

2014

Week Four


EFL NEWS
 ELITE FOOTBALL LEAGUE

2014

Week Four

November 9, 2014



CHP	27	MOH	33	ICC	16	AUR	31	CHI	16	LAK	17	MAR	28	COW	15	SC	24	SEB	30
CAR	35	VIR	24	TCT	21	CC	13	SCB	20	MVM	24	YOR	16	DTL	17	GWG	17	SBE	24

Hellish Start!



Jimmy Graham of the Mohave Hellfire breaks away from Virden's *Prince Amukamara* on his way to a 58-yard TD reception in 1st quarter action at **TERRORDOME**. The score sparked the Hellfire to a 33-24 victory and ensured a hellish start for the 0-4 Violators.

LATEST EFL NEWS INSIDE

- VIRDEN VIOLATED AGAIN
- MUSTANGS TRAMPLE SPARTANS
- MARKHAM MAKING THE MOST OF IT
- SHERMAN PICKS APART KINGS
- AND MUCH MORE.....

Also in this issue

- SPATS FEATURE, 'SWORDFIGHT AT STARBUCKS'
- JIMMY THE GEEK
- THIS WEEK IN EFL HISTORY



*Who was slick
in Week Four?*

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



Philip Rivers
QB
Carthage
Cannibals

23 of 31, 384 yards, 4 TD passes.
Unstoppable in Week 4 win.



Richard Sherman
CB
Durham Thunder
Lizards

4 Tackles, 1 Def, 4 completions in
11 targets, 2 INTs stifled Cowtown.



1-3-0

Mohave

33

**GAME OF THE WEEK**

MVP

Andrew Luck

24

Viriden

0-4-0

**TEAM LEADERS**

Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Luck	23	35	299	2
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Ball	16	104	6.5	0
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Graham	6	104	17.3	1

Team	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
Mohave	0	17	6	10	-	33
Viriden	10	7	0	7	-	24

TEAM LEADERS

Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Stafford	19	27	296	2
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Charles	13	96	7.4	1
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Bryant	7	115	16.4	1

Play of the Game

Facing 4th & inches at their own 41 with 2:43 left in the game and leading 26-24, the Hellfire elected to go for it. **Mike Tolbert** broke a tackle and gained 5 yards to maintain critical ball control.

SUMMARY: Undisciplined play by fired-up Mohave led to a penalty-assisted opening TD drive by the Violators and a 4th & 20 Mohave punt to start the game. The Violators pressed the early advantage, driving 83 yards to the Mohave 6, but the Hellfire defence stiffened when **Justin Houston** stuffed **Jamaal Charles** for a loss on 3rd and inches. Viriden settled for a FG and the Hellfire settled down. **Jimmy Graham** sparked a 17-point Mohave 2nd quarter with an impressive 58-yard catch-and-run for a TD, and **Andrew Luck** scrambled 2 yards for a TD to give Mohave a 14-10 lead. Charles broke runs of 11 and 51 yards to set up a 6-yard TD pass from **Matt Stafford** to **Dez Bryant** to put Viriden back in front, but **Matt Prater** tied it with a 48-yard FG with 0:43 left in the half. In a 3rd quarter of FG tries, Prater booted two and **Mason Crosby** missed from 50 yards to make it 23-17 for Mohave then an 18-yard run by **Montee Ball** set up Prater's 4th FG of the day to make it 26-17. The Violators charged back, covering 80 yards in 2:47 to pull within 2 points on a 35-yard TD catch by **Torrey Smith**. Hoping to run out the clock, Mohave stalled at their 41 after 3 snaps, facing 4th & inches with 2:43 left. They gambled and **Mike Tolbert** converted with a 5-yard run, setting up a 7-yard TD pass to **Hakeem Nicks** to clinch the win.

QUOTES: "You have to shake things up sometimes. I let my assistants call this one for the most part, but that call to go for it on 4th down late in the game was all me. I eat it if Mike doesn't break that tackle, but since he did I expect the credit. So write something good please, you nasty rats!" – Mohave head coach, **Bobby Elder**, addressing the media about his drinking in the owner's lounge for most of the game.

"It just seems to be little things that we aren't doing right and those mistakes come back to haunt us every time." – Viriden coach, **Lance Barrate**.

**HAPPY FAN****titter****ANGRY FAN**

Randy the Desert Rat @torchrat
Jacked up #Hellfire deliver the goods on the road! Crazy call by @bobbye pays off for once!



Skully @skully74
#Violators can't blame the refs for this one. Our defence stinks! Did we blitz even once?

11-08-2014 TERRORDOME Temp: 70 Wind: Calm None MVP: Andrew Luck

Scoring Summary

1 9:48 Viriden	TD Charles 3 run (Crosby) (12-80-5:04)	0-7
1 1:29 Viriden	FG Crosby 25 (12-82-6:35)	0-10
2 13:20 Mohave	TD Luck 58 pass to Graham (Prater) (5-88-3:00)	7-10
2 6:44 Mohave	TD Luck 2 run (Prater) (10-71-4:58)	14-10
2 4:57 Viriden	TD Stafford 6 pass to Bryant (Crosby) (4-80-1:47)	14-17
2 0:48 Mohave	FG Prater 48 (11-37-3:55)	17-17
3 8:15 Mohave	FG Prater 25 (14-69-6:33)	20-17
3 0:42 Mohave	FG Prater 20 (8-58-3:48)	23-17
4 7:03 Mohave	FG Prater 28 (13-53-6:43)	26-17
4 4:16 Viriden	TD Stafford 35 pass to Smith (Crosby) (6-80-2:47)	26-24
4 2:04 Mohave	TD Luck 7 pass to Nicks (Prater) (9-69-2:04)	33-24

	MOH	VV
First Downs	25	21
Rushes	32-208	16-108
Passes	35-23-299	27-19-296
Sacked	3-23	3-27
Fumble	0	1
Penalties	9-84	5-29
Turnovers	0	1
Missed Tackles	5	8
Blitzes	23	1
Time	35:00	25:00
Third Down	6-14	4-10
Fourth Down	1-1	0-0
Red Att/Td/Fg	9/2/3	3/2/1
Net Offense	484	377

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



PATRIOTS

2-2-0

0

10

7

10

0

OT

27

Blake Bortles

21 of 27, 298 yards, 2 TDs



CANNIBALS

4-0-0

14

7

7

7

0

35

Philip Rivers

23 of 31, 384 yards, 4 TDs

The Cannibals struck early with a 69-yard TD pass from **Philip Rivers** to **Emmanuel Sanders** followed quickly by a 1-yard TD run by **Eddie Lacy** after Pats' punter **Kevin Huber** mishandled a snap at his own 1. Rivers then hit **Josh Gordon** for a 38-yard TD pass to make it 21-3 before **Blake Bortles** connected with **Sammy Watkins** for a 16-yard TD to give the Pats some life. A 72-yard catch-and-run TD by Pats' **Terrance Williams** to open the 3rd momentarily stunned the crowd, but Carthage quickly regained full control with Rivers throwing TD passes to Gordon and Sanders to secure the win.



CUBS

1-3-0

0

3

10

3

0

OT

16

Russell Wilson

21 of 32, 235 yards, 1 TD



TRIUMPH

4-0-0

7

7

0

7

0

21

Jay Cutler

27 of 33, 270 yards, 2 TDs

Russell Wilson fumbled a snap at the Cubs' 16 yard line on their first possession, setting up a 16-yard TD pass from **Jay Cutler** to **Vincent Jackson** for a quick 7-0 Triumph lead. In the 2nd quarter, LB **Kevin Burnett** stripped the ball from **CJ Spiller** at their 43 yard line then Cutler hit Jackson for a 40-yard pass to set up a 2-yard **Tre Mason** TD run to make it 14-3 Triumph. A 50-yard **Greg Zuerlein** FG and a 40-yard TD pass to **Steve Smith** brought the Cubs to within 1 point, 14-13, but Burnett forced another fumble by Wilson to set up the game-winning TD on a 7-yard pass to **Antonio Brown**.



CONVICTS

3-1-0

7

3

3

3

0

OT

16

Cam Newton

21 of 32, 242 yards



SLUGGS

4-0-0

0

7

3

10

0

20

Knowshon Moreno

26 Carries, 153 yards

In heavy rain **Cam Newton** worked the short passing game; dumping it off for pass plays of 21 & 22 yards to set up **Adrian Peterson's** opening 5-yard TD run. With **RGIII** struggling with his accuracy, the Sluggs turned to the ground game. They tied it on a 9-yard TD run by **Stevan Ridley** but fell behind 13-10 after an interception by **Bernard Pollard** and a long Chino drive to start the 2nd half set up a pair of FGs. The Sluggs turned the tide in the 4th quarter when Griffin started finding his receivers; throwing a 15-yard TD pass to **Randall Cobb** then scrambling 16 yards to set up a FG.



EFL
ELITE FOOTBALL LEAGUE

QUICK COUNTS!!

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



KNIGHTS

0-4-0

7	3	7	0	0	17
OT					

Brandon LaFell
4 Receptions, 45 yards, 1 TD



MONARCHS

2-2-0

7	3	0	14	0	24
OT					

DeMarco Murray
29 Carries, 120 yards, 3 TDs

Yeremiah Bell picked off **Ryan Tannehill** and returned it 38 yards to set up a TD run by **Ryan Mathews**. Mission Viejo tied it after a pass interference penalty set up **DeMarco Murray** for a 1-yard TD plunge. After an exchange of FGs, the Knights recovered a fumble by Murray to start the 2nd half, setting up a 16-yard TD pass from **Sam Bradford** to **Brandon LaFell**. With 4:43 left, the Monarchs converted 4th & goal from the 6, scoring on a 6-yard TD pass to Murray to tie it. The Knights tried to convert 4th and 1 at their 32 but **Mike Glennon** was stuffed for -4, setting up Murray's 3rd TD to win it.



NORTH STARS

3-1-0

14	7	0	7	0	28
OT					

Alex Smith
15 of 20, 144 yards, 4 TDs



EXCALIBURS

2-2-0

3	3	10	0	0	16
OT					

Marshawn Lynch
20 Carries, 110 yards, 1 TD

Marshawn Lynch broke a 48-yard run on the game's opening drive but York managed just a FG from it then fell behind on three quick Markham TDs: **Andre Williams** capped a 7-minute drive with a 5-yard TD catch; **Jonathan Cyprien** picked off **Tom Brady** to set an 8-yard TD pass to **Andre Ellington**; and **Alex Smith** threw a 47-yard strike to **Jordy Nelson** for a TD to give the Stars a 21-6 lead going into half time. York closed in, posting a 10-point 3rd quarter with a 7-yard TD run by Lynch, but Markham replied with an 87-yard TD drive that ended with a 4-yard Smith to Nelson TD pass.



CORN KINGS

2-2-0

0	3	3	9	0	15
OT					

Alfred Morris
20 Carries, 103 yards, 1 TD



T-LIZARDS

3-1-0

7	3	0	7	0	17
OT					

Richard Sherman
4 Tackles, 1 Def, 2 INTs

Joe Flacco was intercepted 4 times in his first four possessions, two of those by **Richard Sherman**, to help spot the Lizards to a 10-0 lead. After marking the scoreboard before the half with a **Nick Novak** FG, a 16-play drive in the 3rd and a blown 4th down conversion at mid field by the Lizards set up 2 more Cowtown FGs to make it a 1-point game. **Nick Foles** entered in relief of **Drew Brees** and threw a 9-yard TD pass to **TY Hilton** to extend Durham's lead to 8. The Kings' rally fell short, coming within a 2-point conversion of tying the game after **Alfred Morris** scored a TD from 3 yards out.

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



MUSTANGS

4-0-0

7

7

7

10

0

31

OT

Matt Forte
103 rush yds, 96 rec yds, 2 TDs



SPARTANS

1-3-0

0

6

0

7

0

13

Peyton Manning
30 of 50, 294 yards, 3 INTs

It took the Mustangs 4 attempts to get the ball into the end zone after reaching 1st and goal on their opening drive, but when **Julian Edelman** caught the short cross from **Matt Ryan** for a TD they took a lead they would not surrender. A red zone pick of **Peyton Manning** by **Brandon Boykin** in the 1st helped to hold the Spartans at bay until **Matt Forte** could extend that lead with an 18-yard TD run. A 31-yard TD pass to **Anquan Boldin** after a failed 4th down convert attempt by Pickering made it 21-6 for Aurora. 3 more Spartans' turnovers kept them from mounting a serious 2nd half comeback.



REGULATORS

3-1-0

0

7

10

7

0

24

OT

Tony Romo
25 of 35, 316 yards, 3 TDs, 1 INT



GLADIATORS

0-4-0

0

7

7

3

0

17

LeSean McCoy
26 Carries, 126 yards

Leodis McKelvin picked off **Tony Romo** to set up the game's first points on a 3-yard TD pass from **Big Ben** to **Taylor Thompson**, but Romo connected with **Greg Jennings** for a 12-yard TD pass to tie the game just before half time. **Tamba Hali** picked off Big Ben in the red zone only to fumble it right back to the Glads, who took advantage with a 10-yard TD run by **Ahmad Bradshaw** to regain the lead. But a 17-point 2nd half outburst by the Regs, that included TD passes of 71 yards to **AJ Green** and 58 yards to Jennings, put the game out of reach for a Glads' offence without **Reggie Wayne**.



SWORDFISH

1-3-0

7

3

14

6

0

30

OT

Andy Dalton
24 of 37, 271 yards, 2 TDs



BLUE EAGLES

1-3-0

3

14

0

7

0

24

Aaron Rodgers
36 of 54, 351 yards, 3 TDs, 1 INT

A back-and-forth 1st half saw the Blue Eagles gain a 17-10 advantage on the strength of 2 TD passes from **Aaron Rodgers** to **DeSean Jackson**. The Swordfish rebounded in the 2nd half with **Andy Dalton** completing a 32-yard pass to **Nate Washington** to set up a 5-yard TD run by **Pierre Thomas** to tie it. They took the lead on a 5-yard TD pass to **Wes Welker**, after **Perry Riley Jr** picked off Rodgers in Scarborough territory, then slowly pulled away with a pair of FGs by **Adam Vinatieri**. The Eagles scored a TD with 1:26 remaining, but fell short when they failed to recover the onside kick.

WEEK FOUR

STANDINGS

East	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Twin Cities	4	0	0	1	121	30.3	75	18.8	11.5	2 0 0	3 0 0	4 0 0
Carthage	4	0	0	1	138	34.5	99	24.8	9.8	2 0 0	3 0 0	4 0 0
Charleswood	1	3	0	0.25	76	19	119	29.8	-10.8	1 1 0	1 2 0	1 3 0
Mohave	1	3	0	0.25	109	27.3	126	31.5	-4.3	0 2 0	1 2 0	1 3 0
Virden	0	4	0	0	98	24.5	117	29.3	-4.8	0 2 0	0 4 0	0 4 0
West	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Santa Clara	4	0	0	1	133	33.3	91	22.8	10.5	2 0 0	3 0 0	4 0 0
Chino	3	1	0	0.75	110	27.5	95	23.8	3.8	2 0 0	3 1 0	3 1 0
Mission Viejo	2	2	0	0.5	95	23.8	103	25.8	-2	2 1 0	1 2 0	2 2 0
Iowa City	1	3	0	0.25	114	28.5	129	32.3	-3.8	0 1 0	1 2 0	1 3 0
Los Angeles	0	4	0	0	81	20.3	121	30.3	-10	0 2 0	0 3 0	0 4 0
North	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Durham	3	1	0	0.75	90	22.5	66	16.5	6	2 0 0	3 1 0	3 1 0
Markham	3	1	0	0.75	81	20.3	61	15.3	5	2 0 0	2 1 0	3 1 0
Cowtown	2	2	0	0.5	93	23.3	89	22.3	1	1 1 0	1 2 0	2 2 0
York	2	2	0	0.5	85	21.3	102	25.5	-4.3	0 2 0	1 2 0	2 2 0
Pickering	1	3	0	0.25	82	20.5	99	24.8	-4.3	1 1 0	1 2 0	1 3 0
South	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Aurora	4	0	0	1	152	38	54	13.5	24.5	1 0 0	3 0 0	4 0 0
South Carolina	3	1	0	0.75	106	26.5	107	26.8	-0.3	1 1 0	3 1 0	3 1 0
Scarborough	1	3	0	0.25	100	25	101	25.3	-0.3	0 3 0	1 2 0	1 3 0
Sebastian	1	3	0	0.25	83	20.8	129	32.3	-11.5	0 2 0	1 2 0	1 3 0
Gwinnett	0	4	0	0	54	13.5	118	29.5	-16	0 2 0	0 3 0	0 4 0

PASSING

#	Player	Team	Att	Cmp	C%	Yards	In	I%	Lg	TD	TD%	Rate
1	Cutler	TCT	137	96	70.1	1092	2	1.5	42	14	10.2	121.7
2	Griffin II	SCB	98	62	63.3	943	1	1	65	7	7.1	114.5
3	Rivers, P	CAR	144	101	70.1	1525	4	2.8	75	9	6.3	113.9
4	Wilson, R	ICC	111	76	68.5	985	2	1.8	45	7	6.3	109.6
5	Bortles	CHP	101	68	67.3	964	2	2	72	6	5.9	109.5
6	Bradford	LAK	58	34	58.6	477	0	0	78	4	6.9	108.2
7	Smith, A	MAR	89	60	67.4	647	0	0	48	5	5.6	107.3
8	Ryan, M	AUR	129	82	63.6	979	2	1.6	76	10	7.8	106.1
9	Brees	DTL	78	58	74.4	616	0	0	45	2	2.6	105.5
10	Stafford ,M	VV	149	91	61.1	1408	2	1.3	65	6	4	100.2
11	Newton, C	CHI	125	89	71.2	972	3	2.4	44	6	4.8	99.8
12	Luck	MOH	136	83	61	1033	3	2.2	77	8	5.9	95
13	Romo	SC	154	97	63	1081	5	3.2	71	11	7.1	94.1
14	Brady	YOR	91	50	54.9	650	1	1.1	55	4	4.4	87.7
15	Rodgers, A	SBE	159	100	62.9	1109	4	2.5	54	7	4.4	87.7

RUSHING

#	Player	Team	Att	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	Moreno	SCB	101	518	5.1	24	6
2	Spiller	ICC	59	432	7.3	55	2
3	Lynch, M	YOR	84	423	5	48	4
4	McCoy, L	GWG	96	412	4.3	35	2
5	Murray	MVM	83	406	4.9	62	3
6	Morris, A	COW	77	367	4.8	21	2
7	Johnson, C	PIC	83	365	4.4	18	0
8	Gore	SC	65	339	5.2	56	1
9	Lacy	CAR	85	308	3.6	13	7
10	Charles, J	VV	55	290	5.3	51	2
11	Mathews, R	LAK	70	268	3.8	19	2
12	Jackson, F	DTL	62	267	4.3	15	2
13	Peterson, A	CHI	67	252	3.8	15	4
14	Forte	AUR	71	245	3.5	23	3
15	Ball, M	MOH	48	243	5.1	21	1
16	Rice, R	SBE	52	237	4.6	54	0
17	Williams, A	MAR	56	210	3.8	24	2
18	Tate, B	VV	26	201	7.7	41	2
19	Ivory	CHP	55	181	3.3	17	2
20	Newton, C	CHI	24	168	7	25	1

RECEIVING

#	Player	Team	No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	Brown, A	TCT	37	397	10.7	33	5
2	Green, AJ	SC	32	452	14.1	71	4
3	Gordon, J	CAR	30	592	19.7	75	4
4	Forte	AUR	28	193	6.9	19	0
5	Jackson, D	SBE	28	357	12.8	49	3
6	Garcon	PIC	27	280	10.4	19	3
7	Watkins, S	CHP	27	409	15.1	71	3
8	Jones, J	VV	26	511	19.7	65	3
9	Woodhead	CHI	25	260	10.4	35	3
10	Bryant, D	VV	25	405	16.2	30	1
11	Graham, J	MOH	24	356	14.8	65	3
12	Hilton	DTL	23	236	10.3	19	1
13	Boldin	AUR	22	451	20.5	76	7
14	Olsen	CHI	22	245	11.1	36	2
15	Thomas, D	PIC	21	290	13.8	41	4
16	Evans, M	COW	21	286	13.6	46	2
17	Rice, R	SBE	21	175	8.3	21	0
18	Jackson, V	TCT	20	412	20.6	42	6
19	McCoy, L	GWG	20	116	5.8	12	0
20	Nicks, H	MOH	20	251	12.6	33	3

KICKING

#	Player	Team	FGA	FGM	FG%	40	50	Lg	Pts
1	Folk	AUR	13	11	84.6	7	4	55	50
2	Prater	MOH	11	11	100	4	2	56	43
3	Zuerlein	ICC	11	10	90.9	5	2	51	42
4	Feely	SBE	13	10	76.9	3	0	49	40
5	Bailey, D	CHI	10	9	90	4	0	49	38
6	Henery	SCB	8	7	87.5	2	0	46	37
7	Crosby	VV	11	9	81.8	2	1	54	36
8	Hauschka	CAR	8	4	50	3	1	53	30
9	Dawson	DTL	7	7	100	2	1	57	30
10	Novak	COW	7	7	100	3	0	44	29
11	Carpenter	MVM	9	6	66.7	1	0	44	29
12	Vinatieri	SS	8	7	87.5	1	0	48	29
13	Tucker, J	SC	10	5	50	1	0	40	28
14	Brown, J	MAR	6	6	100	1	0	44	27
15	Gostkowski	TCT	3	3	100	2	0	49	25
16	Walsh	YOR	6	5	83.3	3	1	54	25
17	Lindell	LAK	5	4	80	2	1	59	21
18	Suisham	GWG	4	4	100	1	0	45	18
19	Bironas	CHP	3	2	66.7	1	0	47	16
20	Janikowski	PIC	1	1	100	0	0	27	13



AROUND THE



With Spats McChad

NEW YORK – When someone is actively trying to murder you, or at least abduct you in order to have you tortured mercilessly by a deranged maniac, your instincts take over and you find reserves of endurance and strength you never knew you had. I call that strength the Action Hero Within. Most of us cannot summon it at will and most of us are never targeted for murder, so most of us live our entire lives completely unaware that there resides inside each of us an **Ethan Hunt** or a **Martin Riggs** waiting to take on that mission impossible without a lethal weapon at hand. This week I discovered that I am probably no **John McClane**, but I die hard. I discovered this when I went to my local Starbucks for my morning ‘*venti bold*.’

SWORD FIGHT AT STARBUCKS

I had a few seconds warning and it made all the difference.

In retrospect, I sensed something was amiss before pulling open the door to Starbucks. The morning caffeine crowd usually buries their communal face in I-phones, I-pads and anything readable, completely self-absorbed while impatiently waiting for their morning fix. (It is no coincidence that Apple markets their products with an “I” – today people relate instantly to “I” rather than “you” or “we”). But this morning people whose clothes, posture and hairstyles were familiar to me had their faces actually raised and clearly visible, their eyes fixated on a spot where the *baristas* mix the special drinks. Curious, I looked over there as I took my place in line and my blood instantly ran cold.

A tall man wearing a scarlet waistcoat, knee-length breeches with white stockings, black buckled shoes and a black tricorne set on top of a short powdered wig, stood waving a large poster in front of a paralyzed young female barista. She had allowed steamed milk to overflow into her mixing cup as she stood there.

“That’snumber f-four,” I could hear her stammer as she stared at the poster then cast a fleeting glance up at the man in the funny black three-cornered hat, her face set in fear. I felt a tingle of nerves when she said it. I sometimes called myself “No. 4” when I didn’t feel like giving out my name to the inquisitive Starbucks staff member marking my cup.

There was nothing funny about the tone of the man’s reply, but there was something funny, as in strange, about his accent: “*That-ah eess NOT noomber four-ah!*” he hissed at her in a sinister baritone voice. “*Where-ah eeess he? When dosss he come-ah here-ah?*”

A young manager – no doubt he was trying to be helpful but, as I look back on it, he nearly got me killed with his customer service – approached the man holding the poster and said in a clear and effeminate tone, “Sir, I think the customer you are looking for is over there,” and with that he pointed back at me. I could feel the people in line, as one, turn their heads back to look at me, but my eyes remained fixated on the man with the black tricorne.

He turned his head and I clearly saw his face. He wore white make-up, black eye-liner, purple lipstick and a black waxed moustache. But the feature that had no doubt caused the young barista to freeze in horror was a long bulbous nose, disfigured at its tip by a giant inflamed red boil that appeared, even at a distance of 20-plus feet, to throb. In a city packed with freaks, this particular freak could only be one person – the notorious **Red Pimple!**

He did not pick me out at first, quite possibly because in the flesh I am much more strikingly handsome a figure than I appear to be in the headshot that adorns this column. Had I taken that opportunity to bolt (I was right next to the door) I might have escaped cleanly, but I was frozen in the moment. Perhaps, at some deep level, I needed to finally face my nemesis, in order to let him know that I was not afraid of him; that I was, in fact, somewhat amused by his pretension and contemptuous of the threat he posed.

At a deep level I might have been thinking all that. But at an instinctual level I could not help going rigid and wetting myself just a little as his dark eyes lit up in recognition. He smiled thinly and, in a flash, drew a steely rapier from a scabbard strapped to his belt and held it high in the air.

“Ahhhh, Spats McChad! *We-ah finally meet-ah! In zee name-ah uff Heess High-ahness Christofaro dee Ferraro, surrender-ah!*” he sneered, leveling his sword and advancing towards me.

Thankfully, the crowd of about two dozen customers immediately panicked, scattering in all directions. As he strode forward, the **Red Pimple** caught his sword in the jacket of a woman who had lost her footing and stumbled into him. The

sound of her scream brought me out of my trance and I suddenly became aware of people pushing past me to get out of the store. I decided to join them, lending my weight to the crush out the door. But something held them up.

I looked ahead and saw two large caped figures, wearing black bicorne, blocking the doorway. They seemed intent on getting inside but were struggling to push through against the heavy rush outside. I only caught a glimpse of their faces, but they looked big, mean and stupid, not to mention ridiculous in those capes. Obviously, they were the Red Pimple's henchmen, but they weren't carrying swords like he was. Instead they each carried a length of rope with a loop at the end.

For a moment I felt trapped. But I soon saw my chance to get away when a man in a business suit, looking deeply irritated, gave one of the men a stiff shove, barking, "Excuse me, excuse me! Let me through, please," as he elbowed his way past. The guys in the bicorne looked taken aback by the boldness of the man and, instinctively, stepped back to let him through. These goons may have looked menacing, but they were no match for a New Yorker in a hurry.

Taking advantage of the distraction I ducked next to a screaming young lady who was following and slipped through the gap. But it was not a clean break. The goon to my right saw me at the last instant and turned around to grab hold. I felt his hand pull down on my shoulder. I fell to the sidewalk and into the path of the young lady. She stumbled stepping onto my thigh with her stiletto heels and fell over top of me. With strength I never knew I had, I pushed her off so forcefully that she rolled into the path of the second caped goon, knocking him over like a bowling pin. I got back to my feet and began to run but slammed into a fruit seller's cart, causing a small avalanche of apples and oranges to cascade across the pavement and onto the road.

Sadly, an elderly gentleman with a cane attempting to avoid the rolling produce lost his balance and fell to the pavement. I heard the snap of bone as he landed on his hip, followed by a feeble groan. It sickened me, but I had no time to dwell on it. I grabbed his cane and used it to deflect a length of flying rope tossed at me by one of cape goons.

Seeing that he missed, he tugged on the rope to retrieve the loop, not realizing that a Sister from the Convent of the Sacred Heart, carrying a load of bread to a local shelter, had stepped on it in her hurry to get past the commotion. As he yanked backwards the noose tightened around her ankle and she was violently upended. Loaves of bread flew everywhere and I could hear the crack of her skull as her head snapped back and hit the pavement. It turned my stomach, but I ignored the urge to vomit, snatched her nun's habit and wrapped it around my face.

Truly, God, if such an entity exists, was watching over me that morning, because, in the heat of the moment, I was mistaken for the nun by the other goon as he kicked the lady wearing the stiletto heels in the stomach and stood up. He ignored me and headed toward the crowd that had gathered around the injured nun, thinking I was at the center of it.

With the sound of sirens in the background I broke into a run across the street, my sharpened senses allowing me to dodge the speeding yellow taxis that careened into each other and into light poles to avoid me. Safely making it to the other side of the street I ducked into the subway, discarded the nun's habit, and took the train to Brooklyn.

The trip gave me time to catch my breath and think about my next move. I decided to catch the local news at a sports bar in Brooklyn and find out if the police had caught my assailants. To my shock, I found that my ordeal was not worth a mention on any of the channels I tuned in to. In between stories about the new 25-mph speed limit and the 45-year sentence for a man convicted of murdering his wife and two children in Queens, mere passing reference was made in the traffic & weather report to a multi-car pile-up snarling traffic on West 50th Street that had injured an elderly pedestrian and a nun, both of whom were expected to survive. Not a single word about a scarlet-clad villain with a sword and a huge zit on his nose accompanied by two caped lummoxes with ropes who had attempted to abduct a respected nationally-renowned journalist.

I realize New York City is big, but how can it be so big that a bizarre attack like the one that victimized me does not warrant even a passing mention in the local news? Was I going to have to go to the police myself? They should be looking for *me*, God damn it! Exhausted and deflated, I headed home. By the time I returned, things appeared back to normal in front of my favourite Starbucks and traffic had resumed on West 50th Street. It was as if nothing had happened. I began to question whether or not my paranoia surrounding **Chris Ferraro** and the **Red Pimple** had led to some kind of delusional episode. But then, out of the corner of my eye I caught a flash of an object near the curb next to the sidewalk, close to where the fruit seller had earlier lost his wares. I bent down and picked it up. *Ah ha!* I thought. This was proof that I had not imagined my ordeal. It was a broach, the stick pin broken off, of a red rooster, the type that adorns the Coat of Arms of the House of Ferraro.

In that moment, I realized that my war with King Ferraro was far from over. I had survived the first attempt on my life. But in doing so I had ensured only that the Red Pimple and his men, embarrassed by this failure, would take no chances next time. I realized at that moment, that it was time for me to fight back.....*(to be continued)*

WINNING THE LIOTTARY

The Mustangs' defence has been dominating the lead stories in network sports centres around the country. But it was a wrinkle in their offence that caught the attention of the shrewder of the network analysts this week. They opened their showdown versus Pickering at Thermopylae Stadium in an unfamiliar two-tight end set with a single wide-out and two running backs in the 'I' formation. The Spartans' response to this never-before-seen-on-Mustangs-game-film offensive set up was to deploy a version of their 'stack' defence, with 5 linemen, 3 linebackers, 2 safeties and 1 corner back. For the connoisseur, seeing these power formations lining up near mid-field, instead of near the goal line, was reminiscent of a gridiron scene from the 30s or 40s. It

turned out to be somewhat of a ruse. Believing that the Mustangs were powering up to get something out of their weak running game, the Spartans guessed run and were caught off guard when **Matt Ryan** dropped back and lofted a perfect spiral into the waiting arms of **Anquan Boldin** for a 29-yard gain. It was a bold opening salvo and one that seemed to immediately suck some wind out of the home crowd and the previously pumped up Pickering defenders.

The Mustangs went on to have some further success passing out of this predominantly run formation. The Spartans were forced to back off and that opened up some rare room for **Matt Forte** to gain traction on the ground. The versatile Forte gained 103 yards rushing, ran for 2 touchdowns, and added 96 yards receiving to round off a productive day as the Mustangs went on to overpower Pickering 31-13.

It was not the outcome most people had expected – not the Mustangs victory, which was a 50-50 proposition – but the way they won. For Pickering, the whole lead up to the game and the subsequent contest on the field had the feel of that opening play – they looked ready, they felt ready, but when it came time to play the Mustangs looked in control and the Spartans often looked off balance and befuddled. Aurora did not look at



Aurora head coach **Rich Liotta** gives a friendly smile for the TV cameras during the 4th quarter of his Mustangs' Week Four game in Pickering. His team dismantled the Spartans 31-13 and made it look frighteningly easy. Liotta never looked worried during the contest and spoke at length about his pride in his players after the game.

all intimidated by the combative and noisy '300 Spartans' fan zone, a group of crazies that can wear on the nerves of the most stoic opponents; they may even have been energized by them. This Mustangs team is much different from the staid, uninspired group that took the field under **Doug Shirley**; or the artificially crazed crew under **Ricky Main** that tried to bring a Headball mentality to the game, with mixed results. This group looks confident, smart, and tough both physically and mentally.

New head coach **Rich Liotta** is getting much of the credit for turning around the perennially talented but under-achieving Mustangs. If the first four games are a true indication, this team could be a powerhouse exceeding the calibre of the Florida Dragons of 2008-2009, or the Spartans of 2010. But Liotta is not seeking the limelight; nor is he avoiding the spotlight. He is a consummate professional. And that means making himself accessible to the media, while not trying to drum up headlines, and answering questions politely without actually revealing anything of substance.

Not that he won't talk football – he will dazzle you with detail about how **Kory Lichtensteiger** has developed into a serviceable pro guard in his zone blocking scheme – he just won't tell you anything that could reveal a future strategy; or what he feels are his team's strengths and weaknesses; or what exactly is the prognosis for recovery for his moderately injured players. Most coaches know about all of that, but most coaches don't have the self control or the presence of mind to remember to do it; or to actually pull it off when the media spotlight falls on them.

He is also a team-builder and morale-booster. He shrewdly credits his staff with laying the building blocks for success, which not only earns their loyalty and respect, but allows him to gracefully decline to comment on what they are doing. "To be honest, I am never too sure myself what Ari is going to come up with week to week," he said with a smile when asked about his offensive strategy against the Spartans. "He comes out of 'the lab' – that's what we call his office – with that big grin of his and heads straight onto the practice field. He must have seen something on film he felt we could use – either something they were doing or something we were doing, and he made it work."

Liotta was speaking about his 'new age' wunderkind offensive coordinator, **Arian Oliphant**, a 24-year old graduate of the Concord Institute of Math and Cider, an alternative experimental college for "gifted imaginations." Oliphant – the only child of a Wiccan High Priestess and a prize-winning nuclear physicist from the Shpingling Institute (who turned his back on a

promising career to brew his own extra strong IPA in the Muskokas) – is the second-youngest person to hold a professional coaching position in football history. He joins a revamped coaching staff that has only one holdover from the Shirley years, long-snapper coach **Quinn Philby Jr.**, a distant cousin of owner **Haus Beauregard**. It is a coaching staff that I will be looking at again in the coming weeks, especially if the Mustangs are able to keep up the pace they have set one quarter into the season.

AROUND THE EFL

Still recovering from the trauma of my encounter with the evil minions of **Chris Ferraro**, I do not have the time or energy I usually have to dig deep into what was another exciting week in the EFL. But read on anyway; you will still learn more from a little bit of Spats than you will from a lot of somebody else.....

If the Mustangs are one of the good news stories in the first quarter of 2014, one of the stories at the top of the bad news list has to be the Virden Violators. This week they dropped their 4th straight game, falling 33-24 to another one of the three finalists for top underperformer of the first quarter, the Mohave Hellfire. You know you are struggling when you permit the Hellfire to break their winless streak at the expense of you breaking your winless streak and you do so *at home*. **TERRORDOME** is starting to look as inhospitable and creepy to the Violators as it does to visitors. In a sure sign that Virden is powerfully hexed, a reckless 4th down gambit by **Bobby Elder** actually worked, possibly making the ultimate difference in the outcome. With a precarious two-point lead, over 2 minutes remaining, and the ball at Mohave's own 41, fullback **Mike Tolbert** broke a tackle and gained 5 yards to convert 4th and inches. Mohave went on to score the clinching touchdown against a demoralized Virden defence.

It was one of the more entertaining games of Week Four and one of the most noteworthy because it involved the Swordfish executing plays like a real professional football team. Sebastian looked impressive in dispatching rival Scarborough, 30-24 at Bluff's Stadium. Despite aggressive blitzing the Blue Eagles failed to get much pressure on **Andy Dalton**, who re-discovered veteran **Wes Welker** while throwing for 271 yards and 2 touchdowns in a come-from-behind win. At this point, I am shocked that I cannot tell you which one of these two teams is more likely to finish in third place behind South Carolina.

The Carthage offence under **Philip Rivers** turned in another strong performance, gaining over 500 yards of net offence for the second consecutive week. Rivers threw for 384 yards and 4 touchdown passes, two of those to his favourite target, **Josh Gordon** in directing a 35-27 victory over Charleswood. The Cannibal QB needed to be on his game since he faced a surprisingly stiff challenge from rookie opponent, **Blake Bortles**, who did not look intimidated by the steaming pot of fake limbs wearing Patriots' gear being stirred violently by the Cannibals' feral mascot **Mulu** near the Charleswood sideline.

It looks like the Triumph air attack may be slowing down at the same time that passing appears more important than ever to their success. **Jay Cutler** threw just 2 touchdown passes, ending his 4 TD passes per game streak at three, to lead Twin Cities over the Cubs, 21-16. The Triumph benefitted from 3 Cubs' turnovers, two of those on fumbles forced by linebacker **Kevin Burnett**, to set up all three of their touchdowns. With just 55 yards of rushing against a defence that played almost the entire game with five or more defensive backs, Coach **Guy Williams** must be nervously counting the days until the return of **Doug Martin**.

At Jurassic Park, the Thunder Lizards sneaked past Cowtown 17-15 in a game that was much closer than expected. **Joe Flacco** threw four interceptions in the first half, two of those to Durham's star corner **Richard Sherman**, to create the conditions for a blowout by the home team. But the expected slaughter never happened. The Lizards managed just 10 points off those turnovers and, when the handouts stopped coming, the Lizards' offence under **Drew Brees** stopped with it. It took **Nick Foles** in relief to get Durham moving again, putting them in front 17-9 in the 4th quarter on a TD pass to **TY Hilton**. The Corn Kings came within a failed 2-point convert of tying the game, making Durham fans more relieved than excited when the final whistle blew.

The South Carolina Regulators are building their playoff bid one game at a time, rising to 3-1 after rallying in the 2nd half to subdue Gwinnett 24-17 at the Coliseum. The Glads did a fine job of holding onto the ball and keeping the Regs off the field early, building a 14-7 lead that survived into the 3rd quarter. But the damn broke when **Tony Romo** found a wide open **AJ Green** over the middle for a 71-yard touchdown pass to tie it. The big play snapped **Hal Corson's** offence out of a game-long daze and they finished strong against a team they should beat. It's a mental process turning an established loser into a winner – a process that is progressing in South Carolina at a slow and comfortable pace.

In Santa Clara, the Banana Slugs looked quite beatable for the second straight week but still found a way to knock off their main competition in the West by a score of 20-16. Chino led this game 13-7 deep into the third quarter. This was largely due to a jittery **Robert Griffin**, who looked like he was fighting a pass rush that didn't really exist. He moved around and pump-faked needlessly, throwing himself off rhythm as much as Convicts' pass-rusher **Adrian Clayborn** did. The excitable **Knowshon Moreno** looked stable by comparison, rushing for 153 yards to keep his team moving forward enough to win.

At Camelot, Markham diehards are predicting a second straight North Division title after the Stars dispatched York 28-16 on the strength of 4 touchdown passes by **Alex Smith**. It was classic Markham football – a heavy dose of the run setting up the deep airstrike on play action. The **Darrin Jones** blocking scheme allows non-entities like guard **Hugh Thornton** to open up holes for other non-entities like **Andre Williams**. No wonder all-pro guard **Evan Mathis** was considered expendable.

Finally, while the Red Pimple was failing miserably in New York, the Monarchs football team was riding the legs of **DeMarco Murray** in a 4th quarter rally to beat the Knights 24-17. Providing proof that one man's food is another man's poison, Murray scored the game-winning TD on a 7-yard run that came less than 2 minutes after the crazy Knights went for it on 4th & 1 at their own 32 with 2:56 left in a tie game. Perhaps if they had been playing Virden, such a gamble would have made the difference.

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JIMMY'S WEEK FIVE PICKS

MOHAVE @ CHARLESWOOD (line – PATRIOTS by 2)

INJURIES: Mohave – D.J. Fluker (OUT); Charleswood – Michael Crabtree (OUT), Anthony Spencer (OUT), Kellen Winslow (OUT).

It may defy the rational mind but the Patriots have to be taken seriously now, especially at home. Winning over fans' hearts through its lively on-field exertions and freed from great expectations, belief in the Charleswood youth movement is growing, especially now that Peyton Manning is looking human again in Pickering. The team's modest competitiveness is threatening to turn next year's draft on its head. People are asking: if the Pats aren't the worst team, which one is? Trust me on this one, folks: do not get caught up in the hype – the Pats are the worst team. This week the Hellfire will seize the opportunity to start the slow process of proving that fact to the Pollyannas of the league who may be overawed by Blake Bortles' unexpected successes. The Hellfire have their own problems, of course, but those problems are not on the same scale as the team the Pats miraculously beat on opening day and that the Hellfire beat last week. With little to no Patriots' pass rush to cause him trouble, Andrew Luck will find time to pick apart the Charleswood secondary and turn this into a comfortable win. **PICK: MOHAVE**

CHINO @ VIRDEN (line – CONVICTS by 1)

INJURIES: Chino – John Conner (OUT), Roddy White (OUT); Virden – Justin Blackmon (OUT), Julio Jones (OUT), Nick Perry (OUT), Antonio Smith (OUT), Aldon Smith (OUT), Aqib Talib (OUT).

It is time to stop thinking about the potential of the Violators and begin to focus on the reality of their performance. They are a strong 0-4, if such a thing exists, but they are still 0-4. They have both the most *efficient* offence in the league, as measured by yards-per-play, and the most *prolific*, as measured by total yards gained; yet, they are tenth in scoring. But the relative lack of production by the offence would not be fatal if it were not for the atrocious performance of the defence, which has surrendered almost as many yards as their offence has gained. The defence is a big reason why Virden has yet to win a game. That fact is shocking considering all of the top grade talent it has on the back side of the ball. The Convicts have been steady to this point in the season and have worked for their success. Some Chino backers would have hoped to have seen a little more demonstration of mastery in their victories, but those are the people who think the Convicts are a great team now that they have Adrian Peterson. The fact is they are a very good team, not a great team, and they will labour to win against most of the teams in the league. Expect them to struggle here, against a desperate Virden team in a mood to eviscerate somebody. **PICK: VIRDEN**

CARTHAGE @ TWIN CITIES (line – TRIUMPH by 4)

INJURIES: Carthage – Danny Amendola (OUT), Rhett Ellison (OUT), ; Twin Cities – Doug Martin (OUT), Henry Melton (OUT), Shane Vereen (OUT).

It is too early to call this game the battle for the East, but the winner will gain a big advantage down the stretch. Both squads are full value for their perfect starts to the season but neither is likely to be close to perfection by season's end. The commonality between them is a pair of competing passing attacks that are at or near the top of the league in effectiveness and efficiency. Philip Rivers has accumulated the most total passing yards of any quarterback, averaging 10.6 yards per attempt, while Jay Cutler has thrown the most TD passes, with 14; he is the reason why the Triumph lead the league in red zone TD efficiency with a stunning rate of 92%. Neither defence is particularly strong at stopping the pass, but the Cannibals have the edge against the run, not that it will matter much against a pass-first, run-never offence like Twin Cities'. I think the Cannibals are ultimately the better team, but their defence right now is suspect after a shaky performance in victory over the Patriots last week. **PICK: TWIN CITIES**

MISSION VIEJO @ IOWA CITY (line – CUBS by 3)

INJURIES: **Mission Viejo** – Brandon Browner (OUT), Jarret Johnson (OUT), David Nelson (OUT), Mike Williams (OUT); **Iowa City** – None.

It's not the first time in history the Cubs have been behind the Monarchs in the standings but it still looks bizarre. The difference in their records is an out-of division game; the Cubs fell to 4-0 Twin Cities while the Monarchs conquered the 1-3 Hellfire. Iowa's defence has been awful through four weeks of the season while their offence has been one of the best. Contrast that with the Monarchs' slightly above-average defence and its thoroughly mediocre offence and you have a superficial case for the "defence wins championships" axiom. But let's face it, neither of these two teams is going to win a championship soon, especially not this year, so we can all relax and call it the way we know it will be. The Monarchs enter the game with Kenbrell Thompkins as their top receiver, which doesn't cut it even against the unremarkable Cubs' secondary. How much steam DeMarco Murray has left to keep the Monarchs riding the victory train remains to be seen, but it probably won't be enough to keep pace with the Cubs' offensive bullet train. **PICK: IOWA CITY**

LOS ANGELES @ SANTA CLARA (line – BANANA SLUGGS by 14)

INJURIES: **Los Angeles** –Andre Brown (OUT), Mike Brown (OUT), Cortland Finnegan (OUT), Shonn Greene (OUT), Spencer Larsen (OUT); **Santa Clara** – Jairus Byrd (OUT).

This line may be a little low considering the possibility that the Knights might not score at all against the Banana Sluggs. But the last time people took a "sure bet" to bed with them involving Santa Clara it farted under the sheets. It will probably take several weeks for the Sluggs to live down their 2-point margin of victory over lowly Charleswood. Still, it's hard to imagine any realistic scenario where the Sluggs don't completely annihilate the Knights at home. Having pointed out the obvious (that's my job, people!), I must also point out the not-so-obvious (that's also my job – the more important part of it actually). That is, the Knights' defence is a sleeper. It has forced more turnovers than any team other than Aurora. If they pick up on the game film of a jumpy RGIII last week and bring a little extra pressure, it could be a tighter game than expected. On the other hand, with that offence backing it up, it will probably be a slaughter anyway. **PICK: SANTA CLARA**

COWTOWN @ MARKHAM (line – NORTH STARS by 2)

INJURIES: **Cowtown** – Mike Evans (PROBABLE), Terrence Newman (PROBABLE), Cecil Shorts III (OUT), Ryan Clady (OUT), Brett Keisel (OUT), Zack Miller (OUT); **Markham** – None.

An interesting fact about the North Stars is that they win without having very many good players. Despite operating behind an offensive line that would struggle to push a grand piano from side of the room to the other they are finding success rushing the ball, averaging 154 yards per game, and are proving capable of doing damage through the air at critical times. Don't underestimate the influence of Alex Smith on this success; he is used to playing on bad teams, making the Stars look highly talented by comparison. Markham is also stopping the opposition when it really matters – in the red zone. In a quasi-rebuilding year they may yet shock the league with a playoff berth if everything goes right. It would be nice to say the same things about the Corn Kings; they are in a similar position as Markham – rebuilding around a core of good, but not great players. Unfortunately, their weaknesses appear a little more critical. Joe Flacco is looking nervous behind a shaky offensive line that is missing its kingpin, Ryan Clady. Flacco threw 4 interceptions in the 1st half against Durham last week and two of them looked gift-wrapped. The Kings are tough at the Dawg Pound and will come close, but not close enough. **PICK: MARKHAM**

SOUTH CAROLINA @ DURHAM (line – THUNDER LIZARDS by 8)

INJURIES: **South Carolina** – Brandon Pettigrew (PROBABLE), Rob Housler (DOUBTFUL); **Durham** – Devin McCourty (QUESTIONABLE), Tyrann Mathieu (OUT).

Durham is still looking for that big breakout game from Drew Brees, but finding it elusive with Nick Foles getting almost half the action behind center. There is a full blown QB controversy in Lizard Land and it may yet get ugly before the season is over. Brees is reportedly fuming behind the scenes; but with performances like last week's against Cowtown he will be doing a lot more fuming on the sidelines. The Regulators on the other hand know who their QB is; there will be nothing to distract Tony Romo from finding the holes in a Durham secondary still hampered by injury. Devin McCourty is listed as 'questionable' but sources say he is unlikely to play. If he stays out, the Regulators have a legitimate shot at an upset here and are likely to stay within the 8-point spread. Many fans will grab the points here in any case, but I caution you that South Carolina is a fragile 3-1, having given up more points than they have scored and yet to show dominating tendencies. **PICK: DURHAM**

YORK @ PICKERING (line – SPARTANS by 2)

INJURIES: York – Geno Atkins (OUT), Victor Cruz (OUT), Von Miller (OUT), Nick Toon (OUT); **Pickering** – Jordan Cameron (DOUBTFUL), Miles Austin (OUT), Charles Tillman (OUT).

The Spartans are not in a happy place at the moment and are ripe for the picking. Sadly for the Excaliburs, they are not in the best position to pluck that Pickering Pear from the Tree of Broken Dreams. Victor Cruz is out, leaving them with rookie Kelvin Benjamin as Tom Brady's top receiving threat at wide receiver and nobody of consequence behind him. Normally the Swords would be expected to run the ball effectively against a Spartans' defence that has struggled in the ground game, but Pickering has the luxury of being able to game plan against it, degrading the threat of a good ground-pounding. On defence, York is also missing two of its top stars in Geno Atkins and Von Miller. While Peyton Manning is still getting grounded in the Pickering offence, his experience will be felt in a positive way this week, steadying a teetering Spartans ship. **PICK: PICKERING**

SCARBOROUGH @ AURORA (line – MUSTANGS by 11)

INJURIES: Scarborough – Kroy Biermann (OUT), Nate Burleson (OUT); **Aurora** – Jeremy Kerley (OUT), LaRon Landry (OUT).

Looking for positives in the Scarborough game is a difficult challenge. I thought I had found the pot of gold when I discovered that they are ranked 4th in passing yards per game and 3rd in red zone scoring efficiency. But upon further review I discovered that those numbers are more the product of a dismal running game than the strength of the passing game and that, for red zone *touchdown* efficiency, they are ranked 14th, meaning they are not making the most of their opportunities. On defence the traditionally superior Blue Eagles are stuck in mediocrity, which is a generous description since they just surrendered 30 points to the Swordfish last week. On the other side, the Mustangs are doing almost everything right under new coach Rich Liotta and appear to be unstoppable. It would be unthinkable that Scarborough would steal one on the road here, but it is precisely at unthinkable moments when the unthinkable happens. **PICK: SCARBOROUGH**

SEBASTIAN @ GWINNETT (line – SWORDFISH by 1)

INJURIES: Sebastian – Jadeveon Clowney (OUT), Leon Hall (OUT); **Gwinnett** – Maurkice Pouncey (OUT), Joseph Randle (OUT), Reggie Wayne (OUT), Bjoern Werner (OUT).

Just when I was contemplating picking the Fish to win outright, Jadeveon Clowney goes down to injury, removing a key piece from a defence that has played respectably at times this year. Clowney has not been making flashy plays but offences are trying to avoid him, which is as good as having a rock in his spot. Sebastian has the best rated run defence in the league right now and if they continue to stand up the line of scrimmage the Glads will be forced to rely on Big Ben to get the job done. That would be nothing new, but with Lance Moore and rookie Jarvis Landry as his go-to guys at wide receiver, it may not be a reasonable expectation. The Glads looked good last week against the Regs. Expect them to play well here. **PICK: GWINNETT**



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FROM THE EFL ARCHIVES – Week Two of the 2008 season was an historic one. For the first time in football history an entire team vanished from the field at the sound of the final gun. The TV camera footage from Round Table Stadium preserves the eerie moment when the Death Valley Undertakers (v.1) went up in a cloud of smoke and mist after dropping a 30-19 decision to the Knights. But the cameras tell merely a small part of the strange story.

Like an episode from the 'Twilight Zone' the bizarre mystery unravelled only in part over the months that

followed. Many questions to this day remain unanswered. What remains clear is that the players themselves survived without a scratch and went on to play their Week Three game in the blue and bronze uniforms of the Pickering Spartans.

Dozens of magazine articles, a handful of TV specials, and 1 full length book attempted to sketch out and explain what happened but none of the theories they ventured stood up to scrutiny. It turns out that syndicated columnist **Spats McChad** may have been closest to the truth about what happened that fateful day. His contention that **Chris Worthley** was an evil warlock who crafted a deal with the Devil himself to bend reality to his whim has never been convincingly refuted. The show, 'Myth-busters' was unable, in a recent episode, to demonstrate that the events of that day could have any other explanation. In light of subsequent events it appears that McChad's theories are likely correct, although they may never be proven beyond a doubt.

In other football news, the only other game worth mentioning was Charleswood rubbing it in 23-13 against rival Gwinnett with a 4th down TD pass in the dying seconds to pad the final score of what had been a gruelingly tight game.