

2010



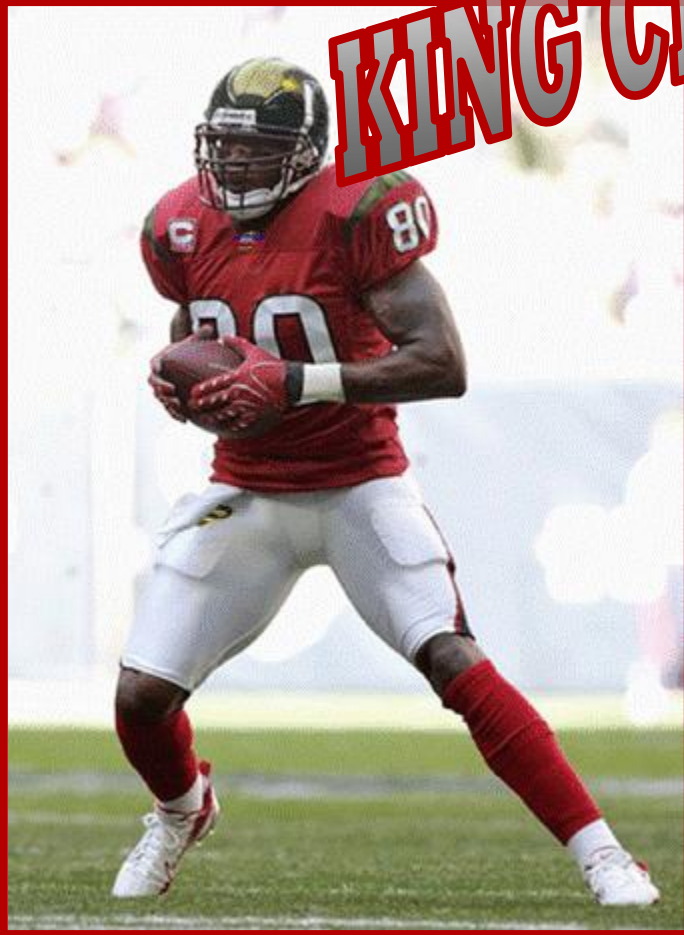
2010

WEEK SIXTEEN IN REVIEW

January 30th, 2011



KING CRIMSON!



Andre Johnson makes history, Ringgold makes playoffs with 55-24 rout of Garland. (STORY INSIDE)

LATEST EFL NEWS INSIDE

THE GAMES

- CRIMSON TIDE ROLLS OVER MUSTANGS
- KASAY LEAVES HIS MARK ON STARS
- NO DECISION IN L.A.
- BEARS PAW SLEEPING PATS
- MOHAVE END "HELL" OF A SEASON ON HOT NOTE
- DURHAM HITS LOW POINT IN COWTOWN
- CUBS IN CONTROL IN CAMELOT
- FANTASTIC FLORIDA FLAWLESS FIRST

COMMENT

"Dr. McChad's Post-Season Post-Mortem," "M.V.P. Land," "Ringgold finally playoff bound," "A Loser's Victory," "True Perfection."— Spats McChad

PREDICTIONS

Los Angeles will come back to life, Pickering will swat aside the Dinos, The Romo Factor and Florida will win (did you expect different?). – Jimmy the Geek



*Who was slick
in Week
Sixteen?*

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



Ben Roethlisberger
QB
Ringgold Crimson
Hawks

450 yds passing & 7 TDs vs
Garland to lead team into playoffs.



Mike Brown
DB
Chino Convicts

15 tackles, 2 INTs, 1 FF – made
pick to preserve league's first tie.

HAWKS SOAR TO NEW HEIGHTS

RECORD DAY IN RINGGOLD AS TEAM SCORES 1ST PLAYOFF BERTH



RINGGOLD

55



GARLAND

24

RINGGOLD – It was a record day in Ringgold. **Ben Roethlisberger** tied the single game TD passing mark of 7 to lead his team to their first playoff berth in franchise history. Big Ben also watched his opponent, **Matt Ryan**, throw for 494 yards trying to keep up with the super-hot Ringgold attack; breaking Ben's single game passing mark of 465 yards in the process. But the banner day belonged to **Andre Johnson**, who shattered **Wes Welker's** single game reception yardage mark of 246 with a thrilling 278 yards receiving on 11 catches; 4 of those for touchdowns.

Welker, who with 154 yards had a great day in his own right, could only watch helplessly as Johnson ran through the Garland secondary unchallenged from their first scoring drive to their last. Johnson caught a 20-yard pass on Ringgold's first play from scrimmage then 2 plays later snagged a 32-yard pass on a long slant to set up a 6-yard TD pass from Big Ben to **Maurice Jones-Drew** to stake the Hawks to an early 7-0 lead. The Mustangs fired right back with a 61-yard pass from Ryan to Welker that set up a 24-yard field goal by **Robbie Gould**. After a Ringgold three-and-out, the Mustangs needed just one play, a 50-yard TD pass to **Chris Chambers** on a long post, to vault ahead 10-7. But, Garland's only lead of the day would not last long. Ringgold answered by hurling Jones-Drew at the Mustangs' line. The Ringgold runner ground out 36 yards on 5 carries to set up a 9-yard TD pass to **Santonio Holmes** that put his team in front 14-10 near the end of the 1st quarter.

Sensing early that they were in a shootout, the Mustangs started gambling late in the 1st quarter – trying to convert a 4th and 10 at the Ringgold 37 yard line. They came up short by 5 yards, giving the Hawks the ball at their own 32. Roethlisberger made short work of the field by finding Johnson twice on the next drive – the first time for 34 yards and the second time for 16 yards and a TD to extend Ringgold's lead to 21-10. Not to be completely outshone, the Hawks defence took control on Garland's next possession; **DeMarcus Ware** sacked Ryan for an 8-yard loss on 2nd down and safety, **Brodney Pool** cut underneath Welker for an interception and a 36-yard return to the Mustangs 7 yard line to set up an eventual 18-yard chip shot FG by **Shaun Suisham** to make it 24-10. Another failed 4th down and 10 gamble by Garland, this time at mid-field, set the Hawks up nicely for their 4th TD of the 1st half – a 19-yard pass to rookie tight end, Rob Gronkowski. The Mustangs got that one back as Chambers hauled in a 32-yard pass and **Frank Gore** made his only yards of the day count with an 8-yard TD run to make it 31-17 Ringgold. With 29 seconds left in the half, the Hawks were not yet done. Jones-Drew gained 12 yards on a draw and Johnson caught a 38-yard bomb to set up a 44-yard FG by Suisham to make it 34-17 as the gun sounded to end the 2nd quarter.

The 2nd half brought more fireworks for the home team, including a 56 and 24-yard TD passes to the unstoppable Johnson. Despite a record aerial display, Garland could not keep up, allowing Ringgold to romp to a 55-24 victory and earn the final wild card berth in their conference.

01-29-2011 The Hawk's Nest Temp: 40 Wind: 5-15 None MVP: **Ben Roethlisberger**

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2009 Garland (3-13)	10	7	7	0	24
2009 Ringgold (7-9)	14	20	14	7	55

1 9:07 Ringgold	TD Roethlisberger 6 pass to Jones-Drew (Suisham) (4-65-2:	0-7
1 7:10 Garland	FG Gould 24 (7-63-1:44)	3-7
1 5:59 Garland	TD Ryan 50 pass to Chambers (Gould) (1-50-0:15)	10-7
1 1:03 Ringgold	TD Roethlisberger 9 pass to Holmes (Suisham) (12-73-4:43)	10-14
2 11:51 Ringgold	TD Roethlisberger 16 pass to Johnson (Suisham) (7-68-3:36)	10-21
2 8:15 Ringgold	FG Suisham 18 (4-6-1:52)	10-24
2 4:40 Ringgold	TD Roethlisberger 19 pass to Gronkowski (Suisham) (4-55-1	10-31
2 0:40 Garland	TD Gore 8 run (Gould) (8-70-3:54)	17-31
2 0:00 Ringgold	FG Suisham 44 (3-50-0:29)	17-34
3 5:15 Ringgold	TD Roethlisberger 17 pass to Johnson (Suisham) (5-35-2:44	17-41
3 1:35 Garland	TD Ryan 11 pass to Welker (Gould) (7-49-3:33)	24-41
3 0:16 Ringgold	TD Roethlisberger 56 pass to Johnson (Suisham) (3-71-1:07	24-48
4 9:53 Ringgold	TD Roethlisberger 24 pass to Johnson (Suisham) (3-55-1:51	24-55

	GDM	RCH
First Downs	22	25
Rushes	9-20	24-102
Passes	65-36-494	32-22-450
Sacked	5-34	2-16
Fumble	0	0
Penalties	7-45	1-5
Turnovers	2	0
Time	29:18	30:42
Third Down	7-17	5-10
Fourth Down	4-8	0-0
Red Att/Td/Fg	6/2/1	6/5/1
Net Offense	480	536

< Garland >

Passing	Att	Cmp	Yds	Sk	25	In	Td	Rate
Ryan	65	36	494	5	3	2	2	77.3

Rushing	Att	Yds	Ave	FD	10	Lg	TD
Gore	3	8	2.7	1	0	8	1
Ryan	2	6	3.0	0	0	3	0
Forte	2	3	1.5	1	0	2	0
McGahee	2	3	1.5	1	0	4	0

Receiving	No	Dp	Att	Yds	Ave	FD	25	Lg	TD
Welker	10	0	21	154	15.4	5	1	61	1
Forte	8	0	9	74	9.3	5	0	17	0
Chambers	5	0	10	151	30.2	5	2	50	1
Edelman	3	0	4	38	12.7	2	0	16	0
Gore	3	0	5	19	6.3	0	0	8	0
Carlson	3	0	4	25	8.3	1	0	14	0
Keller	3	2	9	26	8.7	1	0	12	0

< Ringgold >

Passing	Att	Cmp	Yds	Sk	25	In	Td	Rate
Roethlisberger	32	22	450	2	6	0	7	151.0

Rushing	Att	Yds	Ave	FD	10	Lg	TD
Jones-Drew	20	89	4.5	5	3	15	0
Roethlisber	4	13	3.3	1	0	7	0

Receiving	No	Dp	Att	Yds	Ave	FD	25	Lg	TD
Johnson	11	0	14	278	25.3	10	4	56	4
Jones-Drew	4	0	5	73	18.3	4	1	31	1
Holmes	3	1	6	48	16.0	3	1	32	1
Gronkowski	2	0	5	37	18.5	2	0	19	1
Thomas	2	0	2	14	7.0	0	0	10	0

SPARTANS FIGHT OFF STUBBORN STARS

GAME POINTS: With Pickering's entire starting wide receiver corps and several others sitting down, the Spartans had their hands full at home trying to prevent an upset by the determined North Stars. With a playoff spot in their sights, Markham challenged by forcing 2 **Brett Favre** interceptions and getting clutch TD throws from **Jason Campbell** to keep pace on the scoreboard. The Spartans controlled the play, but could not find the end zone again after **Devin Thomas** caught a 14-yard TD pass from Favre late in the 2nd quarter to tie the game at 14. Forced to settle for field goals, the Spartans slowly built a 20-14 lead by the final quarter of play but saw it disappear when **Jason Peelle** capped off a 13-play Markham drive with a 1-yard TD reception from Campbell. **Chris Johnson** broke the single season rushing record on a 14-yard run that helped key Pickering's final scoring drive. With 1:45 left, **John Kasay** drove it through from 38 yards for the win.

KEY PERFORMANCES: **Brett Favre** completed 25 of 35 for 259 yards, 2 TDs and 2 INTs, **Chris Johnson** rushed for 127 yards on 24 carries, **Tony Gonzalez** caught 8 for 95 yards and 1 TD; **Jason Campbell** went 11 of 18 for 96 yards, 3 TDs, **DeAngelo Williams** rushed for 107 yards on 24 carries, **Jahvid Best** gained 55 yards on 10 carries.



21

MARKHAM



23

PICKERING

01-29-2011 Thermopylae Stadium Temp: 18 Wind: 0-10 None MVP: **Chris Johnson**

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2009 Markham (6-10)	7	7	0	7	21
2009 Pickering (15-1)	7	10	0	6	23

1 9:02 Pickering	TD Favre 7 pass to Gonzalez (Kasay) (13-85-5:52)	0-7
1 0:32 Markham	TD Campbell 14 pass to Leach (Lindell) (13-71-8:14)	7-7
2 7:01 Markham	TD Campbell 5 pass to Ochocinco (Lindell) (6-25-2:11)	14-7
2 3:19 Pickering	TD Favre 14 pass to Thomas (Kasay) (7-68-3:28)	14-14
2 0:22 Pickering	FG Kasay 33 (9-62-1:29)	14-17
4 14:56 Pickering	FG Kasay 30 (17-78-10:04)	14-20
4 6:37 Markham	TD Campbell 1 pass to Peelle (Lindell) (13-66-7:22)	21-20
4 1:45 Pickering	FG Kasay 38 (11-59-4:42)	21-23

	MAR	PIC
First Downs	17	25
Rushes	38-167	27-130
Passes	18-11-96	35-25-259
Sacked	1-2	1-2
Fumble	1	0
Penalties	2-10	5-38
Turnovers	1	2
Time	31:25	28:35
Third Down	11-13	8-12
Fourth Down	1-2	0-0
Red Att/Td/Fg	4/3/0	4/2/2
Net Offense	261	387



CHINO

13



LOS ANGELES

13

TIE ONE ON!

GAME POINTS: It was the kind of defensive slugfest many anticipated but the final result was a shock. LA and Chino fought to the league's historic first tie after LA saw victory slip from their hands in the final seconds of regulation. After taking a 7-point lead on a 49-yard FG by **Dan Carpenter**, the Knights squib-kicked with 1:31 left and **Joshua Cribbs** returned it 13 yards to the LA 49 yard line. From there, **Jay Cutler** led a sharp TD drive sparked by a 25-yard screen to **Steven Jackson** and ending with an 8-yard scoring strike to **Greg Olsen** with 17 seconds left. Chino carried the momentum into OT with a 53-yard drive to the Knights 16, but **Jeff Reed** missed from 33 yards to give LA new life. Back-to-back lost fumbles in LA territory and consecutive punts by both teams ate up clock until the Knights pushed into Chino territory with 39 seconds left. But Convict, **Mike Brown** intercepted **Kurt Warner** at the Chino 28 to preserve the tie.

KEY PERFORMANCES: **Kurt Warner** went 28 of 42 for 297 yards, 1 TD and 2 INTs, **Roddy White** caught 9 passes for 116 yards and 1 TD, **Jamaal Charles** rushed for 92 yards on 24 carries; **Jay Cutler** completed 32 of 51 for 291 yards, 1 TD and 2 INTs, **Knowshon Moreno** had 137 total yards on 8 catches and 23 carries.

01-29-2011 Round Table Stadium Temp: 61 Wind: Calm Rain MVP: **Mike Brown**

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2009 Chino (11-4-1)	3	3	0	7	13
2009 Los Angeles (7-8-1)	0	3	0	10	13

1 6:27 Chino	FG Reed 48 (5-21-2:36)	3-0
2 10:13 Chino	FG Reed 34 (12-40-5:22)	6-0
2 4:28 Los Angeles	FG Carpenter 35 (11-49-5:33)	6-3
4 11:31 Los Angeles	TD Warner 14 pass to White (Carpenter) (5-55-2:34)	6-10
4 1:36 Los Angeles	FG Carpenter 49 (11-48-7:00)	6-13
4 0:17 Chino	TD Cutler 8 pass to Olsen (Reed,J) (6-59-1:01)	13-13

	CHI	LAK
First Downs	19	17
Rushes	29-99	30-112
Passes	51-32-291	42-28-297
Sacked	6-29	1-8
Fumble	4	1
Penalties	7-65	10-70
Turnovers	3	3
Time	39:47	35:13
Third Down	5-20	6-16
Fourth Down	2-4	2-2
Red Att/Td/Fg	3/1/1	1/1/0
Net Offense	361	401

KUTZTOWN TAKES DOWN PATS

GAME POINTS: With Charleswood leading 6-3 and pressing for more points late in the 2nd quarter, Kutztown safety **LaRon Landry** intercepted **Peyton Manning** at the 13 yard line and returned it 80 yards to the Pats' 7. From there, **Tony Romo** set up a screen to **Le'Ron McClain** that the fullback took to the house to give the Bears a 10-6 lead at halftime. In the 2nd half, the Charleswood offence, deprived of its starting wide receivers, could make no headway against a Kutztown defence that was focused on stopping the pass. Romo completed 6 consecutive passes for 72 yards to 4 different receivers to set up a 2-yard TD run by McClain that made it 17-6 at the start of the 4th quarter. **Adrian Peterson** got the call 8 times on the Pats' next drive to get their offence rolling, but after reaching the Bears' 37 a pair of offensive penalties and a lost fumble by Peterson snuffed out Charleswood's last good scoring opportunity.

KEY PERFORMANCES: **Le'Ron McClain** rushed for 41 yards and gained 48 thru the air, **Tony Romo** went 18 of 23 for 163 yards, 1 TD and 1 INT, **Ray Lewis** made 14 tackles, 1 sack and 1 FF; **Peyton Manning** went 16 of 31 for 162 yards and 1 INT, **Adrian Peterson** rushed for 94 yards on 21 carries, **Jason Avant** caught 7 for 66 yards.



6

CHARLESWOOD



20

KUTZTOWN

01-29-2011 Lincoln Financial Temp: 48 Wind: 0-10 None MVP: **Le'Ron McClain**

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2009 Charleswood (12-4)	3	3	0	0	6
2009 Kutztown (9-7)	3	7	0	10	20

1 10:37 Charleswood	FG Gostkowski 36 (10-46-4:08)	3-0
1 5:08 Kutztown	FG Kaeding 46 (12-44-5:16)	3-3
2 6:01 Charleswood	FG Gostkowski 19 (12-78-6:07)	6-3
2 0:16 Kutztown	TD Romo 7 pass to McClain (Kaeding) (1-7-0:07)	6-10
4 14:50 Kutztown	TD McClain 2 run (Kaeding) (10-85-5:59)	6-17
4 3:12 Kutztown	FG Kaeding 36 (8-41-4:55)	6-20

	CHP	KUT
First Downs	16	17
Rushes	29-105	27-105
Passes	31-16-162	23-18-163
Sacked	4-28	1-11
Fumble	3	1
Penalties	5-35	6-30
Turnovers	2	2
Time	30:19	29:41
Third Down	4-15	4-10
Fourth Down	3-4	0-0
Red Att/Td/Fg	4/0/2	2/2/0
Net Offense	239	257



27

MOHAVE



14

VIRDEN

MOHAVE SINGES VIRDEN IN FINALE

GAME POINTS: **Matt Schaub** finished strongly in Mohave's final game of the season, throwing 2 TD passes to **Terrell Owens** in a convincing win over Virден at **TERRORDOME**. It was **Rashard Mendenhall** who set the offensive tone for the Hellfire, carrying 8 times for 39 yards on their opening field goal drive, and 7 more times on their first TD drive that finished with a 2-yard run by **Jerome Harrison** to make the score 13-7 for Mohave at halftime. Schaub connected with **Owen Daniels** for a 34-yard pass play on Mohave's opening drive of the 2nd half and found Owens 3 plays later for a 14-yard TD pass to make it 20-7. **Drew Brees** found **Tory Holt** at the back of the end zone on a hitch route to bring Virден to within one score. But the Virден star was picked off by **Chris Houston** in the red zone to snuff out a possible go-ahead TD drive. Aided by defensive penalties, the Hellfire moved 93 yards for the final TD to salt the game away.

KEY PERFORMANCES: **Matt Schaub** went 20 of 31 for 248 yards and 2 TDs, **Rashard Mendenhall** gained 103 yards on 26 carries, **Terrell Owens** caught 4 for 61 yards and 2 TDs; **Drew Brees** went 25 of 46 for 285 yards, 2 TDs and 2 INTs.

01-25-2011 TERRORDOME Temp: 63 Wind: Calm None MVP: **Matt Schaub**

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2009 Mohave (7-9)	6	7	7	7	27
2009 Virден (6-10)	0	7	0	7	14

1 4:32 Mohave	FG Bironas 39 (15-56-8:38)	3-0
1 2:13 Mohave	FG Bironas 37 (6-19-2:06)	6-0
2 12:03 Virден	TD Brees 6 pass to Tomlinson (Tynes) (12-83-5:04)	6-7
2 2:57 Mohave	TD Harrison 2 run (Bironas) (16-81-9:01)	13-7
3 10:44 Mohave	TD Schaub 14 pass to Owens (Bironas) (7-75-4:10)	20-7
4 14:39 Virден	TD Brees 7 pass to Holt (Tynes) (13-50-4:33)	20-14
4 2:51 Mohave	TD Schaub 28 pass to Owens (Bironas) (8-93-4:19)	27-14

	MOH	VV
First Downs	25	19
Rushes	37-125	9-13
Passes	31-20-248	46-25-285
Sacked	2-15	2-17
Fumble	1	2
Penalties	8-45	6-51
Turnovers	0	3
Time	37:12	22:48
Third Down	6-15	4-13
Fourth Down	2-2	2-2
Red Att/Td/Fg	4/2/2	3/2/0
Net Offense	358	281

CORN KINGS STUN DINOS

GAME POINTS: Trailing 21-10 in the 4th quarter, the Corn Kings suddenly came to life when **Stephen Tulloch** forced **Kevin Smith** to fumble at the Durham 44 yard line and **Robert Geathers** returned it for a TD. **Joe Flacco** hooked up with **Donnie Avery** for the 2-point conversion to pull within a FG of Durham with 10 minutes remaining. After a 3-and-out by the Dinos, Cowtown got the ball in Durham territory after a 20-yard punt return by **Tramon Williams**. A 15-yard pass to **Kevin Walter** put them in range for a 43-yard FG by **Olindo Mare** to tie the game. Durham took over and drove the ball up the field into the Corn Kings red zone, but **Justin Durant** intercepted **Philip Rivers** at the 18 yard line and returned it 26 yards. After an apparent Durham interception was negated by an offside penalty against **Mike Peterson**, Flacco hit Walter for a 42-yard pass play to the Durham 15. Two plays later, Mare kicked the winner with no time left from 27 yards.

KEY PERFORMANCES: **Joe Flacco** went 20 of 31 for 217 yards and 1 TD, **Marion Barber** gained 99 yards on 18 carries, **Kevin Walter** caught 8 for 117 yards; **Philip Rivers** went 18 of 33 for 230 yards, 2 TDs, 1 INT, **Dwayne Bowe** caught 6 for 94 yards.



DURHAM

21



COWTOWN

24

01-29-2011 Tillman Field Temp: 38 Wind: 5-15 None MVP: **Joe Flacco**

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2009 Durham (10-6)	0	7	14	0	21
2009 Cowtown (3-13)	3	7	0	14	24

1 0:13 Cowtown	FG Mare 26 (10-47-5:31)	0-3
2 9:42 Durham	TD Faulk 8 run (Crosby) (6-74-3:34)	7-3
2 3:33 Cowtown	TD Flacco 11 pass to Camarillo (Mare) (13-87-6:04)	7-10
3 9:18 Durham	TD Rivers 5 pass to Smith (Crosby) (10-61-5:30)	14-10
3 5:07 Durham	TD Rivers 16 pass to Smith (Crosby) (2-25-0:51)	21-10
4 10:10 Cowtown	TD Geathers 44 yd fumble recovery (2 - Avery) (0-0-0:00)	21-18
4 5:50 Cowtown	FG Mare 43 (7-21-2:25)	21-21
4 0:00 Cowtown	FG Mare 27 (7-46-2:33)	21-24

	DTL	COW
First Downs	20	16
Rushes	23-127	30-141
Passes	33-18-230	31-20-217
Sacked	2-18	3-25
Fumble	4	1
Penalties	4-15	5-50
Turnovers	3	1
Time	25:39	34:21
Third Down	5-10	7-16
Fourth Down	1-2	0-1
Red Att/Td/Fg	4/3/0	3/1/2
Net Offense	339	333



IOWA CITY

19



YORK

0

CUBS RACK UP MEANINGLESS WIN

GAME POINTS: **Neil Rackers** kicked 4 field goals in 4 attempts to account for most of the scoring in a meaningless game in York. **Patrick Willis** picked off **Tom Brady** on York's first possession to set up the first and shortest of Rackers' field goals from 29 yards out. Early in the 2nd quarter, **Sam Bradford** completed 7 of 8 passes for 64 yards on the game's only TD drive, striking for 'six' on a 3-yard short quick to **Lee Evans** to make it 10-0 Iowa City. The Excaliburs struggled on offence all day due to lack of any effective running game. When they did get into scoring position, **Shayne Graham** missed on both of his field goal opportunities and, down 13-0 late in the 3rd quarter; York was denied on 4th & 5 at the Iowa City 18 yard line. **Mario Williams** was a force in the York backfield all day; pressuring Brady while forcing fumbles on both of his 2 sacks.

KEY PERFORMANCES: **Sam Bradford** went 22 of 34 for 214 yards, 1 TD, 1 INT, **Larry Fitzgerald** caught 8 passes for 112 yards, **Patrick Willis** made 8 tackles, 1 stuff and 1 INT, **Mario Williams** had 2 sacks, 3 Hurries and 2 FF; **Tom Brady** went 23 of 43 for 243 yards and 1 INT, **Pierre Thomas** rushed for 25 yards on 11 carries.

01-29-2011 Camelot Temp: 42 Wind: Calm None MVP: **Sam Bradford**

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2009 Iowa City (6-10)	3	10	0	6	19
2009 York (3-13)	0	0	0	0	0

1 8:41 Iowa City	FG Rackers 29 (8-27-3:13)	3-0
2 10:36 Iowa City	TD Bradford 3 pass to Evans (Rackers) (10-68-4:39)	10-0
2 4:27 Iowa City	FG Rackers 44 (6-44-3:28)	13-0
4 9:09 Iowa City	FG Rackers 38 (8-28-4:47)	16-0
4 2:27 Iowa City	FG Rackers 35 (7-14-4:44)	19-0

	ICC	YOR
First Downs	18	12
Rushes	32-87	15-30
Passes	34-22-214	43-23-243
Sacked	0-0	2-18
Fumble	1	2
Penalties	1-5	6-40
Turnovers	1	1
Time	33:04	26:56
Third Down	9-16	9-15
Fourth Down	0-1	0-3
Red Att/Td/Fg	3/1/2	2/0/0
Net Offense	301	255

FLORIDA IS FLAWLESS

GAME POINTS: The Florida Dragons made EFL football history by becoming the first team to record a perfect 16-0 record in the regular season. They did it in classic Dragons style, forcing 4 Gwinnett turnovers and mounting a balanced attack on offence to stroll to an easy win. For the briefest of moments it looked like the game might go differently. On the first play from scrimmage, the Glads' **Darnell Dockett** broke through the Florida line and sacked **Aaron Rodgers**, forcing a fumble that **D.J. Williams** recovered at the Florida 28 yard line. But Gwinnett came away with no points to show for their early break when **Thomas Jones** was stopped for no gain on 4th down and 1 at the 19 yard line. The Dragons took complete control of the game from that point. A 56-yard catch and run by **Ray Rice** put Florida into position for their first points, a 19-yard FG by Ryan Longwell. On Gwinnett's next possession, safety **Michael Griffin** intercepted **Eli Manning** at the Florida 43 and the Dragons turned it into points in just 4 plays; the last two passes of 26 yards then 11 yards for a TD to **DeSean Jackson**. The Florida "Firewall" soon became too hot for Gwinnett to handle while the Florida offence used the running game and the occasional pass to move 75 yards to their second TD on a 1-yard run by Rice to make it 20-0. Two Florida TDs in the 3rd quarter turned the game into a laughter and the 4th quarter played out with **Matt Cassel** at QB for Gwinnett and Florida in cruise control.

KEY PERFORMANCES: **Aaron Rodgers** went 12 of 20 for 250 yards and 2 TDs, **Jonathan Stewart** rushed for 116 yards and 1 TD on 22 carries, **Brandon Marshall** caught 4 passes for 112 yards and 1 TD, **LaMarr Woodley** had 2 sacks; **Eli Manning** went 9 of 21 for 80 yards and 2 INTS, **Leon Washington** had 5 carries for 61 yards.



37

FLORIDA



13

GWINNETT

01-29-2011 Gwinnett Coliseum Temp: 56 Wind: 5-15 None MVP: **Aaron Rodgers**

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2009 Florida (16-0)	13	7	14	3	37
2009 Gwinnett (6-10)	0	3	0	10	13

1 9:00 Florida	FG Longwell 19 (8-79-4:18)	3-0
1 5:54 Florida	TD Rodgers 11 pass to Jackson (Longwell) (4-57-1:57)	10-0
1 0:11 Florida	FG Longwell 26 (9-45-3:45)	13-0
2 7:50 Florida	TD Rice 1 run	20-0
2 0:00 Gwinnett	FG Brown 21 (12-84-4:16)	20-3
3 12:23 Florida	TD Rodgers 63 pass to Marshall (Longwell) (2-74-0:52)	27-3
3 3:30 Florida	TD Stewart 3 run (Longwell) (7-37-3:48)	34-3
4 14:55 Gwinnett	FG Brown 47 (9-39-3:21)	34-6
4 12:17 Florida	FG Longwell 52 (4-9-2:32)	37-6
4 3:15 Gwinnett	TD Cassel 32 pass to Thomas (Brown,J) (12-69-4:00)	37-13

	FLD	GWG
First Downs	19	12
Rushes	40-169	21-116
Passes	20-12-250	37-18-153
Sacked	2-10	3-13
Fumble	4	5
Penalties	3-35	7-55
Turnovers	1	4
Time	35:03	24:57
Third Down	4-14	5-16
Fourth Down	0-0	2-3
Red Att/Td/Fg	6/3/2	2/0/1
Net Offense	409	256

WEEK SIXTEEN LEADERS

Passing

Ryan, M (GDM)	65-36-494
Roethlisberger (RCH)	32-22-450
Warner (LAK)	42-28-297
Cutler (CHI)	51-32-291
Brees (VV)	46-25-285

Rushing

Johnson, C (PIC)	24-127
Stewart (FLD)	22-116
Williams, D (MAR)	24-107
Mendenhall (MOH)	26-103
Barber (COW)	18-99

Receiving

Johnson, A (RCH)	11-278
Welker (GDM)	10-154
Chambers, C (GDM)	5-151
Walter (COW)	8-117
White, R (LAK)	9-116

LEADER BOARD

STANDINGS

East	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Charleswood (1)	12	4	0	0.750	490	30.6	264	16.5	14.1	8 0 0	4 2 0	7 3 0
Kutztown (3)	9	7	0	0.563	348	21.8	364	22.8	-1	5 3 0	3 3 0	6 4 0
Mohave	7	9	0	0.438	322	20.1	383	23.9	-3.8	5 3 0	4 2 0	6 4 0
Virden	6	10	0	0.375	336	21	430	26.9	-5.9	4 4 0	1 5 0	2 8 0
West	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Chino (2)	11	4	1	0.719	420	26.3	239	14.9	11.3	6 2 0	4 1 1	8 1 1
Los Angeles (4)	7	8	1	0.469	335	20.9	296	18.5	2.4	3 4 1	2 3 1	4 5 1
Iowa City	6	10	0	0.375	278	17.4	381	23.8	-6.4	1 6 0	3 3 0	4 6 0
York	3	13	0	0.188	270	16.9	485	30.3	-13.4	2 7 0	2 4 0	2 8 0
North	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Pickering (2)	15	1	0	0.938	503	31.4	227	14.2	17.3	7 1 0	6 0 0	9 1 0
Durham (3)	10	6	0	0.625	368	23	299	18.7	4.3	7 1 0	2 4 0	5 5 0
Markham	6	10	0	0.375	289	18.1	403	25.2	-7.1	5 3 0	2 4 0	3 7 0
Cowtown	3	13	0	0.188	236	14.8	448	28	-13.3	3 5 0	2 4 0	3 7 0
South	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Florida (1)	16	0	0	1.000	460	28.8	199	12.4	16.3	8 0 0	6 0 0	10 0 0
Ringgold (4)	7	9	0	0.438	394	24.6	383	23.9	0.7	5 3 0	3 3 0	5 5 0
Gwinnett	6	10	0	0.375	320	20	430	26.9	-6.9	4 4 0	2 4 0	3 7 0
Garland (#)-conf playoff seed	3	13	0	0.188	337	21.1	475	29.7	-8.6	2 6 0	1 5 0	2 8 0

PASSING

			Att	Cmp	C%	Yards	In	I%	Lg	TD	TD%	Rate
1	Favre	PIC	440	302	68.6	4013	11	2.5	53	31	7	110.4
2	Rodgers	FLD	411	266	64.7	3273	7	1.7	75	23	5.6	100.8
3	Manning, P	CHP	499	336	67.3	3991	15	3	73	30	6	99
4	Roethlisberger	RCH	484	310	64	3893	15	3.1	56	32	6.6	98.1
5	McNabb	CHI	353	218	61.8	2678	7	2	64	22	6.2	97.7
6	Brees	VV	512	329	64.3	4004	14	2.7	51	25	4.9	93.1
7	Romo	KUT	477	315	66	3532	13	2.7	60	21	4.4	91.3
8	Campbell, J	MAR	396	257	64.9	2770	12	3	64	20	5.1	89.5
9	Warner	LAK	411	259	63	2740	12	2.9	74	23	5.6	88.9
10	Cutler	CHI	165	112	67.9	1053	5	3	39	8	4.8	88.8
11	Schaub	MOH	496	312	62.9	3628	17	3.4	56	26	5.2	88.2
12	Manning, E	GWG	474	276	58.2	3264	13	2.7	78	27	5.7	86.9
13	Rivers, P	DTL	477	273	57.2	3311	17	3.6	86	29	6.1	84.1
14	Brady	YOR	579	363	62.7	3685	18	3.1	55	25	4.3	82.3
15	Bradford	ICC	348	213	61.2	2122	8	2.3	53	11	3.2	79.5

RUSHING

			Att	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD				Att	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	Johnson,C	PIC	369	2156	5.8	88	27	8	Williams, D	MAR	208	1043	5	54	4
2	Peterson,A	CHP	331	1505	4.5	95	20	9	Rice,R	FLD	221	1033	4.7	58	6
3	Jones,T	GWG	321	1399	4.4	83	7	10	Charles	LAK	204	904	4.4	20	6
4	Jones-Drew	RCH	273	1270	4.7	94	3	11	Barber	COW	203	836	4.1	40	2
5	Williams,R	VV	294	1246	4.2	68	8	12	Best	MAR	204	806	4	56	5
6	Mendenhall	MOH	267	1138	4.3	63	4	13	Stewart	FLD	147	796	5.4	43	11
7	Jackson,S	CHI	250	1129	4.5	61	4	14	McCoy,L	KUT	202	784	3.9	75	4
8	Williams,D	MAR	208	1043	5	54	4	15	Brown,R	ICC	179	780	4.4	50	8

Yards/Game			Rushing Gains			Of	10+	Rushing			1st	Downs
1	Johnson, C	PIC	135	1	Johnson, C	PIC	61	1	Johnson, C	PIC	123	
2	Peterson, A	CHP	94.1	2	Peterson, A	CHP	32	2	Peterson, A	CHP	82	
3	Jones, T	GWG	87.4	3	Jones, T	GWG	30	3	Jones, T	GWG	81	
4	Williams, D	MAR	86.9	4	Charles	LAK	30	4	Williams, R	VV	61	
5	Jones-Drew	RCH	79.4	5	Jackson, S	CHI	28	5	Jones-Drew	RCH	58	

RECEIVING

			No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD				No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	Welker	GDM	100	1309	13.1	68	6	8	Rice, S	CHP	86	1117	13	28	5
2	Johnson, A	RCH	91	1512	16.6	56	14	9	Moss, R	CHI	85	1189	14	51	15
3	Witten	CHP	90	959	10.7	73	11	10	Clark, D	GWG	83	783	9.4	25	6
4	Wayne	GWG	88	1315	14.9	78	17	11	Smith, S	LAK	79	895	11.3	55	10
5	White, R	LAK	88	981	11.1	49	4	12	Jennings, G	KUT	79	1146	14.5	60	4
6	Holmes	RCH	87	1241	14.3	40	9	13	Fitzgerald	ICC	78	815	10.4	35	9
7	Ward, H	CHI	87	988	11.4	64	9	14	Driver	MOH	78	1052	13.5	39	6
8	Rice, S	CHP	86	1117	13	28	5	15	Colston	CHP	70	947	13.5	35	7

RAC Yards				Yards/Game						Receiving	First	Down%
1	Rice, R	FLD	529	1	Welker	GDM	101	1	Holmes	RCH	86.2	
2	Jennings, G	KUT	527	2	Johnson, A	RCH	94.5	2	Johnson, C	DTL	78.4	
3	Jones-Drew	RCH	523	3	Jackson, V	PIC	82.5	3	Jackson, V	PIC	78	
4	Johnson, A	RCH	511	4	Wayne	GWG	82.2	4	Davis, V	DTL	77.6	
5	Welker	GDM	452	5	Hester, D	VV	77.6	5	Chambers, C	GDM	76.9	

INTERCEPTIONS

			No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD				No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	Brown, S	CHP	6	109	18.2	63	1	8	Woodson	LAK	5	179	35.8	77	2
2	Sharper	KUT	5	244	48.8	87	3	9	Talib	CHI	4	115	28.8	56	1
3	Flowers	VV	5	67	13.4	37	0	10	Cox, D	VV	4	3	0.8	3	0
4	Rodgers-Cr	DTL	5	94	18.8	37	1	11	Jammer	CHP	4	57	14.3	36	0
5	Samuel	PIC	5	82	16.4	49	0	12	Rolle	ICC	4	106	26.5	45	1
6	Brown, M	CHI	5	6	1.2	2	0	13	Willis, P	ICC	4	77	19.3	31	0
7	Byrd	ICC	5	225	45	59	1	14	Collins, N	CHI	4	129	32.3	45	0
8	Woodson	LAK	5	179	35.8	77	2	15	Revis	FLD	4	146	36.5	62	1

SACKS

1	Woodley	FLD	18	7	Cole, T	MOH	12	13	Graham, B	KUT	8
2	Williams, M	ICC	14	8	Freeney	FLD	11	14	Edwards, R	PIC	8
3	Harrison, J	CHI	14	9	Ware, D	RCH	10	15	Carter, A	LAK	7
4	Orakpo	LAK	13	10	Banta-Cain	COW	9	16	Abraham	CHP	7
5	Taylor, J	PIC	13	11	Peppers	CHI	9	17	Allen, J	DTL	7

TACKLES

1	Cushing	GDM	166	7	James, B	LAK	135	13	Davis, A	VV	104
2	Ryans	ICC	162	8	Willis, P	ICC	133	14	Vilma	DTL	103
3	Hayes, G	YOR	142	9	Barnett	RCH	130	15	Carter, A	LAK	103
4	Beason	CHP	142	10	Briggs, L	GWG	120	16	Laurinaiti	GWG	98
5	Ruud	MAR	141	11	Fletcher	MOH	108	17	Newman	CHI	94

KICKING

			FGA	FGM	FG%	40	50	Lg	Pts
1	Reed, J	CHI	40	34	85	7	0	48	146
2	Longwell	FLD	35	32	91.4	14	4	56	146
3	Gostkowski	CHP	30	28	93.3	8	0	48	142
4	Kaeding	KUT	36	32	88.9	8	1	51	132
5	Kasay	PIC	29	24	82.8	2	0	41	130
6	Suisham	RCH	27	24	88.9	6	0	47	108
7	Crosby	DTL	26	20	76.9	4	0	49	104
8	Carpenter	LAK	31	27	87.1	14	7	56	103
9	Bironas	MOH	25	21	84	8	1	51	100
10	Gould	GDM	24	19	79.2	7	2	54	97
11	Rackers	ICC	28	23	82.1	6	0	49	96
12	Brown, J	GWG	24	20	83.3	9	2	54	96
13	Tynes	VV	19	16	84.2	6	2	52	88
14	Mare	COW	23	20	87	10	3	50	84
15	Lindell	MAR	23	17	73.9	4	0	47	83



AROUND THE



With Spats McChad

NEW YORK – While I am almost certainly suffering serious and undiagnosed health complications from HULD (Healthy Urban Lung Disease) I am committed, as always, first and foremost to *you* my Dear Readers. My cough is worsening to the point where it has come full circle and no longer induces in me the urge to cough – I must force it out on my own. That is how insidious this particular lung disease is; masking its harmful intrusion into my immune system by suppressing the need to cough, therefore depriving me of Nature’s warning that I am ill. How many others out there, in this hazy city, have no idea what is happening to their lungs because they have *no urge to cough*? They probably number the hundreds of thousands, if not millions.

When the EFL season is over, I will turn my investigative reporter skills to this serious health concern. In the meantime, I will not allow my immediate welfare and personal discomfort to interfere with my duty to all of you – bringing you the most entertaining and *correct* perspective of the best on-field product this crazy, violent game called football has to offer – the Elite Football League.

....AND THEN THERE WERE 8.....OR, MORE SPECIFICALLY, TWO GROUPS OF 4

Now that the dust has settled on the 4th regular season in EFL history it is a reality check to note that the 8 eight teams most pundits expected to make the post-season have, in fact, made the post-season. Apart from a coin flip call between Mohave and Kutztown and the unrealized dark horse potential of Gwinnett there was not much controversy when the season began over which teams would likely make the playoffs. Yet it often seemed throughout the entire season that something strange was happening – that something was *not quite right*. This, it turns out, had more to do with the *way* the teams found their way to the final result most of us predicted, than the final result itself.

It was a strange season in many ways and noteworthy for a variety of reasons, good and bad. We saw a team finish with a perfect 16-0 record for the first time in the league’s short history. We saw a new league rushing record set and one player score more touchdowns in a single season than any other player had before him. We saw the team with the second best record edge out the team with the perfect record in the league’s Power Rankings. We saw the single game receiving yardage record set twice; the second one achieving it while playing against the previous record holder. We also saw three 6-9 teams in a race for one wild card berth and two sub-500 teams make it to the post-season – another first (and hopefully last). It was a season where tempers often seemed short and patience was a rare and pleasant virtue. It was a season maddeningly unpredictable if you bet money on the spread but relatively stable if you bet on the winner. It was a season defined more by failure than by success, yet in 10 years will more likely be remembered for its success than its failure.

For Florida, Pickering, Durham and Ringgold in the Can-Am Conference; and Charleswood, Chino, Kutztown and Los Angeles in the Pacific-Atlantic Conference, the regular season is history and a brand new season starts this week. Throw out the records – they are all 0-0 as of now, each with a shot at the Ring. Their tale is yet to be told. As for the rest.....well what exactly happened to them anyway? Before we look forward to the playoffs and forget them, let’s take a look back and see *why* we are forgetting them. Yes, it’s time again for.....

DOCTOR McCHAD’S POST-SEASON POST-MORTEM

MOHAVE (7-9): After four weeks the Hellfire were 4-0 and **Matt Schaub** was the fashionable pick for League Offensive MVP. In Week 5, Chino clobbered Schaub, sacking him three times and pressuring him into throwing a pair of interceptions in a 32-13 loss. The Hellfire QB was never the same again and neither was the team. Frustration and impatience spilled over into the league’s second worst penalty total and the second highest number of 4th down attempts. The league’s least efficient run defence did not help but in the end it boiled down to Schaub’s 17 picks, 39 times sacked and his meteoric fall as the season progressed.

MARKHAM (6-10): One of only two teams to run more often than they passed, the North Stars were mired near the bottom of the offensive rankings all year. Their protect-Campbell policy made the offence slightly more explosive than a Roloids tablet in a glass of water. Nevertheless, considering their defence also finished near the bottom of the rankings, it is a testimony to the adaptable coaching staff that they managed to achieve their pre-season goals of 6 wins and a 3rd place



Pickering's Chris Johnson talks to reporters after setting a new single season rushing record. God, apparently, had nothing to do with it – Brett Favre did.

finish in the North Division while playing some good teams tough in the process. The key to success is in not setting the bar too high and in that respect it was a successful season for the Stars.

GWINNETT (6-10): The Glads committed too many penalties, turned the ball over 7 more times than their opponents, and gave up way too many points. Although it had improved by the end of the year, the defence was terrible for most of the season and that put enormous pressure on **Eli Manning**, who certainly did *not* rise to the challenge very often. A solid season from running back **Thomas Jones** did not take the heat off of Eli, who threw 13 picks and tied for the league lead in fumbles. Take away the Manning-to-Wayne combo and the Gwinnett attack was a non-entity.

IOWA CITY (6-10): A 9-7 team in a 6-10 team's body, the Cubs' failure to reach 500 can be attributed almost entirely to the struggles of their rookie QB, **Sam Bradford**. After a great debut on Opening Day, he was injured and came back two weeks later looking green as spinach. Although he showed improvement later on, shining like a star against one of the League's toughest defences in Chino in Week 14, in the balance he was a liability. Not his fault – he was thrown into the deep end early. The good news for Cubs fans is he didn't drown.

VIRDEN (6-10): It's obvious but I can't resist the urge to say it:

the Violators were the most violated team this year as measured by net yards surrendered per game. They could not stop anybody. If not for its 17 interceptions, 4th best in the league in that category, the pass defence might have gone down as the worst of all time. Their offence, however, was a completely different story; a real "feel good" story. **Drew Brees** deserves an Honourable Mention when **Chris Johnson** is eventually announced Offensive MVP. Brees made everyone around him better; turning the likes of **Devin Hester** into a Top 15 wide receiver and guiding the offence to the 4th highest efficiency ranking. If there had been any defence at all in Virden they would likely have made the playoffs in a season like this one.

YORK (3-13): **Tom Brady** is praying for some help, starting with an offensive line, continuing with wide receivers, and ending with a running back. Oh, and some defence would be nice too. Brady was left hanging in the wind by himself for the entire year as York passed the ball almost 70% of the time. Like Brees, he made those around him better but the supporting cast in York was just too fragile to support success. **Michael Crabtree** had a good year and linebacker **Geno Hayes** had a phenomenal year. Brady was a hero and was lucky to escape alive.

COWTOWN (3-13): It fits perfectly with the Corn Kings' unlucky season that they would find a way to score a major upset in the final game and lose the #1 overall draft pick in the process. The sad story in Cowtown revolved around the development (or lack thereof) of QB, **Joe Flacco**, and the collapse of their pass defence. The young signal-caller struggled with turnovers and erratic accuracy and his persistent problems translated into the worst offence in the league. But it was not all his fault. Unlike Bradford in Iowa City, Flacco had little support – few good targets to throw to and no running threat. Defensively, the secondary played....well they didn't play actually, and that was the problem. Opposing QBs passed for an obscene 117.2 QB rating against them. Add some key and lengthy injuries to this mix and you have the ingredients for a season-long debacle.

GARLAND (3-13): **Matt Ryan** of 2010 was not the Matt Ryan of 2009 and the Mustangs plummeted like a rock in the standings. But though Ryan was the most obvious problem, he was not the only one. Almost everyone on this team should line up for a spanking – everyone except **Wes Welker** and **Brian Cushing**. Few expected Garland to make the post-season but a last place finish overall falls well below expectations. The defence came uncomfortably close to giving up 500 points while the offence was pass-happy, predictable and overly aggressive – attempting a League-high 50 fourth down conversion attempts; not all of them due to late comeback attempts. Welker needed a partner on the other side more reliable than flashy but unsteady Chris Chambers and the defence missed a true a run-stopper.

M.V.P. LAND

With nothing but pride on the line for Pickering, the Spartans showed that they may have an unlimited supply of that characteristic. They fought off an upset bid by rival Markham to finish the season 15-1 and earn a 6-0 sweep of their Division. The win came on a last minute 38-yard field goal by **John Kasay**, giving Pickering a slim 23-21 lead with 1:45 left on the clock. **Darrin Jones**, the **AMAZING ABSORBING MAN**, was in fine form for this game - absorbing the force of the Pickering game plan and throwing it back at them with equal power, but with a Markham twist. The twist being that, while they moved relentlessly, they did it at a plodding and deliberate pace calibrated to induce mental slumber in the opposing coach. The

Markham scoring drive for the go-ahead touchdown in the 4th quarter was without highlight. That includes the touchdown. It was the kind of drive that causes all but the most fanatical Dawg-lover to tune out. I'm sure it came as a surprise to all on the Pickering sideline when they realized Markham was at their 5 yard line facing 1st and goal. "How did they get there?" one could imagine distracted coaches asking each other as **David Harris** frantically called in for a play. The Markham offence is like a thief disguised as a shrub moving yard-by-yard toward its target - you don't know there's a shrub next to you until it's next to you.

On ESPN, the North Stars' near upset of Pickering's B+ Squad was overshadowed by another record-setting day for **Chris Johnson**. His 127 yards on the ground was 24 yards more than he needed to break **Frank Gore's** single season rushing mark of 2131, set back in 2007. Johnson finished with **2156** rushing yards this year and set league records for rushing TDs (27), total TDs (29), gains of 10 yards or more (61) and probably many more obscure records the statisticians haven't determined yet. Johnson's record setting run came at an opportune time for the Spartans. Trailing 21-20 with the ball on their 24, Johnson ripped off a 14 yard gain to jump start the drive and eventually open a tiny window for Favre in the passing game. **Russ Flont** went into hyperbolic overdrive in his praise of Johnson, *"Completely unstoppable - the best single season we will ever see from any player,"* he yelled at host, **Chris Berman**, spittle flying from his lips. *"He may be the best running back of all time and he's just getting started. A 3,000-yard, 40 touchdown season next year is not out of the question, in my opinion,"* he added, all bug-eyed and red in the face. Flont is the kind of guy who, when faced an indisputable fact such as Johnson's great season, has to outdo everyone in recognizing it.

Johnson himself was a little more subdued. *"First of all, I want to thank God, most of all. Without Him it wouldn't be possible,"* Johnson said when asked to comment on his record-setting season. It is customary for football players to give credit to the Big Guy (or Gal if you are an annoying feminist) for their major accomplishments on the field. I used to find it quaint when football players invoked God after spending 3 hours trying to beat the hell out of each other. Now I find it slightly irritating; actually, more than slightly irritating. If God did help Johnson this year, He did it by putting **Brett Favre** on his team. At least that's what Favre appears to think. Favre, in his post-game scrum, looked tired after struggling more than expected against the semi-pro Markham secondary. While the receiving trio of **Anquan Boldin**, **Vincent Jackson**, and **Percy Harvin** partied with the **Kostantakos Family** in their luxury box at Thermopylae Stadium during the game, Favre needed every bit of his characteristic blind luck to find the likes of **Devin Thomas**, **Dennis Northcutt** and some guy named **Andre Roberts** open down the field. Call it the Hand of God, but Favre was intercepted only twice and threw 2 TDs despite what appeared to be at least half a dozen blown routes by the back-up wideouts. *"Good God, it was tougher out there than we expected,"* Favre grimaced. *"We thought they would be coming after Chris but dang it if they didn't do the opposite. I kept thinking, 'they're giving you the record Chris, go for it.' I was surprised at that - they obviously were more worried about me."*

Whether Favre made Johnson better this year or the converse is a classic chicken-egg question. They obviously both made each other better - but who started it? Pickering fans seem to be breaking into two camps in the debate but the rest of the league seems to have reached their verdict. Johnson appears to be the overwhelming choice for Offensive MVP in fan polls. By next week we will know who the AP writers choose, but if my own straw poll of colleagues holds up it will be Johnson in a landslide. And really, who else is there? His teammate Favre, with his elite 110.4 QB rating and 31 TD passes is the only competition.

RINGGOLD RIDES MUSTANGS INTO PLAYOFFS

Ringgold entered the post-season for the first time in franchise history in style. **Andre Johnson** set a new EFL single game receiving yards record with 278, shattering the previous record of 246 set by his opponent **Wes Welker** in Week 6 this year. **Big Ben** tied the single game TD pass record of 7 held by **Carson Palmer** and **Tony Romo**, while his opponent, **Matt Ryan**, broke the single game yards passing mark of 465 set by Roethlisberger this year by throwing for a stupendous 494 yards in a losing cause. All this translated into a 55-24 fireworks display that left me scratching my head again at the crazy Crimson Hawks.

Coming off a loss the previous week in Gwinnett in which they looked every bit like the bumbling clowns we have become accustomed to seeing since the Meadowlands Swamp Dogs logo was unveiled back in 2007, this week they looked completely different. Roethlisberger and Johnson played pitch and catch as if competing in a sandlot game against kids 2 years younger. The 'Thoroughheads' appeared to be back; deader than ever. But that alone does not account for the impressive offensive display. The Hawks are definitely for real...sometimes.

A TRUE LOSERS VICTORY

There were losers on both sides of the field in Cowtown this week. The Corn Kings had the #1 pick in the rookie draft in their hands and let it go, thanks to 4th quarter heroics by the defence and two clutch catches by **Kevin Walter**. With **Nick Fairly** and **Da'Quan Bowers**, both defensive linemen, near the top of everyone's draft board, it is perhaps not surprising that the Corn Kings' defence would suddenly wake up and make plays at the 11th hour. **Robert Geathers**, whose uninspired play since landing a 5-year contract is making him very replaceable, ran like a thief with the ball after recovering **Kevin Smith's** fumble to score the TD that sparked the sudden turnaround. It was an unfamiliar and good feeling for fans and players in Cowtown to beat their hated rival Durham; even if it means picking second. **Coach Coghlin** and **Joe Flacco** may keep their jobs after all - the players didn't quit and Flacco made a pair of big time throws to set up the final two field goals.

On the other side of this debacle, Durham's 24-21 loss to Cowtown may have been the last straw for angry fans. It has

also reportedly shaken the team's confidence in their leader, **Philip Rivers**, as well as Rivers' confidence in himself. Head Coach, **George Kaldis**, angry at the best of times, is rumoured to have been sedated by team doctors before venturing out to meet the press. You would never have guessed he was under the influence of any calming drug. He launched a tirade worthy of **Bobby Elder's** infamous "Referee Rant" that got the Hellfire coach suspended for one game in mid-season. Kaldis will not be suspended because he did not take aim at the league; but he may have dealt Rivers a mortal wound to his confidence heading into the quarter final game against Pickering. Most of it is unfit for print but it started as Kaldis took the podium with "*Rivers is SHIT!*" and, as shit is wont to do, went downhill from there.

FLORIDA IS PERFECT

I end my last regular season column with a few words about the team that has everything. The Florida Dragons, winners of two consecutive Gale Sayers Trophies and the most dominant team in the EFL's short history achieved a milestone few thought any team would accomplish – a perfect regular season. After losing just once in each of the previous two seasons, both times to Chino, the third try was a charm for the Flying Fire-Breathing Lizards. They survived robust overtime challenges from Pickering and Los Angeles to keep the 'L' column unblemished through sixteen gruelling weeks – ending strong with a 37-13 pasting of the tarnished Gladiators. We may never see it again – or likely not for a long time.

But for **Jim Heaton**, 16-0 remains just Part I of the Ultimate Challenge: a Perfect Season. Heaton did not pause to congratulate his team or himself. "*We have unfinished work to do,*" he said tersely as he cut short his post game scrum. He is right and I, for one, do not find fault with his reservation. Standing between his team and The Perfect Season is an armoured runaway freight train called the Pickering Spartans. They want revenge for their Week Four loss to Florida at home and also want to prove that, for one season anyway; they, *not* the Dragons, are the best in the EFL.

















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PLAYOFF PICTURE AT A GLANCE

		PACIFIC-ATLANTIC CONFERENCE		CAN-AM CONFERENCE	
OUT	ALIVE	IN	IN	ALIVE	OUT
			1 		
			2 		
			3 		
			4 		

JIMMY'S QUARTER FINAL PLAYOFF PICKS

LOS ANGELES @ CHARLESWOOD (line – PATRIOTS by 7)

Charleswood throttled Los Angeles 38-14 in their only regular season meeting mostly because the Knights turned the ball over 5 times. Do I need to point out that LA must avoid similar carelessness this time around? If they do, I like their chances. The Pats built their 12-4 season on turnovers, forcing 46 to lead the league by a margin of 8. Their turnover ratio of +15 was second best in the league. Take that away (pun intended) and the match-up becomes a lot closer than one would expect between the #1 seed and a 7-8-1 team with a great, but underachieving, defence and a basket case offence. Despite a late season surge by Adrian Peterson, the Pats still ranked third from the bottom in average yards per carry, meaning that Peyton Manning will get the call to make the difference against a Knights team that shut down the run better than anyone. The Pats defence was solid all year and will pose a challenge for Kurt Warner and an LA attack that has, along with their defence, performed below expectations all season. Having said all this, I am not going to hang expectations for this game on regular season performance. Making the playoffs at all is like a reprieve from the gallows for the Knights after a difficult season. Meanwhile, the Pats are slightly notorious for not winning the big game. I think LA will come to play and will prevail in a low-scoring defensive struggle.

INJURY REPORT: CHP – Ed Reed (Out); LA – Al Harris (Out), B.J. Raji (Out), Brian Bulaga (Probable). **Pick: LOS ANGELES**

DURHAM @ PICKERING (line – SPARTANS by 8)

It's no secret to me why the Thunder Lizards are fading fast. They own a devastating -13 turnover ratio and have committed more gross turnovers than any other team. Mistakes tend to breed mistakes and the compound interest on Durham's early turnover deficit has taken over the team's psyche. Philip Rivers looks shaky, the defence loses concentration late in the game, the offensive line is not executing consistently and the coach looks like he is ready to explode at any moment. The karma over the Dinosaurs is bad indeed. Contrast that with Pickering – the team with the best turnover ratio in the EFL at +16 on top of being the team that needs such good fortune less than any other. The Spartans owned Durham in two regular season contests and there is no reason to think they won't own them again in the playoffs. In fact, it may get ugly for the team that finished the season with a loss to the inept Corn Kings. INJURY REPORT: PIC – None; DUR – Danny Amendola (Out), Ty Warren (Doubtful).

Pick: PICKERING

RINGGOLD @ FLORIDA (line – DRAGONS by 10)

If the Crimson Hawks can play as explosively as they did in the final week this will be a contest. They won't win, but it will be a contest. If they play like they did in two regular season match-ups against these Dragons it could be a very long day. Ringgold generated only 19 turnovers all year but 5 of them came against Florida to just 1 committed in those two games. Despite that, they could not mount a challenge to the Florida powerhouse because their offensive line was incapable of keeping the nasty Florida pass rush at bay. Big Ben was sacked 7 times and pressured constantly in those games as he struggled to find open receivers against the likes of Darrelle Revis and Brandon Meriweather; if Ben can't get the ball vertical, the Hawks offence comes to a halt. Maurice Jones-Drew will need to step up as he did in Week Three and Big Ben will have to do a better job of avoiding the pressure. More so than against most teams, the Dragons like to put the ball in the air against Ringgold. They will do that again in this game but not to the point of imbalance – Jonathan Stewart and Ray Rice will see plenty of action, especially late when the Dragons shift into 'clock mode' after grabbing the early lead. I want to see a good game here but I am not betting on it. Ringgold's first post-season experience will be a traumatic one.

INJURY REPORT: FLD – None; RCH – Sen'Derrick Marks (Out), Domata Peko (Probable). **Pick: FLORIDA**

KUTZTOWN @ CHINO (line – CONVICTS by 8)

In their regular season match-up at Kutztown the Golden Bears played the Convicts evenly but fell by 10 points because of three costly turnovers. The Convicts like to steal the ball and whatever they do on the road they tend to do better at home. The Big House will not be hospitable to Tony Romo and his play-making duo of LeSean McCoy and Greg Jennings. Looking at the numbers it is a little surprising that Kutztown, below average in most team categories, finished 9-7. I think this is explained by the Romo Factor – an unquantifiable quality that brings advantage and disadvantage somewhat randomly to the Bears on any given Sunday. Romo, who threw 7 TD passes in one game this season and 3 interceptions in each of two others is as capable of walking onto Chino's field and winning the game by himself as he is capable of fumbling or throwing it away. The 'Lockdown Crew,' the league's second best turnover-generating machine, will be doing their best to bring out the worst in Kutztown's "Golden Boy." On offence, Donovan McNabb is well-rested and ready according to coaches and Chino scribes reporting on the team's preparations for their Quarter final showdown. Expect a big day from Steven Jackson as the Bears focus on stopping the fast strike threat of McNabb-to-Moss.

INJURY REPORT: CHI – Michael Boley (Out), D'Qwell Jackson (Out), Luis Castillo (Out), John McCargo (Out); KUT – Todd Herremans (Out), Chris Cooley (Out), Felix Jones (Probable). **Pick: CHINO**

