

WEEK 16

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2012 EFL 2012

February 3, 2013



EAST				WEST				NORTH				SOUTH			
Virden	13	3	0	Death Valley	15	1	0	Durham	14	2	0	Scarborough	14	2	0
York	13	3	0	Los Angeles	10	6	0	Markham	11	4	1	Gwinnett	9	7	0
Commonwealth	7	9	0	Chino	9	7	0	Cowtown	9	6	1	Garland	8	8	0
Mohave	3	13	0	Mission Viejo	3	13	0	Pickering	6	10	0	South Carolina	5	11	0
Charleswood	1	15	0	Iowa City	1	15	0	Swil City	4	2	0	Sebastian	4	12	0

SACKED!

LA tackle *Sione Fua* and linebacker *Brian Orakpo* land on top of Chino's *Cam Newton* in Week 16 action at Round Table Stadium. The vaunted 'Blue Shield' was in championship form in a do-or-die game to decide the final wildcard berth in the Pacific-Atlantic Conference. In other EFL action, it was a cold and windy day at Tillman Field as the Corn Kings hosted the Spartans in a game with the potential to decide the final playoff seed in the Can-Am conference and make the match-up between Garland and Gwinnett at the Coliseum a mere exercise. Upsets and stats were the themes in other EFL action. *(MORE INSIDE)*



THE BLUE SHIELD!



Who was slick in Week Sixteen?

"BRYLCREEM" THE EFL'S FIRST SPONSOR



DeMarco Murray
RB
Mission Viejo Monarchs

20 Carries, 155 yards, 2 TDs. Sparked attack in win vs Mohave.



Jamar Chaney
OLB
Sebastian Swordfish

7 tackles, 2 PD, 1 INT. 46-yard INT return set up game-winning FG.



9-7-0

3

EFL

GAME OF THE WEEK



10-6-0

16

DON'T COUNT OUT CHAMPS! 7 SACKS BY THE 'BLUE SHIELD' DUMPS NEWTON AND CONVICTS!

CONVICT OF THE GAME

Ben Roethlisberger

24 of 37, 354 yards, 2 TDs, 1 INT

Team	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
Chino	3	0	0	0	-	3
Los Angeles	3	10	0	3	-	16

KNIGHT OF THE GAME

Aaron Rodgers

31 of 51, 316 yards, 2 TDs

GAME SUMMARY: With the season on the line for both teams, LA's "Blue Shield" slammed the door on the Chino offence by sacking **Cam Newton** 7 times, knocking him down 7 more, and holding the Convicts to a lone field goal, which came on the game's opening drive. After moving the ball 61 yards, 27 of those coming on a pass to **Legedu Naanee**, **Dan Bailey** drilled home a 3-pointer from 37 yards out to give Chino an early lead. That effort turned out to be the best the Chino offence could muster over the course of the game. After forcing the Knights to punt on their first possession, the Convicts took over again and adopted an aggressive stance by attempting to convert 4th down and 1 at their own 41 yard line. Back-up end **Andre Fluellen** got penetration and stuffed **Steven Jackson** for a 1-yard loss on the play, handing LA the ball at the Chino 40. The Knights tied the game on that drive with a 31-yard field goal by **Dan Carpenter** then took the lead on their next possession with another field goal, from 38 yards away, following a 55 yard drive. The Convicts got the ball back and moved steadily into LA territory, with the help of a personal foul penalty on **Andre Carter** and a 13-yard run by **Danny Woodhead**, until they faced 4th and 1 at the 38. Again they went for it, this time with Newton taking it himself, but spy **D'Qwell Jackson** saw it coming and held him up at the original line of scrimmage. The Knights drove back up the field but came up 1 yard short on 3rd down at the Chino 25 yard line. Instead of opting for the field goal, the Knights went for it and **Alex Smith** converted on a 4-yard tipped pass caught by a diving **Earnest Graham**. It was a key play, because 3 plays later **Darren Sproles** turned the corner on a pitch and raced into the end zone from 5 yards out for the game's only touchdown. With a 13-3 lead at half time, the Knights' defence started teeing off on Newton, sacking him 5 times, two coming back-to-back late in the 3rd quarter when **Sione Fua** dumped hum for an 11-yard loss then **Brian Orakpo** blew up an attempted screen with an 8-yard sack. The Convicts never left own end in the entire second half, allowing the Knights' offence to play conservatively and run out the clock. The win gives LA the final wildcard berth in the PAC and a shot at a rare repeat for the Championship.

QUOTE OF THE GAME

"We felt we could wear him down if we hit enough. That was our plan from the start – make him pay a physical price for every yard. The defence stood up and made it happen. Don't count us out of this thing yet. The Champs are back!" – *LA Coach, Jeff Dohrn.*

"Cam sure sucked today. I'm his number one fan, but he looked like an old man out there. The rest of the offence was worse! Trust me when I say there will be changes next year." – *Chino coach, Rob Nazar.*



FANS' THUMB UP

Dominant Knights' 'D'

FANS' THUMB DOWN

No help for Cam



FAN RATING



02-02-2013 Round Table Stadium Temp: 61 Wind: 0-10 None MVP: **Darren Sproles**

1 9:16 Chino	FG Bailey 37 (10-61-5:40)	3-0
1 2:23 Los Angeles	FG Carpenter 31 (8-27-3:11)	3-3
2 8:55 Los Angeles	FG Carpenter 38 (11-55-6:47)	3-6
2 1:00 Los Angeles	TD Sproles 5 run (Carpenter) (9-62-4:36)	3-13
4 2:21 Los Angeles	FG Carpenter 19 (4-6-0:15)	3-16

	CHI	LAK
First Downs	9	16
Rushes	26-80	41-142
Passes	22-12-116	17-12-112
Sacked	7-59	1-8
Fumble	2	1
Penalties	4-35	4-48
Turnovers	0	1
Missed Tackles	4	3
Blitzes	11	27
Time	26:40	33:20
Third Down	3-15	5-14
Fourth Down	0-5	1-1
Red Att/Td/Fg	0/0/0	3/1/2
Net Offense	137	246



QUICK COUNTS!!

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



VIOLATORS
13-3-0

0	7	14	14	0	35
OT					

Matt Stafford
20 of 24, 436 yards, 5 TDs, 2 INTs



PATRIOTS
1-15-0

7	3	14	3	0	27
OT					

Michael Vick
29 of 45, 385 yards, 3 TDs, 1 INT

Pats' linebacker **Barret Ruud** intercepted a pass tipped by **Shaun Phillips** to set up the 3rd TD pass of the afternoon by **Michael Vick**, giving Charleswood a shocking 24-14 lead with 3:39 remaining in the 3rd quarter. Virden's MVP candidate **Matt Stafford** proceeded to complete his next 9 pass attempts for 234 yards and 3 TDs, including long-distance strikes of 48 yards to **Torrey Smith** and 63 yards to **Dez Bryant**, to take a 35-24 lead with 5:23 remaining. The Pats got a FG then recovered an onside kick but their comeback was cut short by **Stanford Rount**'s pick of Vick in Virden territory.



NORTH STARS
11-4-1

10	0	10	7	0	27
OT					

Wes Welker
11 Receptions, 172 yards, 2 TDs



SWORDFISH
4-12-0

7	10	7	6	0	30
OT					

Roy Helu
152 Total Yards (57 run, 95 rec)

With the score tied 27-27 and Markham driving in Sebastian territory in the final minute, linebacker **Jamar Chaney** intercepted **Eli Manning** and returned it 46 yards to the North Stars' 33 yard line. **Roy Helu** took a pitch around left end on the next play that went for 15 yards, setting up a 37-yard game-winning field goal by **Adam Vinatieri** as time expired for a big Week 16 upset. Markham moved the ball easily, making 27 1st downs and gaining over 500 yards of offence; but 4 turnovers, including 3 interceptions by Manning, led to 10 Swordfish points and stopped 2 possible scoring drives.



TRIUMPH
4-12-0

0	0	0	0	0	0
OT					

Kevin Burnett
7 Tackles, 1 Sack, 1 TFL, 1 Hur



T-LIZARDS
14-2-0

3	14	10	10	0	33
OT					

Philip Rivers
20 of 34, 326 yards, 2 TDs

A 43-yard pass play on a dump-off to **Toby Gerhart** set up a 29-yard FG by **Mason Crosby** on Durham's opening possession for a 3-0 lead. That would turn out to be all the points the Lizards would need as **Jason Campbell** and **Tim Tebow**, trading opportunities at QB for the Triumph, struggled to do anything offensively in the steady rain against the dominant Durham defence. **Philip Rivers** stood in at QB for Durham and directed an efficient attack that took advantage of 3 turnovers and a lacklustre performance by the Triumph defence to build a 27-0 lead before running out



QUICK COUNTS!!

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



COLONIALS

7-9-0

0	3	0	7	0	10
				OT	

Doug Baldwin
5 Receptions, 50 yards, 1 TD



EXCALIBURS

13-3-0

10	7	10	3	0	30
				OT	

Brandon Jacobs
15 Carries, 98 yards, 2 TDs

A spectacular play by **Michael Crabtree** got the Excaliburs rolling to their 13th victory of the season. **Tom Brady** rifled a quick out pass to a double-covered Crabtree, who split the defenders and dodged a tackle to sprint 75 yards for a TD. **Jason Babin** recorded a sack on each of Commonwealth's first two possessions, and **Geno Atkins** notched another that forced a long FG by **Stephen Gostkowski**, allowing York to build a 17-3 half time lead. **Brandon Jacobs** and **Michael Turner** took over the game in the 2nd half for York, combing for 33 carries, 199 yards, and 2 TDs to finish off an easy win.



HELLFIRE

3-13-0

0	0	3	10	0	13
				OT	

Jimmy Graham
11 Receptions, 82 yards, 1 TD



MONARCHS

3-13-0

3	14	0	21	0	38
				OT	

DeMarco Murray
20 Carries, 155 yards, 2 TDs

Hellfire QB **Andrew Luck** was picked off by **Koa Misi** on 4th down and 3 in the 2nd quarter, setting up a 30-yard TD pass from **Colt McCoy** to **Devery Henderson** to give Mission Viejo a 10-0 lead. Approaching the end of the 1st half, **DeMarco Murray** carried 4 straight times for 34 yards, bringing the defence into the box and allowing **Mike Williams** to be wide open on a 14-yard TD pass that made it 17-0 at the half. Murray would go on to score 2 rushing TDs, while Luck would turn the ball over 4 times, with 3 interceptions and a lost fumble, leading to 21 Monarchs' points in the 4th quarter.



BLUE EAGLES

14-2-0

0	14	14	3	0	31
				OT	

Greg Little
3 Rec, 77 Yds, 1 Car, 39 Yds, 3 TDs



REGULATORS

5-11-0

7	10	3	6	0	26
				OT	

Felix Jones
34 Carries, 154 yards, 1 TD

A balanced attack and an aggressive approach on 4th down enabled heavy underdog South Carolina to jump out to a 14-0 lead, scoring on a 1-yard QB sneak by **Tony Romo** and a 35-yard TD pass to **Austin Collie**. But the second of two botched surprise onside kick attempts gave the Blue Eagles field position to get back in the game on a 10-yard TD pass to **Greg Little**. Little scored the next 2 Blue Eagles' TDs on a 28-yard reception and a 39-yard end around to take a 21-17 lead. A 79-yard TD pass from **Aaron Rodgers** to **Brandon Marshall** put the game away as Scarborough survived a scare.



QUICK COUNTS!!

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



SPARTANS
6-10-0

0	0	0	0	0	0

Dustin Colquitt
8 Punts, 48.5 Avg, 2 Inside 20



CORN KINGS
9-6-1

0	7	7	7	0	21

Malcolm Floyd
5 Receptions, 111 yards, 2 TDs

An encroachment penalty on **Jabaal Sheard** gave Cowtown a 1st down as they lined up to kick a field goal. On the next play **Joe Flacco** connected with **Malcolm Floyd** on a 23-yard slant pass to break a scoreless tie with seconds remaining in the 1st half. In the 3rd quarter Sheard was flagged for roughing the passer, nullifying an interception that would have given the ball to Pickering in Cowtown territory. The flag allowed the Kings to score their 2nd TD when **Matt Moore**, subbing for an injured Flacco, found **Santana Moss** for a 6-yard TD. A 50-yard fly to Floyd rounded out the scoring.



MUSTANGS
8-8-0

7	0	7	0	0	14

Nate Washington
8 Receptions, 93 yards, 1 TD



GLADIATORS
12-3-0

7	7	7	6	0	27

LeSean McCoy
20 for 73 rush, 35 rec yds, 2 TDs

Running back **LeSean McCoy** found the end zone twice on runs of 11 and 9 yards to stake the Gladiators to a 14-7 lead by half time. They extended that lead on their first possession of the 2nd half after a personal foul on **JJ Watt** and consecutive passes covering 33 yards to **Jeremy Maclin** and **Demaryius Thomas** set up a 2-yard TD run by **Ahmad Bradshaw**. A gamble on 4th and inches in their end paid off for Garland to set up an 8-yard TD run by **Matt Forte** but a similar gamble on their next possession did not succeed, setting up the first of 2 **Josh Brown** FGs in the 4th quarter.



UNDERTAKERS
15-1-0

14	10	0	0	6	30

Drew Brees
20 of 22, 339 yards, 3 TDs



CUBS
1-15-0

3	0	14	7	0	24

Dexter McCluster
30 Carries, 146 yards, 2 TDs (1 rec)

Russell Wilson threw a 1-yard TD pass to **Mike Wallace** with 29 seconds left in regulation to tie the score at 24 and push the game into overtime. In the extra period **Drew Brees** completed 6 of 6 for 65 yards and a 14-yard TD to **Mario Manningham** to give his team its 15th win of the season and the best record in the league. The Undertakers' attempts to give two of their running backs 1,000-yard seasons derailed an apparent easy rout and allowed the Cubs back in the game in the 2nd half. **Dexter McCluster** ran for a 19-yard TD and caught a 9-yard TD for another to lead the comeback.



STATS



WEEK SIXTEEN

FINAL STANDINGS

East	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Virden (z)	13	3	0	0.813	512	32	343	21.4	10.6	7 1 0	8 0 0	11 1 0
York (y)	13	3	0	0.813	444	27.8	274	17.1	10.6	7 1 0	6 2 0	10 2 0
Commonwealth	7	9	0	0.438	335	20.9	451	28.2	-7.3	5 3 0	3 5 0	6 6 0
Mohave	3	13	0	0.188	267	16.7	508	31.8	-15.1	1 7 0	0 8 0	1 11 0
Charleswood	1	15	0	0.063	218	13.6	550	34.4	-20.8	1 7 0	1 7 0	1 11 0
West	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Death Valley (z)	15	1	0	0.938	625	39.1	357	22.3	16.8	8 0 0	8 0 0	11 1 0
Los Angeles (z)	10	6	0	0.625	413	25.8	273	17.1	8.8	5 3 0	6 2 0	8 4 0
Chino	9	7	0	0.563	355	22.2	308	19.3	2.9	4 4 0	4 4 0	6 6 0
Mission Viejo	3	13	0	0.188	233	14.6	487	30.4	-15.9	2 6 0	2 6 0	3 9 0
Iowa City	1	15	0	0.063	272	17	410	25.6	-8.6	1 7 0	0 8 0	1 11 0
North	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Durham (z)	14	2	0	0.875	499	31.2	251	15.7	15.5	8 0 0	6 2 0	10 2 0
Markham (y)	11	4	1	0.719	453	28.3	278	17.4	10.9	6 1 1	6 1 1	9 2 1
Cowtown (y)	9	6	1	0.594	399	24.9	293	18.3	6.6	6 2 0	4 3 1	6 5 1
Pickering	6	10	0	0.375	307	19.2	357	22.3	-3.1	3 5 0	3 5 0	5 7 0
Twin Cities	4	12	0	0.25	257	16.1	378	23.6	-7.6	3 5 0	0 8 0	2 10 0
South	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Scarborough (z)	14	2	0	0.875	473	29.6	259	16.2	13.4	7 1 0	7 1 0	10 2 0
Gwinnett	9	7	0	0.563	365	22.8	335	20.9	1.9	5 3 0	5 3 0	7 5 0
Garland	8	8	0	0.5	365	22.8	330	20.6	2.2	5 3 0	3 5 0	4 8 0
South Carolina	5	11	0	0.313	295	18.4	420	26.3	-7.8	3 5 0	3 5 0	3 9 0
Sebastian	4	12	0	0.25	244	15.3	469	29.3	-14.1	2 6 0	2 6 0	3 9 0

(z)-clinched division

(y)-clinched wildcard

PASSING

	Att	Cmp	C%	Yards	In	I%	Lg	TD	TD%	Rate	
1 Brees	DVU	586	428	73.0	5622	7	1.2	63	73	12.5	137.5
2 Stafford	VV	508	363	71.5	5015	10	2.0	64	45	8.9	124.1
3 Brady	YOR	426	282	66.2	4068	13	3.1	75	33	7.7	110.1
4 Schaub	DTL	198	126	63.6	1872	3	1.5	66	12	6.1	108.4
5 Smith,A	LAK	494	337	68.2	3738	5	1.0	51	31	6.3	107.2
6 Rodgers,A	SBE	507	345	68.0	4169	9	1.8	79	27	5.3	103.4
7 Cutler	TCT	290	191	65.9	2135	3	1.0	55	17	5.9	102.9
8 Rivers,P	DTL	308	194	63.0	2768	10	3.2	53	22	7.1	102.3
9 Flacco	COW	464	253	54.5	3262	10	2.2	81	33	7.1	91.5
10 Manning,E	MAR	436	265	60.8	3923	19	4.4	75	24	5.5	90.4
11 Romo	SC	518	342	66.0	3923	17	3.3	75	24	4.6	90.4
12 Wilson,R	ICC	375	225	60.0	2803	10	2.7	71	19	5.1	89.0
13 Luck	MOH	475	306	64.4	3304	13	2.7	52	22	4.6	88.8
14 Roethlisbe	GWG	507	325	64.1	3700	16	3.2	80	24	4.7	88.5
15 Ryan,M	GDM	535	328	61.3	3764	10	1.9	81	19	3.6	86.5
16 Newton,C	CHI	422	261	61.8	2784	12	2.8	75	19	4.5	84.3
17 Vick	CHP	374	224	59.9	2548	13	3.5	71	13	3.5	77.5
18 Dalton	SS	489	289	59.1	2916	15	3.1	63	14	2.9	72.9
19 Freeman,J	COM	387	231	59.7	2619	19	4.9	61	15	3.9	72.5
20 McCoy,C	MVM	208	120	57.7	1074	6	2.9	44	7	3.4	70.9
21 Griffin,R	PIC	377	214	56.8	2672	20	5.3	93	14	3.7	69.2
22 Henne	DVU	6	6	100.0	101	0	0.0	36	1	16.7	158.3
23 Naanee	CHI	1	1	100.0	15	0	0.0	15	0	0.0	118.8
24 Thigpen	GWG	1	1	100.0	10	0	0.0	10	0	0.0	108.3
25 Bradford,S	ICC	43	26	60.5	323	0	0.0	51	2	4.7	99.3

RUSHING

		Att	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD			Att	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD		
1	Jones-Drew	COW	365	1640	4.5	61	5	13	Newton,C	CHI	152	837	5.5	25	17
2	Rice,R	SBE	315	1594	5.1	70	12	14	Murray,D	MVM	174	822	4.7	51	7
3	Turner,M	YOR	282	1356	4.8	43	7	15	Jackson,S	CHI	211	815	3.9	52	1
4	Jackson,F	COM	237	1137	4.8	74	7	16	Stewart,J	MAR	160	800	5.0	25	7
5	McCoy,L	GWG	243	1086	4.5	67	12	17	Sproles	LAK	96	742	7.7	34	2
6	Williams,D	MAR	165	1018	6.2	73	12	18	Johnson,C	PIC	202	720	3.6	36	3
7	Mathews,R	DVU	237	1009	4.3	36	2	19	Greene,S	LAK	165	633	3.8	36	1
8	McGahee	DVU	200	1007	5.0	66	5	20	Jacobs,B	YOR	149	621	4.2	57	11
9	Wells,B	VV	233	960	4.1	63	9	21	Gore	SC	177	619	3.5	15	6
10	Bush,R	DTL	203	918	4.5	44	13	22	Tate,B	VV	119	575	4.8	27	1
11	Brown,D	ICC	168	893	5.3	72	6	23	Thomas,P	SS	128	543	4.2	31	5
12	Martin,D	TCT	197	842	4.3	55	1	24	Foster,A	GDM	164	537	3.3	34	10

RECEIVING

		No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD			No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD		
1	Graham,J	MOH	117	1193	10.2	52	6	13	Winslow	YOR	72	791	11.0	35	3
2	Gronkows,R	DVU	96	1473	15.3	63	14	14	Hernandez	DVU	71	769	10.8	54	16
3	Fitzgerald	COW	87	1369	15.7	87	14	15	Marshall,B	SBE	71	899	12.7	79	7
4	Welker	MAR	86	1288	15.0	73	7	16	Gonzalez	LAK	69	679	9.8	36	7
5	Johnson,C	DTL	85	1544	18.2	66	14	17	Green,A	SC	69	1046	15.2	75	10
6	White,R	LAK	85	1062	12.5	48	8	18	Bryant,D	VV	68	1116	16.4	64	13
7	Wallace,M	ICC	81	1556	19.2	71	15	19	Baldwin	COM	68	935	13.8	61	6
8	Witten	CHP	79	841	10.6	55	5	20	Pettigrew	SC	68	630	9.3	26	4
9	Nicks,H	MOH	78	1322	16.9	51	12	21	Cruz	YOR	68	1471	21.6	75	13
10	Colston	DVU	77	1073	13.9	59	10	22	Jackson,D	SBE	66	916	13.9	73	6
11	Smith,S	LAK	75	1048	14.0	51	10	23	Williams,M	MVM	65	799	12.3	37	2
12	Bowe	DTL	73	1024	14.0	53	13	24	Wayne	GWG	65	967	14.9	80	8

KICKING

		FGA	FGM	FG%	40	50	Lg	Pts	
1	Akers	MAR	40	35	87.5	17	3	51	153
2	Tynes	VV	32	29	90.6	9	0	49	146
3	Crosby	DTL	33	29	87.9	6	3	54	143
4	Janikowski	SBE	32	27	84.4	10	3	52	135
5	Carpenter	LAK	33	29	87.9	7	5	57	129
6	Gostkowski	COM	32	28	87.5	10	2	54	119
7	Gano	DVU	20	15	75.0	4	3	55	119
8	Gould	GDM	31	26	83.9	6	1	50	119
9	Bailey,D	CHI	32	25	78.1	10	2	51	115
10	Scobee	PIC	31	28	90.3	15	4	58	113
11	Walsh	YOR	24	18	75.0	5	1	54	108
12	Kasay	COW	24	19	79.2	7	1	52	103
13	Brown,J	GWG	22	19	86.4	7	1	52	101
14	Zuerlein	ICC	33	23	69.7	13	4	51	98
15	Vinatieri	SS	23	23	100.0	7	0	49	88
16	Rackers	MVM	27	21	77.8	10	4	59	85
17	Longwell	SC	21	17	81.0	7	1	50	85
18	Cundiff	MOH	14	12	85.7	3	0	48	69
19	Bironas	TCT	15	11	73.3	4	2	53	65
20	Folk	CHP	15	10	66.7	4	0	48	56
21	Lindell	LAK	5	5	100.0	0	0	36	16

INTERCEPTIONS

		No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD			No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	Chancellor DTL	6	33	5.5	15	0	13	Barron CHP	4	122	30.5	45	2
2	Webster COW	5	99	19.8	41	1	14	Chaney SS	4	124	31.0	52	0
3	Sherman DTL	5	54	10.8	29	1	15	Robinson,P SS	4	38	9.5	14	0
4	Brown,T MAR	5	8	1.6	5	0	16	Byrd,J MAR	3	89	29.7	89	1
5	DeCoud GWG	5	52	10.4	29	0	17	Joseph,J PIC	3	20	6.7	20	0
6	Barnett VV	4	64	16.0	35	1	18	Matthews DVU	3	56	18.7	31	0
7	Phillips,K COW	4	45	11.3	42	0	19	Allen,J DVU	3	4	1.3	4	0
8	Flowers COW	4	68	17.0	27	1	20	Woodson LAK	3	24	8.0	21	0
9	Webb,L MVM	4	60	15.0	36	0	21	Taylor,B MVM	3	15	5.0	8	0
10	Cromartie SBE	4	133	33.3	57	1	22	Newman VV	3	87	29.0	50	1
11	Revis SBE	4	94	23.5	72	1	23	Williams,T VV	3	90	30.0	66	0
12	Weddle GDM	4	40	10.0	19	0	24	Manning,D YOR	3	50	16.7	29	0

SACKS

1	Ware,D VV	21	10	Atkins YOR	9	19	Cole,T MAR	8
2	Babin YOR	18	11	Avril GDM	9	20	Abraham MAR	8
3	Allen,J DTL	16	12	Barnes,A GWG	9	21	Wimbley LAK	7
4	Pierre-Pau ICC	14	13	Seymour SC	9	22	Johnson,M YOR	7
5	Suggs SBE	13	14	Anderson,M COW	8	23	Miller,V YOR	7
6	Peppers CHI	12	15	Orakpo LAK	8	24	Jones,C SS	7
7	Harrison,J CHI	10	16	McDonald PIC	8	25	Suh SBE	6
8	Freeney TCT	10	17	Campbell,C SBE	8	26	Kelly,T DTL	6
9	Sheard PIC	10	18	Smith,A VV	8	27	Dumervil DTL	6

TACKLES

1	Laurinaiti GWG	164	10	Cushing GDM	128	19	Chaney SS	102
2	McClain,R MOH	155	11	Kuechly SC	127	20	Angerer MAR	102
3	Barnett VV	153	12	Burnett,K TCT	123	21	Mayo DVU	99
4	Jackson,D LAK	137	13	Hawthorne COM	121	22	Hall,D GDM	98
5	Washington PIC	137	14	Briggs GWG	120	23	Bowman GDM	95
6	Smith,D CHI	135	15	Conner SS	117	24	Clark,R YOR	93
7	Johnson,D COW	132	16	Martin,S MVM	107	25	Urlacher YOR	91
8	Lofton DTL	129	17	Henders,EJ SC	106	26	Taylor,P CHP	89
9	Pierre-Pau ICC	129	18	Mauluga MVM	103	27	Willis,P ICC	88

KICK RETURNS

		No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD			No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	McKnight MAR	41	1245	30.4	100	1	13	Washington COM	68	1578	23.2	42	0
2	Harvin PIC	40	1198	30.0	109	2	14	Banks MOH	72	1640	22.8	47	0
3	Sherels SS	57	1606	28.2	76	0	15	Tate,B MVM	75	1702	22.7	52	0
4	Ginn Jr. TCT	58	1581	27.3	106	1	16	Weems COW	39	883	22.6	35	0
5	Sproles LAK	43	1165	27.1	82	0	17	Cobb DVU	49	1105	22.6	35	0
6	Strougter CHP	90	2406	26.7	104	1	18	Scott,D SBE	46	1030	22.4	100	1
7	Arenas SC	18	472	26.2	97	0	19	Mariani YOR	46	1024	22.3	49	0
8	Karim GDM	29	737	25.4	36	0	20	Lefeged VV	36	678	18.8	51	0
9	Logan GWG	52	1256	24.2	42	0	21	Reed,D DTL	3	92	30.7	40	0
10	Gates,C ICC	62	1487	24.0	75	0	22	Skrine MVM	1	30	30.0	30	0
11	Cribbs CHI	42	1006	24.0	58	0	23	Rogers,J ICC	3	88	29.3	33	0
12	Hester,D DTL	27	633	23.4	52	0	24	Cosby MOH	1	28	28.0	28	0

PUNT RETURNS

		No	Fc	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD			No	Fc	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	Peterson,P GDM	37	10	594	16.1	80	4	13	Banks MOH	21	3	215	10.2	23	0
2	Bess DTL	23	19	329	14.3	40	0	14	Cobb DVU	21	12	212	10.1	62	1
3	Sproles LAK	38	9	520	13.7	84	3	15	Cribbs CHI	46	7	455	9.9	20	0
4	Arenas SC	26	12	334	12.8	31	0	16	Adams,J PIC	35	15	316	9.0	16	0
5	Jones,J CHP	39	1	499	12.8	75	2	17	Tate,B MVM	24	5	205	8.5	22	0
6	Mariani YOR	31	13	375	12.1	69	1	18	Jackson,D SBE	36	21	306	8.5	45	0
7	Crayton MAR	17	8	191	11.2	40	0	19	Edwards,A ICC	40	4	333	8.3	41	0
8	Ginn Jr. TCT	44	7	479	10.9	25	0	20	Sherels SS	22	8	159	7.2	13	0
9	Washington COM	39	4	415	10.6	19	0	21	McKelvin GWG	2	1	37	18.5	19	0
10	Weems COW	55	13	580	10.5	65	0	22	Decker DTL	3	0	53	17.7	21	0
11	Logan GWG	27	16	280	10.4	27	0	23	Bush,R DTL	2	0	25	12.5	14	0
12	Bryant,D VV	18	11	185	10.3	46	0	24	Peard MAR	2	0	25	12.5	16	0



AROUND THE



With Spats McChad

NEW YORK – The regular season is over and I am convinced that the right teams made it into the great post-season tournament for football's biggest prize. Unlike 2011, when 6-10 Iowa City slithered into the post-season while Scarborough's raft of stars got a head start preparing for the Pro Bowl, there are no accidental entries or missing behemoths this year. Fans in Gwinnett and Garland are entitled to disagree, but in a strong conference with 6 *bona fide* contenders (7 if you count Pickering) a couple had to fall into the ditch and it might as well have been the two that suffered 4-game losing streaks at different points in the season. When one looks at it that way, Cowtown's 3-game losing streak was the difference in them making the playoffs; they fell a little less hard than their competition. In the slightly less cutthroat PAC Conference there are no weak sisters in the final four – just weaker losers outside of it. Does this fact make the achievements of their top four less impressive? Not necessarily. In regular season games involving playoff teams from both conferences against each other the record is deadlocked at 3-3 – a small sample size, but one that gives us no reason to believe one conference has a distinct edge over the other, which bodes well for the Final.

My predictions of the Division winners given in Week One were, as expected, almost entirely accurate. I got three out of the four; but while on paper I was a tie-breaker away in missing on York, I was miles off in my implicit dismissal of Virden when I declared that York would win "*because there is nobody else.*" Clearly there was and I just didn't see it. **Matt Stafford**, whose injury problems and **Eli Manning** had conspired to keep him off the field during his relatively short career, is a great quarterback who came out of nowhere this year. Forgive me for not recognizing, at the time, that **Lance Barrate** knew what he had in Stafford when he cut Eli loose; nor anticipating the mid-season acquisition of Defensive MVP candidate **DeMarcus Ware** and premium journeyman corner **Stanford Rount** to bolster the unsteady Virden defence. The Violators earned more than respect with their 13-3 regular season run – they earned at least one home game in the playoffs.

The season's final week determined two playoff teams, one division winner, and the top seed in the Can-Am Conference. It also featured one huge but meaningless upset, three near-upsets, a new single-season sack record, a farcical pursuit of 1000 rushing yards, and a costly temper tantrum by a losing coach – among other things. Read on....

SHIELD BASHED

With a playoff berth on the line, both Cam and his Convicts failed to rise to the occasion. The Knights won in traditional Knights style, 16-3, snatching the last remaining wildcard spot in the PAC by sacking **Cam Newton** 7 times and holding the Convicts to a paltry 9 first downs and 137 total yards of offence. The 'Blue Shield' did not just parry Chino's blows; it bashed them back and knocked them down as if it was a weapon in its own right. The match-up was, in many ways, the perfect scenario for the reigning champs; at home facing a one-dimensional offence that featured a physically gifted but relatively inexperienced quarterback who had become known for making big plays when the ones called in the huddle didn't work. The LA defensive game plan took direct aim at the Convicts' biggest asset.

Facing a defence that possessed an equally physically gifted front seven, but without a serious threat at wide receiver to keep them honest, Cam looked to be in a tough spot from the beginning, at least on paper. In the event, the game played out as it might have on paper, but a lot more painfully for Newton. As big and strong as he is, Newton looked battered and exhausted by the end of the game. He was slow to rise and resume the hurry-up offence on Chino's final drive after an unblocked **Brian Orakpo** took him to the turf for the last of seven sacks on the night; he did not look so much injured as he looked simply weary. On the next play he was hit as he threw then called a timeout to rest and to contemplate what would turn out to be the Convicts' final play of the season – a rushed deep ball that went through the hands of **Aurelious Benn**. Knocked down after the throw, Newton lay on the grass for a few moments, staring up at a jawing Orakpo as he taunted him with words we will never know, but don't have to know to understand what they meant – something like, "*You ain't so super now, man!*"

In this battle of titanic defences, the 'Blue Shield' won the day. The 'Lockdown Crew' or the 'The Great Wall of Chino,' whichever you prefer, played respectably, causing the only turnover of the game on a sack of **Alex Smith** and forced fumble by **Tyson Jackson**; but they did not dominate the line of scrimmage as the Knights did. Smith, who is suspected of nursing an undisclosed arm injury, could have been a vulnerable target but was, for the most part, comfortable in the pocket on the few occasions he was called upon to throw the ball. The sly and shifty **Darren Sproles** scored the game's only TD by out-running his

pursuit and turning the corner for a 5-yard scoring play. Although "impressive" would not be a word to describe the Knights' offence on this night, "adequate" would be, and adequate is good enough when your opponent is wholly inadequate.

The performance of the Knights' defence in the final week, in a must-win game against one of the league's developing stars, buffs up the armour of a unit tarnished in three devastating aerial assaults during the regular season by the league's top two quarterbacks, **Drew Brees** and **Matt Stafford**. In 3 losses, 2 to Death Valley and 1 to Virden, the Knights gave up 122 points and the opposing QBs posted outrageous numbers: 91 of 121 for 1,335 yards, 14 TDs and 0 INTs, for a devastatingly efficient 149.2 passer rating, while getting sacked only once. The road to a second Gale Sayers trophy will pass through the Graveyard in Death Valley and possibly the **TERRORDOME** in Virden. If the



"I've got a mind to come over there and kick your ass," or words to that effect, will earn Pickering coach **Gus Konstantakos** a hefty fine from the league office once the Rules Committee completes its investigation. The Spartans were flagged 12 times, one nullifying an interception by **Jonathan Joseph**, in a 21-0 loss to Cowtown.

Champs plan to repeat, they are going to have to pour over the game film of those regular season horror shows against the Undertakers and Violators as much as they did for Cam and the Convicts and figure out a way to slow down the most dangerous passing duo in the history of the EFL.

But for now, it is all smiles, yelps, and a few defiant taunts from the Knights' corner, beginning at the top. "Watch out Death Valley – the Champs are coming to town!" boasted Knights' coach **Jeff Dohrn**, whose team faces the Undertakers in the quarter finals.

Charles Woodson, the subject of much criticism in those big losses to Brees and Stafford, took a break from praising his defensive line's performance against Chino to deliver the inevitable 'everybody doubted us but we never doubted ourselves' speech: "Everybody was doubting this team, but we never doubted ourselves," he declared, following the script to the letter. "We just took one game at a time and knew in our hearts we're a great team!"

BEST SERVED COLD

They say that *revenge*, as a dish, is best served cold. With the 29 degree temperature in Cowtown feeling like 15 degrees with the wind chill, the weather did its part to set the stage for the Corn Kings' biggest game of the season against a rival that is quickly becoming less welcome than even the hated Thunder Lizards. After handing Cowtown a 17-14 loss on opening day, the Pickering Spartans dispatched Twin Cities and then proceeded to lose 6 games in a row to practically eliminate themselves from post-season contention. Later, when very close to official elimination prior to Week 12, Spartans' owner **Gus Konstantakos** declared in his customary belligerent manner that his team would "revel in the spoiler role because Spartans NEVER surrender!" Since that declaration there had been no spoiling, just a couple of blowout losses to Markham and Durham and a pair of meaningless wins over Twin Cities and South Carolina. With just one game left, if there was going to be any spoiling at all it would have to come this week at Tillman Field. With the Corn Kings needing a victory to advance, the season's best spoiling opportunity was right there in front of the Spartans, waiting to be seized.

On the other side, the sting of that opening day loss to Pickering was still felt by the Corn Kings; they had allowed a rookie QB to make big plays against their defence and had fallen to a 58-yard field goal by **Josh Scobee** in the dying seconds of the game. Now, that same team stood between them and a playoff berth. They wanted that berth but just as much they wanted revenge.

The desire to *spoil* mixed with the desire for *revenge* created a very negative atmosphere that appeared to stifle both teams for most of the first half. It was either that or it was just too damn cold for both of them! Between them, the teams accounted for 10 punts and one turnover on downs before the Corn Kings finally got on the scoreboard thanks to an encroachment penalty against **Jabaal Sheard** that gave Cowtown a 1st down at the Pickering 23 with 24 seconds left in the 1st half. On the very next play, **Joe Flacco** threw a strike to a double-covered **Malcolm Floyd** for a 23-yard touchdown pass and a 7-0 lead. Sheard, who was probably mad at Flacco for making the most of his innocent little offside penalty, decided to unload on the Corn King pivot at the first opportunity because, on the very first play of the 2nd half, Sheard levelled Flacco after he had released a pass that was picked off by **Jonathan Joseph**. A flag flew and the personal foul penalty against Sheard allowed the Corn Kings to maintain possession and brought them across mid-field. This

caused an already annoyed Konstantakos to become enraged with the referees.

“Why don’t I come over there and show you what a personal foul is, huh?” he bellowed at the referee within range of every Network and EFL Films field microphone, not to mention the ‘Sounds of the Game’ mike he was wearing on his lapel. “Listen to me you moron! Don’t make me come over there and kick your ass!”

The referees ignored the tirade, knowing one word of explanation might trigger an explosion, but a quiet call to have Security move in the direction of the Pickering bench was made at the same time that Konstantakos was angrily pacing the sideline looking for something to kick; so heated that he had thrown his jacket away. When the Corn Kings went on the score a touchdown on that possession and take a 14-0 lead, he hounded every official he could find who strayed even remotely close to the Pickering bench. The audio record is intact and it is not appropriate for general audiences, so I will not repeat it here. Let’s just say that once the “investigation” is concluded, a hefty fine will be levied.

The Pickering owner could have saved his breath and spared his pocketbook. The 21-0 whitewash the Corn Kings dished out at his team’s expense was a cold-weather beating that warmed the hearts of fans at Tillman Field and overwhelmed his demoralized team. The Cowtown defence was determined to teach **Robert Griffin III** a lesson and the rookie was a willing pupil, finishing with a 36.5 game day passer rating and no points. The Spartans were held to just 148 total yards of offence. His counterpart, **Joe Flacco**, once again made the throws that mattered, throwing 2 TD passes to bring his season total to 33, good for 3rd in the league. **Matt Moore**, in the game for 2 plays while Flacco was repaired on the sidelines, threw the third TD to give him 8 on the season. The Corn Kings are in the playoffs for the second consecutive campaign, and will be hoping to continue exacting their revenge next week in Jurassic Park against the team that suddenly and shockingly ended their season last year.

LIKE OLD TIMES....ALMOST!

As the Patriots approached the finish line of the 2012 season with nobody behind them they suddenly found the wind for a headlong sprint. It was as if knowing that the pain would end soon had unleashed a last shot of adrenaline – a final death gasp for the team – that caused its bony hand to lash out for the Violators' throat. To **Lance Barrate's** shock and horror, the Pats' clamped down on his team with a death grip that threatened one of the biggest "chokes" in recent memory. Eyebrows raised as the half time score of Charleswood 10, Virden 7 flashed onto the millions of TV screens across the continent that were tuned into other games, but the vast majority did not reach for their converters; the Pats had never played a competitive half of football in 2012 against a good team that wasn't followed or preceded by a complete collapse. When the score flashed Charleswood 17 Virden 7 in the 3rd quarter, however, *that* result drew people's attention.

Disbelieving viewers who flipped to the game quickly enough may have caught **Torrey Smith** shake off a hit by **Barrett Ruud** and sprint the distance for a 63-yard TD reception; those who were a little slow would have simply caught the score: Charleswood 17, Virden 14. The quick response by the Virden QB, and MVP candidate, **Matt Stafford** appeared at the time to signal the start of the Charleswood collapse, but the Pats were in no frame of mind to capitulate. **Shaun Phillips** tipped a Stafford pass on the first play of Virden's next possession and Ruud picked it off at the Virden 26. Four plays later, **Michael Vick** flicked a short slant to **Santonio Holmes**, who slipped by tight coverage for an 8-yard TD catch and a 24-14 lead with 3:39 left in the 3rd quarter. With at least 30,000 Patriots fans (the number of footballs handed out on Football Giveaway Day in Charleswood) believing again, as if it were old times, and rooting hard for a miraculous upset, Stafford went to work on a injury-riddled Pats' secondary that featured **Jayron Hosley** and **Leonard Johnson** at corner; and linebacker **Stewart Bradley** in front of **Mark Barron** at safety. He fired back with 21 points on three consecutive series, connecting on TD passes of 48 yards to Smith and 63 yards to **Dez Bryant** on either end of a 5-yard check down in the end zone to **Fred Davis**. The three-punch combo caused the Pats to stagger back and lose their footing but, to everyone's surprise and admiration, they refused to turtle. A 46-yard pass to **Jason Witten** set up a 25-yard **Nick Folk** field goal and a successful onside kick gave the Pats the ball with 2:29 left, trailing by 8 points 35-27.

Somehow the Pats managed to survive a 9-yard sack by **DeMarcus Ware** (his record-setting 21st of the season) on 1st down and managed to convert 4th and 8 with a 14-yard pass, caught by Witten at the Virden 39. But on the next play, **Brandon Mebane** broke through the Pats' line and hit Vick as he tried to check down to Holmes. Virden corner **Stanford Routt** snatched the wobbly pass out of the air for an interception that put an end to Charleswood's hopes of a fantastic upset to end the worst season in the history of their franchise.

Despite the final result, it was an intoxicating game to watch for Pats fans. Having endured more misery and humiliation this year than any fan-base in the EFL, they fervently desired the satisfaction of sucker-punching their cross-city rivals and potentially knocking them out of top spot in the East Division. On the other end of this surprisingly great season finale, the Violators erupted in celebration at clinching their first Division title. The team that **Fantasy Freakz** blogger, **Arpin Plunderflunder** of FootballOutriders.Org had predicted at the beginning of the season would win the East had delivered. Ware, free from the shackles of Death Valley and going to the playoffs possibly to face his former team again, spoke for the whole team we he said: “Everybody doubted this team but we in this locker room never doubted ourselves! We believed and now you have to believe!”

THE NEW MARKHAM

The universe must remain in perpetual balance or else we face oblivion. For this reason, when the Markham North Stars ascended this year from the status of gritty, determined, laughing stock loser to the rank of Championship Contender, a team had to take its

place in the hierarchy. That team is the Swordfish. At 4-12, the record is about right (although 6-10 would have been perfect) and with stunning upsets over Gwinnett and, in the final week, Markham, the ability to shock is certainly in place. In order to truly shock, the losses between the wins have to be pathetic and yes, the Sebastian losses usually were. So, its official – the Swordfish are the “North Stars of 2012” – and they even have **Mark Sanchez!**

On ‘Season Ticket Free-For-All Day’ in Sebastian, a lively crowd of about 8,500 showed up to play musical chairs. To the sound of the theme song from ‘Miami Vice’ the Swordfish faithful ambled through the stands on either side of the 50-yard line hoping to strike silver in the form of a coveted ‘silver seat.’ When the music stopped after about 15 agonizing minutes (while the announcer spoke over the pulsing Miami Vice theme and read out the names of sponsors – mostly fish products and marinas) each fan sat down in the closest seat and waited for their number to be drawn. In this manner, 200 free pairs of season tickets were awarded to the lucky winners of the draw. Everyone else received a discount coupon for a family-size box of Captain Gill’s *Sea Cakes* and a two-for-one pass for a tour of the Sebastian coast on **Russ Lemmon’s Coastal Clipper** sight-seeing boat. Life must be pretty empty in the Sebastian area if over 8,000 people have nothing better to do on a Sunday.

As for the game, the Old Markham could not have done it better than this. The Swordfish created four turnovers, three of them on interceptions of **Eli Manning**, and did just enough offensively to take advantage of them. The North Stars shredded the Swordfish secondary for 445 yards through the air, but Manning’s lapses kept them from gaining separation on the scoreboard. Despite the difficulty netting the elusive Swordfish, with the score tied 27-27 and time running out, it appeared as if Markham would finally escape with a win when Manning connected with **Wes Welker** for 30 yards then **Brandon LaFell** for 10 yards to bring them within striking distance of **David Akers** at the Sebastian 34 yard line. But instead of turning to the ground-and-pound to get him a little closer, Manning elected to go upstairs again to Welker. He didn’t see linebacker **Jamar Chaney** underneath in double-coverage and as a result the throw did not go high enough. Chaney batted it up then snatched it out of the air and raced 46 yards to the Markham 33 yard line. From the Sebastian 34 to the Markham 33, the turn-around had the heads of **Darrin Jones** and his defence spinning. **Roy Helu** scampered around the left corner for 15 yards to the 18 yard line and, with 1 second left, **Adam Vinatieri** lined up for the game-winning kick. He made no mistake from 37 yards and, with that historic boot, helped his team land its biggest catch of its inaugural season.

The normally reserved **Andy Dalton**, whose main contribution toward the upset was his being not as bad as he could have been, was very vocal after the game: “Everybody doubted this team when we were down but inside this locker room we always knew we were better than people gave us credit for. We never doubted ourselves and in the end we showed what we can do.” Well, the last part is certainly true – the Swordfish showed that they could go 4-12. Like the North stars before them, they will grow tired of it eventually and field a real team.

AROUND THE EFL

The Gladiators won a heart-breaker over Garland, 27-14, in their season finale at the Coliseum. It was a heart-breaker because, despite a great team effort by the Glads’ defence and outstanding individual efforts from **LeSean McCoy** and **Big Ben**, the victory was in vain. The Corn Kings, as many expected, made this contest meaningless in terms of the playoffs, by knocking off the Spartans and clinging by their fingernails to the final wildcard position. On the other side of this loss, the unhappy Mustangs return to Garland for a team BBQ before a few of them head to Mexico City for the Pro Bowl. The ribs won’t be as tasty with the taste of this sour season still in their mouths. They will, however, get a front row seat at this year’s final as the Championship game comes to Garland.

At Joe Ferguson Stadium one could almost hear the ‘doot-doot-doodle-oodle oot doot doo doo’ playing in the background as the Death Valley Circus tried to outperform Iowa City’s Dancing Bears in a pantomime-style football game that witnessed the most improbable play-calling as Head Embalmer, **Chris Worthley** tried desperately to get his running backs **Willis McGahee** and **Ryan Mathews** each over the 1,000-yard rushing mark for the season while Ringmaster, **Deron Redding** tried desperately to stop him. The actual outcome of the game was secondary. Death Valley won the ‘Contest of Wills,’ with both of his running backs creeping over the 1,000-yard mark by the end of the game, but it took them 49 carries to get the job done against stack formations deployed in the middle of the field. As for the game result, who cares?

Mohave tight end **Jimmy Graham** caught 11 passes to set a new season record for receptions with 117 but the Hellfire were humbled anyway in a 38-13 loss to Mission Viejo. The score is not a reliable indicator of the relative balance of play, which was in favour of Mohave; but as is the case when teams pull off upsets, turnovers played a role. The Monarchs picked off their opponent 3 times for the third time in their last four games and also forced a fumble by **Andrew Luck** to set up 14 points. **DeMarco Murray** peeled off a 51-yard TD run in rushing for 155 yards on the day while starter **Colt McCoy** threw a pair of TD passes to leave Monarchs’ fans with the false impression that there is hope for next year.

The Regulators discovered their running game 15 games too late to change their season’s fortunes. **Felix Jones** rushed for 154 yards and 1 touchdown and South Carolina came charging out of the gate with aggressive play calls to put a scare into the Blue Eagles. In the end, **Greg Little** stepped up for an injured **DeSean Jackson** while **Aaron Rodgers** picked apart the feeble Regs’ secondary to allow Scarborough to escape the Carolina Slammer with a 31-26 victory.

While hoping, faintly, that Charleswood would pull off the improbable and knock off the Violators, the Excaliburs took care of their own business with a sound and measured 30-10 thumping of the Colonials at Camelot. This could have been a much worse

blowout than it was except that **Jay Hammond** called off the dogs soon after *Michael Crabtree* fought off double coverage on a short quick to streak 75 yards for the opening TD. It was going to be that kind of game and Hammond wanted no part of it. "I saw they were going through the motions and I didn't want my boys going all-out against that. It gives them a false sense of how good they are. They need to have confidence, for sure, but over-confidence leads to stupid mistakes." Wise words from the man of few words.

Ironically, an exciting EFL season ended with the year's most dreadfully boring game. In the steady rain at Jurassic Park the Triumph came up soggy and limp in a 37-0 loss. As in Camelot, the outcome could have been much worse but the Thunder Lizards stopped trying in the 4th quarter and gave *Michael Bush* a workout. The normally upbeat **Guy Williams** was quiet after the game while Durham coach **George Kaldis** simply said: "It was terrible to be a part of that game, even as the winner. I feel badly for Guy."

DR. McCHAD'S POST-SEASON POST MORTEM

The season is over for 12 of the EFL's 20 teams. While all eyes now turn to the impending battles between the 8 survivors of the 2012 campaign, I feel it behooves us all to pause and recognize the sacrifice made by those that fell during the regular season; without their loss, there would be no victory. For some, the death of their post-season hopes was a mercy – both to the team and to fans. For others, death may have come unexpectedly, creating grief and bitterness. For those in-between – the ones that may have dared to hope for a while but in the end were prepared for the worst – there will be sorrow perhaps followed by new resolution. However they fell, a thorough examination of their individual cases can teach us how to prevent such tragedies in the future. So before we put these teams to rest, let us look one last time at what they did in life and how they met their ends:

GWINNETT (9-7) – Cause of Death: *Irregular Heart Beat*. They are naming a new roller coaster at Gwinnett's new Adventure Theme Park the *Big Ben* in honour of the Gladiators' quarterback. **Ben Roethlisberger** compiled a passer rating of 59.7 over a four-game losing streak to start the season and a 105.4 passer rating over a 5-game winning streak to end the season. Inconsistency at the most important position put an otherwise solid team out of the playoff picture.

GARLAND (8-8) – Cause of Death: *Suicide*. The Mustangs lost 5 of their last 6 games to fall out of a race they looked certain to win. The puzzling part is that their worst moments came after their big name running backs returned from injury. **Doug Shirley** will be pouring over the game film trying to find out what went wrong and when he does I hope he shares the secret with the rest of us.

COMMONWEALTH (7-9) – Cause of Death: *Abandonment*. The Colonials took advantage of the weakest Division and the weaker Conference to stay in the playoff race, at least theoretically, up until Week 14. Losses to Garland, Scarborough and Durham after a 5-2 start took the wind out of their sails, along with the abandonment of the team during that stretch to a 10-year old.

PICKERING (6-10) – Cause of Death: *Misadventure*. Everything was in place on this team but the quarterback. Spartan management took a gamble that highly-touted rookie **RGIII** would pay immediate dividends, but his many problems, dismissed as "rookie errors" and "learning curve" early in the season, persisted throughout the year against some of the league's toughest competition. If **Gus Konstantakos** had it to do over again, he might have rebuilt properly or gone for **Alex Smith**.

SOUTH CAROLINA (5-11) – Cause of Death: *Attrition*. The Regulators had their good moments but more often did not in posting a second consecutive 5-11 season. The disappearance of **Frank Gore** as a running threat along with a shaky offensive line reduced the effectiveness of **Tony Romo** and made it impossible to bail out the gushing leak caused by a somewhat talented, but poorly run and injury-riddled defence.

TWIN CITIES (4-12) – Cause of Death: *Congenital Heart Defect*. Better than their record, the Triumph were condemned to finish out of the playoffs by brutal North Division competition and their status as an expansion team. They grabbed much of the best front-loaded talent in the entry draft, but cast-offs are still cast-offs. A thorn in their opponent's sides most of the season, good coaching was not enough to compensate for a congenital talent-deficit and the loss of a re-invigorated **Jay Cutler** in the final 4 games.

SEBASTIAN (4-12) – Cause of Death: *Despair*. When **Mark Sanchez** is on the roster and he actually starts, it sends the wrong message to the team. Although it was just two games at the beginning of the year, it was clear from the start that **Russ Lemmon** was looking ahead to next year and for the most part the team played like the season didn't matter. **Andy Dalton's** flashes of brilliance in an otherwise dull and hopeless campaign gave the team's few fans something to cheer about and a bit of hope for the future.

MOHAVE (3-13) – Cause of Death: *Mohave Disease*. The Hellfire have a unique way of simply not getting the job done on game day regardless of who they are playing and who is in the line-up. With a rookie at QB and weaknesses on both lines, nobody expected much from **Bobby Elder's** troops, but with Charleswood and four games vs expansion teams 3 wins is a disappointment.

MISSION VIEJO (3-13) – Cause of Death: *Stillborn*. The Monarchs can thank the Cubs and the Hellfire for rescuing them from a Tampa Bay-type start to their franchise. Feisty and defiant though they were, they never stood a chance.

IOWA CITY (1-15) – Cause of Death: *Traffic Accident*. When a young person in the prime of life dies tragically on the road we often say it wasn't supposed to end that way. The Cubs' 2012 season was such a tragedy. Loaded with talent but lacking experience, the youngest team in the league was brash and clumsy and occasionally brilliant, for quarters at a time. They finished with the dishonour of losing twice to the *real* worst team in the league and winning just once against the other really bad one.

CHARLESWOOD (1-15) – Cause of Death: *Failure to Provide the Necessities of Life*. The loss of **Peyton Manning** to neck surgery was just the beginning of a long slide into the basement that began early in the off-season. The inability of the Pats to compete was confirmed through a horrifyingly dismal campaign that may yet thankfully fade away in the league's memory only because of a single win over the Hellfire. Call it murder.



BODY COUNT



POST-SEASON INJURY REPORT



COWTOWN

Maurkice Pouncey, C – OUT (2 games); Charles Godfrey, S – OUT (2 games)



DEATH VALLEY

None



DURHAM

None



LOS ANGELES

Sam Young, G – OUT; Osi Umenyiora, DE – OUT; Andre Carter, DE – OUT (2 games)



MARKHAM

None



SCARBOROUGH

None



VIRDEN

Anthony Castonzo, T – OUT (2 games); Eric Berry, S – OUT; Jeff Otah, T – OUT (4 games)



YORK

Michael Crabtree, WR – DOUBTFUL; Juron Criner, WR – DOUBTFUL

PLAYOFF PICTURE AT A GLANCE



OUT	ALIVE	IN	IN	ALIVE	OUT
			1		
			2		
			3		
			4		

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JIMMY'S QUARTER FINALS PICKS

LOS ANGELES @ DEATH VALLEY (line – UNDERTAKERS by 5)

These teams know each other well and hate each other thoroughly. On the Knights' side, the intensity of this rivalry deepened when the Undertakers unveiled their 'Death Rain' offence at the expense of the previously impregnable 'Blue Shield' in Week One. On the Undertakers side, hate has not set in as much, but as a threat the Knights are the team they did not want to face. The LA defence no longer carries an invincible air, but it is still capable of shutting down the run as the 3.2 yard rushing average against them can attest. The Undertakers did not try to run much in their outings against the Knights but when they did they averaged 3.7 yards a carry and 84 yards per game – running was not much of a factor, but with Drew Brees at the controls it didn't need to be. Lost in the hysteria about Brees' passing is the fact that Alex Smith threw for 334 yards and 3 TDs while Darren Sproles ran through the Death Valley like buzz saw in that first game. If Smith's mysterious arm injury is healed, expect some push back from the Knights' offence as their defence struggles with the Undertakers' twin tight end threat. With all of the attention focused on the offences, I think the weather at the Graveyard will slow the pace down considerably. As in Week One, this game will be a close one, but unlike that 90-point bonanza, this will be a rare DV grinder with Brees' arm tipping the balance. **PICK: DEATH VALLEY**

YORK @ VIRDEN (line – VIOLATORS by 3)

As in the other PAC contest this game features a home favourite trying to win a third consecutive game against a Division rival. It is considered one of the toughest feats of football to beat a good team three times in a single season but the Violators are going to make that task look easy. Since reaching the high water mark of their season with back-to-back wins over Cowtown and Death Valley, the Excaliburs have faltered when compared with other top teams. Their crucible came in Week 13 against these same Violators and they were no match for them in almost every aspect of the game. Their best player that day was Michael Crabtree and he is listed as 'Doubtful' for this game. If he is out, the improved Violators' defence will be in a position to win the match-up battle against sets of 3 or more wide receivers. The Swords need a big performance from their veteran QB or it will not be a very close game after half time. The real power of the Violators lies of course in Matt Stafford and his quintet of under-rated but eminently dangerous wide receivers. York has the best pass rush in the league and it will have to find a way to pressure and knock down the Virden QB or the Violators won't have to bother unleashing Ben Tate and Beanie Wells. If you'd asked me at the beginning of the season who I would pick in this game, I would have said York; but since then the Violators have won me over. **PICK: VIRDEN**

COWTOWN @ DURHAM (line – THUNDER LIZARDS by 6)

Last year the Corn Kings had the best record in football and exited in the first round of the playoffs at home against the Dinos. This year they have an opportunity to return the favour at Jurassic Park. Durham may not have had the best record in the EFL, but they were unquestionably the strongest team in the Can-Am Conference in 2012. Much attention has centered on the quarterback controversy and the strength of their wide receivers, but the real strength of the Lizards has been their pass defence, which ranks first in nearly every category and has limited opposing quarterbacks to a measly 62.8 passer rating. This is not good news for Cowtown's "Mr. Inconsistent," but while Joe Flacco has struggled to find the mark at times this year, he still ranks third in the league in TD passes with 33, showing an ability to make the clutch throws at the key times. Maurice Jones-Drew is a veritable workhorse in the backfield and the Corn Kings will want to continue riding him into the soggy Jurassic Park turf. The Corn Kings' defence is a little underrated despite leading the league in yards-per-play surrendered with 4.7. While the Lizards found a way around them in Week 12, it may be difficult to do it again in the playoffs, especially if the weather is bad. And speaking of the weather – that factor will determine the nature of this game. If it is relatively dry, look for Durham to pull away by the 4th quarter; if it is soggy, anything can happen with these two defences on the field. **PICK: DURHAM**

MARKHAM @ SCARBOROUGH (line – BLUE EAGLES by 2)

These two clubs did not face each other in the regular season. The last time they did, Markham wasn't the team it is today, but they still fell by just 2 points. The Blue Eagles are questioning themselves again after 2 losses in their final 6 games of the season and difficulties putting away South Carolina and Twin Cities during that stretch. The team that had been 10-0 before getting chomped by Durham is still impressive, but not as formidable in its own mind. Markham was caught flat-footed in a meaningless game at the Fish Tank in the final week. While that was an embarrassing lapse coming on the eve of the post-season, it bucked the trend of a team that has been steadily rising since crushing Gwinnett in Week 11. The North Stars have a slight edge in team offence and the two teams are practically even defensively. The North Stars' Achilles Heel is turnovers, which they both generate and surrender. Overall, they are +8 on the season, but against a team like the Blue Eagles they cannot afford to throw the ball away. Fortunately they have a solid offensive line capable of working the line of scrimmage against a good defence as well as two running backs in DeAngelo Williams and Jonathan Stewart who can work inside and also breakaway to the outside. Expect Markham to pound the Scarborough line on offence until Eli is ready to launch a deep ball. On the Scarborough side, Aaron Rodgers has been steady, but not as dominant when compared with other top quarterbacks. His apologists will tell you that is because he doesn't have to be with Ray Rice in the backfield. While that may be true, at some point he will have to carry his team during these playoffs and if he doesn't make a big play or two against the turnover-hungry North Stars, he may not get a chance after this week. Expect a close game, and a handful of new grey hairs for both coaches, with the Eagles squeaking by. **PICK: SCARBOROUGH**

EFL FOCUS

A weekly tour of Media from around the EFL. This week we focus on.....

MARKHAM



Sparky McGillicuddy

CHANGE IS IN THE IOWA AIR

By Sparky McGillicuddy

IOWA CITY - Watching The atmosphere at Joe Ferguson Stadium was less than optimal as the Iowa City Cubs wrapped up their worst campaign ever by hosting the high-flying, in your face Death Valley Undertakers. Chris Worthley (think Rex Ryan on steroids) brought his 14-1 squad into the Heartland with one goal: Get Willis "Ghetto Dweller" McGahee and Ryan Matthews over the 1,000 yard mark for the season. Plain and simple. The Undertakers shot out to their customary 7-0 lead on a Drew Brees to Aaron Hernandez 28-yard strike. Worthley, always the class act, opted for an onside kick and it was recovered by tough as nails Iowa City reserve offensive lineman Mike "Gibby" Gibson. As the Undertakers employed the dirty tactics (including eye-gouging) taught to them by the Worthley-led coaching staff to pry the

Ball from Gibson, Gibson retained possession and power elbowed special teams stalwart Vontaze Burfict in the throat, leaving the thug speechless and in tears as he was helped to the sideline.

After the Cubs cut the score to 7-3, Brees went to work again, hitting Rob Gronkowski on a 63-yard gem to put the Undertakers up 11. After another failed Death Valley onside kick, the Cubs drive ended on yet another missed field goal by Greg Zuerlein.

With the Undertakers up 24-3 at halftime, the Iowa City faithful went into full-fledged bitter beer mode and began belting out, "We've had enough, into the fire (with Redding)", as they parodied an old KISS song from the 80's. With that, a giant poster of Redding was unfurled by a fan as he ran onto the field, dropped it in the Cubs endzone and lit it on fire.

The Cubs' never say die attitude once again took center stage and Russell Wilson, Dexter McCluster Jason Pierre-Paul and Mike Wallace led the charge back from the brink. Iowa City cut the lead to 24-17 and were on the move again! Facing a 4th and goal at the Death Valley 1 yard line, Russell Wilson rolled out and found Mike Wallace, who made a leaping grab, for the tying score! The Cubs received the overtime kickoff (strange, as the referees didn't bother to flip a coin). For the fourth time, Death Valley opted for an onside kick

and, for the fourth time, it failed. Presented with a golden opportunity, Russell Wilson was sacked on the first play and the offense couldn't dig themselves out of the hole. The Undertakers marched down the field and capped off the victory with a Drew Brees 14-yard game-winning touchdown to Mario Manningham.

Injury Update: Late in the 4th Quarter, Death Valley left tackle Jake Long suffered a stinger. He has been ruled out for their opening playoff game vs. Los Angeles! He is set to miss 2 games.

Worthley was not happy after the game. "They think they got one over on me by crippling Long. That was a dirty play! I can't wait to play them next year! I CAN'T WAIT!!! Iowa City Owner/C.E.O. Rodney Alberhasky was in attendance and made a brief statement after the game. He said a press conference will be announced shortly and "some major fundamental changes will be made." Stay tuned!

-Sparky McGillicuddy

