

2014

Week Nine


EFL NEWS
 ELITE FOOTBALL LEAGUE

2014

Week Nine

December 14, 2014



CHP	17	DTL	24	TCT	6	COW	30	GWG	21	ICC	40	YOR	6	SBE	13	PIC	23	LAK	24
AUR	35	VIR	29	MAR	19	MOH	29	CAR	27	SC	34	CHI	10	SCB	34	MVM	21	SEB	34

Redding to Win!



Cory Redding and Ray McDonald of Pickering combine to take down Ryan Tannehill for a sack on 3rd down to set up 4th and long on Mission Viejo's final drive. The Spartans held on to prevail over the improving Monarchs, 23-21. (STORY INSIDE)

LATEST EFL NEWS INSIDE

- SHOOTOUT AT THE SLAMMER
- MOHAVE BLOWS IT AT HOME
- VIRDEN STUNS LIZARDS
- FISH WIN AT TANK
- CARTHAGE & AURORA STILL PERFECT
- AND MUCH MORE.....

Also in this issue

- SPATS FEATURE, 'PARKPOURRI,' 'A DAY AT THE CIRCUS.'
- JIMMY THE GEEK
- THIS WEEK IN EFL HISTORY



*Who was slick
in Week Nine*

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



OFFENSE



Russell Wilson
QB
Iowa City
Cubs

270 pass yds, 4 TDs, 97 rush yds, 1 TD. One-man show wins in OT.



DEFENSE



Kiko Alonso
ILB
Chino Convicts

12 Tackles, 2 Sacks. Solid versus the run and 2 timely sacks in win.



6-3-0

Pickering**23****MVP****Peyton Manning****21****Mission Viejo**

2-7-0

**TEAM LEADERS**

Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Manning	21	32	306	2
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Johnson	18	92	5.1	0
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Thomas	5	149	29.8	1

Team	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
Pickering	10	10	0	3	-	23
Mission Viejo	0	0	7	14	-	21

Play of the Game

With 3:06 remaining in the 1st quarter, **Peyton Manning** faked a handoff and fired a long slant pass, hitting **Demaryius Thomas** in perfect stride for a 59-yard TD pass to highlight a 20-point 1st half.

TEAM LEADERS

Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Tannehill	22	33	192	0
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Murray	27	132	4.9	3
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Latimer	6	67	11.2	0

SUMMARY: For the first 30 minutes the game looked to be the blowout for Pickering many had expected. A holding penalty on Ronald Leary stopped the Spartans' opening drive and forced a field goal, but on their next, **Peyton Manning** struck quickly with a 59-yard TD pass to **Demaryius Thomas** to make it 10-0. While the Monarchs struggled offensively, Manning connected with **Pierre Garçon** for a 15-yard major on the first play of the 2nd quarter then led a long drive to a field goal near the end of the half to make it 20-0. But the Monarchs came out charging in the 2nd half; **DeMarco Murray** followed a nice block by **Russell Okung** to score from 6 yards to get Mission on the board. With Pickering driving in the 4th quarter, Monarchs' safety **Duke Ihenacho** forced a fumble at the end of a 27-yard run by **Chris Johnson**, recovered by the Monarchs. 9 plays later Murray capped an 84-yard drive with a 5-yard TD run to make it 20-14. On Pickering's next possession **Sebastian Janikowski** made it a two-score game with a 38-yard FG, but Murray brought Mission back to within 2 with his 3rd TD run of the day. With 3:13 left and the ball at their 40, the Monarchs stood a chance. But a hold by **Josh Sitton** then a sack of **Ryan Tannehill** by **Cory Redding** on the next play, set up a game-clinching interception by **Troy Polamalu**.

QUOTES: "They have a good team. Don't laugh, I'm not being sarcastic. They are better than you think. No gentlemen, seriously, they are...well....not awful at all. Don't laugh, guys, come on! I'm being serious here!" – Pickering QB, **Peyton Manning**.

"We played with heart today. Not one player in that locker room hung his head at half time, nobody gave up. We came real close. If Ryan doesn't choke at the end there we kick a field goal to win it. But hey, who doesn't choke sometimes?" – Mission Viejo coach, **Shane Falco**.

**HAPPY FAN****titter****ANGRY FAN****Cosmas@Bronzenblue**

Too close! We let them back in it. The old Spartans would have stepped on that team's throat.

**Hickenbottom @theHickster**

DeMarco Murray Day at the Royal C. Props to Vernon too – his best game this year.

12-09-2014 HMK Royal Coliseum Temp: 43 Wind: Calm None MVP: **Peyton Manning**

Scoring Summary

1 7:41 Pickering	FG Scobee 46 (13-63-6:53)	3-0
1 3:04 Pickering	TD Manning 59 pass to Thomas (Janikowski) (3-76-1:39)	10-0
2 14:52 Pickering	TD Manning 15 pass to Garcon (Janikowski) (3-25-0:56)	17-0
2 0:04 Pickering	FG Janikowski 24 (14-82-4:25)	20-0
3 8:27 Mission Viejo	TD Murray 6 run (Carpenter) (12-75-6:28)	20-7
4 14:09 Mission Viejo	TD Murray 5 run (Carpenter) (9-84-4:34)	20-14
4 10:57 Pickering	FG Janikowski 38 (7-50-3:01)	23-14
4 4:19 Mission Viejo	TD Murray 6 run (Carpenter) (11-81-6:31)	23-21

	PIC	MVM
First Downs	17	23
Rushes	22-106	29-133
Passes	32-21-306	33-22-192
Sacked	2-17	2-13
Fumble	3	0
Penalties	8-77	5-38
Turnovers	2	1
Missed Tackles	6	8
Blitzes	12	23
Time	25:51	34:09
Third Down	6-13	2-12
Fourth Down	0-0	1-2
Red Att/Td/Fg	3/1/2	3/3/0
Net Offense	395	312

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



GLADIATORS

2-7-0

0	7	0	14	0	21
---	---	---	----	---	----

OT

Ben Roethlisberger
 19 of 26, 277 yards, 3 TDs, 1 INT



CANNIBALS

9-0-0

3	0	0	7	0	27
---	---	---	---	---	----

Eddie Lacy
 22 Carries, 101 yards, 1 TD

Passes of 38 yards to **Doug Baldwin** and 33 yards to **Danny Amendola** set up two FGs while a 4th & 6 convert led to a 3-yard TD run by **Eddie Lacy** as the Cannibals took a 13-0 lead. The Glads struck before half time when Big Ben audibled a deep pass to Jarvis Landry, good for a 49-yard TD. A scoreless 3rd quarter gave way to a frantic 4th. The Cannibals notched back-to-back TDs on an 8-yard run by **LeGarrette Blount** and a **Philip Rivers** TD pass to Baldwin. The Glads countered with a 41-yard TD pass to **Lance Moore** and a recovered onside kick to set up another TD, but fell short.



EXCALIBURS

4-5-0

0	3	0	3	0	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

OT

Marshawn Lynch
 22 Carries, 120 yards



CONVICTS

7-2-0

3	0	0	7	0	10
---	---	---	---	---	----

Cam Newton
 22 of 31, 168 yards, 1 TD

With both offences fighting a steady rain it took an 18-yard pass interference call against York corner **William Gay** to set up the game's first score – a 52-yard FG by **Dan Bailey**. The Excaliburs tied it on a 30-yard **Blair Walsh** FG with 1:00 left to finish the 1st half scoring. A 48-yard run by **Marshawn Lynch** early in the 3rd spurred a York drive to the 1, where the Convicts stopped him cold on 4th down. The break in the game came after Walsh missed a 47-yard FG attempt. Chino drove 63 yards in 13 plays, scoring the game-winner on a 15-yard TD pass from **Cam Newton** to **Roddy White**.



PATRIOTS

3-6-0

3	0	7	7	0	17
---	---	---	---	---	----

OT

Chris Ivory
 15 Carries, 75 yards, 1 TD



MUSTANGS

9-0-0

7	21	7	6	0	35
---	----	---	---	---	----

Matt Forte
 21 Carries, 146 yards, 3 TDs

Matt Forte had 9 carries for 54 yards to set up a 10-yard TD pass from **Matt Ryan** to **Anquan Boldin** on the Mustangs' opening drive. That set the stage for a season-high rushing performance by the Aurora running back; Forte scored all 3 Mustangs' TDs in the 2nd quarter, including a highlight reel 55-yarder to make it 28-3 at half time. A 46-yard interception return by Pats' **Ray Maualuga** to the Aurora 1-foot line up a TD plunge by **Chris Ivory** to make it 28-10, but a pick of **Blake Bortles** and a 34-yard return by **Nolan Carroll** set up another Mustangs' TD to put the Pats back on their heels.



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

0-9-0

7

7

7

3

0

24

OT

Mike Glennon
40 of 54, 378 yards, 3 TDs



SWORDFISH

3-6-0

7

10

0

17

0

34

Andy Dalton
18 of 32, 346 yards, 3 TDs

A back-and-forth 1st half saw **Andy Dalton** fumble to set up an early TD for the Knights. The Swordfish tied it with an 8-yard punch by **Zac Stacy** then held off a Knights' 4th down challenge at their 4 yard line to set up a 40-yard TD pass to **Aaron Dobson**. LA replied with an 80-yard drive to a 6-yard TD pass from **Mike Glennon** to **Mike Brown**, but a 54-yard FG by **Adam Vinatieri** put Sebastian in front to end the half. 10 points to start the 2nd half put LA in front 24-17, but Dalton passed for 142 yards and 2 TDs in the 4th, including a 58-yarder to **Nate Washington**, to pull off the comeback.



TRIUMPH

6-3-0

0

0

6

0

0

6

OT

Johnny Manziel
18 of 34, 172 yards, 1 TD



NORTH STARS

4-5-0

7

6

3

3

0

19

Andre Ellington
19 Carries, 84 yards, 36 rec. yards

The North Stars took advantage of great field position, after a **Matt Boshier** punt pinned the Triumph at their 2 yard line and their defence forced a three-and-out, to score their only TD on 4-yard slant from **Alex Smith** to **Jordy Nelson**. The Triumph offence managed only 3 first downs and 78 yards of offence in a scoreless 1st half while the Stars built a 13-0 lead. The Triumph got on the board late in the 3rd when **Johnny Manziel** hit **Ted Ginn Jr** for a 26-yard TD pass to make it 16-6, but the Stars added a FG and easily held off the Triumph comeback attempts with two sacks and a forced fumble.



CORN KINGS

6-3-0

7

6

3

14

0

30

OT

Joe Flacco
25 of 40, 291 yards, 2 TDs, 1 INT



HELLFIRE

1-8-0

7

10

3

9

0

29

Andrew Luck
15 of 25, 224 yards, 2 TDs

A fumble by **Alfred Morris** at his 19 yard line set up an 18-yard TD pass from **Andrew Luck** to **Harry Douglas**, giving Mohave a 14-7 lead and the early momentum. The Kings stayed close with 3 FGs, one from 56 yards, from **Nick Novak**, but still trailed 20-16 heading into the 4th. **Joe Flacco** hit **Mike Evans** for a 43-yard TD pass to give Cowtown its first lead, but a **Matt Prater** FG tied it at 23 then Douglas put Mohave in front with a 33-yard TD catch. The Hellfire missed the 2-point convert, a costly mistake as the Kings drove 80 yards to score the winning TD on a 12-yard scramble by Flacco.

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



BLUE EAGLES

3-6-0

3

7

3

0

0

13

OT

Derrick Morgan
6 Tackles, 2 Sacks, 1 TFL, 1 FF



SLUGGS

7-2-0

7

7

7

13

0

34

Alshon Jeffery
7 Catches, 172 yards, 3 TDs

Dont'a Hightower picked off **RGIII** in the 1st and returned it to the Sluggs' 11, but the Eagles could not move the ball and had to settle for a FG. **RGIII** responded with a 30-yard run followed by a 50-yard TD pass to **Alshon Jeffery** to give the Sluggs a lead they would not give up. After **Jason Snelling** made it 14-3 with a 14-yard TD run, Scarborough's **Melvin White** picked off **RGIII** and returned it 24 yards for a TD to account for the only Scarborough TD. The Sluggs struck early in the 2nd half with a 57-yard TD pass to Jeffery, his 2nd of 3 TDs, then got a "pick six" from **Daryl Smith** to seal it.



CUBS

5-4-0

14

10

7

3

6

40

OT

Russell Wilson
23 of 34, 270 yards, 4 TDs, 1 INT



REGULATORS

5-4-0

7

10

7

10

0

34

Tony Romo
36 of 52, 368 yards, 3 TDs

Through 60:00 the Regs and the Cubs matched each other score for score with neither holding a two-score advantage at any point. The Cubs held the lead the longest after **Russell Wilson** hit **Mike Wallace** for a 24-yard TD pass in the 3rd quarter; 6:52 minutes later, **Tony Romo** found **AJ Green** in the end zone from 5 yards out to tie the score at 31. They traded FGs in the 4th, with the Regs' **Justin Tucker** tying it at 34 with 1:08 left. In OT, the Cubs took the first drive 80 yards and won the game when a nearly-sacked Wilson flipped the ball to **Coby Fleener**, who ran it in for a 13-yard TD.



T-LIZARDS

5-4-0

0

7

17

0

0

24

OT

Nick Foles
22 of 39, 259 yards, 2 TDs, 1 INT



VIOLATORS

3-6-0

10

3

0

16

0

29

Matt Stafford
18 of 27, 184 yards, 1 TD

Anthony Barr strip-sacked **Nick Foles** near mid-field to set up an 8-yard TD run by **Jamaal Charles**, propelling the Violators to a 13-7 half time lead. The Lizards erased that lead and more with a 17-point burst in 3rd quarter, sparked by a 19-yard TD pass to **Reggie Bush** and lost fumbles by **John Kuhn** and **Dez Bryant** that led to 10 more Durham points. Virden answered with a 68-yard punt return TD by **Marcus Sherels** and a **Rodney McLeod** interception that set up a 32-yard TD pass from **Matt Stafford** to Bryant. The Lizards drove 61 yards but the rally died on the Virden 5 with 0:48 left.

WEEK NINE STANDINGS

East	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Carthage	9	0	0	1.000	294	32.7	211	23.4	9.2	5 0 0	4 0 0	6 0 0
Twin Cities	6	3	0	0.667	209	23.2	184	20.4	2.8	2 2 0	3 1 0	5 1 0
Charleswood	3	6	0	0.333	164	18.2	248	27.6	-9.3	3 1 0	2 2 0	2 4 0
Virden	3	6	0	0.333	260	28.9	257	28.6	0.3	3 2 0	0 4 0	1 5 0
Mohave	1	8	0	0.111	207	23	272	30.2	-7.2	0 5 0	1 3 0	1 5 0
West	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Chino	7	2	0	0.778	233	25.9	191	21.2	4.7	4 0 0	3 1 0	4 2 0
Santa Clara	7	2	0	0.778	284	31.6	219	24.3	7.2	4 1 0	4 0 0	6 0 0
Iowa City	5	4	0	0.556	264	29.3	273	30.3	-1	2 2 0	2 2 0	3 3 0
Mission Viejo	2	7	0	0.222	184	20.4	243	27	-6.6	2 3 0	1 3 0	2 4 0
Los Angeles	0	9	0	0.000	142	15.8	280	31.1	-15.3	0 4 0	0 4 0	0 6 0
North	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Cowtown	6	3	0	0.667	249	27.7	219	24.3	3.3	3 2 0	2 2 0	3 3 0
Pickering	6	3	0	0.667	242	26.9	183	20.3	6.6	3 1 0	2 2 0	3 3 0
Durham	5	4	0	0.556	259	28.8	214	23.8	5	3 1 0	3 1 0	4 2 0
Markham	4	5	0	0.444	181	20.1	175	19.4	0.7	3 2 0	2 2 0	3 3 0
York	4	5	0	0.444	172	19.1	182	20.2	-1.1	1 3 0	1 3 0	2 4 0
South	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Aurora	9	0	0	1.000	318	35.3	118	13.1	22.2	5 0 0	4 0 0	6 0 0
South Carolina	5	4	0	0.556	242	26.9	239	26.6	0.3	3 2 0	3 1 0	4 2 0
Scarborough	3	6	0	0.333	188	20.9	235	26.1	-5.2	0 4 0	1 3 0	2 4 0
Sebastian	3	6	0	0.333	203	22.6	275	30.6	-8	1 4 0	1 3 0	1 5 0
Gwinnett	2	7	0	0.222	174	19.3	251	27.9	-8.6	1 3 0	1 3 0	2 4 0

PASSING

#	Player	Team	Att	Cmp	C%	Yards	In	I%	Lg	TD	TD%	Rate
1	Cutler	TCT	153	104	68	1200	4	2.6	42	15	9.8	113.2
2	Manning, P	PIC	282	183	64.9	2348	7	2.5	80	22	7.8	106.5
3	Newton, C	CHI	278	197	70.9	2028	3	1.1	47	16	5.8	106.2
4	Rivers, P	CAR	272	184	67.6	2563	9	3.3	75	18	6.6	106.0
5	Foles	DTL	164	98	59.8	1295	1	0.6	57	11	6.7	104.6
6	Ryan, M	AUR	329	215	65.3	2418	6	1.8	76	24	7.3	103.9
7	Wilson, R	ICC	283	192	67.8	2284	6	2.1	69	17	6.0	103.4
8	Stafford, M	VV	298	190	63.8	2683	7	2.3	65	15	5.0	99.7
9	Brees	DTL	150	109	72.7	1168	4	2.7	45	7	4.7	99.5
10	Griffin III	SCB	258	161	62.4	2137	5	1.9	65	13	5.0	97.3
11	Glennon	LAK	146	95	65.1	934	0	0	55	6	4.1	96.7
12	Smith, A	MAR	232	141	60.8	1408	2	0.9	48	13	5.6	93.1
13	Flacco	COW	327	204	62.4	2515	13	4	80	21	6.4	91.0
14	Romo	SC	372	229	61.6	2342	6	1.6	71	20	5.4	90.8
15	Luck	MOH	307	183	59.6	2239	9	2.9	77	13	4.2	84.0
16	Tannehill	MVM	280	166	59.3	1769	7	2.5	51	13	4.6	82.9
17	Brady	YOR	253	144	56.9	1725	6	2.4	55	10	4.0	81.2
18	Bortles	CHP	243	143	58.8	1754	9	3.7	72	11	4.5	80.9
19	Dalton	SS	332	192	57.8	2083	6	1.8	74	12	3.6	80.9
20	Rodgers, A	SBE	237	141	59.5	1622	8	3.4	54	10	4.2	80.2

RUSHING

#	Player	Team	Att	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	Morris, A	COW	171	937	5.5	41	5
2	Lacy	CAR	191	922	4.8	57	13
3	Lynch,M	YOR	178	857	4.8	48	7
4	Charles, J	VV	172	855	5.0	51	7
5	Johnson, C	PIC	183	838	4.6	35	3
6	Moreno	SCB	159	757	4.8	24	13
7	Spiller	ICC	124	710	5.7	55	3
8	McCoy, L	GWG	185	683	3.7	35	7
9	Gore	SC	139	681	4.9	56	6
10	Forte	AUR	156	650	4.2	55	11
11	Murray	MVM	135	619	4.6	62	6
12	Ivory	CHP	136	524	3.9	50	5
13	Bell, L	LAK	131	520	4.0	44	1
14	Ellington	MAR	95	498	5.2	43	2
15	Peterson, A	CHI	113	493	4.4	31	6
16	Ball, M	MOH	104	489	4.7	27	3
17	Jackson, F	DTL	100	468	4.7	20	9
18	Miller, L	CHP	111	430	3.9	49	1
19	Ridley	SCB	82	419	5.1	26	6
20	Newton, C	CHI	53	395	7.5	55	3

RECEIVING

#	Player	Team	No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	Green, A	SC	70	888	12.7	71	8
2	Brown, A	TCT	65	748	11.5	45	8
3	Bryant, D	VV	61	992	16.3	50	8
4	Edelman	AUR	56	533	9.5	52	7
5	Johnson, A	SCB	55	678	12.3	40	1
6	Graham, J	MOH	53	769	14.5	65	5
7	Boldin	AUR	52	928	17.8	76	13
8	Jackson, D	SBE	52	802	15.4	60	7
9	Garcon	PIC	51	636	12.5	71	9
10	Olsen	CHI	50	446	8.9	36	3
11	Wright, K	TCT	50	432	8.6	35	4
12	Woodhead	CHI	49	446	9.1	35	4
13	Wallace, M	ICC	48	766	16.0	69	8
14	Jackson, V	TCT	48	857	17.9	42	6
15	Douglas, H	MOH	47	534	11.4	33	3
16	Fitzgerald	COW	46	672	14.6	80	7
17	LaFell	LAK	45	637	14.2	78	6
18	Williams, T	CHP	43	605	14.1	72	4
19	Decker	DTL	42	547	13.0	28	5
20	Thomas, D	PIC	42	731	17.4	80	7

KICKING

#	Player	Team	FGA	FGM	FG%	40	50	Lg	Pts
1	Zuerlein	ICC	23	21	91.3	7	3	51	90
2	Crosby	VV	22	19	86.4	7	2	54	84
3	Folk	AUR	18	15	83.3	10	5	55	84
4	Prater	MOH	24	21	87.5	5	2	56	81
5	Hauschka	CAR	18	14	77.8	7	2	53	78
6	Novak	COW	17	15	88.2	5	1	56	71
7	Bailey, D	CHI	20	15	75	8	1	52	71
8	Vinatieri	SS	18	16	88.9	5	2	54	69
9	Henery	SCB	13	11	84.6	3	0	47	68
10	Feely	SBE	20	16	80	4	0	49	68
11	Tucker, J	SC	19	13	68.4	4	1	50	68
12	Dawson	DTL	12	12	100	3	1	57	67
13	Brown, J	MAR	16	14	87.5	7	3	53	61
14	Gostkowski	TCT	10	10	100	5	0	49	53
15	Walsh	YOR	17	11	64.7	4	2	54	52
16	Carpenter	MVM	13	10	76.9	1	0	44	52
17	Suisham	GWG	9	9	100	3	0	45	48
18	Bironas	CHP	10	8	80	4	0	49	44
19	Janikowski	PIC	5	4	80	0	0	38	41
20	Lindell	LAK	10	8	80	3	1	59	40

Welcome to the **BLOGOSPHERE**



<http://thehomefront.com>



WHERE FANS SPEAK

WAT A ROOKIE!

BY RANDY BACHMAN (CONTRIBUTOR) ON DECEMBER 14, 2014



Sammy Watkins is *taking care of business*. The Patriots' first pick in 2014 draft out of Clemson is looking good so far but I have a feeling that *you ain't seen nothing yet!* Watkins has been banged up, missed two games already, but he still has 38 catches, second behind Mike Evans among rookie wide receivers, and he is definitely *not fragile*. One thing is obvious: this dude is not afraid to go across the middle or fight off two guys for the ball. He has guts, strength and speed, a *blue collar* work ethic with a superstar pedigree.

His *free wheelin'* style when pass protection for Blake Bortles breaks down usually gets him in a position to bail out his quarterback. This was what happened when he came back to Blake when he was about to be swallowed up by the Virden defence; Sammy took the toss and ran 71 yards for a TD with seconds left in the game! He hit like a *sledgehammer* and left the Violators *blue moanin*.

These eyes know what they're seeing in this

Sammy Watkins; he is going to be a star in this league. But first the young Pats team around him has to build up its confidence and his quarterback has to develop into the kind of player Jason Findlay hoped for when he drafted him with the last pick of the first round. If Blake can't get it done, this team could come *undun* before Watkins reaches his potential.

Our Pats aren't finished building yet. Before they *roll on down the highway* to another championship they have to fill some holes on both their lines and get a running back half as good as AP. Not some *second hand* back handed down in a trade, but a thoroughbred with speed and power. They should be able to land one of those with one of the 6 picks they have in top 40 draft slots next year. They say running backs are easy to find now, but the right running back makes a big difference. That's what AP taught us last year. Until then, *let it ride* on Sammy Watkins!



AROUND THE



With Spats McChad

NEW YORK – If the EFL season were analogous to a car trip from the east coast to the west coast, Week Nine would signal entry into Saskatchewan – more than half way to our destination but still with a long way to go and little interesting to see in our immediate surroundings. The Prairies are bleak and so is the Week Nine vibe.

The games in Week Nine are important, but do not feel critical. Those few teams in dire need of a win at this point are all resigned to falling out of the race eventually, making their desperation half-hearted at best. Virden was one such team and they pulled off a bit of a shocker this week against the Thunder Lizards that keeps their shaky playoff hopes alive for another week. But nobody in Virden is planning a victory parade yet, or even thinking about who might plan that victory parade if there were a better than unlikely chance they would need to plan one.

Being 9/16ths of the way through the season does not lend itself to any natural discussion points, either. The playoff picture is sharpening, but still too out of focus to be able to attach sure meaning to any individual game. It's no longer the halfway point, but still far from the 3-quarters point.

Oh well....time to pull out that Stadiums Rating Guide I got from *Bulldog Gridiron Tours Ltd.*, when I visited Canton in the Fall. It rates the total experience and individual features of each park based on feedback from travellers and their staff of seasoned football tourists. I have been pouring over it trying to decide if I really want to do my '20 parks in 16 Weeks' EFL tour. Here are some of the highlights:

PARKPOURRI

If a football fan cared only about watching the football there would be no reason to go to the park in this day and age. Cable/Satellite sports packages have almost all viewing options covered. You have to pay extra for the privilege of special channels like *EFL Red Zone*, *Drawing Board* and *EFL Film Room*, but the cost is cheap compared with a day out at the stadium. That's why the EFL insists on upholding the medieval "Blackout" rule – it is the only leverage they have to force some fans out to the park. Technology is weakening that leverage a little bit more with each passing year.

So why do fans go to the trouble of actually going to the stadium? For the experience, of course; and that experience includes more than just the game. It could include everything, or anything, from the site to the food to the ambience. So, here are some aspects of the total football experience that I find important, and where to go get the best of that particular thing:

TAILGATING – Camelot, York. If you care about getting sauced and sated before the game more than you care about making it into the stadium, Camelot is the place for you. One of the smallest parking lots in the league has plenty of green space around it and the locals take advantage. By the end of the season it is "brown space" as monster truck tire tracks and boot prints trample everything living. This is the scene of a Medieval Times-style tournament festival on Excaliburs' home dates. Local chef, **Ralph Buttermilk**, is the most prominent of the local gastronomes who go to great lengths to create 'Camelot in the Parking Lot.' His weekly King's Feast features roasted boar on a spit and his famous deep fried onions – not onion rings, whole onions. If it's beer you like, you might never want to leave this place. Beer tents dot the landscape and by one count last October there were 83 different varieties available. But apparently no trip to Camelot is complete without downing a pint of 'Abbott Tudbully's Dirty Monk Mead' before the game. It packs a 15% alcohol-by-volume punch that will make you forget the game.

HONOURABLE MENTION – TERRORDOME, Virden. The tailgate starts early, finishes late, and often ends with the local police breaking up the last vestige of drunks some time after the local bars close. *Bulldog* recommends getting there early for the 'Beer with Breakfast' portion of the tailgate: "Pancakes, sausages and wheat beer turns out to be the perfect way to start a Football Sunday. Who would have thought?"

VENUE – Patriot Place, Charleswood. As many visitors discovered during the 2011 EFL Championship, Patriot Place is a very comfortable and clean facility. If you want armchair quarterback comfort at the stadium, this is the place for you. The chairback seats are cushioned, slightly larger than average, and there is an extra six-inches of leg room, giving fans ample space to move around without inadvertently bumping a neighbour. The sightlines are good from every seat in the house and if you are fortunate to have platinum premium tickets you will find yourself closer to the action than any other ticket holders in the league. Climate control inside the dome is really welcome on those bitter cold December days in Winnipeg.

HONOURABLE MENTION – Carolina Slammer – Columbia. This new facility epitomizes "Southern Comfort" on a grand scale. Tiered

canopies shade the crowd from the mid-day Carolina sun and misters kick in over the Magnolia Seats when the temperature rises above 90° F. Steeper seating angles draw the eye unobstructed to the field of play. Iced tea is served free of charge and hostesses never stop smiling. It's almost too good for football fans.

CONCESSIONS – TCF Bank Stadium, Twin Cities / Camelot, York. This category is split between the healthy, affordable, 'Birdie Burger'-inspired creations of Guy Williams' alternative fast food restaurant chain and the deep-fried prime rib sandwich and chocolate ale special available inside the stadium at Camelot. Neither of these options is traditional stadium fare, but apparently both make a good impression for different reasons. Personally, I think they missed the mark by failing to place the Fish Tank in Sebastian near or at the top of this list. **HONOURABLE MENTION – Tillman Field, Cowtown.** If you like peameal bacon sandwiches with fresh cut french fries and homemade pumpkin pie ice cream sandwiches, washed down with a shot of sweet corn whiskey, this is the only place in the league you'll find them all in one place, fresh and affordable.

AMBIENCE – Joe Ferguson Stadium, Iowa City. There is nothing fancy or particularly striking about the park itself, but the crowd at Joe Ferguson Stadium is one of the liveliest in the league. Not the loudest fans on record (Chino's fans take that prize) they are always active and reacting to everything happening on the field. Led by the vociferous and slightly crazy Iowa Joe, they are noted for being very positive overall, exhorting the Cubs to greater efforts rather than booing poor performance. They are so enthusiastic that fans of the visitors have been known to end up cheering for the Cubs by the end of the game. They were sorely tested in 2012 during a disastrous 1-15 campaign but managed to refrain from tossing garbage on the field, feeling, in the famous words of one anonymous



Banana Sluggs' linebacker **Robert Mathis** celebrates his 2nd sack in as many plays in Week 9 action versus Scarborough. Mathis has 13 sacks in 9 games, putting him on a record-setting pace and making him a Defensive MVP candidate.

fan, "there is enough garbage on that field as it is!" **HONOURABLE MENTION – Gwinnett Coliseum, Gwinnett.** Whether it's the effect of the forum-style columns in the plaza at the stadium's front entrance, the black, gold and red banners hanging from the scoreboard, or the coliseum bench seating in the 300 level, it is hard not to feel something magnificent is about to take place when you enter this stadium. The crowd noise is steady throughout the game and nearly deafening when the Gladiators are playing well. Plenty of fans decked out in Roman-era costume boost the sense of pageantry.

These are just a few of the interesting tidbits drawn from *Bulldog's Stadium Ratings Guide*. The 2014 Edition does not include Santa Clara's new digs, but contains an interesting round-up of the experience at the Graveyard in Death Valley. Next week, we will look at some of the worst the EFL has to offer, as well as a couple of the most unique fan experiences out there.

A DAY AT THE CIRCUS

Johnny Manziel is drawing a crowd of curious onlookers every week for the Triumph, boosting TV ratings in the games he starts. But this week's tilt at the Dawg Pound against the decelerating North Stars tested the patience of even the most inquisitive fan. The Markham offence was in 'Mark Sanchez-era' mode this week (without the interceptions), and **Johnny Football** was performing like a typical unready rookie quarterback while barking and gesticulating after almost every play; and really, really, getting on my nerves in the process. These exaggerated "field general" theatrics bug me when a future Hall-of-Famer like **Peyton Manning** does them; when a whelp like Manziel tries them, while pulling off the football equivalent of peeing on the carpet, I feel like rubbing his nose in the turf and saying, "bad boy!"

To give you an example of how painful this game was to watch, take the opening series for both teams: Twin Cities gets the ball first at their 20 and overcomes a first play sack and fumble with consecutive passes of 14 and 8 yards to bring up 2nd and 2 at their 38. Manziel, all soaking wet 200 lbs of him, bucks the middle of the Markham line for a 1-yard loss on the next play. Then, on 3rd and 3, he is forced to quickly abort a long pass play by the blitz pressure of **John Abraham** and **D'Qwell Jackson**; Manziel runs 20 yards evading the rush to gain 2, bringing up 4th and 1 at their 39, normally a punting situation.

Whether Coach **Guy Williams** was so inexplicably fearful of the Markham offence that he felt he needed to keep the ball out of its hands; or he was so disdainful of its ability to take advantage, is not clear. But, straying far afield from convention, the Triumph attempted to convert the first down.

"Well, look at this," observed play-by-play announcer, **Greg Gumby**. "It looks like Guy Williams is going to at least try to draw the North Stars offside here."

"If not, this is a big gamble, Greg," commented **Dan Deerduff**. "But it shows great faith in Johnny Manziel and it sends a message to Markham."

"What kind of message do you think they're sending, Dan?" Gumby asked as Manziel brought his offence to the line.

After a moment of hesitation, Deerduff replied, "That they're going to do things like this to try and win the game here on the road with this crowd here...." he trailed off, clearly unsure of what the message might be. If I had been in the booth I would have answered snappily: *"that they're crazy, Greg. They are telling the North Stars, 'hey, we're nuts and we're going to do nutty things to prove it to you.' Crazy people are scary, Greg. He's trying to scare Markham and catch them off guard."*

Markham stuck to its 2-4 nickel package in this short yardage situation, clearly proving that they were willing to match nuts with nuts. In the event, veteran **Trent Cole** tripped up rookie running back **Tre Mason** behind the line for a 1-yard loss, giving Markham the ball at the Triumph 38 yard line. Pumped up with adrenaline, the Stars replied in the usual way, by attempting a pass down field on a designed rollout. But **Alex Smith** rolled out right into the arms of **Jurrell Casey**, who wrapped him up for a 9-yard loss. A 6-yard pass and an incompleteness were not enough to get the Stars into field goal range. Facing 4th and long at the Triumph 41, they elected to do the sensible thing and punt, putting Manziel back at his 2 yard line to start the next drive. It was too deep a hole for the Triumph. Markham would force a three-and-out and take advantage of great field position to drive to their only touchdown of the afternoon. The Manziel-led Triumph offence was ineffective for the rest of the 1st half while the North Stars's attack was marginally better, taking advantage of good field position to eke out a pair of field goals to make it 13-0 at half time.

I will spare you the dreary details of the 2nd half except to report that it was more of the same for both teams. On this day, Markham was less inept than Twin Cities, not losing by a score of 16-6.

AROUND THE EFL

At the Carolina Slammer, the Cubs scored last to win an intense battle with the Regulators in overtime by a score of 40-34. This was a breath-taking game that saw 6 different leads erased before the Cubs made it impossible for the Regs to match by taking the opening drive of overtime 80 yards in 8 plays for a touchdown, ending the drama with a 13-yard pass from **Russell Wilson** to **Coby Fleener**. This game belonged to Wilson, the league's emerging superstar at quarterback. "Russell" (as media have suddenly started to refer to him) not only threw for 270 yards and 4 TD passes, he rushed for 97 yards and another TD on 8 carries, making it a dozen jelly-filled donut-day for **Colin Kaepernick** holding the clipboard on the sideline.

At the Fiery Depths in Mohave, the desert heat may have fried the brain of Hellfire coach **Bobby Elder**. After **Andrew Luck** had connected with **Harry Douglas** for a 31-yard touchdown pass to break a 23-23 tie with Cowtown in 4th quarter, Elder kept his offence on the field to try for two. The Hellfire offence appeared to be as confused as Cowtown and failed to convert. This opened the door for the Corn Kings, who walked right in with an 80-yard touchdown drive that ended with a rare **Joe Flacco** scramble for the score. A single extra point turned out to be the difference in a 30-29 Cowtown win, prompting a grilling of Coach Elder after the game. "I screwed up the math," he answered. This response had the unintended effect of completely silencing the room as puzzled reporters tried to comprehend how, in a game that had been tied, math could have been involved at all.

At **TERRORDOME** in Virden the hard luck Violators ran into a team with an even darker aura. The Thunder Lizards fell out of a share of first place in the North by imploding in the 4th quarter to drop a 29-24 decision to Virden. Seemingly in control with a 24-13 lead, Durham let the game get away from them starting with a 68-yard punt return TD by **Marcus Sherels**. Then **Nick Foles** threw off his back foot, under pressure from **Anthony Barr**, and was picked off by safety **Rodney McLeod**. This set up a 32-yard touchdown pass from **Matt Stafford** to **Dez Bryant** that put Virden in front 29-24 with 4:21 left in the game. The Durham rally fell 5 yards short as **Eric Berry** jarred the ball loose from the hands of **Vernon Davis** in the end zone. Coach **George Kaldis** refused to answer questions about the quarterback carousel that some are blaming for Durham's inconsistency this year.

At the Fish Tank in Sebastian the Swordfish overcame a fine effort by the Knights' offence to prevail 34-24. It was just the second home victory in the three-year history of the franchise. **Andy Dalton** completed four passes of 40 yards or more, two of them for touchdowns, to outduel a 378-yard, 3-TD effort by **Mike Glennon** in a quarterback battle that nobody saw coming.

At HMK Royal Coliseum in Mission Viejo, the Spartans fought off a late push from a spunky Monarchs' team thanks to a surge of aggression from **Cory Redding**. Trailing 23-21 and needing a field goal to win, the Monarchs drove to the Pickering 46 before stopping for the two-minute warning. After recovering his breath, the Spartans' lineman beat Pro Bowl guard **Josh Sitton** on an inside move, inducing a holding penalty that made it 3rd and 20, then sacked **Ryan Tannehill** on the next play to bring up 4th and Impossible. **Troy Polamalu** made it a sure thing with his first interception of the year.

On a rare rainy day in Chino, the Excaliburs and Convicts out-sloshed the North Stars and Triumph with an all-round indolent offensive performance. One good drive by the Convicts was good enough to win it. **Cam Newton** accounted for 198 of the Convicts' 208 total yards (168 passing and 30 rushing) and threw the game-winning TD to **Roddy White** in a 10-6 win.

In Santa Clara, **Major Gerow** was AWOL, forcing **Captain Rob Bott** to step in as emergency coach. For the Banana Sluggs. His relative conservatism on defence made Scarborough quarterback, **Terrelle Pryor** look like, well, **Terrelle Pryor**! The Blue Eagles managed just 99 total yards and 6 first downs in dropping a 34-13 decision, while **Robert Mathis** added 2 sacks to his league-leading sack total of 13. At this pace, Mathis will be candidate for Defensive MVP.

Finally, the league's two unbeaten teams remained unbeaten after Week Nine. Carthage made the most of two Gwinnett turnovers and a 101-yard rushing day by **Eddie Lacy** to prevail 27-21, while the Mustangs had no trouble with Charleswood quarterback **Blake Bortles**, holding him to 82 yards passing and intercepting him twice in a 35-17 trouncing of the Pats.

BUG THE BOOKIE!

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

Your source for fantasy and on-line betting solutions



RECORD VS THE SPREAD AFTER WEEK 9:

53-34-3

JIMMY'S WEEK TEN PICKS

MARKHAM @ CHARLESWOOD (line – NORTH STARS by 1)

INJURIES: **Markham** – Anthony Fasano (OUT), Jordan Reed (OUT); **Charleswood** – Nate Solder (DOUBTFUL), Michael Crabtree (OUT), Jerod Mayo (OUT), Anthony Spencer (OUT), Vince Wilfork (OUT);

The North Stars' big play drought continues. Their longest play from scrimmage in the last 4 games has been a 43-yard run by Andre Ellington while their longest pass has been a mere 21 yards. In a league where the passing attack is so crucial to success, that number is going to get a team nowhere most weeks. This week the Stars can think about moving from dink-and-dunk to a full gear offence against one of the worst defences in the league. Or they could play it safe, with one of the safest quarterbacks in the league in Alex Smith, and still be successful provided their defence can keep a struggling Blake Bortles down. The Pats' QB has been on a downward trend for the past four weeks after defining the term "game manager" over the first 5 weeks of the season. With their QB's decline the Pats are coming down to earth, but they still have their seemingly unshakable spirit. The Stars may be in for a taste of their own medicine going up against an inferior but plucky opponent on its home turf. This line says it all; Markham should win, but do not expect much more than the slimmest of margins. **PICK: MARKHAM**

VIRDEN @ SCARBOROUGH (line – BLUE EAGLES by 1)

INJURIES: **Virden** – Mark Ingram (PROBABLE), Nick Perry (DOUBTFUL), Melvin Ingram (OUT), Justin Blackmon (OUT), Julio Jones (OUT); **Scarborough** – LaMichael James (PROBABLE), Kroy Biermann (OUT), Nate Burleson (OUT), King Dunlap (OUT), Aaron Rodgers (OUT), Charles Sims (OUT), D.J. Williams (OUT).

With Aaron Rodgers probably a month away from returning, the playoff fate of the Blue Eagles lies in the unsteady hands of Terrelle Pryor. With this questionable line the odds-makers are probably fondly remembering how the Eagles under Pryor pushed the Cannibals against the spread two weeks ago. But they seem to have ignored how Pryor was thoroughly humbled by the Banana Sluggs last week. The skilled bettor must be able to see when a team's past reputation is about to become an empty cliché and the Violators' "curse" is about to become one after two consecutive wins against quality opponents. It is often just a matter of time before the numbers catch up with the performance, and Virden's numbers, at least on offence, have always been great. The difference over the past two weeks has been the improvement of their defence in holding off two very good quarterbacks. The result: two wins and renewed hope for fans in Virden. Let Vegas put money on an out-dated "curse" and an untamed quarterback; I am going with the team that is finally beginning to realize its potential, even if it is probably too late. **PICK: VIRDEN**

SEBASTIAN @ TWIN CITIES (line – TRIUMPH by 10)

INJURIES: **Sebastian** – Leon Hall (OUT), Rahim Moore (OUT), Wes Welker (OUT); **Twin Cities** – Clint Bolling (QUESTIONABLE), Jay Cutler (OUT), Doug Martin (OUT), Henry Melton (OUT), Shane Vereen (OUT);

For the second consecutive week Andy Dalton finds himself in a position of advantage over his opponent; Johnny Manziel gets the start for Twin Cities while Jay Cutler stays out one more week as a precautionary measure. The extra medical care for Cutler is a testimony to how important he is to the Triumph's chances of making, and succeeding in, the playoffs. In the meantime, Guy Williams is counting on Johnny Football to pull off some Heisman magic at home against a weak opponent. The friendly crowd will help, but by how much? It is scary for Triumph fans to dwell on how difficult it was for Manziel to find Antonio Brown last week

against the North Stars; if he can't succeed in the passing game, all is lost against a Swordfish team that has enough game to upset a wounded opponent on the road. Let's cut to the chase – Twin Cities is praying to escape with a win here. The odds are in their favour, but not by much. But while Dalton is clearly the better quarterback, Manziel clearly has the better supporting cast. Expect a triumph in the 'W' column for the Triumph, but a victory versus the spread for the Fish. **PICK: SEBASTIAN**

MOHAVE @ DURHAM (line – THUNDER LIZARDS by 13)

INJURIES: **Mohave** – Aaron Donald (QUESTIONABLE), Dwayne Gratz (OUT), Justin Houston (OUT), Bruce Irvin (OUT), Amini Silatolu (OUT); **Durham** – Marquise Goodwin (OUT), Eugene Monroe (OUT).

The pressure here is all on Durham while the devil-may-care Hellfire can try for two-point conversions with every touchdown if they feel like it. They will, of course, have to score touchdowns to indulge that whimsy. On the road in humid Jurassic Park the environment could hardly be less conducive to an offensive fireworks display from a team with misfiring weapons going up against Richard Sherman and Co. While the Lizards' defense has been an asset in an offensive year in the league, their offence has been a tremendous disappointment. George Kaldis has managed to turn a position of strength into a position of weakness, as discontinuity around the quarterback position wreaks havoc with the team's offensive rhythm. Fortunately, Calvin Johnson returns from injury this week, but some are asking if that matters very much. Inexplicably the best wide receiver in the game has been targeted less than 6 times per game and ranks 50th in the league in catches. Durham's dysfunction does not mean the Hellfire are likely to beat the spread, but if the Lizards don't make a statement, they will continue to fall. **PICK: DURHAM**

CARTHAGE @ YORK (line – CANNIBALS by 3)

INJURIES: **Carthage** – Kyle Rudolph (OUT), Harrison Smith (OUT); **York** – De'Anthony Thomas (QUESTIONABLE), Nick Toon (DOUBTFUL) Geno Atkins (OUT), Von Miller (OUT), Robert Geathers (OUT), Asante Samuel (OUT).

The only thing the York offence is consistently doing right is not turning the ball over. Marshawn Lynch is having a good year, but he could be having a great year if Tom Brady and the passing game could get on track. This lack of offence is a real problem for York seeing as they are going up against a Cannibals' team led by Philip Rivers with a healthy Josh Gordon and a confident Eddie Lacy at his disposal. The uninspiring but competent Carthage defence just got a lot better spelling off an offence that can hold on to the ball if it chooses and score from a distance when it needs to. Adding to the Swords' woes is a defence missing stars Geno Atkins and Von Miller. York has the home field, but with a 1-3 home record, that is no advantage. **PICK: CARTHAGE**

COWTOWN @ IOWA CITY (line – CUBS by 3)

INJURIES: **Cowtown** – Ryan Clady (OUT), Brandon Flowers (OUT); **Iowa City** – Bruce Miller (OUT), Xavier Rhodes (OUT); There has rarely been a dull moment watching the Cubs this year. The emotional roller coaster has been more up than down and the dominance of their offence is making them the chic underdog choice to beat out Twin Cities for the playoffs. That offence, led by emerging superstar Russell Wilson, is an intoxicating choice here at home against a team that many believe has fluked its way into contention over the first nine weeks. While statisticians wrestle with the implications of a team with a -9 turnover differential leading its Division with a 6-3 record, the Corn Kings just continue to get the job done on the field. Joe Flacco, for all his flaws, seems to find his receivers when it matters most, while his defence follows suit with key stops at key moments. All this has the makings of a fantastic match-up with significant playoff implications for both teams. Cowtown's defence should give them the edge, but the home field is a big consideration here, as is the momentum from a spectacular win for the Cubs over South Carolina last week. I am going with the hotter hand at home. **PICK: IOWA CITY**

AURORA @ CHINO (line – MUSTANGS by 6)

INJURIES: **Aurora** – None; **Chino** – Adrian Peterson (PROBABLE), Jahri Evans (OUT), DeMarcus Ware (OUT).

The Convicts are neck and neck with the Division-leading Banana Sluggs – a powerhouse with Championship pedigree – which puts them in the elite category of EFL teams. This week, they get an opportunity to prove that they belong in that category as they host the league's most dominant team. The Mustangs are taking on all comers and trampling them into the dirt. Last week, they exercised their 19th ranked run offence in an easy victory over Charleswood. This week, they plan to punish Cam Newton and, in the process, shut down the Chino offence. If any team can take a quarterback like Newton out of the game, it would be Aurora. Conversely, if a quarterback were to be freely chosen among all in the league to frustrate the trumpeted Mustangs' defence, Newton would be near the top of that list. This game hinges on Adrian Peterson. If he can go, expect a fierce challenge from the Convicts and a close game. If not, Cam will be exposed. My inside info tells me AP plays. **PICK: CHINO**

SANTA CLARA @ PICKERING (line – SPARTANS by 5)

INJURIES: **Santa Clara** – Nick Fairly (PROBABLE), Randall Cobb (OUT), Alfonzo Dennard (OUT), Rob Gronkowski

(OUT), Clay Matthews (OUT), Louis Nix III (OUT); **Pickering** – Craig Stevens (OUT), Charles Tillman (OUT).

The military coach system in place with the Sluggs is not working out as the Pentagon hoped. The players are running the show; and while that is good for morale, it doesn't always yield results. Under the direction of Captain Rob Bott the Sluggs held greenhorn Terrelle Pryor in check, but with Peyton Manning on the schedule, General Supernaw, the commander of Project ReDead, felt the need to bring in some experience. Ryan Rich, the youngest coach in EFL history and reputedly the richest boy in the world has apparently done all of his homework and is ready to coach this Sunday's game for the Banana Sluggs. This causes concern in the Pickering war room as the tendencies under Major Gerow will no longer apply. On the other hand, Ryan Rich has just a few days to introduce his 'KLaw' system to the players and there is no guarantee that the undisciplined Sluggs will take to it. Nevertheless, the 5-point line is a little too generous regardless of the circumstances. **PICK: SANTA CLARA**

MISSION VIEJO @ GINNETT (line – Pick'Em)

INJURIES: Mission Viejo – Brandon Browner (OUT), Brian Cushing (OUT), Mike James (OUT), Kenbrell Thompkins (OUT), Mike Williams (OUT); **Gwinnett** – Mike Iupati (PROBABLE), Lance Briggs (OUT), Tommy Kelly (OUT), Maurkice Pouncey (OUT), Reggie Wayne (OUT).

These 2-7 titans are statistically evenly matched but the Monarchs have been playing their opponents consistently tough over the course of a 5-game losing streak. The Glads have been living off their stars' reputations for over a year now, but it is just now sinking in to the common bettor that they have fewer stars in 2014 and the talent around them is subpar. As unimpressive as the no-name receiving corps in Mission Viejo is, the Glads are in no better shape with Reggie Wayne out. These days you will get an argument from some fans as to who is the better back: LeSean McCoy or DeMarco Murray. The Monarchs are clearly superior in the trenches and that negates the home field advantage for the Glads. The fundamentals favour the Monarchs, but I can't get past the mental block of being unable to imagine them winning at the Coliseum. **PICK: GWINNETT**

SOUTH CAROLINA @ LOS ANGELES (line – REGULATORS by 6)

INJURIES: South Carolina – Sam Acho (OUT), Kyle Van Noy (OUT); **Los Angeles** – Cortland Finnegan (OUT), Garrett Graham (OUT), Kenny Vaccaro (OUT).

The Regulators are reeling after a pair of losses to teams they needed to beat to make a statement to themselves and the league that they belong in the playoff picture. The Regs have been picking the low-hanging fruit to survive; they have yet to beat a 500-or-better team this year. This week they don't have to reach up to snatch the fruit of victory, just bend down and pick it up. The winless Knights look more likely to remain that way with each passing week. Yesterday they got a rare 400-yard day from the offence but it was not enough to upset the Swordfish. The chance of that miracle repeating itself against the Regulators is about as slim as the Knights' latest Hollywood spokesperson, Keira Knightley's waist. The Regs lead the league in pass attempts and with Cortland Finnegan and Kenny Vaccaro out for LA there would be no reason to slow down that pace this week. I think the Knights have a surprise in them this season, but not this week. **PICK: SOUTH CAROLINA**



ANCIENT HISTORY CHANNEL
PRESENTS
This Week in EFL History
With Professor Sterling Smitherman

FROM THE EFL ARCHIVES – I must confess to a grievous error in last week's column. I referred to a 2008 game between the Florida Dragons and Iowa City Cubs as occurring "in the days before 2-point conversions." In fact, one of my new research assistants failed to convert the number MCMXCIV to its proper Arabic number, 1994 (the year 2-point conversions came into play on the old defunct NFL) when preparing my research brief. You see, as Anchorman and Director of History at the Ancient History Channel, most of my work is done in Roman Numerals and all of our computers are set to convert conventional numbers

to their Roman equivalent for my convenience. This caused some confusion for the new intern, who has not yet mastered the old number system which, in its day, was a significant advancement over IIII IIII || (12), for example.

Moving on to Week Seven in the 2008, the big controversy was in Kutztown, where the Golden Bears beat the Knights 28-23 on a 42-yard 'Hail Mary' with one second left on the clock. Amazing enough on its own, it became legendary due to the fact that when the play started, there were only 3 seconds on the clock. Somehow, Brandon Stokley made it to the end zone and Tony Romo dropped back seven steps and uncorked a deep ball into the end zone in all of 2 seconds. After this game, the old hand wound clock at Lincoln Bear Field was replaced by a digital one.

The rest of the games around the league that week were not very interesting. The good teams won and the bad teams lost – by a lot! Winners defeated losers by an average score of 29-9, with the Golden Bears victory being the only close contest. The other big news item was the Colorado Thundersnow scoring an offensive TD against the Hellfire in a 40-17 loss. Florida and Charleswood remained undefeated.