rushing

CHP: Hill 15/26, Dobbins 7/25, Watson 2/9, Ozigbo 3/4
 PCC: Hubbard 6/27, Bell 6/17, Jones 5/7, Ingold 1/3

Receiving

CHP: Cooper 5/82, Smith-Schuster 5/65 TD, Kelce 5/107 TD, Metcalf 4/88 TD, Meyers 1/21 TD
 PCC: Aiyuk 5/66 TD, Bell 3/7, Ingold 3/13, Higbee 2/12, Hubbard 1/1

Defense

CHP: Landry III 11-Tk
 PCC:

Injuries

CHP: Linder 2, Stanley 1, Collins Sr. 1
 PCC: Sutton 5, Barkley 4, Godchaux 3, Okudah 3, Cohen 2, Jones 2, Bullard 1

Misc

CHP: Lutz 2/3 FG 41 Lg, Smith Schuster 1-F Lost
 PCC: Koo 1/1 FG 26 Lg, Johnson Jr 1-FR



Durham QB, **Josh Allen** hit **Darren Waller** on an out pass for a 14-yard TD with 4:47 left in the game to give the Lizards a 17-13 lead and finish off a comeback from down 10 points late in the 3rd quarter. The Oshawa defence held the powerful Durham offence to just 3 points in the 1st half, picking off Allen once and forcing a turnover on downs. Over three quarters they built a modest lead on two FGs and a 10-yard TD pass from **Matt Ryan** to **Davante Adams**. Durham began their comeback on a gutsy 32-yard slant to **Cooper Kupp** on 4th & 1 from their own 34 to set up their first TD.

12-08-2021 GM Megadome Temp:72 Wind: *Internet* Line:DTL by 2 MVP:Allen HFA:ON(3)

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 Durham (9-1)	0	3	7	7	17
2021 Oshawa (2-7-1)	3	3	7	0	13

Passing

DTL: Allen 37/24 293 Yds 2 TDs Int

OSH: Ryan 36/24 225 Yds TD

Rushing

DTL: Gibson 11/34, Allen 3/1

OSH: Singletary 22/114, Rountree III 3/9

Receiving

DTL: Samuel 7/29, Waller 6/86 TD, Kupp 5/101, Boyd 4/73 TD, Gibson 2/4

OSH: Adams 7/72 TD, Gesicki 6/60, Rountree III 4/24, Schultz 3/24, Singletary 2/32

Defense

DTL: Burns 2-Sks 3-Tk, Young Sk 7-Tk, Simmons 8-Tk

OSH: Simmons Sk 4-Tk

Injuries

DTL:

OSH: Adams 2, Kendricks 1, Harris 1

Misc

DTL: Santos 1/1 FG 47 Lg

OSH: Gonzalez 2/3 FG 47 Lg



Jimmy Garoppolo tossed TD passes of 32 and 17 yards to **Mike Evans** in the 2nd quarter to put the Corn Kings up by two scores, 19-6 at half time. The Cadillac could not quite close the gap despite scoring on their first series of the 2nd half on a 10-yard scramble by **Kyler Murray**. The Corn Kings were able to stay in front thanks to an effective run game and an incredibly efficient Garoppolo, who missed only one throw all game and connected on all 15 of his targets to Evans. Murray struggled playing from behind, missing throws and giving up a fumble, returned by **Tre Herndon** for a TD.

12-10-2021 Kelly-Burke Field Temp:50 Wind:10-20 None Line:COW by 1 MVP:Evans HFA

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 Cowntown (5-5)	7	12	7	14	40
2021 Erieau (3-7)	3	3	7	6	19

Passing

COW: Garoppolo 27/26 317 Yds 2 TDs, Fitzpatrick 4/4 46 Yds

ERI: Murray 22/10 140 Yds TD Int

Rushing

COW: Gore 11/54 TD, Gurley II 11/33 2 TDs, Murray 7/32, Garoppolo 2/10

ERI: Murray 8/41 TD, Vaughn 4/39, Harris 12/12, Moss 1/7, Hines 3/3

Receiving

COW: Evans 15/206 2 TDs, Bourne 4/29, Gurley II 2/19, McKenzie 2/12, Cephus 2/64

ERI: Henry 4/41, Higgins 2/20, Waddle 2/67 TD, Conley 1/10, Harris 1/2

Defense

COW: Watt FF 6-Tk

ERI: Van Noy Sk FF 7-Tk, King II 14-Tk, Garrett 2-Sks 2-Tk, Jones Sk 5-Tk

Injuries

COW: Saubert 1, Farley 1

ERI: Hurst 4, Gilmore 3, Andrews 1, Allen 1, Bosa 1

Misc

COW: Garoppolo 1-F Lost, Herndon 1-FR TD, Slye 0/1 FG

ERI: Diggs 1-FR, Gostkowski 2/2 FG 42 Lg



32
29

With the Irish in front 25-22 early in the 4th, **Duron Harmon** picked off **Kirk Cousins** at the Swordfish 47. That set up a 34-yard run by **Aaron Jones** and a 2-yard TD run by **Baker Mayfield** to give the Irish the two-score advantage needed to stay ahead of the aggressive Swordfish. Bold 4th down gambles had set up two of the first three TD drives for Sebastian, but an early turnover on downs and a lost fumble by **Jordan Akins** had set up 10 Irish points. Sebastian pulled with 3 :58 left on a 5-yard TD pass to **Nick Chubb**, but never got the ball back as EE ran out the final 3:49 on the clock.

12-07-2021 Temp:76 Wind:Calm Line:EE by 1 MVP:Mayfield HFA:ON(0)

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 East Elmhurst (7-3)	10	0	15	7	32
2021 Sebastian (4-5-1)	0	15	7	7	29

Passing

EE: Mayfield 21/17 157 Yds 3 TDs
 SS: Cousins 30/19 221 Yds 2 TDs 2 Int

Rushing

EE: Jones 18/136, Mostert 9/52, Mayfield 4/11 TD
 SS: Chubb 14/66 2 TDs, Richard 5/32, Cousins 3/23, Beckham Jr. 1/10

Receiving

EE: Hill 5/54 2 TDs, Everett 4/33, Jones 3/17, Thielen 2/28, Olsen 1/9 TD
 SS: Miller 7/103 TD, Chubb 3/14 TD, Reagor 2/32, Ebron 2/15, Marshall Jr. 2/29

Defense

EE: Hilton Int 9-Tk, Smith FF 7-Tk, Barrett Sk 3-Tk
 SS:

Injuries

EE:
 SS: Feiler 2, Perryman 1

Misc

EE: Boston 1-FR, Blankenship 1/1 FG 35 Lg
 SS: Akins 1-F Lost



35
21

With 1:34 left in the 3rd quarter, **Ben Roethlisberger** connected on a medium cross to **Jarvis Landry** for a 16-yard TD, giving the Glads a 28-21 lead that would stand up the rest of the way. Big Ben hit Landry again in the 4th quarter, this time underneath for a 17-yard TD, for insurance against a Blue Eagles' offence that had managed to answer every Georgia TD to that point with one of their own. **Joe Burrow** threw 3 TD passes, one in each of the first 3 quarters, including a 50-yard strike to **Allen Robinson II** in the 1st, but could not keep up with Big Ben's season-high 5 TD passes.

12-08-2021 Temp:54 Wind:0-10 None Line:SBE by 4 MVP:Roethlisberg HFA:ON(0)

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 Georgia (2-7-1)	7	14	7	7	35
2021 Scarborough (2-7-1)	7	7	7	0	21

Passing

GEO: Roethlisberger 25/21 277 Yds 5 TDs
 SBE: Burrow 21/13 155 Yds 3 TDs

Rushing

GEO: Stevenson 10/69, Jacobs 23/68, Bernard 3/13, Roethlisberger 2/8
 SBE: Carson 11/90, Gaskin 6/35, Burrow 3/6

Receiving

GEO: Landry 7/81 2 TDs, Snead IV 5/67 TD, Bernard 2/16, Okwuegbunam 2/19, Jacobs 2/15
 SBE: Gaskin 4/26, Robinson II 3/78 TD, Ward 2/16 TD, Crowder 2/19, Eifert 1/10 TD

Defense

GEO: Baker Sk 4-Tk
 SBE:

Injuries

GEO: Ertz 3, Fuller V 3, Lewis 1, Wylie 1
 SBE: Uzomah 6, Dantzler 4, Jones 2, Jackson 1, Bosa 1

Misc

GEO: 37:40 TOP
 SBE: Johnson 3/76 KR



Aaron Rodgers slid a pass underneath to **Stefon Diggs** for a 13-yard TD three plays after the Spartans turned it over on downs at their own 25 to give the North Stars a 14-3 lead and signal the beginning of a long day for the home team. Running back **David Johnson** opened and closed the scoring for Budapest, running it in from a half-yard for the game's first TD and punching it in from 3 yards for a score early in the 4th quarter. He combined with **Jeff Wilson Jr** for 189 yards on the ground as the North Stars wore down the Spartans' defence and their defence held Pickering to just 10 1st downs.

12-11-2021 Thermopylae Stadium Temp:39 Wind:10-20 None Line:BUD by 9 MVP:Johnson H

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 Budapest (10-0)	7	14	3	7	31
2021 Pickering (4-6)	0	3	0	0	3

Passing

BUD: Rodgers 20/10 169 Yds 2 TDs

PIC: Rivers 14/8 73 Yds Int

Rushing

BUD: Johnson 20/130 2 TDs, Wilson Jr. 10/59, Rodgers 1/9, Patterson 1/5

PIC: Sermon 20/110, Swift 11/49

Receiving

BUD: Johnson 3/34, Diggs 2/35 TD, Agholor 2/62 TD, Jefferson 1/18, Rodgers 1/15

PIC: Shepard 2/38, Swift 2/6, Brown 2/18, Mooney 1/5, Ricard 1/6

Defense

BUD: David 8-Tk

PIC: Schobert FF 6-Tk, Wolfe Sk 3-Tk

Injuries

BUD:

PIC: Roby 4, Dennard 2, Sanders 1

Misc

BUD: Myers 1/1/ FG 28 Lg

PIC: Zuerlein 1/1 FG 56 Lg



A turnover on downs off York's opening drive and a pair of **Tom Brady** red zone interceptions led to 13 1st-half points for Brooklin. York was at the Hawks' 32 when Brady went deep for **Corey Davis** but found safety **Jessie Bates III** instead. The Hawks drove back 97 yards for a TD on an 18-yard screen to **Ito Smith**. Later, **Alex Highsmith** snared a tipped pass at the Brooklin 9, thwarting another York scoring opportunity, leading to a long FG drive. Brooklin opened the 2nd half with a **Derek Carr** TD pass to **Evan Engram** to take a 20-3 lead then their stingy defence held York to just one TD.

12-09-2021 Hawkeye Park Temp:33 Wind:0-5 *Internet* Line:YOR by 2 MVP:Carr HFA:ON(4)

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 York (7-3)	0	3	7	0	10
2021 Brooklin (5-5)	3	10	7	3	23

Passing

YOR: Brady 34/20 291 Yds TD 2 Int

BRH: Carr 53/31 344 Yds 2 TDs

Rushing

YOR: Henry 16/33, Williams 1/4, Snell Jr. 1/1, Brady 1/1

BRH: Smith 3/33, Jefferson 8/29, Scott 6/27, Carr 3/7

Receiving

YOR: Amendola 5/81, Davis 5/93, Kmet 3/22, Henry 3/50, Ford 2/29 TD, Smith 1/14

BRH: Hopkins 11/146, Tate 5/58, Engram 4/38 TD, Smith 4/33 TD, Jefferson 3/25

Defense

YOR: Butler 12-Tk, Douglas 9-Tk, Gary 8-Tk

BRH: Highsmith Int 7-Tk, Bates III Int 4-Tk

Injuries

YOR: Apple 4, Amendola 2, Alualu 2, Williams 1

BRH: Cobb 6, Ferrell 3, McPhee 2, Ekeler 1

Misc

YOR: Henry 1-F Lost, Gould 1/1 FG 47 Lg

BRH: Williams 1-FR, Bullock 35 FG 31 Lg



WEEK TEN

STANDINGS & STATS

EFL 2021 - Week 10 Standings

East	W	L	T	Pct	Stk	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Cobb County	6	4	0	.600	L1	252	25.2	198	19.8	5.4	4 1 0	2 1 0	6 2 0
New Jersey	5	5	0	.500	W1	187	18.7	238	23.8	-5.1	2 4 0	1 2 0	4 4 0
Buffalo	4	6	0	.400	W1	219	21.9	240	24.0	-2.1	3 2 0	2 1 0	4 4 0
Bruxelles	3	6	1	.350		256	25.6	298	29.8	-4.2	2 3 0	1 2 0	2 5 1
Central	W	L	T	Pct	Stk	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Charleswood	9	1	0	.900	W7	244	24.4	194	19.4	5.0	4 0 0	4 0 0	7 1 0
Virden	6	4	0	.600	W1	301	30.1	251	25.1	5.0	3 3 0	3 1 0	5 3 0
Twin Cities	3	7	0	.300	L2	201	20.1	226	22.6	-2.5	1 3 0	1 3 0	2 6 0
Peg City	0	10	0	.000	L10	145	14.5	296	29.6	-15.1	0 5 0	0 4 0	0 8 0
West	W	L	T	Pct	Stk	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Las Vegas	8	2	0	.800	L1	279	27.9	166	16.6	11.3	4 1 0	3 0 0	7 1 0
Chino	6	3	1	.650		254	25.4	217	21.7	3.7	2 2 1	2 1 0	5 2 1
Iowa City	6	4	0	.600	W3	290	29.0	274	27.4	1.6	4 1 0	1 2 0	5 3 0
Seattle	1	9	0	.100	L3	183	18.3	263	26.3	-8.0	1 4 0	0 3 0	0 8 0
North	W	L	T	Pct	Stk	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Durham	9	1	0	.900	W5	321	32.1	151	15.1	17.0	5 0 0	2 1 0	7 1 0
Cowtown	5	5	0	.500	W1	236	23.6	229	22.9	0.7	3 1 0	1 2 0	5 3 0
Sebastian	4	5	1	.450	L3	327	32.7	347	34.7	-2.0	2 3 0	1 1 1	2 5 1
Scarborough	2	7	1	.250	L1	190	19.0	298	29.8	-10.8	2 3 1	1 1 1	2 5 1
Coastal	W	L	T	Pct	Stk	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Budapest	10	0	0	1.000	W10	312	31.2	130	13.0	18.2	5 0 0	4 0 0	8 0 0
York	7	3	0	.700		246	24.6	208	20.8	3.8	4 1 0	2 2 0	5 3 0
Brooklin	5	5	0	.500	W2	237	23.7	252	25.2	-1.5	2 3 0	1 3 0	4 4 0
Pickering	4	6	0	.400	L2	177	17.7	233	23.3	-5.6	0 5 0	1 3 0	3 5 0
South	W	L	T	Pct	Stk	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
East Elmhurst	7	3	0	.700	W3	222	22.2	194	19.4	2.8	2 2 0	3 0 0	6 2 0
Erieau	3	7	0	.300	L2	175	17.5	239	23.9	-6.4	1 5 0	2 1 0	2 6 0
Oshawa	2	7	1	.250	L3	222	22.2	283	28.3	-6.1	1 4 1	0 2 1	1 6 1
Georgia	2	7	1	.250	W1	246	24.6	297	29.7	-5.1	0 4 0	0 2 1	1 6 1

EFL 2021 - Week 10 Passing Leaders

			Att	Cmp	C%	Yards	In	I%	Lg	TD	TD%	Rate
1	Rodgers,A	BUD	314	230	73.2	3050	2	0.6	75	29	9.2	131.7
2	Mahomes	VV	335	214	63.9	3163	3	0.9	72	29	8.7	119.8
3	Cousins	SS	318	222	69.8	2863	7	2.2	76	29	9.1	119.0
4	Garoppolo	COW	110	80	72.7	936	1	0.9	54	8	7.3	118.6
5	Watson,D	CHP	305	202	66.2	2642	3	1.0	54	24	7.9	115.5
6	Wilson,R	ICC	309	223	72.2	2539	6	1.9	66	24	7.8	114.3
7	Allen,J	DTL	363	243	66.9	2855	4	1.1	75	26	7.2	109.9
8	Roethlisbe	GEO	317	219	69.1	2242	5	1.6	60	22	6.9	105.7
9	Brees	BRX	254	155	61.0	2077	4	1.6	75	18	7.1	104.1
10	Herbert	LV	346	243	70.2	2640	6	1.7	65	19	5.5	103.5
11	Mayfield	EE	270	179	66.3	2039	3	1.1	48	15	5.6	102.7
12	Brady	YOR	311	207	66.6	2584	11	3.5	84	21	6.8	99.9
13	Tannehill	CB	285	177	62.1	2285	7	2.5	55	19	6.7	99.2
14	Bridgewater	CHI	242	176	72.7	1792	5	2.1	75	9	3.7	97.3
15	Stafford	NJ	351	235	67.0	2643	7	2.0	75	17	4.8	97.1
16	Trubisky	TCT	217	135	62.2	1535	5	2.3	69	14	6.5	95.3
17	Carr,D	BRH	350	209	59.7	2473	5	1.4	54	20	5.7	94.4
18	Ryan,M	OSH	350	224	64.0	2180	6	1.7	57	17	4.9	90.4
19	Fitzpatric	COW	198	138	69.7	1409	7	3.5	52	9	4.5	90.2
20	Jackson,L	BUF	346	228	65.9	2141	7	2.0	60	15	4.3	88.8
21	Minshew II	SEA	193	124	64.2	1205	6	3.1	62	11	5.7	87.7
22	Burrow	SBE	294	170	57.8	1713	4	1.4	59	16	5.4	87.0
23	Rivers,P	PIC	274	164	59.9	1899	4	1.5	87	8	2.9	84.5
24	Murray,K	ERI	289	175	60.6	1695	8	2.8	67	8	2.8	74.7
25	Jones,M	PCC	323	183	56.7	2038	13	4.0	80	12	3.7	71.2

EFL 2021 - Week 10 Kick Return Leaders EFL 2021 - Week 10 Punt Return Leaders

			No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD				No	Fc	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	Roberts,A	BRX	17	598	35.2	50	0	1	Grant,J	CHI	22	6	320	14.5	62	1
2	Harris,D	COW	13	392	30.2	76	0	2	Peppers	ERI	17	4	223	13.1	22	0
3	Johnson,D	SBE	15	442	29.5	41	0	3	Harris,D	COW	21	6	236	11.2	20	0
4	Agnew	SEA	21	594	28.3	68	0	4	Erickson	BUF	14	7	139	9.9	24	0
5	Duvernay	TCT	15	419	27.9	49	0	5	Taylor,T	CHP	23	4	215	9.3	27	0
6	Rodgers,I	CHP	13	334	25.7	41	0	6	Roberts,A	BRX	17	0	150	8.8	29	0
7	Scott,B	BRH	13	320	24.6	40	0	7	Proche	DTL	24	9	211	8.8	20	0
8	Webster,N	NJ	13	297	22.8	35	0	8	Moore	EE	18	9	148	8.2	17	0
9	Abdullah	CHI	15	335	22.3	36	0	9	Spencer,D	NJ	18	4	146	8.1	25	0
10	Carter	ICC	13	283	21.8	33	0	10	Peoples-Jo	SS	15	5	116	7.7	16	0
11	Carter,D	BUF	22	477	21.7	48	0	11	Hill,K	SBE	19	4	140	7.4	25	0
12	Atwell	OSH	17	354	20.8	38	0	12	Raymond	CB	13	3	90	6.9	22	0
13	Ballentine	SS	14	287	20.5	31	0	13	Hardman	LV	14	13	44	3.1	13	0
14	Cannon	BUD	5	168	33.6	42	0	14	Lamb	SEA	5	3	74	14.8	38	0
15	Adderley	VV	3	89	29.7	33	0	15	James,R	GEO	1	0	14	14.0	14	0
16	Patterson	BUD	12	324	27.0	39	0	16	Hines	ERI	2	0	24	12.0	16	0
17	Homer	YOR	10	268	26.8	36	0	17	Cole Sr.	SEA	10	1	104	10.4	20	0
18	Hubbard	PCC	4	103	25.8	29	0	18	Atwell	OSH	8	3	82	10.3	22	0
19	Lewis,D	LV	12	309	25.8	43	0	19	Cooper,P	VV	12	9	118	9.8	41	0
20	Hill	DTL	9	218	24.2	38	0	20	Renfrow	SEA	5	5	44	8.8	20	0
21	Johnson,D	CB	4	96	24.0	28	0	21	Tate,G	BRH	4	13	35	8.8	19	0
22	Reed,J	VV	2	48	24.0	25	0	22	Johnson,D	GEO	9	5	78	8.7	18	0
23	Hines	ERI	3	72	24.0	29	0	23	Rodgers,Am	BUD	10	16	83	8.3	20	0
24	Barner	PIC	9	209	23.2	39	0	24	Barner	PIC	6	8	48	8.0	14	0
25	Peoples-Jo	SS	1	22	22.0	22	0	25	Kirk	ICC	8	4	53	6.6	12	0

EFL 2021 - Week 10 Rushing Leaders

		Att	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD	
1	Henry,D	YOR	226	974	4.3	48	7
2	Cook,D	LV	174	863	5.0	49	8
3	Gordon III	TCT	156	843	5.4	45	2
4	Robinson,J	GEO	162	823	5.1	52	6
5	Drake	OSH	145	798	5.5	53	6
6	Jones,A	EE	145	776	5.4	39	5
7	Jackson,L	BUF	121	769	6.4	41	9
8	Taylor,J	SS	128	725	5.7	52	6
9	Chubb,N	SS	140	679	4.9	47	7
10	Sanders,M	PIC	118	586	5.0	25	2
11	Conner	ICC	95	575	6.1	47	1
12	Harris,D	CB	86	567	6.6	35	3
13	Elliott,E	VV	136	555	4.1	28	6
14	Murray,K	ERI	94	553	5.9	23	7
15	Harris	ERI	128	530	4.1	37	1
16	Jones II	CHI	119	505	4.2	26	5
17	Edwards-He	TCT	75	504	6.7	46	6
18	Carson	SBE	97	488	5.0	27	3
19	Montgomery	NJ	135	474	3.5	18	1
20	Mitchell	BRX	98	446	4.6	34	4
21	Swift	PIC	88	400	4.5	38	6
22	Wilson,R	ICC	58	400	6.9	30	4
23	Gurley II	COW	98	374	3.8	37	7
24	Davis,M	BUF	83	355	4.3	25	3
25	Wilson Jr.	BUD	65	353	5.4	30	2
26	Tannehill	CB	37	347	9.4	43	8
27	Johnson,Da	BUD	68	338	5.0	27	4
28	Williams,J	BRX	69	337	4.9	18	0
29	Akers	SEA	69	336	4.9	52	3
30	Singletary	OSH	50	322	6.4	34	2

EFL 2021 - Week 10 Receiving Leaders

		No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD	
1	Adams,D	OSH	79	875	11.1	57	11
2	Allen,K	NJ	65	612	9.4	35	8
3	Diggs,S	BUD	64	813	12.7	66	7
4	Lockett	ICC	62	741	12.0	66	8
5	Hopkins,D	BRH	61	855	14.0	54	9
6	Evans,M	COW	56	756	13.5	41	8
7	Gallup	CHI	56	766	13.7	75	6
8	Waller	DTL	54	688	12.7	43	8
9	Hill,T	EE	53	751	14.2	40	8
10	Woods,R	BUF	52	523	10.1	60	6
11	Jefferson	BUD	52	836	16.1	75	8
12	Chase	VV	49	1026	20.9	72	10
13	Anderson,R	SEA	49	583	11.9	53	4
14	Johnson,D	GEO	48	481	10.0	50	7
15	Godwin,C	BRX	47	764	16.3	56	7
16	Kelce,T	CHP	47	694	14.8	54	9
17	Kupp	DTL	46	765	16.6	75	5
18	Gage	BUF	46	474	10.3	41	3
19	Brown,A	ICC	45	795	17.7	54	5
20	McKissic	NJ	45	386	8.6	29	1
21	McLaurin	NJ	45	637	14.2	75	5
22	Moore,D	TCT	44	775	17.6	69	6
23	Cooper,A	CHP	44	593	13.5	47	5
24	Fant	BUF	44	467	10.6	44	0
25	Amendola	YOR	43	563	13.1	36	3
26	Samuel,C	DTL	43	385	9.0	34	2
27	Parker,D	CB	43	535	12.4	36	8
28	Claypool	BRX	43	777	18.1	75	10
29	Cooks	CB	42	568	13.5	24	5
30	Aiyuk	PCC	41	572	14.0	58	4



AROUND THE



With Spats McChad

NEW YORK – Ten weeks in already and I am not bored yet. I feel like the 15th EFL season is moving along quickly – a sign that I am engaged. There is a lot of bad football being played but, for the most part, it is *interesting* bad football.

Here are some of the reasons I am still absorbed in the action:

The “weaponization” of fourth down. Going for it on 4th down as an anytime, anyplace strategy is more commonplace this year than it has been in past years. It is no longer just **Russ Lemmon** gambling on 4th down in unconventional situations. If the trend continues or picks up it will be interesting to see how new real-life data affects the cheat sheets years from now. You see, the sheet that tells the call-by-numbers coaches when to go for it is based on data derived from about two decades worth of plays called when coaches were following more conventional strategies. By mixing previously unthinkable scenarios into the data, such as 4th & 3 from a team’s own 24 in the first quarter of a one-score game, we will get a better read on whether zanily going for it is a winning or ultimately losing strategy. In my opinion, if you’re calling the game based strictly on a chart you probably shouldn’t be a coach. Still, it is intriguing to watch new strategic ground being broken in real time.

The return of the running game. I believe we are witnessing the beginning of a shift back to the run game as an equal or greater partner in the success of offences. Two decades of rapid evolution of the passing game (legalized “pick plays” in a nutshell) and the effort of defences to adapt to new rules and interpretation of rules have produced players optimized for speed and agility over strength and power. As defences improve their pass rush and coverage skills to meet the aerial threat, smart offensive coordinators are catching on to the fact that 220-lb safeties posing as linebackers, dancing fairies and bean poles at cornerback, and freakish speed rushers abandoning their lanes are ripe for getting run over. We are far from close to returning to the 1970’s, but don’t be surprised if the teams that win the next half dozen Gale Sayers trophies boast a more heavily-weighted running attack than the teams that don’t.

Teams aren’t doing what I thought they would do. Apart from a handful of teams at the extreme ends of the power pole – elite Durham, Budapest and Charleswood versus dumpster fire Peg City – team performances are harder to predict from week-to-week and many teams are simply defying long term projections. From the Under-performers (Oshawa, Pickering, Iowa City, Erieau, Seattle) to the Over-performers (Las Vegas, East Elmhurst, York) to the Jekyll & Hydes (New Jersey, Cowtown, Sebastian, Buffalo) to the Mushy Middle Class (Chino, Virden, Brooklin, Cobb County) to the Freaks (Scarborough, Twin Cities, Georgia, Bruxelles), it is becoming next-to-impossible to tell what will happen on any given Sunday. I’ve considered that I may have been off in my pre-season analysis, but the possibility I might have been wrong is so unlikely that I must think the answer likely lies in that cherished buzz word, “Parity.” The disparity in talent between, for example a Las Vegas and an Oshawa, is so marginal and the teams below them so close, that the difference between success and failure sometimes comes down to luck and perhaps a couple of dozen key plays. That razor-thin margin of error has coaches jumpy and doing strange things. And that’s funny to watch.

Fans in the stands. Even watching a game on TV is better with fans in the stands. Despite the looney COVID-19 protocols tainting some venues, catching a glimpse of a crazed super fan or two at least once per broadcast and hearing the roar of live voices gets me in the football mood on Sundays. I didn’t think I would have missed them this much.

THE NEGOTIATION

The return of fans to stadiums gives us a graphic glimpse into exactly how enthusiastic the fans are about their teams. Official attendance counts released by teams reflect the number of tickets sold. However, that number does not always reflect the number of people in the seats. The difference between the number of tickets sold and the numbers of bums in seats is what I call the Fan Apathy Factor. Yes, occasionally the weather plays a role in inducing fans to stay away, but when it doesn’t, you have a degree of fan apathy proportional to the percentage of purchased seats not filled.

But what does one call it when a team has trouble selling tickets in the first place; and those few who have bought them fail to show up 50% of the time? That’s not fan apathy – that’s a flat-out fan deficit. And the team with by far the largest fan deficit in the league is the Peg City Crusaders.

It’s not difficult to comprehend why. Take a look at this week, for example. After giving their tiny group of supporters a transient thrill with a fumble recovery at mid-field followed by a single-minded drive into the Pats’ end zone – highlighted enroute by a daring screen to **Alec Ingold** for 5 yards on 4th & 3 and capped with a perfect medium cross from **Mac Jones** to **Brandon Aiyuk** for the TD – the woeful Crusaders lay down and were rolled over by a score of 34-10 by a Pats team buoyed by the presence of



Patriots fans flocked to *True North Field* near the Winnipeg airport to watch their team take on their intra-city neighbours, the Peg City Crusaders. Pats' fans took over the venue, out-numbering Crusaders' fans by an eyeball estimate of four-to-one. Peg City's owner, **Carling Thule Richardson** did not care, as long the visiting team's fans spent their cash in his luxurious, state-of-the-art venue that is losing money at a great rate with his team unable to draw fans to the games. The Pats took care of the Peps, 34-10.

thousands of their own fans who had made the trip down the block from *Patriot Place* to the gleaming white elephant west of *James Armstrong Richardson Airport* known as *True North Field* for this intra-city showdown between "downtown" Winnipeg and the 'burbs of Charleswood.

The stadium was more than half full for the first time since the only sellout in franchise history brought 60,286 fans and curious spectators to the grand opening of the park in Week One of the 2019 season. In fact, close to 50,000 real live fans attended *True North Field* in Week Ten, exceeding the season attendance average by close to 400%. It was not because Winnipeggers suddenly became interested in watching young players develop under the manic gaze of an overwrought coach. The vast majority of the official count of 49,865 spectators were Patriot fans coming to watch a public execution of their annoying and unwelcome neighbours.

A visual survey of the crowd yielded an estimate of roughly four-to-one in favour of fans dressed in Patriots' white, blue and red over those wearing Crusaders' burgundy, silver and black. From the TV it looked like a Patriots home game. Being out-numbered four-to-one by the visiting team's fans was another embarrassment for the Crusaders in a season full of them. But for a franchise in *Desperate* (note the capital 'D' and italics) need of operating capital, that distinction was irrelevant. Pats' fans liked to spend money at a game as much as any fans in the league and their team's 8-1 record heading into this game had them in a spending mood. That they outnumbered the home fans did not seem to effect whatever minimal homefield advantage there might have been for the Crusaders. It may actually have helped elevate their mood for the mere fact that it was not as easy to hear individual members of the crowd bellowing graphic insults at them and their coach, **Stephen Katopodis**.

The Peg City coach was under intense fire these days. Two years ago, he had been considered an up-and-comer, one of a group of new hot-shot "offensive gurus" currently popular with owners and the analytics crowd. He was going to turn around a mediocre founding franchise that had changed hands three times and had achieved very little since entering the EFL as the Kutztown Golden Bears in 2007. To say he is now "under the gun" or "on the hotseat" would be both tired clichés and gross understatements. Katopodis is sitting on a sizzling frying pan underneath a cannon, with his head on the chopping board waiting for the axe to fall.

His current jeopardy is not due to his game-day coaching, however. That tends to receive decent grades overall, given the rough and not-so-ready talent at his disposal. Rather, it is the state of team's roster and future prospects that has the tiny Crusader fan base incensed and ready to flock to the Winnipeg Blue Bombers as an alternative. It also has owner Crusaders' owner, **Carling Thule Richardson** so incensed that he speaks openly of firing Katopodis, but refuses, for some reason, to do it.

"Firing the idiot would let him off the hook," Richardson was overheard saying while slamming back Old Fashioneds in his luxury box at the conclusion of Chino's game-clinching touchdown drive last week. It resulted in another Peg City loss. His guest in the box that week, **Elon Musk**, had remarked that he liked to fire his executives occasionally for no reason other than to shake things up. In the cavernous silence of a dome with over 60,000 seats and only about 3,000 people in them, Richardson's increasingly loud

and angry rants could be overheard by anyone within ear shot. They were sometimes surreptitiously recorded and posted on *Twitter*. The multi-billionaire did not care. He wore his disdain for his GM on his jewelled cufflinked sleeve and may have been hamming it up for the phone cameras he pretended not to know were there. “I enjoy watching him suffer. Look at him! Slamming his play-sheet down like a spoiled kid having a tantrum! Maybe if Marcus Maye had been there Gallup wouldn’t have had a free pass into the end zone!”

His butler, **Reginald Plumbottom**, took his empty glass and set a full one down at the table. “Thank you, Reginald,” he said then turned to Musk and chortled, “Hey Elon, maybe you could launch him into space as a test dummy on your new rocket!”

The game versus Chino had set off the best Richardson rant yet. That was due to the fact that seven Chino starters had been on the Crusaders the year before, sent to the Convicts in a blockbuster off-season trade that brought back draft picks, a few ageing vets and lots of dead cap money. Richardson had corrected a reporter who had reminded him about the trade, calling it a “ballbuster” deal before saying, “I hope the guy we got with one of their picks works out, the one with the two last names” then confessing that he wasn’t sure if any of the other players the Crusaders got back were even playing for his team that week.

This week, Richardson had Patriots owner, **Jason Findlay** as his special guest in his luxury box. He was reportedly trying to bury the hatchet with his bitter in-town rival in the hope that the Patriots would lease *True North Field* and rent out *Patriot Place* to the Winnipeg Blue Bombers. The CFL team had moved to the University of Manitoba and were still playing outdoors in Canada’s coldest city. Signing a lease with the Patriots would stabilize the bottom line for a Crusaders’ operation that was rumoured to be deep in the red and losing millions of dollars through the cost of operating a practically empty stadium. The return of fans to the stands after COVID had not brought the windfall Richardson had expected and that was because nobody in Winnipeg cared about the Crusaders. Manitoba was saturated with football and the Crusaders were by far the least appealing team on the market. Although he had been warned that the Winnipeg market could not bear another football team, Richardson had gone ahead with the billion-dollar build of *True North Field* believing he could push the Patriots out and take over the market. He had completely mis-read the city’s mood and love for the Pats, winners of two EFL Championships. Now he had to make nice with the Pats owner if he was going to survive.

According to my sources, **Jason Findlay**, was well-aware of Richardson’s original plan, and did not trust his fellow owner. But being notoriously cheap, Findlay was not about to pass up a sumptuous buffet consisting of prime rib, steamed crab legs, caviar, all the pasta salad one could eat and chocolate mousse. *Hmmmm*, he loved chocolate mousse for dessert. If Richardson was paying, he was in.

Despite having immense pride in his own stadium, *Patriot Place*, the league’s original dome, Findlay had to admit that *True North Field* was at another level. Heated seats, moving walkways, three full-service restaurants, a hotel, a theatre, a bowling alley, a public fitness facility with over 500 stationary bikes, in-seat delivery service in the 100 and 200 levels and luxury boxes, a replica of the Red River that functioned as a kind of moat around the stadium were just a few of the luxurious over-the-top stadium features. He imagined that the league probably could not wait to have the Gale Sayers Game played in it, provided the Crusaders didn’t go bankrupt first. He wondered where Richardson got all the money to pay for this. Wherever he got it from, the supply was apparently not unlimited, as the Crusaders’ owner almost fell over himself trying to make the Patriots’ owner comfortable in the lead up to what he obviously saw as an opening to negotiation for some type of market-sharing relief.

As the game played out in front of them and it became clear from the first two Patriots’ drives that **DeShaun Watson** would not need to break a sweat to lead the Pats to their 9th win, Richardson turned to the subject of business.

“It looks like you have a winner this year, Jason,” Richardson began with an artful smile. “That is quite a fine team you put together, and in so little time too. I wish Bonehead had half the knowledge of the league and eye for talent that you have.”

Findlay smiled and reached for another dish of mousse. He did not need to hurry his response. But he was curious about that last off-the-cuff remark. “Bonehead?” he asked.

“Kato-pillar!” Richardson scoffed. “Bozo, Meathead, Stupid...pick one or all of them – that’s what he is. My coach, of course!”

Findlay chuckled. “That’s a pretty harsh assessment, Carling. Why don’t you fire him then?”

“I would, but a couple of things are holding me back,” Richardson replied, a look of chagrin crossing his face. “First of all, I enjoy watching his face turn red during games and seeing his health deteriorate over this long losing streak. That’s really all that’s keeping me interested in the season. I ask myself each week: *Will this be the week my idiot coach has a stroke or a nervous breakdown on the sideline in front of a national TV audience?* That would make my day! Reginald and I have a side bet going on it,” he nodded to his manservant, who passed him another Old Fashioned. “That’s one reason.” He paused to take a breath then lowered his voice. “The other reason is that – not many people know this – but Dumbass has a ‘no-firing’ clause in his contract.”

“A *no-firing* clause?” Findlay asked, evidently puzzled. “I’ve never heard it put specifically that way before. Surely, you can just payout his contract and say goodbye?”

“Well, I could do that but it would trigger a very harsh penalty,” Richardson responded. He looked glum suddenly. “Very harsh. I’m not proud of that negotiation with Kato-pillar. It was a moment of weakness.”

“How so?” Findlay asked, intrigued enough that he paused in eating his third dish of chocolate mousse.

“I’ll give the prick this,” Richardson confessed. “He did warn me in advance that I would want to fire him. He wanted guarantees that I wouldn’t. He wanted his reputation to stay intact and getting fired makes it hard to get another front office job in the EFL, as you know. There’s nothing to stop him from resigning, of course. But he won’t. He’s a stubborn shit!” With that last word he downed his Old Fashioned in one gulp and reached out for the next, not waiting for Reginald to set it down on the table.

“What penalty would be so harsh that you wouldn’t dare get rid of the guy?” Findlay asked, his curiosity genuinely piqued.

Richardson closed his eyes and sighed. He leaned over and whispered, “*He’s off the team.*” so quietly that none of the camera phones surreptitiously videoing the private conversation between two of Winnipeg’s most powerful men could pick up what he had said.

A stunned expression came over Findlay’s face. “He - ?”

“*Shh!*” Richardson lifted a finger to his lips and nodded in the direction of one the servers, who quickly turned her head away. “We’re being taped, Jason,” he said. “I forgot to tell you, sorry. The servers here tape my private conversations to sell to interested parties who then use them to try and blackmail me. But I don’t play that game. I tell the interested parties to go f*#& themselves. That’s why a lot of our team’s dirty laundry is out there on *Twitter*. I don’t mind it being there. It’s the only way I can get message out publicly because I am not allowed to criticize him publicly either, according to the contract. You’d think Kato-pillar would have the decency to resign, knowing how I feel, but he has no shame.”

Carling Thule Richardson had a reputation in Winnipeg high society for being a cruel and ruthless man, but Findlay did not realize just how callous and ruthless he could be. He was nevertheless fascinated by the man now and the strange situation around his head coach and GM who he could not fire.

“How did Stephen know you would want to fire him?” Findlay queried.

“He said I had to have patience and ‘trust the process,’” Richardson responded. “But he warned me that the process was not going to be easy and that it would not make sense at first. He *did* warn me about that! But back then I couldn’t picture just how crazy and counter-productive looking his ‘process’ would be. I didn’t picture a fan revolt a mere three years in, either.” He snorted wryly. “Fan revolt isn’t the right term actually. You have to have fans for that to happen first.”

Findlay nodded. He turned his spoon in his mousse but did not take a bite. “Well, he’s a pretty decent game day coach,” he said finally. “From what I’ve seen in this game anyway.”

Findlay went through the Crusaders’ touchdown drive after the fumble recovery, breaking it down play-by-play for his host. “If his young players could execute more consistently, he would be more than a handful for my coach,” he concluded.

“That’s right! You hire people from the community to coach every year,” Richardson noted. “I always wondered how you were successful doing that!”

“It’s hit-and-miss,” Findlay acknowledged. “It’s good for the local game and the economy, but it has its drawbacks. These community coaches don’t have the knowledge or experience to draw up many new plays. We keep doing the same plays over and over, year-in, year-out. I’m shocked other coaches have not caught on, actually. But every now and again we’ll face a good coach and get our butts kicked when we shouldn’t have. I’m thinking of dropping the program, but part of me says to myself, ‘if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.’ We won two championships running those reliable old plays. I’d miss them, I think.”

“Sounds like you need Kato-pillar!” Richardson offered, grinning like a Cheshire cat. “With his play design and your eye for talent and roster-building, you’d make a good pair.” Then he frowned. “I’d trade him to you but I can’t do that either!”

At that point the video suddenly ends. Another version with poorer sound quality taken from a different angle circulating on the net continues for another few seconds and shows Findlay chuckling and taking a spoonful of mousse while Richardson reaches into his pocket for a cigar.

What the two owners discussed after the videos end remains a mystery, for now at least. A probe of my sources on both the Crusaders and Patriots has so far picked up nothing concrete, although apparently Richardson was in a good mood after the game, despite his team’s 10th straight loss this year and 11th going back to 2020.

So, while there remain plenty of questions, maybe there is hope for the Crusaders after all. Yours Truly is now on a mission to find out the secret outcome of this partially secret negotiation between the two Winnipeg rivals. As well, I seek to discover the secret clause in the hiring contract between the Crusaders and Coach/GM **Stephen Katopodis** that has the team’s owner so perturbed. According to one of my sources, that won’t be easy. The Crusaders are more likely to win a game first, so it’s entirely possible I will never know.

BEAT HARD

Elsewhere in the province of Manitoba, at **TERRORDOME** in Virden, the connection between **Patrick Mahomes** and rookie wide receiver, **Ja’Marr Chase** continued to blossom in the Violators’ 40-13 punishing of Twin Cities. Mahomes and Chase hooked up for two more touchdown passes, giving them 10 together on the season, the second-best QB-to-receiver scoring combo in the league after **Matt Ryan-to-Davante Adams**, with 11. Virden is beginning to hit its stride and looking like a team that will be next to impossible to stop as it picks up steam. Given this, it is perhaps not surprising that Triumph coach **Guy Williams** felt desperate measures were in order on the field this week. What caught me off guard was who he decided to take those desperate measures with.

The week after I showed appreciation in this column for **Mitch Trubisky**’s game and its value to a developing **Trevor Lawrence**, the Triumph coach did the inexplicable and started **CJ Beathard**. Now, I am *really* confused about the quarterback situation in Minneapolis! And so is the *Valhalla Press*.

Even loyal beat reporter **Lars Odegard** is having trouble spinning this decision: “*With access to Triumph practices restricted in the COVID-19 era, it is hard to confirm, but one must assume that CJ Beathard practiced extremely well this week to prompt Coach Williams into making such a switch against a division rival who he hopes to catch in the standings down the stretch.*”

Nice try, Lars! After watching the Violators roll over the Triumph for 40 consecutive points after they spotted them a game-opening touchdown, I am not sure that any explanation for starting a back-up against **Patrick Mahomes** makes any sense, other than as

a foreshadowing that they knew they would be *beat hard*. However, before the game, there was just enough uncertainty to allow Coach Williams to delude reporters into thinking this was a chess decision, instead of checkers.

The media, caught off guard by the announcement of Beathard as the starter, predictably made the back-up the focus of initial questions. As usual, Williams' responses to those questions from the press were not particularly helpful, except insofar as they confirmed that one cannot believe a single sentence he says.

"CJ gives us the best chance to win at this critical stage of the race," he replied when asked by *Minneapolis Star-Tribune* reporter, **Olaf Thunderbundersson** why he would start the back-up at such a crucial period of the season. When asked a follow up question about why, Williams deadpanned, "CJ comes to work every day and works hard in practice. He is fully prepared to execute the game plan against the Violators." It was not really an answer, but what else is new?

If there was some element to Beathard's game that made him a better fit to play Virden, it was not apparent on the field. That made the apparently conscious decision not to punt the ball even more stupefying. For the second straight week, punter **Mitch Wishnowsky** sat on the bench. Five turnovers on downs (count 'em, 5!), with four of those occurring in their own end, did not put Beathard in the best position to put his team in the best position to win the game. Such is not a reasonable game plan for a decent starter, let alone a back-up.

Beathard played *okay* managing the game. He handed the ball off to **Melvin Gordon II** just as ably as Trubisky had the week before. It was clear that no special weight was being placed on his shoulders, apart from asking him to convert 4th downs in his own territory, none of them with less than 2 yards to go. He delivered modest numbers, completing 13 of 21 for 148 yards and a TD, with no picks – exactly the type of performance one would hope for from a back-up pressed into emergency action, not from a named starter who gives your team the "best chance to win."

After the game, it was inevitable that somebody would mention the elephant in the room and that person was, of course, **Olaf Thunderbundersson**, who has been the sharpest critic of Williams over the past year and a half.

"Coach Williams, do you think Trevor Lawrence could have performed as well or better than CJ did today, given CJ's low passing numbers? And, if not, do you think now that drafting Lawrence was a mistake?"

Irritation flashed in Williams' eyes for the briefest instant. Then he reassumed his relaxed, almost sedated pose. "CJ gave us the best chance to win today. It didn't work out to a win, unfortunately. That is no reflection on Trevor, Mitch, or even Jameis." he replied evasively, stonewalling any attempt to dig into the Lawrence mystery.

The mention of Jameis sent a ripple through the gathering. *Twitter* reacted instantly with what may have been the unexpressed thoughts in the room: '[Will Jameis Winston see the field before Trevor Lawrence?](#)' tweeted ESPN's **Adam Shifty**.

While I would have thought last week that pulling Winston off the practice squad to start a game would have been the height of buffoonery, now I am not so sure it isn't possible. Smoke from the tire fire in Twin Cities is getting pretty high.

INTERCEPTION SCHOOL

Even when a plan works out as designed for the Spartans, it ends up backfiring. With super-rival Budapest coming to Thermopylae Stadium this week for the re-match of the fiasco in Week Two that the North Stars had won easily, Pickering coach **Gus Konstantakos** looked for his team to execute a defensive game plan designed to slow down the Huns just enough to give QB, **Philip Rivers** a chance. It was a brilliant plan predicated on the strengths of arguably the best player on the Spartans, corner **Xavien Howard**.

The Pickering strategy was to play four-man front in a dime package and double-cover **Justin Jefferson** and **George Kittle**, leaving Howard on an island with **Stefon Diggs**. It worked, in the sense that the Budapest passing attack was kept in check. But the North Stars adjusted and the Spartans still lost...by a lot.

Faced with what he viewed as a formidable opposition plan to deal with the league's no.1 rated passer, North Stars coach, **Darrin Jones** shifted to Plan B and turned to a familiar face. **David Johnson** took rare center stage in this one, carrying a season-high 20 times for 130 yards and 2 TDs, to lead the North Stars to a 31-3 cudgeling of the Spartans. Budapest came a 56-yard **Greg Zuerlein** field goal short of pitching a shutout. It was the first time a Budapest running back had carried the ball 20 times in a game in 2021, as Jones had spent the first 9 games learning how to play with his shiny new toy: A passing attack capable of supporting itself.

Not wishing to tempt fate, Jones had **Aaron Rodgers** mostly avoid Howard's side of the field while exploiting the Spartans' focus on Jefferson and Kittle to give his running backs a chance to prove their worth. The ground game answered, producing a total of 203 yards while Rodgers enjoyed a relaxing day, attempting just 20 passes, completing 10 for 169 yards and 2 TDs. Diggs did make a TD catch in front Howard, in the one "challenge" moment of the game that had to occur when Best goes against Best. The pass went underneath and Diggs made a nifty move to get by the Spartans' corner and find the end zone from 13 yards out. It was Diggs' turn to win on that play. But overall, the lack of testing of the Spartans' corner was proof that Howard carried the day.

Unfortunately for Pickering and its dwindling playoff hopes, Howard's status as a super-elite corner is not translating into takeaways and wins. Intimidating the opposition into staying away from him is not satisfying enough for Howard, either. Howard's interception numbers are down this year from his historic pace. In fact, he has yet to pick off a pass in 2021. There are no highlight reel features to be gained in getting a quarterback to throw in another direction. To make a play on the ball the ball had to come his way. It was the one problem he and his private instructors had not envisioned when Howard underwent his highly successful off-season rehab program at the *Rod Woodson School of Interceptions*.

Under the tutelage of the former veteran NFL corner and his professional training staff, Howard worked diligently on special

interception moves, including subtle tricks on how to bait a quarterback into throwing early, and proprietary techniques like ‘lunge & thrust,’ ‘hidden hold,’ ‘head hunter,’ ‘bitch trip,’ ‘yo mama’ and many more. His graduate certificate from the school contains a mention of being voted by instructors and classmates to be the most likely to reach 10 interceptions in 2021. His schooling may have been too successful, however.

Ten weeks into the season, Howard is getting frustrated that quarterbacks are hardly ever throwing the ball in his direction and when they do, it is usually short and safe, when the defensive play calls for a deep cushion underneath. His coach is getting antsy as well, feeling that his plan for domination is being thwarted in part by a lack of takeaways. The Spartans are near the bottom of the league in takeaways with just 4, 3 of which are interceptions, the second-lowest number in the league. The coach and the player have resorted to desperate measures to induce opponents into challenging Howard.

Sources say that the frequent “leaks” coming out of the Spartans’ front office about Howard being injured are really just misinformation designed to fool opponents into thinking he is battling injury and vulnerable. This week, needing a Rodgers gamble or two for his team to stay competitive, Howard himself seemed to take it a step further by limping noticeably between plays, holding his arm as if it was broken just before snaps, and rolling around in pain for no apparent reason on the sideline while the offence had the ball.

These behaviours drew the attention of the network cameras and announcers, leading CBS play-by-play announcer **Ian Hawk** to comment: “It looks like Howard is battling a lot of pain on the sideline. But coach Konstantakos doesn’t appear ready to take him out of the game. Do you think you challenge Howard here, Charles, if you’re Aaron Rodgers?”

“I think at some point you have to challenge him, Ian,” replied analyst, **Charles Davis**. “You have the league’s best quarterback and one of the league’s top receivers paired up. I don’t know how you don’t challenge a beat-up Xavien Howard in that situation.”

It was all to no avail. Jones and Rodgers refused to take the bait. Diggs was targeted just 3 times all game, always short. The third time, as Howard was actually lying on the field pretending to be dead before the snap, Rodgers tried a quick out. At the last instant Howard leaped to his feet and almost picked the ball off. That was the last time Rodgers would look at Diggs all afternoon.

“Wowww! That was almost picked off!” Davis exclaimed as the ball glanced off Howard’s hands and bounced out of bounds. “Playing possum, I see. You know, Ian, if Howard had been down on one knee before the snap instead of lying on his back, that would have been a pick-six!”

All pro athletes strive to be the best at what they do. Even the most talented are compelled to work grueling hours to stay in game shape. The fight to reach and attain an elite level of play is never ending for as long as a player plays the game. But can a player become too good? If so, *how* good is *too* good? Apparently, we now have an example in Pickering’s **Xavien Howard**.

AROUND THE EFL

For my tour of the remaining EFL games on the Week 10 sked I will focus on what I see are the developing playoff races heading into the final six-game stretch. These are the teams in the middle or the ones battling it out in close division races. I’ll start with the team that everybody, including me, tends to underestimate at some point but in the end seems to find ways to stay relevant.

In a game with playoff implications for both teams, the Hawks surprised the Excaliburs with an unspectacular but emphatic 23-10 victory in front of a sellout crowd at Hawkeye Park in Brooklin. Although they did not find the end zone, **Derek Carr** and **DeAndre Hopkins** continued their hot run together, spearheading the Brooklin offence by connecting for 11 passes for 146 yards and 11 first downs to keep the chains moving. The Hawks held the ball for 35 minutes and racked up 440 yards of total offence to dominate the play. They also benefitted from forcing 3 turnovers, a rare occurrence against a team led by **Tom Brady** and **Derrick Henry**. This was one of those days when the GOAT was simply off his game. Mistakes we don’t normally see from a player of his calibre – an **Alex Highsmith** interception off of play action; a **Jessie Bates III** pick in center field thrown right to him; a bad throw to **Corey Davis** on opening drive that should have been picked; the underthrow on the ensuing 4th & 3 on a questionable decision to go for it; the high throw on 3rd & 6 almost picked by **Nickel Robey-Coleman**, etc., etc., - surfaced seemingly out of nowhere and turned what many assumed would be a York victory, into a lost opportunity. The player Brady would normally rely on to bail him out, **King Henry**, was also off his game. GOAT II rushed for a piddly 33 yards on 16 carries and fumbled away the football inside his own red zone. How much of this curious lack of performance was just an overdue off day for the Swords’ stars, and how much was attributable to an under-appreciated defence? The Hawks’ D looked ready for the King and, unlike many other teams before them, actually came at the bruising back. The Hawks had been embarrassed by Henry’s 152 rushing yards and 2 TDs in their Week Two match-up. They weren’t embarrassed this week! It is usually Brady who makes the defences pay for bringing in the safeties to stop the run, but not on this day. Most analysts still assume the Hawks’ defence is a sub-par unit prone to getting gashed, which history tells us it has been for several years. But the assumption is not based on recent history, as Brooklin’s defence has been playing respectably for most of the 2021 season and showing, as they did today, the ability to take the ball away from the opposition. This is a potentially critical development for the Hawks down the stretch. If they get more performances like this from the back-11, they could very well find themselves in the playoffs yet again.

At New Era Stadium in Buffalo, the Lamar Show took center stage for a command performance in an important and not-so-easy 35-28 victory over the Pilots. If this is the type of game of the future in the EFL, the future of football might not be so bleak. There was a hot, dynamic element to this contest as Seattle pitted **Trey Lance** against **Lamar Jackson** in a battle of raw improvisational talent. Seattle GM, **Mitch Gangwish** has made it no secret that he drafted Lance to be the next Lamar. Lance has comparable traits – the legs, the rocket arm, the ability to salvage broken plays – and many of them showed up in this game. The Pilots’ rookie rushed for 74 yards on just 8 carries, including a 13-yard duck-and-scramble for a TD in the 1st quarter to get Seattle on the board. He also threw efficiently,

completing 9 of 12 pass attempts for 152 yards. Yet back-to-back incomplete passes near the end of the third quarter, after the Derailers had taken a 28-21 lead, signalled the end of Lance's day. Always ready with the quick hook if he doesn't like what he sees, Coach Gangwish put in **Gardner Minschew II** for the 4th quarter in an attempt to bring his team back. It did not work out so well. Minschew threw a pick to **Jaquiski Tartt** on his first series that led to the eventual game-winning touchdown on an 8-yard short slant from Jackson to **Robert Woods**. It was Jackson's fifth touchdown of the day and third via the pass. The do-it-all quarterback rushed for two other TDs to have a direct hand in every one of his team's scores. Jackson's performance this week was directly opposite to his disastrous outing last week in a loss to Bruxelles. Jackson truly was the game MVP in this contest, taking advantage of a Seattle defence that ran itself ragged trying to anticipate where Jackson might take off to, but failing to take care of fundamental coverage assignments and maintaining lane discipline against the run. The Derailers' star came through this time when coach **Daryl Brothers** put him in risky 4th down conversion situations all over the field. He converted on all five attempts, and in the process converted his coach back to being a "genius" after being derided as a "dolt" last week. All this game and wins over New Jersey and Virden earlier show is that Lamar and his maniacal coach together have the ability and attitude to take out any team on any given Sunday. They are also capable of falling flat on their faces. They are committed to the insanity. Let's see if it takes them into the post-season.

At Stone Pony Shore in New Jersey, the Wrecking Balls defied the pundits and the historical record of futility in their home park, to sandbag the Assassins 24-19. Well, look, what have we here – a tightening race for the East Division title in which **JC Cohen's** merry band have a viable shot! To say this was a clutch win is an understatement. That it came against arguably the top team in the Pacific Conference is a status bonus that could accrue fringe benefits, such as much-needed confidence moving forward. Just when you thought the Wrecking Balls didn't have it in them (I was one), they do a gut check and find something resembling a six-pack down there. Okay, not a six-pack...or a washboard...but something that's at least not hanging six inches over the belt. In addition to **Matt Stafford** finding **Keenan Allen** on all 11 of his targets for 88 yards and 2 TDs, this game was characterized by two hard-nosed defensive stands in the 4th quarter, to boot! After taking a 24-19 early in the 4th quarter on the second of Allen's TD grabs, the Wrecking Balls found themselves defending a 4th & inches at their own 43-yard line. Coach **Sean McDermott** went all-out to stop the run and it paid off, as **Trayveon Williams** was stuffed behind the line of scrimmage by a keying **Zach Cunningham**. Later, with the Assassins knocking at New Jersey's door in the red zone, with 4th & goal to go at the 7-yard line in the game's final minute, corner **James Bradberry** snared his 4th pick of the year, going down in the end zone for a touchback and all but sealing the dramatic win. It was a stunner for both sides. The confident Assassins hit an unexpected speed bump on their trip to the West Division crown; while the Wrecking Balls showed they have positive mojo left, holding out the possibility of a surprise push in the East.

At Joe Ferguson Stadium in Iowa City, the scrappy Cubs pulled out their third win in a row, edging the Coyotes 23-20 on a 30-yard **Justin Tucker** field goal with 1:08 left in overtime. The result of this and the New Jersey game make the Coyotes one game less secure in their quest for the East Division; while this Cubs' victory comes at a critical time in their campaign to get back in the West Division race. This was an evenly-matched game that ended up seeing the Cubs' star power prevailing over the Coyotes' **Ryan Tannehill**. **Tyler Lockett** caught 11 passes in 11 targets for 186 yards, including a 66-yard catch-and-run for the game's opening score. **Russell Wilson** finished with 308 yards and 2 TD passes, both to Lockett. On the other side, the Cubs' defence took away the Cobb County run game, forcing Tannehill into solo action. He legs responded with 90 yards rushing on 9 carries, two for TDs, including a 14-yard bootleg to tie the game with 0:44 left and send it to overtime. However, his arm got tired, finishing with 24 completions on 47 attempts for 263 yards, 1 TD and 1 INT. Looks like the Coyotes are now in a "dog fight."

At Kelly-Burke Field in Erieau, the Corn Kings' offence exploded out of nowhere in a 40-19 pummeling of the Cadillac. Starter, **Jimmy Garoppolo** completed 26 of 27 pass attempts for 317 yards and 2 TDs to **Mike Evans**, who caught 15 passes on all 15 targets for 206 yards. The Cadillac secondary had no answer for Evans while their pass rush, with 4 sacks, was ultimately thwarted by Garoppolo's quick release and poise in the pocket. **Kyler Murray** had a hand in both Caddy TDs, running it in from 10 yards and connecting with **Jaylen Waddle** for a 67-yard TD pass, but also struggled with accuracy and ball security, throwing a pick and giving up a fumble that **Tre Herndon** returned for a late Cowtown touchdown. The Corn Kings badly needed a win. They are now back at 500 and still in reasonable contention for a playoff berth.

At The Big House in Chino, the Convicts came back from a two-score deficit in the 4th quarter to force overtime then traded field goals with their adversary in the extra period to salvage a 27-27 tie. This result allowed the Convicts to maintain the narrowest of edges over the Cubs in the standings. They can thank their opponent's shaky defence and spent offence for the late reprieve. A good rule of thumb for viewers would be to never count the Bombers *in* any game, even if they have a big lead in the 4th and their defence has just made a rare stop on 4th down to get the ball in their opponent's territory with a chance to extend the lead. That was the situation after **Kyle Fuller** knocked away a pass for **Marvin Jones Jr.** on 4th down, giving Bruxelles good field position at the Chino 48. A busted play, a holding penalty that nullified a 7-yard run and two short check downs brought **Matt Prater** on to attempt a 60-yard field goal. The kick was wide left and that gave the ball back to Chino at mid-field. **Teddy Bridgewater** then led an 11-play drive for a TD that got the comeback rolling. In the end, the *Football Gods* would determine that neither team deserved to win the game and allowed the tie.

At the Fish Tank in Sebastian, a 35-yard **Rodrigo Blankenship** field goal following a 1st quarter turnover on downs at the Swordfish 46, proved to be the difference in a 32-29 East Elmhurst win. The Swordfish offence continued to live dangerously in this contest but, by and large, their needlessly desperate gambles either paid off or at least did them no immediate harm. After falling behind 10-0, a 4th & 5 gamble from their own 30 – which could have lost them the game right then and there had they not made it – turned into

the spark they needed when an 8-yard completion to **Anthony Miller** gave them a new set of downs. Sebastian would go on to score TDs on back-to-back possessions and convert a two-pointer to take a 15-10 lead into half time. The second half was a back-and-forth affair, with safety **Duron Harmon**'s interception of **Kirk Cousins** off a tip by **Jalen Ramsey** ultimately tipping the balance against the home team and allowing the Irish to take a 10-point lead on an ensuing touchdown drive. Needing two scores to tie, the Swordfish came up against 4th & 3 at the East Elmhurst 5-yard line with 3:58 left. This situation seems to come up as a classic coach test at least once a week and, like most others in this manic era, **Russ Lemmon** opted to keep his offence on the field to take advantage of the short trip to the end zone over the short distance to the crossbar. It worked out, as Cousins found **Nick Chubb** at the last instant for a 5-yard TD to bring the score within 3 points, but it was a temporary reprieve. The Irish never gave the ball back, running out the 3:49 remaining on the clock with 3 first downs to raise their South Division leading record to 7-3. **Aaron Jones** rushed for 136 yards and **Baker Mayfield** was an efficient 17 of 21 for 157 yards and 3 TD passes. The Swordfish continue to tread water, despite the most furious fin-flapping, falling to 4-5-1 and slipping ever so slightly behind Cowtown in the North.

At GM Megadome in Oshawa, the Pink Panthers put a scare into the Thunder Lizards, but the superior team prevailed in the end, as Durham clawed by Oshawa, 17-13. The Pink Panthers are finally beginning to play good football but are not getting rewarded for it. They also left points on the field that a struggling team probably should have taken. Yes, another 4th down decision early in a tight game had repercussions later on. Up 3-0 and trying to capitalize on the game's only turnover, a pick of **Josh Allen** by **David Onyemata**, the Panthers went for it on 4th & 2 at the Durham 8-yard line. Rookie defensive end, **Zach Allen** broke through and sacked **Matt Ryan**, giving the ball back to Durham at their own 14 and setting up a return field goal drive by the Lizards that tied the game at 3. Oshawa ended up losing by 4, but a field goal in that situation would have resulted in a 1-point deficit going into Oshawa's final possession. Instead, down 17-13 with 2:15 left, Oshawa found itself at the Durham 25 needing to get the ball into the end zone. Forced to take shots they would not normally have had to take if they needed only a field goal, they put the Durham defence in a better position to make a play. That play came on a botched play-action in which the fake just delayed Ryan's set up. Not fooled, **Ed Oliver** crashed through the middle for an 11-yard sack, eventually setting up the 4th & long that Ryan could not convert. It was a sad ending for a team that really pushed Durham to the wire. The Thunder Lizards were forced to gamble to get back in the game. Trailing 13-3 in the 3rd, Lizards' coach **George Kaldis** elected to go for it on 4th & 1 from his team's own 34. In light of the league trend, the decision to go for it there, on its own, is not overly surprising, although failure would have put Oshawa in field goal range in a low-scoring game. Rather, it was the last second audible by Allen that stunned the home crowd and announcers everywhere. Seeing the Pink Panther defence crowding the line, Allen checked out of the play, dropped back five steps and launched a laser deep over the middle to **Cooper Kupp**, who came down with the ball for a 34-yard gain. That play provided the jolt the drowsy Durham offence needed to go on to put up two touchdowns in two possessions, enough to win the game. This game had the look and feel of a playoff game, which belied the team's respective positions in the standings. The Lizards are tromping away with the North Division while Oshawa is fading fast and can be considered all but out of the race for a wild card. It's not officially over yet, but the funeral preparations for the Pink Panthers' playoff hopes are already being made.

And finally, at the Eagle's Nest in Toronto, two teams rapidly falling out of mathematical contention even before most analysts bother to take out their calculators, put on a good show through three quarters before the better offence gained the upper hand. Georgia's **Ben Roethlisberger** put together consecutive touchdown drives in the second half to put away Scarborough, 35-21. This game had some "game" to it, with both teams opening their respective scoring with 50-yard TD passes: **Diontae Johnson** hauled in a medium fly from Big Ben that he took to the house; then **Joe Burrow** hit **Allen Robinson II** on a long slant for a 50-yard TD to tie it up. Until the veteran QB took control late, the young Blue Eagles' quarterback stood toe-to-toe with him, answering each Gladiator score with one of his own. It has to be frustrating for Blue Eagles' fans to see their young, talented quarterback flashing that talent here and there, but ultimately unable to bring together an offence that finds a way to fall out of rhythm each week.



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COBB COUNTY @ YORK (line – EXCALIBURS by 4)

INJURIES: **Cobb County** – Hassan Ridgeway (OUT); **York** – Mike Williams (QUESTIONABLE), Tyson Alualu (OUT), Danny Amendola (OUT), Eli Apple (OUT), CJ Henderson (OUT).

The Excaliburs took a step back last week, falling to Brooklin in a game where neither of their two big offensive stars looked very good. Tom Brady or Derrick Henry, preferably both, need to step up here against a solid Coyote defence ranked third in efficiency, second in the red zone and fifth in takeaways. The Coyotes, coming off an overtime loss to the Cubs and clinging to a one-game lead over surging New Jersey, cannot afford many more losses as they have a tough schedule down the stretch. The Excaliburs have surprised with their consistency, but as last week showed they lack depth and need their stars to perform at a high level. The Coyotes need more rhythm in their run game to revive the play-action pass that propelled Ryan Tannehill to the top of the passer rankings last year. Expect York to try to get Henry back on track and expect the Coyotes to be ready for him. **PICK: COBB COUNTY**

BRUXELLES @ BROOKLIN (line – HAWKS by 4)

INJURIES: **Bruxelles** – Trey Flowers (OUT), Chris Godwin (OUT), O.J. Howard (OUT), A'Shawn Robinson (OUT), Isaiah Wynn (OUT); **Brooklin** – Carlos Hyde (PROBABLE), Randall Cobb (OUT), Austin Ekeler (OUT), Clelin Ferrell (OUT), Ronnie Harrison Jr. (OUT), Xavier McKinney (OUT), Pernell McPhee (OUT).

The Bombers are not fading willingly into obscurity after a miserable start but as last week's tie versus Chino showed, they lack the firepower needed to put away a staggering opponent. With Chris Godwin listed as 'out,' the list of main targets for Drew Brees is down to Chase Claypool and...well, that's it actually. Elijah Mitchell is a fine running back in small doses, but do not expect him to carry any team that needs to score, at minimum, 30 points per game to have a reasonable shot at victory. The Hawks are coming off a complete win over York last week and beginning to look like the 10-win team they were last year. The defence is playing well but the revival of the Derek Carr to DeAndre Hopkins connection is what is fueling the burn of victory after a clunky start to the year. Unless Harrison Smith has another career day, don't expect the Bombers' defence to offer much resistance. **PICK: BROOKLIN**

PICKERING @ BUFFALO (line – DERAILERS by 3)

INJURIES: **Pickering** – Darqueze Dennard (OUT), Richie Incognito (OUT), Bradley Roby (OUT), Miles Sanders (OUT); **Buffalo** – L'Jarius Sneed (PROBABLE), Derek Barnett (OUT), Bradley Chubb (OUT), Whitney Mercilus (OUT).

The question for the Derailers, as always, comes down to which Lamar Jackson will appear on game day. This principle was underscored the past two games, where Lamar was entirely responsible for a loss to the Bombers two weeks ago then basically beat Seattle single-handedly last week. The Spartans offer more of a challenge than the Pilots but, surprisingly, not much more. Their biggest asset remains Xavien Howard, who will all but nullify Robert Woods. Buffalo's top wideout has not seen as many targets this year as in the past. He will receive even less here. Lamar will be forced to run a lot and there is probably not much Pickering can do to stop him. Philip Rivers will have to get it done with Miles Sanders out again, which didn't look so good last week. **PICK: BUFFALO**

BUDAPEST @ NEW JERSEY (line – NORTH STARS by 10)

INJURIES: **Budapest** – None; **New Jersey** – None.

The Wrecking Balls surprised everyone with a clutch home win over the Assassins last week. Perhaps the most impressive part was that their defence made two critical stops in the 4th quarter to preserve the lead. It was the kind of game a team could build a run on if they weren't then forced by a cruel and implacable schedule to face the best team in the league the following week. It is a pity that all

those little improvements compounding over the past seven weeks to make New Jersey games interesting again, in a non-trainwreck way, will mean little when put up against a team so well-composed that it is capable of beating an opponent in any way of its opponent's choosing, as they demonstrated last week against Pickering. Stars for the win; New Jersey to keep it close. **PICK: NEW JERSEY**

VIRDEN @ OSHAWA (line – VIOLATORS by 2)

INJURIES: **Virден** – Anthony Barr (DOUBTFUL), John Brown (DOUBTFUL), Malik Hooker (DOUBTFUL), Geno Atkins (OUT), Austin Bryant (OUT), Parris Campbell (OUT), Lane Johnson (OUT), Kelechi Osemele (OUT), Solomon Thomas (OUT), Oshane Ximines (OUT). **Oshawa** – Eric Kendricks (PROBABLE), K'Waun Williams (QUESTIONABLE), Kenyan Drake (DOUBTFUL), Julian Edelman (DOUBTFUL), Davante Adams (OUT), Dallas Goedert (OUT), Erik Harris (OUT), Alijah Vera-Tucker (OUT).

It is now too late to matter, but the Pink Panthers that most fans expected to see this year finally showed up last week in a white-knuckle loss to Durham. It was an impressive effort all around against one of the league's two elite teams. The tragedy of defeat was compounded by the loss of Davante Adams for at least this game and possibly one more. This deprives Matt Ryan of his no.1 weapon in a duel against the league's most prolific passer, Patrick Mahomes. The Violators crushed the Triumph last week, partially because they are good, but partially because the Triumph were reckless and kept giving them the ball. They will have to earn their way a little more this week against a defence that kept a lid on Josh Allen for the better part of three quarters. Virден continues to be plagued by injuries but Ezekiel Elliott is back, meaning a more balanced attack and a welcome chance to control the clock again. **PICK: VIRDEN**

PEG CITY @ GEORGIA (line – GLADIATORS by 7)

INJURIES: **Peg City** – Saquon Barkley (OUT), Jonathan Bullard (OUT), Devin Bush (OUT), Tarik Cohen (OUT), Davon Godchaux (OUT), Chandler Jones (OUT), Jeff Okudah (OUT), Courtland Sutton (OUT), Jalen Thompson (OUT); **Georgia** – Zach Ertz (OUT), Will Fuller V (OUT), Jourdan Lewis (OUT), Andrew Wylie (OUT).

Trivia aficionados planning to load the Crusaders into their memory banks as the fourth winless EFL team should pay attention. This is Peg City's best chance to get a victory in the coming six weeks. It is not a good chance, but it is at least feasible due to the match-up of the league's second-least efficient offence against the league's second-least efficient defence. Add in that the Crusaders' defence is not as horrible as most of the stats indicate, when one considers it has spent a lot of time on the field, and a flimsy case could be made that they could stay in the game long enough to steal a victory. Where the fantasy starts to unravel is when one looks carefully at the ways the Georgia offence can beat you. Even with Will Fuller V out, Big Ben has lots of weapons and a strong running back duo to fall back on. Barring any silly Big Ben brain farts, it is hard not to see the Glads pulling away in the 4th after a sweaty fight. **PICK: GEORGIA**

ERIEAU @ CHARLESWOOD (line – PATRIOTS by 10)

INJURIES: **Erieau** – Ricardo Allen (OUT), Mark Andrews (OUT), Joey Bosa (OUT), Stephon Gilmore (OUT), Maurice Hurst (OUT); **Charleswood** – Alvin Kamara (DOUBTFUL), Jamie Collins Sr. (OUT), Brandon Linder (OUT), Ronnie Stanley (OUT), Desmond Trufant (OUT).

The Cadillac defence was blown away by the Corn Kings last week, which came as a shock to most. What did not come as a shock was the sub-par play of the offence, particularly the passing game under Kyler Murray. Apart from a nice hook-up on a deep ball to Jaylen Waddle and a couple of scrambles, Murray was entirely unimpressive. The Pats went through the motions in tossing aside the Crusaders last week and will look at Erieau as posing little more challenge here at home. If anything, the Pats have suffered in the power rankings from having perceived too few challenges and playing accordingly. They have yet to pay a price for playing a minimalist game but that could change this week. The Cadillac are desperate for positives on which to build an identity and desperate teams do desperate things. Desperation can backfire, of course, but if they land a solid punch at the start, the Pats might not know how to respond. **PICK: ERIEAU**

EAST ELMHURST @ TWIN CITIES (line – IRISH by 2)

INJURIES: **East Elmhurst** – None; **Twin Cities** – Darnell Savage (QUESTIONABLE), Antonio Brown (OUT), Trent Brown (OUT), Kenny Golladay (OUT).

The Irish know where they are going after an intense win over the Swordfish, while the Triumph now appear to be directionless after getting stomped on by Virден. Is this the time to pack away hope of a playoff surprise and check out the No.1 pick in the draft? One can only hope. Another appearance by CJ Beathard could make this game all but unwatchable for anyone not from East Elmhurst. With a comfortable 4-game lead, facing a team without a purpose, the biggest threat to the Irish is taking this game lightly while they plan for tougher in-conference challenges. We've seen the COVID-19 bug hit mysteriously before. Will it again? **PICK: EAST ELMHURST**

DURHAM @ CHINO (line – THUNDER LIZARDS by 4)

INJURIES: **Durham** – Rashaad Penny (OUT); **Chino** – PJ Hall (OUT), Shaq Mason (OUT), Christian McCaffrey (OUT), Dak Prescott (OUT).

The Convicts are in a playoff spot if the season were to end now and remain alive in the Division hunt after the Assassins lost last week.

So, this is a bad time to be facing one of the league's premier teams. Chino cannot really afford to lose but they may have no choice. It may be asking too much to ask Teddy Bridgewater to lead a 20+ point charge against the league's best defence. It is certainly not asking much less of the Chino defence to hold Josh Allen to under 30 points. While the Lizards are prone to being surprised occasionally, it will take some kind of external factor, like weather, a lucky bounce and a questionable call to give Chino any hope. **PICK: DURHAM**

SEATTLE @ SEBASTIAN (line – SWORDFISH by 5)

INJURIES: Seattle – Josiah Deguara (OUT); Sebastian – T.Y. Hilton (DOUBTFUL), Jonathan Taylor (DOUBTFUL), Jordan Jenkins (QUESTIONABLE), Matt Feiler (OUT), Denzel Perryman (OUT).

The Swordfish offence has been living on the edge lately as defences start to figure them out, at least over the first three downs. So far, they have been able to execute the daring 4th down gamble to keep 7 of their last 8 TD drives afloat. The moment that stops working they could be in deep trouble as their defence continues to not stop anybody important. The Pilots played an interesting but failing strategy against the Derailers last week, starting Trey Lance in an effort to match Lamar Jackson. They don't really have a match for Kirk Cousins on the roster, but does this mean that they, too, will keep their punter in the dressing room for this game? The Swordfish play like they have nothing to lose while the Pilots, at this point, actually have nothing to lose. Prepare for an interesting blowout. **PICK: SEBASTIAN**

LAS VEGAS @ COWTOWN (line – ASSASSINS by 4)

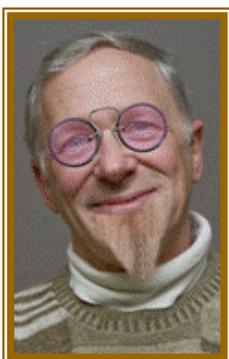
INJURIES: Las Vegas – Yannick Ngakoue (OUT); Cowtown – Caleb Farley (OUT), Eric Saubert (OUT).

Cowtown putting up 40 points last week cannot be entirely dismissed because it came against Erieau. The most shocking stat line from that game was that Cowtown QBs completed 30 of 31 passes to score those points. That needs to be noted regardless of who the opponent is. While that does not mean the no.2-ranked Assassins defence should activate the air raid sirens in fear of getting shell-shocked by the Corn Kings, it does mean that stopping the pass should be in the game plan, whereas before it might not have been. Vegas dropped one they would like back against New Jersey last week. While they still have breathing room on top of the West Division, they do not want to drop another winnable game. With Justin Herbert and Dalvin Cook locked and loaded, expect them to rebound here. **PICK: LAS VEGAS**

SCARBOROUGH @ IOWA CITY (line – CUBS by 8)

INJURIES: Scarborough – Nick Bosa (OUT), Cameron Dantzer (OUT), DeSean Jackson (OUT), Justin Jones (OUT), CJ Uzomah (OUT); Iowa City – AJ Brown (OUT), Jason Peters (OUT).

The Cubs are back on a roll after stealing a big win over Cobb County last week, while the Blue Eagles fell back against the Glads. If one is searching for silver-linings, three touchdown passes from Joe Burrow is a welcome improvement from what had been a three-game slump within a mediocre second season. The other silver lining is that the Cubs' defence, especially against the pass, is not the top-notch unit we are accustomed to seeing wearing blue, white and red. The opportunity for the Eagles to keep in lock-step offensively with the Cubs is there, but the attack will have to be synchronized to include an effective dose of Chris Carson. On the other side, the Cubs look at the Scarborough defence and see an unguarded picnic basket for the taking. Once they grab it, it'll be all over. **PICK: IOWA CITY**



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With Professor
Sterling Smitherman

FROM THE EFL ARCHIVES – In the 2015 EFL season, there were two teams in the State of South Carolina, one in each Conference, and in Week Ten they squared off against each other for bragging rights. This appeared to be a mismatch, however, as the Beaufort County Ravens were considered one of the most talented teams in the league, while the South Carolina Regulators were, as usual, considered nothing special. But in testimony to nothing being certain in the game of football, the Regulators forced two key turnovers that tilted the game in their favour. A **TJ Ward** interception of **RGIII** set up the Regulators' second

TD and a **Tamba Hali** strip-sack of Griffin III in the Regs' red zone led to the game-winning FG drive going the other way for a 24-21 upset and the South Carolina Crown.

EFL Asia, meanwhile, was starting to experience trouble. The Beijing Red Dragons were imprisoned for a week in a North Korean concentration camp while players from the home team Pyongyang Sun simply disappeared for 8 days before the teams' third game of the season was finally played after more than a week's delay.

The big offensive performance of the week came in Mohave. The first rain on game day in team history could not extinguish a red-hot **Andrew Luck**. The Hellfire QB dissected the Swordfish defence, completing 35 of 50 pass attempts for 483 yards and 5 TDs to lead his team to a 41-21 victory. You guessed it: the Swordfish had a bad defence back then as well. But Luck's performance stood out as one of the worst Swordfish no-shows of the year. The big defensive effort came from **JJ Watt** of the Mustangs, who made sure **Derek Carr** and the Violators never got started, with 3 sacks and 2 forced fumbles in a 35-9 win.

By Week Ten, the league was not officially on Pats Watch, as they rose to a perfect 10-0 with a win over Gwinnett.