

2013



EFL NEWS

ELITE FOOTBALL LEAGUE

2013

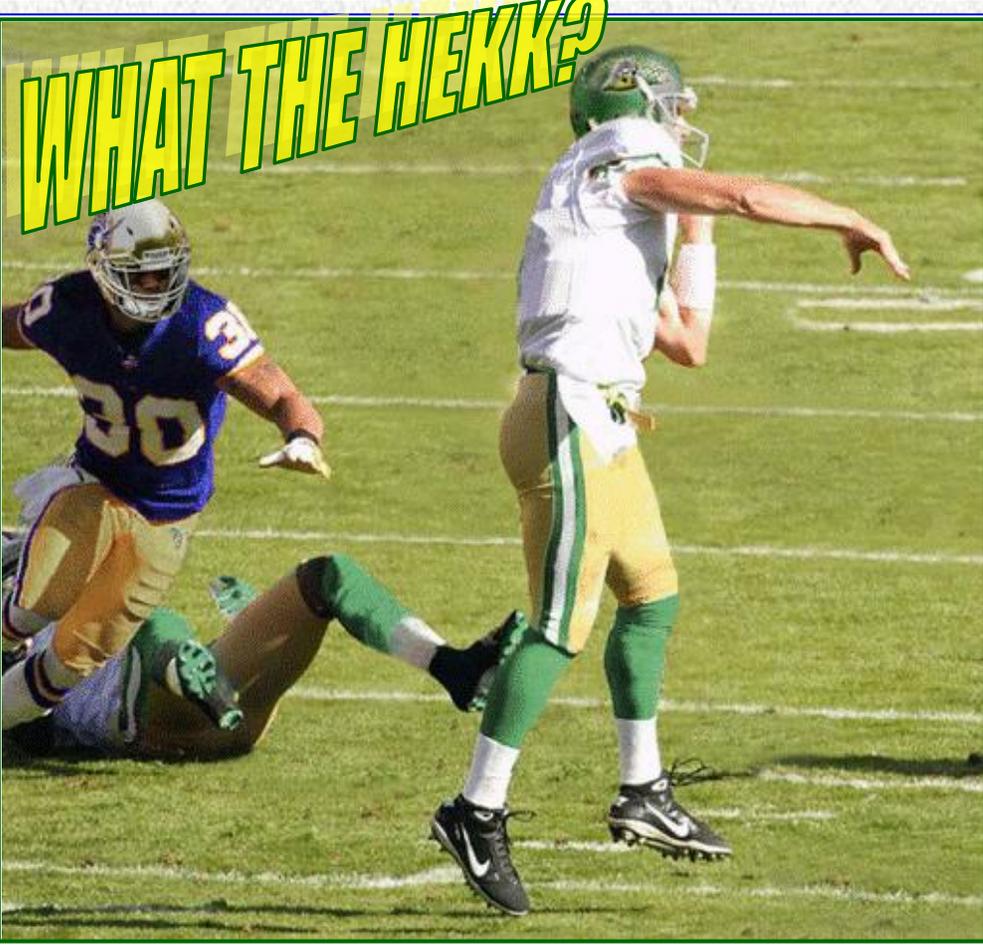
Week Fifteen

Week Fifteen

January 19, 2014



VV	24	CHI	9	CAR	21	DVU	42	ICC	23	DTL	34	COW	26	GDM	17	SBE	21	SEB	7
CHP	27	YOR	26	MOH	31	LA	16	MVM	3	TCT	7	PIC	23	MAR	24	GWG	41	SC	14



WHAT THE HEKK?

Punter *Johnny Hekker* of the Cowtown Corn Kings gets off a pass in 1st quarter action at Pickering. The trick play worked, leading to an early Cowtown TD in a 26-23 win.

LATEST EFL NEWS INSIDE

- PATS BACK ON TOP
- SWORDS STAB CONVICTS
- AJ ATTACKS RECORD
- CUBS CLINCH
- CORN KINGS POP PICKERING
- STARS TAKE ROUND ONE
- GLADS CLIP EAGLES
- HELLFIRE ROAST CANNIBALS
- LIZARDS TAKE OUT TRIUMPH
- AND MORE.....

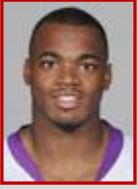
Also in this issue

- EFL FAN BLOG DOGGYDOINGS.COM
- SPATS
- "RETURN OF THE KING"
- JIMMY THE GEEK
- THIS WEEK IN THE EFL



Who was slick in Week Fifteen?

"BRYLCREEM" THE EFL'S FIRST SPONSOR



Adrian Peterson
RB
Charleswood Patriots

31 Carries, 144 yards, 2 TDs.
Gained tough yards often in win.



Ryan Kerrigan
OLB
Cowtown Corn Kings

7 Tackles, 3 Sacks, 1 forced fumble.
Made the big plays when needed.



9-6-0



GAME OF THE WEEK



8-7-0

MVP

Cowtown

26

Joe Flacco

23

Pickering

TEAM LEADERS				
Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Flacco	21	34	202	2
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Morris	23	115	5.0	0
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Shorts	6	98	16.3	0

Team	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
Cowtown	3	10	3	10	-	26
Pickering	7	0	3	13	-	23

TEAM LEADERS				
Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Schaub	21	32	222	1
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Jackson,S	23	163	7.1	2
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Thomas	7	83	11.9	1

Play of the Game

Trailing 7-3 in the 1st quarter, facing 4th and 6 at their 31 yard line, the Corn Kings set up to punt, but punter **Johnny Hekker** threw a pass for a 1st down. They would go on to score a TD on that drive.

SUMMARY: With a chance to clinch a playoff berth, the Spartans began by holding the Corn Kings to a FG on the opening drive then answered with an efficient 75-yard drive for a major, with **Steven Jackson** ploughing into the end zone from 2 yards for a 7-3 lead. But on the next series, with the visitors backed up at their 12 facing 3rd and 28, a personal foul penalty on **Daryl Washington** gave Cowtown a 1st down and new life. The Spartans defence recovered and forced a 4th and 6 at the Cowtown 31. But punter **Johnny Hekker** caught all in the stadium off guard by throwing a pass to **Cecil Shorts** for a 1st down. The successful trick play spurred the Corn Kings on to a TD and appeared to set the Spartans back on their heels. The 1st half ended with the Corn Kings in front by 6. Most of the 3rd quarter was burned up by two long drives that resulted in an exchange of FGs, setting up a wild 4th quarter showdown. **Matt Schaub** finished off a drive from mid-field with a 16-yard TD pass to **Demaryius Thomas** to give Pickering a 17-16 lead but the Corn Kings drove back and regained the lead on a 43-yard **Nick Novak** FG. The Spartans wasted no time regaining the advantage; Jackson rumbled for a 51-yard run then, 5 plays later, dove through the pile for a 3-yard TD run. But with 2:03 left, **Joe Flacco** came alive, completing consecutive passes to Shorts in double coverage for 51 yards then finishing it off with a 7-yard game-winner to **Larry Fitzgerald**.

QUOTES: "I'm not going to go there – it's always tough when calls go against you, but they are judgement calls by the officials. Everyone knows the rules and players have to play within them. In the end it came down to that drive and Joe and Cecil making the plays we needed to win the game. Great plays!!" – Cowtown coach, **Jim Coghlin**, when asked if he thought the refereeing unfairly influenced the outcome.
 "I thought he had the ball, that's why I popped him good. What's wrong with that?" – Pickering linebacker, **Daryl Washington**.



HAPPY FAN



titter

ANGRY FAN



Nestor Green @NestorGreen

Joe just gets it done, like you tell your kids to do. Just get er done, boy! Get er done!



None May Pass @spartafan37

I'm sorry, but the referees stole that game from us! I'm not whining just calling it as it is.

01-17-2014 Thermopylae Stadium Temp: 35 Wind: 0-10 None MVP: Joe Flacco

1 10:16 Cowtown	FG Novak 49 (9-29-4:25)	3-0
1 4:01 Pickering	TD Jackson 2 run (Scobee) (12-75-6:07)	3-7
2 11:51 Cowtown	TD Flacco 6 pass to Fitzgerald (Novak) (15-70-7:05)	10-7
2 0:12 Cowtown	FG Novak 47 (10-43-1:11)	13-7
3 7:06 Pickering	FG Scobee 35 (14-72-7:44)	13-10
3 0:09 Cowtown	FG Novak 26 (12-52-6:54)	16-10
4 8:03 Pickering	TD Schaub 16 pass to Thomas (Scobee) (5-48-2:52)	16-17
4 4:09 Cowtown	FG Novak 43 (7-46-3:43)	19-17
4 2:10 Pickering	TD Jackson 3 run (no good) (7-80-1:59)	19-23
4 1:09 Cowtown	TD Flacco 7 pass to Fitzgerald (Novak) (4-60-0:54)	26-23

	COW	PIC
First Downs	22	22
Rushes	25-117	26-165
Passes	35-22-214	33-21-222
Sacked	4-35	3-26
Fumble	0	1
Penalties	7-40	9-84
Turnovers	0	1
Missed Tackles	7	8
Blitzes	13	4
Time	30:20	29:40
Third Down	6-15	7-12
Fourth Down	1-1	0-1
Red Att/Td/Fg	3/2/1	5/3/1
Net Offense	296	361

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



CUBS
10-5-0

0	6	10	7	0	23
OT					

Colin Kaepernick
17 of 33, 208 yards, 2 TDs



MONARCHS
4-11-0

3	0	0	0	0	3
OT					

Ryan Tannehill
15 of 26, 117 yards, 3 INTs

Monarchs' safety **Tavon Wilson** intercepted **Russell Wilson** on the Cubs' opening possession, setting up a FG and driving the Cubs' starter from the game. **Colin Kaepernick** came on and struggled early in the passing game. The running of **Trent Richardson** set up 2 FGs to give the Cubs a 6-3 half time lead. In the 2nd half, Kaepernick got hot, throwing for 175 yards and 2 TDs, both to wide receiver **Mike Wallace** to provide the Cubs with more than enough offence. The defence sacked **Ryan Tannehill** 4 times and picked him off 3 times, holding them to 8 first downs and just 129 total yards.



UNDERTAKERS
8-7-0

0	14	14	14	0	42
OT					

Andre Johnson
8 Catches, 231 yards, 2 TDs



KNIGHTS
4-11-0

0	9	0	7	0	16
OT					

Shonn Greene
33 Carries, 147 yards

For one quarter the Knights held off an aggressive game plan by the Undertakers and won the field position battle to score first with a FG at the start of the 2nd. But Death Valley broke through with a pair of long strikes to **Andre Johnson**; 46 yards to set up a TD pass to **Aaron Hernandez** and 34 yards from **Michael Vick** for a TD. The Knights added a pair of FGs to keep the score close after two, but a relentless deep passing attack broke the LA defence. A 38-yard pass interference call on **Charles Woodson** set up the first of four TD passes in the 2nd half to power the visitors to a big win.



CANNIBALS
5-10-0

3	10	8	0	0	21
OT					

MJD
22 Carries, 99 yards, 2 TDs



HELLFIRE
6-9-0

0	21	0	10	0	31
OT					

Andrew Luck
15 of 24, 230 yards, 4 TDs

The Cannibals controlled the play early but only managed a pair of **Steven Hauschka** FGs. **Jimmy Graham** got the Hellfire offence moving with a 25-yard TD catch then **Philip Rivers** fumbled at his own 40 to set up a 40-yard TD pass from **Andrew Luck** to **Chris Givens**. Luck capped an 82-yard drive with a 19-yard TD pass **Montee Ball** to finish a 3-TD string. **Jonathan Dwyer** fumbled to set up the first of 2 TD runs by **MJD** then a 2-point convert to tie it at 21. But **Matt Prater** booted a 54-yard FG to go ahead in the 4th and **Hakeem Nicks** added a 13-yard TD catch to clinch 3rd straight win.

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



CONVICTS
8-7-0

0	3	3	3	0	9
OT					

Chris Johnson
13 Carries, 122 yards



EXCALIBURS
8-7-0

7	3	3	13	0	26
OT					

Tom Brady
22 of 34, 207 yards, 2 TDs

In a penalty-marred game a facemask on **Quinton Coples** on 3rd down helped set up the first York TD, an 11-yard pass to **Donald Jones**. Three more Chino penalties helped to keep a 19-play FG drive alive for York, but a 15-yard personal foul on **William Gay** helped the Convicts mark the scoreboard with a FG before the half. A sack by **Darryl Sharpton** turned back the Excaliburs on 4th and goal at the Chino 1 to start the 3rd quarter, but York broke it open with a **Danieal Manning** pick of **Cam Newton** and 62-yard return to set up a 12-yard TD pass from **Tom Brady** to **Delanie Walker**.



VIOLATORS
8-7-0

3	0	7	14	0	24
OT					

Matt Stafford
21 of 29, 273 yards



PATRIOTS
10-5-0

0	7	10	10	0	27
OT					

Adrian Peterson
31 Carries, 144 yards, 2 TDs

Pats star **Adrian Peterson** broke through from 3 yards for a TD that erased a 3-0 Virden lead at the end of the 1st half. The Pats made it 14-3 on their first possession of the 2nd half, but the Violators framed a 52-yard Pats' FG by **Garrett Hartley** with a pair of TD runs by **Jamaal Charles** to knot the score at 17-17 in the 4th quarter. **Peyton Manning** went 4 of 5 for 69 yards to set up a 1-yard TD run by Peterson, but **Matt Stafford** hit **Torrey Smith** for 59 yards to set up a 1-yard TD run by **John Kuhn** to tie it. But the Pats held on to the ball until the end, winning on a 21-yard FG with 0:02 left.



SWORDFISH
2-13-0

0	0	0	7	0	7
OT					

Ronde Barber
6 Tackles, 1 PD, 1 INT, 1 TD



REGULATORS
8-7-0

0	14	0	0	0	14
OT					

Tony Romo
22 of 30, 222 yards, 2 TDs, 2 INTs

Carries of 10 and 24 yards by the Regs' **Frank Gore** started a drive that **Tony Romo** ended with a 9-yard TD pass to **Greg Jennings** to open the scoring at the start of the 2nd quarter. On their next series the Regs extended their lead on a 51-yard catch-and-run by **AJ Green** and looked to add more after a failed 4th down convert attempt by the Fish deep in their own territory. But receiver **Earl Bennett** fumbled away the ball on the next play to keep it 14-0 at the half. Sebastian struggled all day to move the ball and broke the shutout only with a **Ronde Barber** 80-yard pick-six in the 4th.

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



BLUE EAGLES

5-10-0

0	0	7	14	0	21
				OT	

Aaron Rodgers
19 of 32, 251 yards, 1 TD, 1 INT



GLADIATORS

7-8-0

21	10	7	3	0	41
				OT	

Ben Roethlisberger
12 of 16, 269 yards, 3 TDs, 1 INT

An 88-yard deep fly to **Jeremy Maclin** for a TD on the first play from scrimmage set off a flurry of 31 unanswered points in the 1st half for the Glads. A lost fumble by **CJ Spiller** at his team's 20 yard line set up the second Gwinnett TD, a 5-yard run by **Ahmad Bradshaw** then great Glads' field position after a Scarborough punt from their end zone set up a second TD run for Bradshaw. A 67-yard pass to rookie WR **Josh Boyce** set up a 1-yard TD pass from **Big Ben** to **Dallas Clark** to make it 28-0. The 2nd half began with the Glads marching to another TD, giving them an insurmountable 38-0 lead.



MUSTANGS

10-5-0

0	10	0	7	0	17
				OT	

Matt Ryan
25 of 33, 206 yards, 2 TDs, 1 INT



NORTH STARS

12-3-0

3	7	7	7	0	24
				OT	

Eli Manning
15 of 17, 201 yards, 2 TDs, 1 INT

A 3-0 Markham lead was eclipsed in the 2nd after an interception of **Eli Manning** by **DeAngelo Hall** was returned to the Markham 9 setting up a **Matt Ryan** to **Brandon Lloyd** TD pass on the next play. Markham replied promptly with a 48-yard TD pass to **Percy Harvin** but the Mustangs tied it before the half on a 15-play FG drive. A pick by **Ed Reed** and return to the Garland 9 yard set up the go-ahead Markham TD but a sack and strip by **Cliff Avril** set up a Garland TD to tie it 17-17. Early in the 4th, the Stars drove 68 yards to score the game-winner with a 5-yard TD pass to **Matt Speath**.



T-LIZARDS

12-3-0

3	14	10	7	0	34
				OT	

Megatron
8 Catches, 138 yards, 2 TDs



TRIUMPH

6-9-0

0	7	0	0	0	7
				OT	

Antoine Winfield
3 Tackles, 1 PD, 2 INTs-57 yds

The Lizards used a ball control style in the early going, running **Reggie Bush** 12 times for 54 yards and a TD to post a 10-0 lead early in the 2nd quarter. After **Elvis Dumervil** forced a Jay Cutler fumble on a sack in Triumph territory, the Lizards made it 17-0 on a 25-yard TD pass to **T.Y. Hilton** from **Drew Brees**. The first of two **Antoine Winfield** picks set up the lone Triumph TD on a 17-yard pass to **Markus Wheaton**. In the 2nd half, back-up **Nick Foles** took over, throwing a 58-yard pass to **Megatron** on his first play from scrimmage then leading the Durham to 10 more points and an easy win.



STATS



WEEK FIFTEEN

STANDINGS

East	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Charleswood (z)	10	5	0	0.667	465	31	358	23.9	7.1	5 3 0	5 2 0	8 3 0
Virden	8	7	0	0.533	400	26.7	368	24.5	2.1	4 3 0	4 3 0	6 5 0
York	8	7	0	0.533	361	24.1	309	20.6	3.5	6 2 0	3 4 0	6 5 0
Mohave	6	9	0	0.4	300	20	420	28	-8	3 5 0	4 4 0	5 6 0
Carthage	5	10	0	0.333	260	17.3	391	26.1	-8.7	4 3 0	2 5 0	4 7 0
West	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Iowa City (z)	10	5	0	0.667	366	24.4	307	20.5	3.9	4 3 0	7 1 0	8 3 0
Chino	8	7	0	0.533	405	27	336	22.4	4.6	5 2 0	5 2 0	7 4 0
Death Valley	8	7	0	0.533	469	31.3	472	31.5	-0.2	4 3 0	3 4 0	5 6 0
Los Angeles	4	11	0	0.267	261	17.4	419	27.9	-10.5	1 7 0	1 6 0	3 8 0
Mission Viejo	4	11	0	0.267	223	14.9	383	25.5	-10.7	2 6 0	2 5 0	3 8 0
North	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Durham (y)	12	3	0	0.8	468	31.2	312	20.8	10.4	7 0 0	5 2 0	9 2 0
Markham (y)	12	3	0	0.8	395	26.3	275	18.3	8	6 2 0	6 1 0	9 2 0
Cowtown	9	6	0	0.6	433	28.9	326	21.7	7.1	4 3 0	2 5 0	6 5 0
Pickering	8	7	0	0.533	375	25	360	24	1	4 4 0	3 5 0	6 5 0
Twin Cities	6	9	0	0.4	295	19.7	380	25.3	-5.7	3 5 0	2 5 0	3 8 0
South	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Garland (z)	10	5	0	0.667	412	27.5	279	18.6	8.9	5 2 0	5 2 0	6 5 0
South Carolina	8	7	0	0.533	311	20.7	322	21.5	-0.7	6 2 0	4 3 0	5 6 0
Gwinnett	7	8	0	0.467	321	21.4	310	20.7	0.7	6 2 0	5 2 0	6 5 0
Scarborough	5	10	0	0.333	308	20.5	407	27.1	-6.6	2 5 0	3 4 0	4 7 0
Sebastian	2	13	0	0.133	228	15.2	322	21.5	-6.3	0 7 0	1 7 0	1 10 0

(z)-clinched division

(y)-clinched wildcard

PASSING

Passing	Att	Cmp	C%	Yards	In	I%	Lg	TD	TD%	Rate
1 Smith, A LAK	232	170	73.3	1703	6	2.6	54	17	7.3	107.4
2 Manning, P CHP	470	341	72.6	3835	12	2.6	59	27	5.7	105.1
3 Griffin II DVU	424	276	65.1	3354	14	3.3	77	33	7.8	101.5
4 Brees DTL	537	347	64.6	4452	21	3.9	59	38	7.1	97.8
5 Newton, C CHI	394	257	65.2	3036	12	3.0	81	24	6.1	96.2
6 Romo SC	498	348	69.9	3677	14	2.8	78	25	5.0	96.1
7 Manning, E MAR	385	233	60.5	2890	14	3.6	48	30	7.8	94.6
8 Ryan, M GDM	482	320	66.4	3448	12	2.5	62	25	5.2	94.1
9 Roethlisbe GWG	334	210	62.9	2150	5	1.5	88	19	5.7	94.0
10 Rodgers, A SBE	540	358	66.3	3730	10	1.9	87	25	4.6	93.8
11 Flacco COW	539	317	58.8	3920	13	2.4	71	34	6.3	92.4
12 Wilson, R ICC	323	218	67.5	2688	12	3.7	60	14	4.3	92.0
13 Stafford VV	496	285	57.5	3640	14	2.8	59	32	6.5	90.3
14 Brady YOR	554	329	59.4	3970	7	1.3	69	22	4.0	89.4
15 Schaub PIC	522	311	59.6	3657	17	3.3	73	27	5.2	84.6
16 Cutler TCT	414	251	60.6	2875	13	3.1	58	20	4.8	84.6
17 Rivers, P CAR	420	278	66.2	2474	10	2.4	57	12	2.9	81.4
18 Luck MOH	399	224	56.1	2574	13	3.3	52	21	5.3	79.7
19 Tannehill MVM	428	249	58.2	2738	13	3.0	78	18	4.2	78.6
20 Dalton SS	482	277	57.5	2961	15	3.1	82	14	2.9	72.3
21 Bradford, S LAK	173	97	56.1	825	7	4.0	54	2	1.2	55.7
22 Hekker COW	2	2	100.0	24	0	0.0	12	0	0.0	116.7
23 Hill, Sh LAK	13	8	61.5	96	0	0.0	21	1	7.7	109.8
24 Vick DVU	141	73	51.8	1188	5	3.5	82	15	10.6	101.0
25 Cousins CHI	50	35	70.0	394	2	4.0	46	3	6.0	96.6

RUSHING

Rushing		Att	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD	
1	Morris	COW	344	1928	5.6	44	14
2	Peterson,A	CHP	380	1923	5.1	29	23
3	Jackson,S	PIC	288	1505	5.2	51	8
4	Martin,D	TCT	319	1452	4.6	31	8
5	Johnson,C	CHI	276	1385	5.0	60	4
6	Charles,J	VV	243	1338	5.5	71	5
7	Foster,A	GDM	262	1226	4.7	66	17
8	Gore	SC	241	1226	5.1	39	6
9	Greene	LAK	297	1200	4.0	29	1
10	Bush,R	DTL	213	1170	5.5	35	9
11	Bradshaw	GWG	227	1147	5.1	41	10
12	Richardson	ICC	206	988	4.8	33	7
13	Ball,M	MOH	210	841	4.0	27	5
14	Ridley	DVU	194	831	4.3	23	2
15	Williams,D	MAR	163	792	4.9	48	6
16	Spiller	SBE	158	786	5.0	83	4
17	Bernard	YOR	172	745	4.3	44	7
18	Pierce	MVM	172	734	4.3	34	4
19	Turner,M	YOR	186	733	3.9	48	9
20	Dwyer	MOH	132	701	5.3	35	2
21	Griffin II	DVU	109	656	6.0	34	4
22	Newton,C	CHI	125	647	5.2	27	7
23	Forte	GDM	134	589	4.4	51	2
24	Rice,R	SBE	144	557	3.9	49	6
25	Lacy	CAR	130	540	4.2	55	2

RECEIVING

Receiving		No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD	
1	Johnson,C	DTL	112	1831	16.3	59	19
2	White,R	CHI	100	1591	15.9	81	12
3	Johnson,A	DVU	94	2118	22.5	82	28
4	Graham,J	MOH	92	991	10.8	31	7
5	Welker	SBE	89	1054	11.8	87	6
6	Crabtree,M	CHP	88	1180	13.4	59	11
7	Thomas,D	PIC	87	1211	13.9	57	11
8	Bryant,D	VV	86	1263	14.7	54	14
9	Witten	CHP	86	816	9.5	44	6
10	Lloyd,B	GDM	80	1083	13.5	62	5
11	Wayne	GWG	80	963	12.0	39	11
12	Marshall	SBE	76	952	12.5	87	9
13	Cruz	YOR	74	1142	15.4	55	7
14	Jackson,V	PIC	73	1148	15.7	73	6
15	Gonzalez	ICC	71	828	11.7	27	5
16	Jones,J	VV	70	1029	14.7	31	10
17	Rudolph	CAR	69	600	8.7	29	5
18	Boldin	GDM	69	843	12.2	46	14
19	Green,A	SC	68	963	14.2	77	8
20	Fitzgerald	COW	67	819	12.2	44	11
21	Cobb	DVU	67	635	9.5	25	6
22	Decker	DTL	65	852	13.1	50	4
23	Smith,S	ICC	63	1249	19.8	64	9
24	Pitta	MVM	62	626	10.1	78	6
25	Williams,M	MVM	59	896	15.2	78	8

KICKING

Kicking		FGA	FGM	FG%	40	50	Lg	Pts	
1	Walsh	YOR	31	27	87.1	10	4	57	121
2	Bailey,D	CHI	31	25	80.6	10	3	55	121
3	Dawson	DTL	23	21	91.3	7	3	54	120
4	Folk	GDM	26	25	96.2	5	2	55	119
5	Tynes	VV	27	24	88.9	7	2	52	118
6	Zuerlein	ICC	36	24	66.7	11	1	51	114
7	Novak	COW	28	24	85.7	12	1	53	113
8	Hartley	CHP	21	18	85.7	8	2	52	111
9	Henery	DVU	21	18	85.7	9	4	54	107
10	Prater	MOH	27	25	92.6	10	2	54	106
11	Graham,S	MAR	25	19	76.0	4	0	49	105
12	Scobee	PIC	26	22	84.6	6	3	54	105
13	Suisham	GWG	25	23	92.0	7	4	51	103
14	Hauschka	CAR	28	24	85.7	9	4	54	94
15	Bironas	SC	24	20	83.3	9	1	56	93
16	Lindell	LAK	23	20	87.0	10	4	54	87
17	Janikowski	SBE	18	14	77.8	2	1	51	80
18	Gostkowski	TCT	15	12	80.0	3	1	54	73
19	Vinatieri	SS	19	16	84.2	6	2	54	68
20	Carpenter	MVM	14	11	78.6	6	2	53	59

TACKLES

Tackles			
1	Kuechly	SC	160
2	Freeman, J	SBE	135
3	Dunbar	CHI	134
4	Riley	SS	131
5	Mayo	DVU	128
6	Willis, P	ICC	116
7	Barwin	LAK	111
8	Posluszny	VV	111
9	Washington	PIC	104
10	Wagner	TCT	103
11	Jackson, D	MAR	101
12	Barnett	VV	101
13	Bowman	GDM	98
14	Laurinaiti	GWG	94
15	Ninkovich	MAR	91
16	Hawk	MVM	89
17	Houston, J	MOH	88
18	Woodyard	YOR	88
19	Tulloch	COW	87
20	Bailey, C	DTL	87
21	Greenway	LAK	87
22	Cromartie	MAR	85
23	Miller, V	YOR	85
24	McClain, R	SC	83
25	Lofton	DTL	82

SACKS

Sacks			
1	Smith, A	VV	21
2	Johnson, C	DVU	14
3	Watt	GDM	13
4	Hardy	CAR	12
5	Atkins	YOR	12
6	Johnson, M	YOR	12
7	Wake	MOH	10
8	Long, C	DVU	10
9	Quinn, R	LAK	10
10	Dumervil	DTL	10
11	Ninkovich	MAR	9
12	Peppers	CHI	9
13	Smith, A	VV	9
14	Kerrigan	COW	9
15	Griffen	COW	9
16	Houston, J	MOH	9
17	Jordan, D	GWG	9
18	Sheard	PIC	8
19	Irvin, B	MOH	8
20	Jordan, C	MVM	8
21	Avril	GDM	8
22	Harrison, J	CHI	8
23	Abraham	MAR	8
24	Greenway	LAK	7
25	Allen, J	DTL	7

INTERCEPTIONS

Interceptions		No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD	
1	Hayward, C	ICC	7	95	13.6	30	0
2	Elam	DVU	6	70	11.7	26	0
3	DeCoud	GWG	6	62	10.3	34	0
4	Barber	SS	6	200	33.3	80	2
5	Clark, R	YOR	5	77	15.4	66	0
6	Jones, R	ICC	5	56	11.2	43	0
7	Reid, E	TCT	4	51	12.8	29	0
8	Jackson, K	CHP	4	70	17.5	28	1
9	Samuel	YOR	4	38	9.5	19	0
10	Sherman	DTL	4	40	10.0	16	0
11	Reed, E	MAR	4	100	25.0	62	0
12	Wright, M	SC	4	9	2.3	9	0
13	Winfield	TCT	4	90	22.5	52	0
14	Hall, L	SS	4	164	41.0	65	1
15	Slay	TCT	3	47	15.7	47	0
16	Moore, D	MOH	3	58	19.3	31	0
17	Wagner	TCT	3	91	30.3	49	1
18	Mathieu	DTL	3	49	16.3	47	1
19	Finnegan	CHI	3	121	40.3	63	0
20	McCourty, D	DTL	3	0	0.0	0	0
21	Jenkins, J	DVU	3	29	9.7	29	0
22	Williams, T	VV	3	85	28.3	43	0
23	Bailey, C	DTL	3	14	4.7	12	0
24	McDonald, T	LAK	3	48	16.0	34	1
25	Vaccaro	LAK	3	95	31.7	39	0

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WHERE FANS SPEAK

DAWG OF WAR!

BY NORMAN LIU (CONTRIBUTOR) ON JANUARY 18, 2014

Rob Ninkovich



The North Stars are not a bunch of pretty boys. No Hollywood stars are seen on this team. They don't give good interviews and nobody in Markham really cares if they have something smart to say. That is because Markham players know what matters and what matters is not what you say after the game. What matters is what you do in the game. They know the people of Markham know this too, so they do not try to make us feel good by telling happy lies. It makes me proud to be a Markham fan.

One thing that makes me curious is why Darrin Jones named his team North Stars and then calls them "Dawgs" (not even spelled right) all the time. The writers and fans do this too and it is very strange to me. But I think they got it more right with Dawgs than Stars even though the Markham Dawgs are playing like super Stars these days.

The Markham defence is the best in the EFL and there are many great players to talk about. None of those players can be discussed before I talk about my vote for "Top Dawg." He is Rob Ninkovich, the soul and heart of this defending group. He can play on the line and on linebacker. He plays most on the line but has tackle numbers of a linebacker, with 91. That is number two on the team. He gets by blocks many times for 9 sacks and 10 tackles for loss of yards and fights for the ball by knocking it out of the hands of the other team 5 times and picking it up 4 times. He does this clean with only 3 penalties all year.

I asked Rob once after a game what it feels like to be Top Dawg on the Top (North) Stars and he would not answer. Maybe he did not understand me or he may have been thinking hard about the game and what he was going to do when the play started. Even though I wanted him to answer I was glad he did not because he had a good game because he did not talk to me. Next on DoggyDoings I talk about Jairus Byrd, the guarder of passes.



AROUND THE



With Spats McChad

NEW YORK – The amazing turnaround by the 2012 Champion Markham North Stars captured the imagination of a nation of sports scribes and won the heart of a city. While winning the heart of Markham may be a bit like winning the affection of a middle-aged, plain, rumpled, chain-smoking bingo devotee, it is better than earning its implacable enmity. Along with the love of the common and uncommon folk of Markham, a Gale Sayers Trophy also brings the franchise increased ticket and television revenues, higher merchandise sales, and a modicum of respect from discerning and prestigious national media like me. You can't buy that kind of respect; just ask free-spending **Chris Ferraro** of Mission Viejo. But the North Stars are old news in the continuing Cinderella Series, pushed out of the admiring spotlight by twin worst-to-first stories in the Pacific-Atlantic Conference. Week Fifteen in the EFL marked the week when the two Chumps of 2012 turned into Champs of their respective Divisions, albeit in very different fashions. Read on.....

GROWING UP IS HARD TO DO

The Cubs lived up to their name in 2012, playing like baby bears during a dismal 1-15 campaign cluttered with rookie mistakes and tainted with whispers of tanking and child abuse. The youngest roster in the league behaved like it, showing flashes of brilliance and physical skill between bonehead miscues, arrogant posturing, and temper tantrums. The always positive **Deron Redding** was hard-pressed to put a positive spin on the year-long downward spiral. With fans and media on the verge of total revolt, Redding felt compelled to bring on board a kind of Dr. Spock for young adults, **Dr. Rodney Alberhasky**. The career pharmacist's experiments in sports psychology appeared to have no effect initially, but threats to cut the entire team (except for **Patrick Willis**) during the off-season seemed to work well when combined with the promise of ice cream an unlimited toppings at Coldstone Creamery for the entire team after every win. The Cubs made their tenth trip to the creamery after dispatching one of this year's chumps, the Monarchs, at HMK Royal Coliseum. They earned their treat unspectacularly, in workmanlike fashion, but with a little bit of internal drama added on to cast doubt on the "man" part.

For the third week in a row, an early interception by starter **Russell Wilson** was enough for Coach Redding to call on **Colin Kaepernick** to get the job done; and for the second week in a row, he did. But beating the Monarchs these days is all in a day's work for just about anybody with eyesight, two legs and a decent arm. The Cubs' defence suffocated the Monarchs' running game and knocked around **Ryan Tannehill**, sacking him 4 times and inducing 3 interceptions. With so many opportunities to move the ball, it was just a matter of time before the Cubs' offence got it right. **Mike Wallace** made rare headlines with 2 touchdown receptions as Iowa City clinched the West Division title with a 23-3 victory. But one has to wonder how far this now dysfunctional offence can take the Cubs in the post-season. An incensed Redding threw his clipboard and actually walked onto the field to scold Wilson as he came to the sidelines after the interception.

"I *told* you *not* to throw interceptions!" he barked at Wilson in a rare, if not unheard of, brusque tone from the normally upbeat Redding. "You know what this means, don't you?"

"Yes, sir," a hang dog Wilson replied as he unclipped the strap and popped his helmet off, "timeout."

"This is your third and final timeout, Russell!" Redding wagged an index finger. "You are out of timeouts! The clock is running on your time here starting next game if you don't do as you're told!"

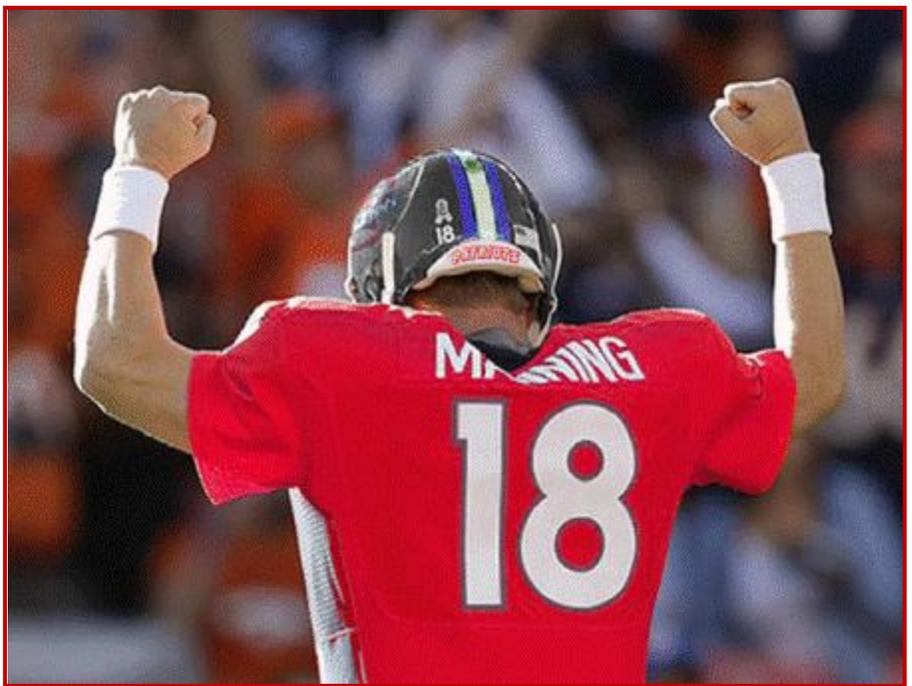
After Wilson had moved out of earshot, a miked-up for TV Redding explained to nobody in particular, "That was very hard for me to do. I love these guys, especially Russell, but sometimes a kid needs tough love. He killed it when we buried the Undertakers in week twelve; he absolutely punched them out. Since then, he thinks he knows it all and he's making rookie mistakes again. He has to wake up! He has to grow up quickly!"

RETURN OF THE KING

The Dark Age of Charleswood was chronologically brief – only one year – but what a long and dark year it was! The loss of **Peyton Manning** for major surgery to relieve his swelling head had the effect of a death, plunging the EFL's most successful regular season franchise into a prolonged period of mourning. Even stalwarts **Adrian Peterson** and **Jason Witten** struggled under the heavy hand of beast lord, **Michael Vick** and his sidekick **Brandon Weeden**. The losses piled up and with each one the oppressive cloud of despair grew thicker over the once proud franchise. But with the return of the 'Original Patriot' (Peyton was the first player drafted in the inaugural EFL entry draft) and the banishment of Vick to the barren wastes of Death

Valley, a second Golden Age appears to have begun in Charleswood.

While last year Charleswood battled with Iowa City for the first overall pick in the rookie draft, this year the two teams are battling for the number one seed in the conference playoffs after a back-and-forth battle ended on "forth" for the Patriots in a last second 27-24 victory over Virden at Patriot Place. It was another quintessential performance by the skill players on the Pats' offence: **AP** powered through tackles for 144 yards and 2 touchdowns on 31 carries while Peyton chose from prime targets on the flanks, **Michael Crabtree** and **Brian Hartline**, and down the seam, **Jason Witten**, to throw for 288 yards and 1 touchdown. While the line play has been shaky at times this season they were able, as they often are, to do just enough to enable the stars behind them to pull off their magic. Meanwhile, the re-born defence, worst in the league in 2012, continued to be effective, if not overly spectacular, showing an ability to get off the



The Patriots' **Peyton Manning** celebrates after completing a TD pass to **Brian Hartline** that gave his team a 14-3 lead early in the 3rd quarter. The Violators battled back to tie the game at 24-24 but Manning directed the winning FG drive to return the Pats to the post-season after finishing 1-15 last year.

field and their offence back on by holding the Violators to 25 minutes of possession time. But Virden was able to strike quickly when they needed to, rebounding impressively from a 14-3 deficit to work their way into a 24-24 tie with 4:29 left in the game. In a game where it looked like the team that possessed the ball last would be victorious, the Violators needed to force a three-and-out, something they had been unable to do all afternoon. Late in the 4th quarter, with the Virden defence running on fumes, it was too much to ask. Peterson and Manning took turns punching holes in the Virden line and secondary, the telling blow coming when Peterson broke a 22-yard run to bring the Pats into field goal range with a first down. With 2 seconds left on the clock, Garrett Hartley made no mistake from 21 yards to propel the Pats back into the post-season. Welcome back, Jason!

HEKK OF A GAME

At Thermopylae Stadium in Pickering this week, the Corn Kings put themselves in the driver's seat for the final playoff spot in the Can-Am Conference by taking down the Spartans 26-23 with the help of a surgically precise touchdown drive to take the lead in the game's final minute. But the turning point of a game that went down to the wire in the 4th quarter may have actually come much earlier than that – back in the 1st quarter. That was when the Corn Kings kept an apparently dead drive alive with a fake punt in their own territory, already trailing Pickering 7-3 at the time. It was a gutsy, almost suicidal call by Cowtown coach **Jim Coghlin**, but it worked. On 4th and 6 from the Cowtown 31 yard line, **Johnny Hekker** tossed a rainbow to **Cecil Shorts** for 12 yards and a 1st down. They eventually finished off the drive with a touchdown, a conclusion that nobody would have seen coming after the first 3 snaps of the same drive – a sack, a holding penalty, and an incomplete pass. Facing 3rd and 28 at their own 12, an unnecessary roughness penalty on **Daryl Washington** gave Cowtown a gift first down. Add in the fake punt by Hekker, and you have an improbable scoring drive that would have sucked the wind out of 'Hurricane Katrina.'

The fake punt drive, and the 54-second scoring drive in the final two minutes that completed Cowtown's upset of the Spartans, certainly appeared to suck the wind out of an even bigger blowhard, **Aristedes Kalogiannis**, who was left with nothing to say other than to lay the blame at the foot of Providence and the referees:

"Alas, there are forces larger than the players that can influence the outcome of sport. Mean spirits may ascribe blame to the players for not being able to stop the devil Shorts on that final death drive by the enemy, or on the coach for not exerting pressure on the oaffish Flacco, but who can do so in all honesty? It is unfortunate that the Spartans cannot execute every play to perfection, but if they could this game would have meant nothing because they would already be at the top. Although valiant, strong, heroic, they are still but human. Students of our glorious Hellenistic period know all too well how the fruits of Alexander's divinely inspired conquests could not be held by mere flesh and blood, but know as well that the influence they exerted helped to build a better world. It was the Will of the Almighty that we might rise and fall with the breath of Providence. So, too, one must see the inspired hand of fate behind the deadly accuracy of the throws spiralling from the hand of the foe, Flacco, who had for the better part of the previous 58 minutes appeared ordinary, but transformed into an assassin at the moment of decision. If one must lay blame at the foot of any person, let it be at the feet of the demonic referee crew that vexed the heroic Spartans at every critical

juncture. Their cruel judgements shackled our Heroes, but still our warriors fought and just barely fell."

While I am keenly aware that Aristedes' single most important role is to apologize for Coach **Gus Konstantakos** in order to keep his standing intact within the bloody circle that is ex-patriot Greek sports politics, I must agree, in a limited way, with his take. Cut through the bluster and mandatory paean to the faded glory of Greece, and it is hard to disagree with him that there was not much the Spartans' defence or their coach could have done differently to prevent a Corn Kings' touchdown on their last drive. They say a perfect pass will beat perfect coverage. The last three passes from **Joe Flacco**, two of them into double-coverage, surely support that adage. I am going to add that running a perfect pass route helps, and that is what **Cecil Shorts** did when he partnered with his quarterback to undress **Johnthan Banks** and **Morgan Burnett** on consecutive plays of 12 and 39 yards to set up the game-winning TD pass to **Larry Fitzgerald**.

Obviously still smarting and muddled from the harpoon in the backside he sustained from the 'Brontolyzer' after rampaging through Jurassic Park last week, a subdued **Gus Konstantakos** spoke briefly to reporters after the game before deferring to his defensive coordinator, **General Pausanias** (real name: **Monte Kiffin**. Every member of the Pickering coaching staff is given a "Spartan name" while employed with the team)

"Obviously, I am disappointed in the final result," a barely audible Konstantakos said. "I felt we executed our game plan and did not get rewarded today. The flags really hurt us but I can't say I am going to ask my players to play any differently than they did today. We practice *aggressively* and we play *aggressively*, like Spartans should. We aren't playing shuffleboard out there, we're playing football – tackle football, not fag football!"

This last remark caused the room to buzz slightly as reporters checked with each other to confirm what they had just heard. Konstantakos caught himself immediately, "I meant to say *flag* football, guys, not that other word," he said, chuckling nervously. "You know, there's not much difference between them."

The buzzing increased as reporters weighed the possible interpretations, causing Konstantakos to check himself again. "I mean there's just *one* letter difference, you know – a single 'L'. I don't mean to say anything bad about people who play flag football, not that there's anything bad about being...you know...a fag or anything, I just want to make sure that everyone understands that's not what we are playing out there, no matter what somebody's sexual preference might be. I think the refs need to know that. They need to know that tackling is allowed and that fags, I mean flags, don't belong on the field in a lot of those situations where they fell today. Not that I'm criticizing the refs, they do a tough job, they just...I, ah...ah...*just forget it!*" And with that, he rose clutching his backside, in obvious pain, and shuffled out of the room to a chorus of follow-up questions that will never be answered, except perhaps, in private at an upcoming league disciplinary hearing.

THE POWER OF POSITIVE THINKING DEBUNKED

Unlike their national partners in the media, local play-by-play announcers are often known for "homerism" when calling games on the local radio station. There is nothing wrong with that, in my opinion, because they are, after all, local announcers. They have a vested interest in promoting the local team so that the local market tunes in to their station on game day. Many also happen to be fans. Although most local announcers are practically unknown outside their local market, a few are so colourful that they have drawn wide-ranging attention.

Audio clips of Iowa City's **Clement "Buck" Hornywig** screaming "*TEEEEEEE DEEEEEEE for EEEYYYYEEE-OHHHHHHH-WAAAAHHHHH!*" and messing up the names of visiting players, such as Cam *Newtown* (Newton) and Ryan *Tannahide* (Tannehill) and, most infamously, *Hari Kari Nakamaka* (Haruki Nakamura), are all over the Internet.

Video clips of Pickering's **Spiros Thanatos** turning blood red as he howls, "*NNNNEEEEEVVVVAAAAAAA SSSSAAAARRRRREEEEENNNNNDDAAAAAAHHHHH!*" into the microphone are hilarious to watch, while equally entertaining is South Carolina's **Blix Hibbert** letting loose the Horry County Rebel Yell at top volume after a Regulators' touchdown or interception.

Death Valley Radio-666 narrator, the late **Vincent Price**, has not lost any of his distinctive vocal tone since his death, but doesn't retain any memory after 1993 and relies heavily on colour men, the late **Al Davis** and **Herman Munster** to fill in the gaps between plays with anecdotes. In the same vein, but still among the living, is Mohave's **Jesus don Johnson**, whose unique and peculiar rapid fire high-pitched patter resembles that of an auctioneer and enables him, on a good day, to call every single missed tackle and block on a kickoff return or big run from scrimmage.

But the homer of all homers across EFL Nation is without a doubt, **Dale Smeeg** of HAUS 780 AM in Garland. Smeeg is an unabashed Mustangs fan as well as the voice of Mustangs Football. He abandons all pretense of objectivity the moment tensions rise and the Mustangs are in jeopardy. At Gwinnett this year, as **Shaun Suisham** set up to kick a field goal that would put the Gladiators ahead by 9 and make it a two-possession game with less than 2 minutes remaining in the game, Smeeg's commentary went like this:

"We can't afford to give up a score here. Suisham is accurate from this distance so we need something to really go wrong for him here if we are going to stay in the game. Come on, pleasemiss pleasemiss pleasemiss pleasemiss pleasemiss..."

Smeeg's smooth baritone voice makes the most banal pronouncements, for instance "the Mustangs need a win today," sound like deep thought. His talent for making simple statements sound like revelations lends a hypnotic quality to his broadcasts that can affect even fans of the opposing team. Many a visitor to Garland, listening in on the local radio band while stuck in traffic

on the way to The Corral, has found himself buying a Mustangs jersey on arrival and switching sides. Recently, Smeeg has been attempting to combine his vocal powers with the power of positive thinking to harness the psychic energy of Garland fans and actually change the outcome of games. He credits at least part of the Mustangs' turnaround to the harnessing of this power through his repetition of positive messages, but of course there is no way to prove it.

In this week's showdown between the Mustangs and the North Stars in Markham, Smeeg decided to try something more ambitious in order to prove his theory – he attempted to influence the specific outcome of a single play. He laid the groundwork by repeatedly instructing his listeners to close their eyes and attempt to visualize everything he was describing in as much detail as possible. Smeeg theorized that if everyone did this faithfully and constantly from the beginning of the game, enough energy would build up in their common “thought cloud” to enable the power of the group to influence real events on the field by sometime in the fourth quarter, when the Mustangs would probably need it most.

Sure enough, with the Mustangs trailing 24-17 and facing 3rd and 1 at their own 42 yard line with 0:33 left in the game, it was time for a miracle and time for Smeeg to try something he had never tried before. He closed his eyes tightly in concentration, stuck in earplugs, and proceeded to call the play: *“four receivers wide for the Mustangs, Markham with two safeties deep, Ryan in the shotgun, here's the snap. Ryan steps back, he looks downfield, he throws toward the sideline....he's got Boldin at mid-field, Cromartie misses him, Boldin has the sideline, now he cuts inside, Cyprien slips down, Boldin crosses the 20, the 15, Reed can't bring him down, he's at the 10, 5, TOUCHDOWN MUSTANGS! OH MY! OH MY! What a play by Boldin!”*

Mustangs fans listening to the radio in Garland jumped out of their seats, pumped their fists in the air, friends and strangers hugged each other and shouted out loud that the Mustangs had pulled off a miracle. It was a beautiful scene, for the brief moment that it lasted. But the amazing play, broadcast throughout Texas and across the world on satellite, never happened. While Smeeg was describing a play that existed only in his mind in an attempt to make it real, announcers on CBS called the real play like this: *“33 seconds on the clock, 3rd and 1, Ryan back in the shotgun, the Mustangs need a play here trailing 24-17.....Ryan back to pass, he throws deep to Boldin down the middle....he jumps....and it's incomplete! That will bring up 4th down and a do-or-die situation for the Mustangs...”*

As it turned out, it would be a “die” as the Mustangs fell in Markham to the North Stars 24-17 in what many considered to be a preview of the Conference Championship in three weeks. In a game mostly dictated by the play of the defences, it was a string of four straight completions by **Eli Manning** and a 14-yard run by seldom-used back-up running back **Armando Allen** that set up an unlikely 5-yard TD pass to **Matt Spaeth** for the winning score. The loss locked Garland into the #2 seed while changing little for Markham, who still need to beat the Thunder Lizards in Week 16 to win the North Division. As for Smeeg, he is apparently getting help from his boss visualizing a leave of absence from HAUS 780 AM in Garland.

AROUND THE EFL

In Camelot, the Excaliburs jumped the Convicts and stuck a broadsword-sized shiv in the back of their Divisional title hopes with an unexpectedly comfortable 26-9 victory. Cam's Posse could not find the end zone against a stubborn York defence that appears to be coming into its own at just around the right time to cause havoc in the post-season, if they can make it that far. Three Chino turnovers did not help; they mainly served to ensure there would be no comeback from a game they lost early in the trenches.

At Round Table Stadium in LA, easy-going west coast fans became irate as the overmatched Knights tried in vain to keep up with high-powered Death Valley but fell embarrassingly short in a 42-16 rout. Just in case anybody had overlooked the “high-poweredness” of the Undertakers as they struggle this year with their challenges on defence and with turnovers, **Michael Vick** and **RGIII** combined for 14 bomb attempts to **Andre Johnson**, hitting the big guy 3 times for 122 yards on those plays. Chants of “Uncool, Fool!” and “Bummer!” rained down at a moderate 67 decibels between gawks at the music videos on the score board.

At the Fiery Depths the hotter than hell Hellfire won their third straight by upending the Cannibals 31-21 after a 21-point outburst in the 2nd quarter smashed an early 6-point deficit. **Andrew Luck** tossed four touchdown passes for his highest output of the season, and Mohave's top-ranked pass rush harried **Philip Rivers** all day, sacking him 4 times and making life difficult if not intolerable in the pocket. The late-season surge by the Hellfire defence has spawned a new nickname, the ‘*Afterburners*.’

At the Metrodome in Minneapolis, a routine 34-7 blowout of the fading Triumph by the charging Thunder Lizards was made newsworthy by the sudden appearance of Durham quarterback, **Nick Foles** to take a knee at the end of the first half immediately following an interception of **Drew Brees** that had led to a home team touchdown. Holding a 17-7 lead, by no means an insurmountable one, Foles stayed in the game in the second half while Brees held a clipboard on the sideline. Video showing **George Kaldis** throwing his headset after **Antoine Winfield** picked off Brees toward the end of the 2nd quarter seemed to belie later claims by the Durham coach that he was just giving his back-up a taste of meaningful live game action rather than punishing his star pivot for throwing his league-leading 21st interception of the year.

At the Coliseum in Gwinnett it was back to the torture rack for fans of the Blue Eagles as the Gladiators piled up 38 unanswered points through 2½ quarters on the way to a 41-21 victory. Attempting to be gracious in victory, Gwinnett coach **Dave Birdsall** referred to his opponent's performance as an “off day,” causing the media room to disintegrate in uproarious laughter.

Finally, as I often do, I end my column with a mercifully brief summary of a game involving the Swordfish. At the Carolina Slammer, the disinterested Regulators stepped on the Fish and emerged with a 14-7 win – the win being the only redeeming thing about this game for the Regs; unless you count holding the anemic Swordfish offence to 8 first downs and 170 total yards an achievement.

BUG THE BOOKIE!

JIMMY THE GEEK GIVES YOU HIS PICKS
FOR WEEK SIXTEEN EFL ACTION

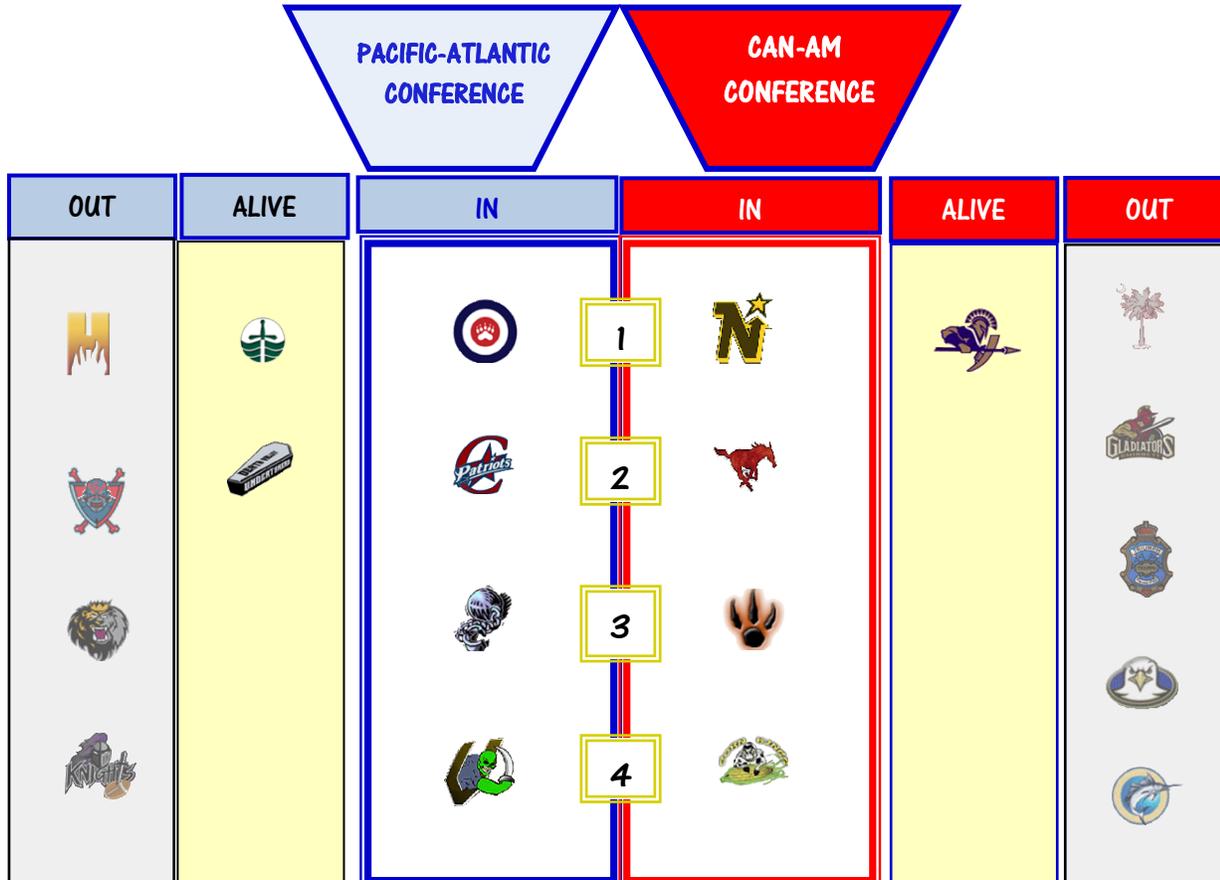
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PLAYOFF PICTURE AT A GLANCE



JIMMY'S WEEK SIXTEEN PICKS

GAMES TO WATCH

MARKHAM @ DURHAM (line – THUNDER LIZARDS by 5)

INJURIES: Markham – Lucas Nicks (OUT); Durham – David DeCastro (OUT).

Here it is – the game the networks were hoping for in the season's final week, a showdown between two powerhouse teams with a division title on the line. Given that the Stars and Lizards can boast of sharing the top won-loss records in the league, the 5-point line appears to give no respect to last year's Champions while giving perhaps misplaced deference to the Dinosaurs' high-powered offence against the league's most efficient defence. Those who see an opportunity to score with Markham point to the penchant for Drew Brees to throw interceptions and the knack for the North Stars defence to take the ball away as a key leveller of any advantage Durham may appear to possess with their receiving arsenal and shifty running back. They also note, quite correctly, that Markham severely humbled the Lizards in the season opener, forcing four turnovers and driving Brees from the game. Interestingly, Brees was

driven from the game last week in Twin Cities, although the perception is that the hook was given in a fit of pique by the Durham coach as opposed to a competitive need. In any case, the signal it sent to last year's Offensive MVP was clearly intended to smarten him up before he faced a serious defence with first seed in the playoffs at stake. Despite indications that not all is happy in Dino Land, there is no escaping the fact that Durham has been dominant in winning their last 8 games while the North Stars have struggled at times in going 6-2 over that same period. The team near the top of its curve appears to be Durham and they have the home field advantage. However, in a game of this magnitude, involving arguably the two best teams in the league, it is dangerous to simply ride the momentum. But remembering that Eli Manning is more than capable of matching Brees pick-for-pick, and that the Markham running game will help, but not carry the day, expect a more conservative Lizards' offense to slowly build a lead and their elite secondary to tee off in the second half to make the game look easier than it was. **PICK: DURHAM**

YORK @ VIRDEN (line – VIOLATORS by 3)

INJURIES: York – Luke Joeckel (OUT), Ryan Williams (OUT); Virden – Brandon Meriweather (OUT), Fili Moala (OUT).

Ironically, while the Violators would be in the post-season if the season were to end today, they are in a weaker position to advance than York is, regardless of the outcome. With four teams in the PAC currently tied at 8-7, Virden's current disadvantage in the tie-breakers may be fatal even in victory. Due to the complicated tie-breaking formula, a Virden win is no guarantee of a post-season berth. A three-way tie at 9-7 with Chino and Death Valley will see them golfing in sunnier climes much earlier than they had hoped. While they need help, one thing is clear – no victory, no advance. York will make the post-season with a win, but can also back in with a loss, combined with losses by Chino and Death Valley. The Violators won the first match-up between these teams, stifling the Swords' offence and finishing with four unanswered scores including the game's only touchdown. With the game at *TERRODOME*, the Violators appear to have the advantage. But the Excaliburs have won five of their last six and appear to have resolved their earlier problems on offence while the defence has been one of the league's most dominant in the second half of the season. Virden has been plagued with inconsistent play at the most important position in the game. If Matt Stafford falters he will bring his team down with him; but if he plays to his capabilities, his defence will give him enough room to get the job done without having to light up the scoreboard. **PICK: VIOLATORS**

GAMES OF NOTE

TWIN CITIES @ COWTOWN (line – CORN KINGS by 9)

INJURIES: Twin Cities – Eric Reid (DOUBTFUL), Glenn Dorsey (OUT); Cowtown – None.

With the home field advantage and all the momentum after an impressive three-game road winning streak, it may seem like a given that the Corn Kings will finish off their amazing second half rebound and leap into the final playoff spot with a win over their last place rival. The generous point spread seems to be reacting to the Cowtown hot streak and the fact that the Triumph have looked a lot like a last place team in four of the last five games. But that one exception was an impressive road upset of Pickering that helped to put Cowtown in the favourable position they currently enjoy. Consider also that the first time these teams met, the Triumph looked like the contender while Cowtown looked dysfunctional and coughed up the ball four times in a 27-10 loss. The possibility of an upset is very much in play here and the visitors would love to end their season on a high note and bring the Corn Kings season to a tragic close with a good punch in the mouth. But the Triumph cannot count on a repeat of the +4 turnover margin they enjoyed in Week Five, and without that it is more difficult to envision a straight-up upset. It is not difficult, on the other hand, to imagine a hard fought game coming down to the wire and well under the 9-point spread. **PICK: TWIN CITIES**

LOS ANGELES @ CHINO (line – CONVICTS by 11)

INJURIES: Los Angeles – Barry Church (OUT), TJ McDonald (OUT), Brian Orakpo (OUT); Chino – Davon House (OUT), Chris Ivory (OUT) Jarius Wright (OUT).

The Convicts control their own destiny – a win and they are in. They also enjoy the same “faint hope” clause that York does in event of a loss – they can back into the playoffs with losses by Virden and Death Valley; but with the Undertakers taking on the Monarchs it is a very faint hope indeed. The Knights have nothing to play for, which is their usual situation in this off-year for the Champions of two seasons past. However, that has not stopped them from leaving it all on the field on game day. With an intense

dislike for each other these long time rivals will give viewers a game, even if the disparity in talent level is painfully obvious. The proud Knights are limping across the finish line after a spirited start to the season and it is hard to imagine them pulling off an upset at the Big House, but stranger things have happened. The Convicts will need to avoid the turnovers that have stained an otherwise impressive campaign; it would be a bonus if they could force one or two by the Knights as well, and if that occurs it will be a comfortable victory and jubilant after-game party for Chino. But if the *kamikaze* Knights' blitz gets to Cam, there could be some very moments. For my money, I think Cam will get it right with the season on the line. **PICK: CHINO**

MISSION VIEJO @ DEATH VALLEY (line – UNDERTAKERS by 8)

INJURIES: *Mission Viejo* – Aaron Maybin (QUESTIONABLE), Akeem Spence (QUESTIONABLE), Dee Milliner (OUT), Demorrio Williams (OUT); *Death Valley* – Larry Warford (QUESTIONABLE), Randall Cobb (DOUBTFUL), Adrian Clayborn (OUT), Brent Grimes (OUT), Jake Long (OUT), Mario Manningham (OUT).

While the propeller-heads in analytics services such as Footballoutriders.Org debate whether Mission Viejo or Sebastian is the worst team in football, it is good enough for our purposes to understand that the Monarchs are pretty bad and much worse than the team they are facing this week. If it were just a matter of taking care business at home against a team fading worse than an old Polaroid, the Undertakers would have little to worry about. But for Death Valley to make the post-season they need help from either Virden or Los Angeles, meaning they will need help from Virden. In the background to the contest itself, is Coach Chris Worthley's obsession with establishing another offensive record for Andre Johnson, who already has more yards and TD passes in a single season than any receiver in EFL history, but who needs two more catches of 25+ yards to eclipse the record of 31 set by Mike Wallace in 2011. This quest, like the one in 2012 for two 1,000-yard rushers, will dominate the game until it is achieved and will provide some dramain a game that should be a walk in the graveyard for the home team. **PICK: DEATH VALLEY**

MOHAVE @ IOWA CITY (line – CUBS by 8)

INJURIES: *Mohave* – None; *Iowa City* –LaMichael James (OUT).

The Cubs have clinched the West and hold the tie-breaker over Charleswood, giving them the inside track on the #1 seed in the Conference. If they can hold off the redhot Hellfire it will mean that the road to the PAC Championship will roll through Joe Ferguson Stadium. But unlike their counterpart in the East, they likely will face a challenge here to close the deal. Mohave has won four of their last five with some wins coming against tough competition. Andrew Luck is gaining confidence and Johnathan Dwyer is showing feature back durability. But the difference maker is the pass rush, which has been so effective that the glaring weaknesses in the secondary and the run defence have been less blinding. With the Mohave blitz hitting home with increasing frequency, the ability of the Cubs' young quarterbacks to check down and evade the rush will be put to the test. Both have athletic scrambling ability, which will work in the Cubs' favour if they can feel the pressure and not panic. The more conservative but talent-laden Cubs defence is as intimidating as Mohave's if not more so. The key to a Hellfire upset will be whether they can make the most of the opportunities presented to them by their big-play defence. **PICK: MOHAVE**

PICKERING @ SEBASTIAN (line – SPARTANS by 2)

INJURIES: *Pickering* – None; *Sebastian* – Usama Young (OUT).

Similar to Death Valley is Pickering's playoff position; they must win and get help from a friend. While not the position the Spartans expected to be in three weeks ago, before they dropped a shocker at home to Twin Cities, they have a better-than-Persian's chance in a mountain pass guarded by 300 Greek hoplites of making it through. The team that helped to back them into a corner ironically holds the key to an escape out the back door. If Twin Cities can husk the Corn Kings in Cowtown then half of the Pickering mission will be accomplished; the second half – a Pickering victory over Sebastian – is all but certain if the Spartans team bus can get them from their hotel to the Fish Tank in time for the players to get dressed and onto the field by kickoff time. The bus driver, I am told, is one of the best in the business and the Mercedes-Benz Turismo bus he drives has never broken down. The confidence of having arrived safe and early will ensure an easy cover for the visitors. **PICK: PICKERING**

FIREPLACE CHANNEL

CHARLESWOOD @ CARTHAGE (line – PATRIOTS by 4)

INJURIES: *Charleswood* – Quinton Patton (PROBABLE), Santonio Holmes (OUT), Jerraud Powers (OUT); *Carthage* – Jon Beason (OUT), Datone Jones (OUT), Winston Justice (OUT).

The Pats clinched the East Division title last week but still have their sights set on the #1-seed in the PAC. They can achieve that goal with a win here at the Killing Field coupled with a Cubs loss to Mohave. Although the Cannibals have vowed to complete the season in the same vigorous manner with which they started it, other clubs have caught on to their many weaknesses and there is no more hiding them. As for the supposed home field advantage, that too appears to be diminishing. Even the boiling cauldron and basket of carrots at the south end of the Killing Field fails to intimidate opponents any longer – word having spread that no human being has been thrown into the soup in over one hundred years. Despite their flaws, Carthage does have Philip Rivers, a QB who still carries the reputation of being capable of dealing damage to a defence. The fact that he carries the same reputation with respect to his own offence is beside the point – defences must game plan for the Carthage signal-caller just in case. On the other side, there is no game plan for the likes of the Carthage 'D' that will stop the Pats' big guns. **PICK: CHARLESWOOD**

SOUTH CAROLINA @ SCARBOROUGH (line – BLUE EAGLES by 1)

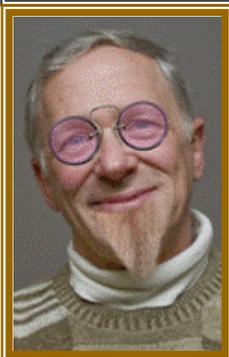
INJURIES: **South Carolina** – Tamba Hali (OUT). **Scarborough** –Derek Cox (OUT), Jordan Norwood (OUT), Darrelle Revis (OUT), Adrian Wilson (OUT).

The season can't end fast enough for the Blue Eagles while the Regulators just look weary after playing out of their skulls in order to stay in the playoff hunt for 14 weeks – a team record. Rumours abound that angry fans in Scarborough are planning to take down what's left of WWII-era Bluff's Stadium after this game, or possibly during it. The Eagles players may actually welcome the distraction, having long ago tired of the scrutiny and criticism that comes with a 5-10 record when many people had predicted they would win a division title and possibly much more. I expect that, as the angry rabble starts to tear up seats and chisel the old brick, the last remnants of tattered Blue Eagle pride will emerge and turn this game into a slaughter. **PICK: SCARBOROUGH**

GWINNETT @ GARLAND (line – MUSTANGS by 7)

INJURIES: **Gwinnett** – Mychal Kendrick (QUESTIONABLE), Ed Dickson (DOUBTFUL), Bill Bentley (OUT), Josh Brown (OUT), Nate Burleson (OUT); **Garland** –Julian Edelman (OUT).

With the division and the #2 seed locked up, the Mustangs can switch to "rest" mode for their season finale and keep their stars fresh for the quarter finals. That is, if Ricky Main can tolerate the possibility of dropping three in a row to end the season. Getting blown out by Scarborough and failing their first test against powerhouse Markham has shifted the mindset in Garland from one of borderline arrogance to shuffling insecurity. The Gladiators remain a good team, better than their record indicates, and a worthy opponent to try and take down in order to re-establish the swagger that had made the embarrassingly talented Mustangs appear virtually unbeatable for seven weeks following the departure of Doug Shirley. But expect the Glads to play without fear while Garland dithers, and send a clear message to the league for next year. **PICK: GWINNETT**



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This Week in EFL History
With Professor Sterling Smitherman

FROM THE EFL ARCHIVES – 2007 – In a week that featured several closely fought contests between teams jockeying for playoff positions, the game that garnered most of the national headlines involved two teams already eliminated from the post-season contention. It was a totally meaningless game except for one very important feature – the identity of the winner. Yes, Week 15 was the week the Swamp Dogs finally won! By a score of 21-7 they knocked off the Anchorage Buccaneers at the Great Northern Sports Complex in Anchorage, thereby escaping total disgrace while tying a tattered ribbon around the total disaster that

the Bucs' season had then become. The two top wide receivers that week came from this game; *Javon Walker* of the Meadowlands had 9 receptions for 170 yards while *Andre Johnson* of the Bucs had 7 for 151 yards and his team's only TD. *Big Ben* celebrated as if he had won the Championship.

Meanwhile, in games that meant something, the Corn Kings clinched the West with a 24-21 come-from-behind victory at The Fiery Depths, knocking Mohave out of the East Division title race. The Hellfire dominated the stat sheet but had to settle for FGs in the red zone, while the Corn Kings turned their limited opportunities into TDs.

In the East, the Patriots clinched the division title with a 31-20 win over Iowa City. Four interceptions of the Cubs' *JP Losman* set the table for 3 of 4 Charleswood TDs. Despite this setback, the Cubs remained in the hunt for the final playoff spot in the West.

All but the 4th seed in each Division had been decided heading into the final week. In the East, Mohave and Florida joined Charleswood as confirmed for the post-season while in the West, Chino and Durham were in but looking up at Cowntown.