

2014

Week Fifteen



# EFL NEWS

ELITE FOOTBALL LEAGUE

2014

Week Fifteen

February 1, 2015



CAR	27	VIR	30	MOH	31	CHI	27	MVM	27	YOR	14	DTL	28	COW	21	SC	0	SBE	20
CHP	12	SCB	45	TCT	35	ICC	24	LAK	6	MAR	30	GWG	10	PIC	28	AUR	30	SEB	30

## LATEST EFL NEWS INSIDE

- CONVICTS CLINCH WILD CARD
- SPARTANS SLAY CORN KINGS
- TRIUMPH ONE WIN AWAY
- MUSTANGS KEEP ON BEING PERFECT
- LIZARDS STAY AHEAD
- KNIGHTS ONE LOSS AWAY FROM WORST SEASON
- SLUGGS KEEP SLUGGING WITHOUT RGIII
- AND MUCH MORE.....

### Also in this issue

- SPATS FEATURE, 'TERMS OF SURRENDER', 'AROUND THE EFL.'
- JIMMY THE GEEK
- THIS WEEK IN EFL HISTORY

**Dan Bailey** of Chino watches his kick as it sails toward the uprights. The perfect boot from 44 yards put the Convicts in front of the Cubs 27-24 with 51 seconds left in the game and salvaged a nerve-racking 4<sup>th</sup> quarter for Chino fans. The Chino defence then held off **Russell Wilson** to clinch a wild card berth and eliminate the Cubs. (STORY INSIDE).

## Dan Bailey



*Who was slick  
in Week  
Fifteen?*

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



**Fred Jackson**  
**RB**  
**Durham**  
**Thunder Lizards**

163 rush yds, 78 rec yds, 4 TDs.  
One-man offence vs Gwinnett.



**Olivier Vernon**  
**DE**  
**Mission Viejo**  
**Monarchs**

17 Tackles, 3 Sacks, 2 TFL. Endless  
motor tore up Knights backfield.



11-4-0

**Chino**

27

**GAME OF THE WEEK**

MVP

Cam Newton

24

**Iowa City**

9-6-0

**TEAM LEADERS**

Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Newton	20	29	255	1
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Peterson	20	87	4.4	1
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Hartline	6	119	19.8	1

Team	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
Chino	7	7	10	3	-	27
Iowa City	7	0	0	17	-	24

**Play of the Game**

Ties at 24 with 2:31 left in the game, **Cam Newton** withstood a heavy rush and completed a deep pass to **James Jones** for 36 yards, putting the Convicts in FG range for the game-winning kick.

**TEAM LEADERS**

Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Wilson	18	33	245	1
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Sproles	14	116	8.3	0
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Wallace	7	135	19.3	2

**SUMMARY:** Facing elimination, the Cubs opened strongly; **Russell Wilson** completed passes of 19 and 24 yards to **Steve Smith** and **Tony Gonzalez**, scrambled for 16 yards and handed off to **CJ Spiller** to punch the ball into the end zone from 1-foot to make it 7-0. The Convicts drew even when **Adrian Peterson** finished off a methodical 65-yard drive with 3 carries for 21 yards, the last for a TD from 2 yards out. From that point, the Convicts wrested control of the game on both sides of the ball. A 4<sup>th</sup> down sack by **Quinton Coples** and a pick by **Alterraun Verner** ended a pair of Cubs' threats while **Cam Newton** connected deep with **Brian Hartline** for a 56-yard TD pass and took it in himself to start the 2<sup>nd</sup> half to give Chino a 21-7 lead. After a **Dan Bailey** 24-yard FG made it 24-7, the Cubs came alive in the 4<sup>th</sup>. Wilson connected with **Mike Wallace** for 26 yards and Spiller added 23 yards on 2 carries to set up a 6-yard TD pass to **Bruce Miller**. The Convicts' offence stalled while the Cubs added a FG then tied the game on a 16-yard scramble by Wilson, set up by a 25-yard **Shane Lechler** punt and a 24-yard pass to Wallace. But Chino's offence recovered; an 11-yard pass to Hartline and a 36-yard completion to **James Jones** put them in FG range for Bailey, who kicked his team into the post-season from 44 yards.

**QUOTES:** "We need to play with the same urgency throughout the game that we do in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. Coming from behind is not a given in this league, sometimes the defence has a say in the outcome." – Iowa City Coach, **Deron Redding**.

"We almost gave it all back in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. We need to play hard for the entire game. It seemed like the players let up after getting that big lead. But Cam took charge and pulled it out. That third down conversion to Hartline on the final drive was huge." – Chino coach, **Rob Nazar**.

**HAPPY FAN****titter****ANGRY FAN****Hot for Cam@426753819**

Hey Cammy! These are for you. Love Tammy!

**Sparky @SparkyMcGillcuddy**

So talented but so young! They played another half game today and lost to the team that played a full game.

01-31-2015 Joe Ferguson Stadium Temp: 31 Wind: 0-5 None MVP: Cam Newton

**Scoring Summary**

1 10:01 Iowa City	TD Spiller 1 run (Zuerlein) (13-80-4:59)	0-7
1 0:00 Chino	TD Peterson 2 run (Bailey,D) (13-65-5:52)	7-7
2 1:01 Chino	TD Newton 56 pass to Hartline (Bailey,D) (8-96-4:15)	14-7
3 8:22 Chino	TD Newton 1 run (Bailey,D) (12-80-6:38)	21-7
3 0:58 Chino	FG Bailey 25 (10-43-5:07)	24-7
4 11:58 Iowa City	TD Wilson 6 pass to Miller (Zuerlein) (9-80-4:09)	24-14
4 5:30 Iowa City	FG Zuerlein 22 (8-57-4:11)	24-17
4 2:39 Iowa City	TD Wilson 16 run (Zuerlein)(2-40-0:18)	24-24
4 0:51 Chino	FG Bailey 44 (8-54-1:43)	27-24

	CHI	ICC
First Downs	19	23
Rushes	32-128	25-215
Passes	29-20-255	33-18-245
Sacked	4-23	4-30
Fumble	0	1
Penalties	6-42	2-14
Turnovers	0	2
Missed Tackles	8	10
Blitzes	15	7
Time	34:05	25:55
Third Down	8-16	6-13
Fourth Down	1-1	0-2
Red Att/Td/Fg	4/2/1	4/3/1
Net Offense	360	430

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



## T-LIZARDS

11-4-0

7	14	7	0	0	28
OT					

Fred Jackson

21 Carries, 163 yards, 4 TDs (r,p)



## GLADIATORS

4-11-0

0	3	0	7	0	10
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Ben Roethlisberger

19 of 35, 256 yards, 1 TD

Running back **Fred Jackson** started the scoring for Durham in the 1<sup>st</sup> with a 7-yard TD catch on a dump-off by **Drew Brees** and ended it in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter with a 6-yard TD reception. In between, he broke free for a 70-yard TD run and cut through the line for an 8-yard TD run to account for all his team's scoring. Holding penalties slowed down the Gwinnett offence in the 1<sup>st</sup> half and a pair of 4<sup>th</sup> and goal stands, at the 3 and at the 1, by the Lizards kept the Glads from getting close. With the game out of reach, the Glads mounted an 88-yard drive, scoring on a 1-yard pass to **Bruce Ellington**.



## HELLFIRE

3-12-0

7	10	7	7	0	31
OT					

Andrew Luck

31 of 41, 321 yards, 4 TDs



## TRIUMPH

11-4-0

7	7	7	14	0	35
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Antonio Brown

9-106 3 TDs Rec, Punt Ret TD

The Triumph opened with an 80-yard drive that ended with a 7-yard TD pass from **Jay Cutler** to **Antonio Brown** but the Hellfire responded with one play – a 77-yard TD pass from **Andrew Luck** to **Jimmy Graham** to tie it. An 18-play drive capped by a 4-yard TD pass to **Harry Douglas** put Mohave in front 14-7 and they held on to a 17-14 lead at half time. After Mohave took a 24-14 lead early in the 3<sup>rd</sup>, Brown returned a punt 76 yards for a TD then caught his third TD pass of the game to give the Triumph a 28-24 lead. A 34-yard catch by Brown set up a **Doug Martin** TD run to ice the game.



## REGULATORS

8-7-0

0	0	0	0	0	0
OT					

Tony Romo

10 of 18, 98 yards



## MUSTANGS

15-0-0

3	3	14	10	0	30
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Matt Ryan

27 of 40, 313 yards, 3 TDs, 2 INTs

Interceptions by Regs' **Marcus Cooper** and **Bradley Fletcher** helped hold the Aurora offence to a pair of FGs in the 1<sup>st</sup> half but **Tony Romo** and the Regs' offence were unable to score in reply. The 2<sup>nd</sup> half started with a Regs' three-and-out, giving the Mustangs good field position in Regs' territory. **Matt Ryan** capped a 46-yard drive with an 8-yard TD pass to **Julian Edelman** to make it 13-0. Aurora stopped the Regs again then marched 79 yards to another Edelman TD catch to make it 20-0. **Christian Ponder** was ineffective in relief of Romo as Aurora added 10 points and posted its 2<sup>nd</sup> shutout.





**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!



## CANNIBALS

12-3-0

7	3	7	10	0	27
OT					

Philip Rivers  
19 of 23, 373 yards, 3 TDs



## PATRIOTS

3-12-0

0	6	6	0	0	12

Blake Bortles  
19 of 38, 164 yards

Carthage finished off an 84-yard opening drive with a 4-yard TD pass from **Philip Rivers** to **Josh Gordon** but the Pats scraped back with a pair of 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter FGs to close within 1 point, before consecutive passes of 26 and 21 yards to Gordon sparked a Carthage FG drive to end the 1<sup>st</sup> half. The Pats took advantage of a **Donte Moncrief** fumble to pull back within 1 point with a FG, but the Cannibals struck back quickly with a 63-yard TD pass to **Jared Cook**. **Rob Bironas'** 4<sup>th</sup> FG made it 17-12, but Carthage pulled away finally in the 4<sup>th</sup> with a FG and a 30-yard TD pass to **Danny Amendola**.



## CORN KINGS

7-8-0

7	14	0	0	0	21
OT					

Joe Flacco  
21 of 29, 270 yards, 3 TDs, 1 INT



## SPARTANS

11-4-0

7	14	0	7	0	28

Peyton Manning  
22 of 28, 334 yards, 4 TDs

Both teams scored TDs on their first three series of the game. Cowtown mounted 3 drives of 80 yards each, ending with **Joe Flacco** TD passes of 9 yards to **Alfred Morris** and 9 yards and 31 yards to **Cecil Shorts**. **Peyton Manning** struck quickly, hitting on 12 of his first 13 passes for 207 yards and 3 TDs, 2 to **Pierre Garçon** and a 24-yarder to **Chris Johnson**. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> half, both defences stiffened in their own territory to keep the other's offence off the board until Manning broke the tie with a 23-yard TD pass to Garçon. Cowtown drove to the Spartans' 10 before giving the ball up on downs.



## BLUE EAGLES

3-12-0

7	6	0	7	0	20
OT					

Aaron Rodgers  
29 of 46, 286 yards, 2 TDs, 1 INT



## SWORDFISH

4-11-0

3	14	10	3	0	30

Andy Dalton  
30 of 38, 379 yards, 1 TD

**Aaron Rodgers** crowned an 86-yard opening drive with a 5-yard TD pass to **Nate Burleson** to gain the early upper hand. But after an exchange of FGs, the Swordfish started swimming to victory with Zac Stacy, who punched the ball into the end zone from 2 yards and 1 yard to cap off two 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter drives. Sebastian started to pull away in the 3<sup>rd</sup> after **Rahim Moore** intercepted Rodgers and Dalton capitalized with a 28-yard TD pass to **Nate Washington** to make the score 27-13. Scarborough pulled within 7, but a 67-yard FG drive for the Fish inside the 2-minute warning put it out of reach.

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



## VIOLATORS

6-9-0

7	10	3	10	0	30
					OT

**Jamaal Charles**  
 34 Carries, 212 yards, 1 TD



## SLUGGS

12-3-0

7	21	3	14	0	45
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**Matt Flynn**  
 18 of 26, 265 yards, 3 TDs

A 65-yard TD pass from **Matt Flynn** to **Alshon Jeffery** and a 9-yard TD run by **Knowshon Moreno** staked the Sluggs to a 14-7 lead, but a 51-yard **Mason Crosby** FG and a 46-yard TD pass to **Dez Bryant** after a **DeAndre Hopkins** fumble put Virden in front 17-14. **Darrelle Revis** turned the game back in the Sluggs' favour with a 43-yard interception return to set up a 4-yard Moreno TD catch then **Trindon Holliday** returned a punt 90 yards for a TD to give Santa Clara a 28-17 half time lead. Another punt return TD for Holliday, from 69 yards early in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, put the Sluggs in command.



## MONARCHS

5-10-0

7	3	14	3	0	27
					OT

**Ryan Tannehill**  
 19 of 27, 196 yards, 2 TDs, 1 INT



## KNIGHTS

0-15-0

3	3	0	0	0	6
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**Le'Veon Bell**  
 21 Carries, 91 yards

After a quick 3-and-out for the Knights the Monarchs got the ball at mid-field and drove quickly for the opening TD, a 6-yard pass from **Ryan Tannehill** to **Mike Williams**. A 21-yard punt return by **Brandin Cooks** helped set up a Knights' FG in the 1<sup>st</sup> then the teams traded FGs in the 2<sup>nd</sup> to make it 10-6 at half time. An attempt to gamble on 4<sup>th</sup> and 2 backfired for LA; the Monarchs took over and drove 47 yards on a 17-yard Tannehill scramble to set up a 19-yard TD pass to **David Nelson**. A second LA 4<sup>th</sup> down convert failed, setting up another Monarchs' TD on a 5-yard TD run by **Mike James**.



## EXCALIBURS

7-8-0

0	0	7	7	0	14
					OT

**Tom Brady**  
 28 of 45, 345 yards, 1 TD, 1 INT



## NORTH STARS

8-7-0

7	14	3	6	0	30
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**Alex Smith**  
 15 of 22, 164 yards, 1 TD

Markham opened with a 79-yard drive on 14 plays, finishing it with a 2-yard TD run by **Andre Ellington**. After a brief punting duel, the game took a sharp downturn for York when **Victor Cruz** and **Delanie Walker** fumbled on consecutive possessions, setting up a 20-yard TD run by **Andre Williams** and an 8-yard TD pass from **Alex Smith** to Jacoby Jones to make it 21-0 Markham at half time. **Michael Griffin** picked off **Tom Brady** to start the 3<sup>rd</sup> setting up a Markham FG and forcing York into hurry-up mode early. Brady led the Swords to 2 TDs but the Stars added 2 more FGs to put it away.

## WEEK FIFTEEN STANDINGS

East	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Carthage (y)	12	3	0	0.800	473	31.5	392	26.1	5.4	6 1 0	6 1 0	9 2 0
Twin Cities (y)	11	4	0	0.733	389	25.9	300	20	5.9	6 2 0	6 1 0	9 2 0
Virden	6	9	0	0.400	421	28.1	420	28	0.1	4 3 0	1 6 0	3 8 0
Charleswood	3	12	0	0.200	226	15.1	419	27.9	-12.9	3 5 0	2 5 0	2 9 0
Mohave	3	12	0	0.200	373	24.9	471	31.4	-6.5	1 6 0	3 5 0	3 8 0
West	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Santa Clara (z)	12	3	0	0.800	502	33.5	353	23.5	9.9	7 1 0	7 0 0	11 0 0
Chino (y)	11	4	0	0.733	427	28.5	312	20.8	7.7	6 1 0	6 1 0	8 3 0
Iowa City	9	6	0	0.600	437	29.1	395	26.3	2.8	5 3 0	3 4 0	6 5 0
Mission Viejo	5	10	0	0.333	304	20.3	385	25.7	-5.4	3 4 0	2 5 0	4 7 0
Los Angeles	0	15	0	0.000	187	12.5	458	30.5	-18.1	0 8 0	0 8 0	0 11 0
North	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Durham (y)	11	4	0	0.733	484	32.3	299	19.9	12.3	6 1 0	6 1 0	9 2 0
Pickering (y)	11	4	0	0.733	439	29.3	353	23.5	5.7	6 2 0	4 3 0	7 4 0
Markham	8	7	0	0.533	315	21	285	19	2	4 4 0	4 3 0	6 5 0
Cowtown	7	8	0	0.467	357	23.8	389	25.9	-2.1	3 4 0	3 5 0	4 7 0
York	7	8	0	0.467	311	20.7	337	22.5	-1.7	3 4 0	1 6 0	4 7 0
South	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Aurora (z)	15	0	0	1.000	504	33.6	167	11.1	22.5	8 0 0	7 0 0	11 0 0
South Carolina	8	7	0	0.533	350	23.3	368	24.5	-1.2	4 3 0	5 2 0	6 5 0
Gwinnett	4	11	0	0.267	282	18.8	420	28	-9.2	1 7 0	3 4 0	4 7 0
Sebastian	4	11	0	0.267	298	19.9	457	30.5	-10.6	2 6 0	2 6 0	2 9 0
Scarborough	3	12	0	0.200	295	19.7	394	26.3	-6.6	0 7 0	1 6 0	2 9 0

(z)-clinched division

(y)-clinched wildcard

## PASSING

#	Player	Team	Att	Cmp	C%	Yards	In	I%	Lg	TD	TD%	Rate
1	Manning, P	PIC	445	293	65.8	4048	9	2	80	40	9	116.4
2	Rivers, P	CAR	482	314	65.1	4593	13	2.7	75	34	7.1	108.4
3	Cutler	TCT	319	214	67.1	2481	9	2.8	56	28	8.8	107.9
4	Newton, C	CHI	445	315	70.8	3247	4	0.9	56	26	5.8	107.2
5	Foles	DTL	222	140	63.1	1852	2	0.9	57	14	6.3	106.7
6	Brees	DTL	273	193	70.7	2244	5	1.8	66	14	5.1	104.7
7	Griffin II	SCB	385	242	62.9	3348	5	1.3	73	22	5.7	104.3
8	Ryan, M	AUR	576	387	67.2	4310	12	2.1	76	39	6.8	103.1
9	Wilson, R	ICC	385	255	66.2	3074	7	1.8	69	20	5.2	100.3
10	Stafford, M	VV	479	295	61.6	4200	14	2.9	80	25	5.2	95.2
11	Smith, A	MAR	380	232	61.1	2386	3	0.8	48	20	5.3	93.4
12	Luck	MOH	536	323	60.3	3889	9	1.7	77	25	4.7	91.1
13	Romo	SC	587	372	63.4	3783	11	1.9	71	28	4.8	89.8
14	Flacco	COW	550	338	61.5	3938	20	3.6	80	31	5.6	86.8
15	Glennon	LAK	245	153	62.4	1399	2	0.8	55	7	2.9	84.0
16	Rodgers, A	SBE	324	198	61.1	2230	9	2.8	54	13	4	83.5
17	Dalton	SS	512	298	58.2	3237	10	2	74	20	3.9	81.8
18	Manziel	TCT	233	143	61.4	1514	6	2.6	45	8	3.4	81.0
19	Roethlisberger	GWG	480	289	60.2	3194	14	2.9	63	19	4	81.0
20	Brady	YOR	452	256	56.6	3183	12	2.7	73	18	4	80.8

## RUSHING

#	Player	Team	Att	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	Morris, A	COW	279	1476	5.3	48	6
2	McCoy, L	GWG	331	1453	4.4	56	10
3	Johnson, C	PIC	310	1444	4.7	35	5
4	Charles, J	VV	285	1418	5.0	51	12
5	Lynch, M	YOR	279	1280	4.6	48	10
6	Forte	AUR	252	1229	4.9	66	14
7	Moreno	SCB	239	1219	5.1	36	21
8	Lacy	CAR	264	1157	4.4	57	16
9	Peterson, A	CHI	231	1144	5.0	90	15
10	Gore	SC	225	1104	4.9	56	10
11	Murray	MVM	233	1026	4.4	62	9
12	Bell, L	LAK	269	989	3.7	44	1
13	Spiller	ICC	158	875	5.5	55	5
14	Ivory	CHP	214	855	4.0	50	6
15	Jackson, F	DTL	157	808	5.1	70	17
16	Ellington	MAR	147	744	5.1	43	4
17	Blount	CAR	165	695	4.2	24	6
18	Ball, M	MOH	132	648	4.9	50	6
19	Newton, C	CHI	94	647	6.9	55	5
20	Pryor	SBE	80	625	7.8	36	4

## RECEIVING

#	Player	Team	No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	Brown, A	TCT	101	1102	10.9	45	15
2	Bryant, D	VV	99	1682	17.0	69	11
3	Green, A	SC	95	1232	13.0	71	9
4	Edelman	AUR	93	897	9.6	52	14
5	Johnson, A	SCB	90	1266	14.1	53	5
6	Wright, K	TCT	87	850	9.8	35	8
7	Boldin	AUR	86	1487	17.3	76	17
8	Jackson, D	SBE	82	1178	14.4	60	8
9	Garcon	PIC	82	1162	14.2	71	18
10	Graham, J	MOH	81	1168	14.4	77	7
11	Douglas, H	MOH	79	926	11.7	42	8
12	Watkins, S	CHP	77	1064	13.8	71	6
13	Gordon, J	CAR	77	1453	18.9	75	8
14	Woodhead	CHI	76	624	8.2	35	4
15	Jackson, V	TCT	75	1327	17.7	56	11
16	Thomas, D	PIC	75	1353	18.0	80	11
17	Olsen	CHI	75	692	9.2	36	7
18	Jeffery	SCB	73	1217	16.7	65	13
19	Forte	AUR	73	518	7.1	41	4
20	Allen, K	SC	73	809	11.1	34	5

## KICKING

#	Player	Team	FGA	FGM	FG%	40	50	Lg	Pts
1	Zuerlein	ICC	45	41	91.1	14	4	52	165
2	Crosby	VV	37	33	89.2	10	5	54	143
3	Folk	AUR	31	26	83.9	14	7	55	138
4	Prater	MOH	36	32	88.9	8	3	56	133
5	Dawson	DTL	24	24	100	9	2	57	130
6	Henery	SCB	27	23	85.2	8	1	50	130
7	Bailey, D	CHI	33	26	78.8	13	2	52	127
8	Hauschka	CAR	28	23	82.1	9	2	53	125
9	Brown, J	MAR	30	26	86.7	12	5	53	111
10	Feely	SBE	32	26	81.3	7	3	52	109
11	Novak	COW	26	23	88.5	9	3	56	107
12	Tucker, J	SC	28	21	75	9	3	54	104
13	Vinatieri	SS	26	22	84.6	7	3	54	98
14	Walsh	YOR	26	20	76.9	6	3	54	93
15	Carpenter	MVM	22	19	86.4	6	1	53	92
16	Gostkowski	TCT	14	14	100	6	0	49	89
17	Suisham	GWG	19	17	89.5	6	0	47	84
18	Bironas	CHP	20	17	85	6	2	53	76
19	Lindell	LAK	19	16	84.2	6	2	59	67
20	Janikowski	PIC	7	6	85.7	0	0	38	66



# Welcome to the **BLOGOSPHERE**



<http://courtjester.org>



## WHERE FANS SPEAK

### MACK PLAYING

### LIKE #1!

BY ATOM BEENWIK (CONTRIBUTOR) ON JANUARY 31, 2015



Heading into the draft he was no higher than #2 on all the major scouting boards. A few had him outside the top five. Luckily for the Monarchs, he turned out to be exactly #3 on draft day. Now, Khalil Mack is #1 in the hearts of Monarchs Subjects.

The consensus second-best defender heading into the draft is playing like a #1 pick if you compare what he has done against the actual #1, Jadeveon Clowney. Both players are in comparable situations playing outside linebacker for struggling teams. While Clowney has had time off due to injury, Khalil has played almost 95% of his team's total snaps on defence.

That just shows you how important he is to the league's 11<sup>th</sup> ranked defence.

Mack is doing it all. He is getting to the quarterback (5 sacks, 4 pressures), he is getting to the ball-carrier (38 tackles) and he is proving to be an asset in coverage (3 passes defended, 45% completion against). But more importantly, he is learning Shane Falco's system quickly and showing a positive attitude on a team that is improving, but still struggling to win.

"I look around the huddle and I see veterans like Jarret (Johnson), Cam-Jo (Cameron Jordan), Hawkeye (AJ Hawk) and "Payday" (Spencer Paysinger), and I think, like, 'wow,' I am on the field with these guys! It's humbling, but I am busting my butt to be as good as those guys some day," Mack said in a recent interview.

There is no question Mack is an emerging leader, both on the field and off the field. His best is yet to come, according to linebacker coach, Collin Ashton: "He has a very high ceiling. He has raw talent but he also does the little things that usually take rookies a long time to learn – the kind of things I never learned as a player but picked up in coach school. He is getting better every game even if his numbers aren't jumping up. He is actually drawing double-teams now."

With the benefit of hindsight, sometimes it's a good thing not to have the #1 overall pick.





# AROUND THE



## With Spats McChad

NEW YORK – At the EFL Head Offices in Canton and deep within the secret Adirondack Mountains retreat of the shadowy EFL Committee, whispers of expansion to 24 teams have taken on casual conversational tones as a public announcement is reportedly imminent. According to my sources, a media release is being prepared for an as yet undetermined date to announce four new teams.

Expansion is a development that the league, which is rapidly growing in popularity with the steady decline of the SFL and marginalization of the Tex-Mex League, has been pursuing for at least two years. Concerns of destabilization, salary inflation, and lack of competitiveness have been among the reasons the current group of EFL owners had, until recently, failed to ratify the league's expansion plans. But sources connected to the EFL administration, and the ravings of one loose-lipped owner, suggest that most members of the current ownership group are now over these worries and are prepared to cash in on a piece of the hefty "franchise fee" to be levied against the new teams.

The owner in question is 'Head Caesar' of the Gladiators, **Dave Birdsall**, who was surreptitiously recorded in an Atlanta Starbucks engaged in a conversation with team president, **Publius Pemberton**. Also present in the video is his secretary, **Cheryl Hunt**, who can be seen dutifully recording everything on a notepad then destroying it at the end of the conversation. The video was downloaded onto YouTube anonymously under the heading, *'Birdseye View of Gladiator Boss Trashing Swordfish and EFL.'*

The video picks up in the middle of an already advanced conversation, as if the person recording it just sat down or just realized what he/she was listening to. What is not exactly clear is why such a conversation would be occurring in a public place, although Pemberton offers a hint at the end when he puts his phone away and says to Birdsall, *"I think he's a no-show."* One could speculate about who the "no-show" might be and be confident of only one thing: the person's gender. What is abundantly clear is what the Gladiators' owner feels about the state of his southern rival in Florida and the focus of league's ambitions.

*"Somebody has to ask the tough questions and hold them accountable,"* Birdsall says at one juncture. *"I'm not rubber-stamping the money grab unless they can show me there won't be any more sociopaths like Worthley in the club!"*

*"They,"* we find out later in the video, are members of the crepuscular EFL Committee that runs league operations. Birdsall suggests that he may have been the only owner asking "tough questions" about the league's expansion plans. He talks about *"caving"* owners who *"see nothing but dollar signs."* But it is also clear from his dialogue with Pemberton that other owners opposed expansion, but for different reasons. He derisively refers to **"Russ"** (presumably Russ Lemmon) as an *"absentee owner"* who has no interest in building a team and *"has the nuts to blame expansion for the sorry state of the fish."* After pausing to laugh at a barely audible comment made by Pemberton in which the word "Twin Cities" is heard, he continues: *"And he hires a corporate head-hunter to pick his players. How fishy is that? Get it? Fishy?"* and laughs at his own joke.

Birdsall's historical public profile places him in the 'quiet camp' of EFL owners – somebody who lets his people do the work, says little, and who shows up for ribbon-cutting ceremonies and the like. But in this video he comes across as quite vocal, even passionate, about EFL matters. As an original founding member of the league, his word evidently carries weight behind the scenes. But apparently not enough weight to turn the tide of the inevitable growth that comes with a product that is increasing in popularity in spite of growing pains and occasional missteps on the way; at least, if my information is true.

But there may be far more going on behind the scenes to get under the skin of original owners like Birdsall than preparation for a third expansion. A source has revealed to me something so incredible it has to have some basis in truth. Apparently the EFL Committee is in secret talks with the State General Administration of Sports in the People's Republic of China to set up *EFL Asia*, a developmental feeder league to capitalize on the popularity of the Markham North Stars in the Chinese province of Guangdong. While I think that there is room for four more teams in the EFL, the prospect of a sister league in Asia strikes me as the kind of insane venture that could succeed with incredible luck, but is more than likely to fail spectacularly. Keep reading these pages in the following weeks to learn about EFL Asia before it makes the networks.

### TERMS OF SURRENDER

While the Aurora Mustangs charged out of the gate like Secretariat and have never slackened the pace over 15 grueling weeks of smash-mouth on the gridiron, their main competition in the Can-Am Conference have both experienced ups and downs over

impressive, but less dominant campaigns. **Peyton Manning** took four weeks to adjust to his new surroundings in Pickering before mastering the cunning and sometimes manic game plans of master demolisher, **Gus Konstantakos**. The elite talent on the Durham offence similarly took about half the season to adjust to the meticulously planned quarterback platoon system devised by master strategist **George Kaldis**. But if one of those two North Division colossi seems to be looming a little larger than the other down the final stretch it is not because of plans carefully laid at the beginning of the season. Insiders in the Durham camp are crediting a wholesale attitude adjustment on the Durham sideline with the recent ascendancy of the Lizards that has enabled them to wrest control of the Division from the Spartans.

It was apparently after a 4<sup>th</sup> quarter collapse in a Week 7 loss to the Cubs that **George Kaldis** decided things needed to change dramatically for his team or they could conceivably be relegated to the ranks of the also-rans in a season that had started with high expectations. He decided that conventional benching would not do the trick – he had, after all, carefully selected his roster for the ability of each individual player to get the job done. It was also too late to totally revamp the offence and he didn't



Durham coach **George Kaldis** barks out instructions during a Week 14 whitewashing of York, 44-17. The Swords did the smart thing and knuckled under in the final 3 minutes, sparing the full wrath of Lizard back-up QB, **Aaron Murray**.

want to – after all, he had created it and he knew the plays would work. He felt his team was better than his rival's in Pickering, but something was missing. He studied Pickering and Durham game film until the wee hours, putting in 23-hour days for almost a full week. His staff became worried about him. A nurse, Abigail, was hired to be at his side in the film room to administer sponge baths, adjust the feeding tube, and ensure that bodily wastes were drained in a sanitary manner. After five days of this grueling, torturous regimen Kaldis became shockingly unkempt, malodorous, and was on the verge of a complete mental breakdown, but he was still no closer to discovering the secret of Spartans' success.

And then.....suddenly.....it came to him! While studying film of the Week 12 Spartans-North Stars game the camera panned briefly on the Pickering sideline, where Coach **Gus Konstantakos** could be seen bellowing at his players as they prepared to take the field, trailing Markham 27-23 in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. 'NNNNNEEEVVVVEERRRR SSSUURRRNNDDERRR!' Konstantakos howled, fists pumping furiously in the air. *That* was what the Thunder Lizards were missing: a **BATTLE CRY**!

Kaldis rewound the tape and replayed that segment over and over again then abruptly turned to Abigail and barked, "**SURRENDER OR DIE!!**" Nurse Abigail let out a shriek of terror as the dishevelled, smelly madman with the catheter glared at her with his glassy, red eyes. She backed away in horror and fumbled for her phone. The look of panic on her face snapped Kaldis out of his mania and he quickly melted, becoming apologetic: "I'm sorry Abigail, it's just that....that I *finally* found it! I have the secret to victory." Then, with a glint in his eye he raised his arms and pronounced: "**ALL WILL FALL BEFORE THE MIGHT OF DURHAM!! SURRENDER OR DIE!!**" And with that, Kaldis erupted in the hysterical laugh of the temporarily insane while Abigail cautiously tiptoed backwards out of the Durham film room.

And so "**SURRENDER OR DIE**" was incorporated into the Durham game plan. It became featured in everything the Lizards did in practice, in the class room, on the field and even at team meals; where the phrase was substituted for 'Amen' when saying grace. Coach Kaldis began to run his team like a military Death Squad, instilling ferocity in his players by practising how to deliver the "slightly late hit" – a tackle that, in Kaldis' words, "is late, but just a fraction late. Too close for an honest ref to call." They also worked on the "slightly out-of-bounds" hit, the "accidental face plant," the "groin grind," the "under-the-pile eye gouge," and the "near-the-knee" hit on opposing quarterbacks. The idea was to send a message to their opponents that the Lizards were prepared to injure them if they got too far out of line and, when defeat looked certain, failed to surrender.

"The worst thing a Spartan player can do in Konstantakos' eyes is to surrender," Kaldis explained during one team meeting. "We, and by that I mean you, will *force* them to surrender! You will make *all* teams we play surrender. They will surrender, *or they will die!*"

Whether due to the new Durham battle cry, or the simple result of a team finding its natural stride, the Lizards' fortunes seemed to turn around immediately with a 48-17 walloping of Santa Clara. A setback at Virden followed, with a loss to the

dangerous and unpredictable Violators, but from that point onward Durham dominated their opponents, including their arch foe Pickering. But the success seems to have fueled a killer streak in the Durham coach that is unsettling to his fellow coaches.

Fresh off the scandal of being surreptitiously recorded in public making snide remarks about a fellow owner and taking the league to task, **Dave Birdsall** was not in the mood to handle his team's Week 15 punishment at the hands of Durham. His overmatched Gladiators put up a good fight, but three failed 4<sup>th</sup> down gambles in Durham territory, two of those inside the 10, kept them out of the end zone for almost 58 minutes. When they got the ball, trailing 28-3 with 2:33 left, **Big Ben** and Company were determined to breach the Durham end zone. Finally, with 54 seconds left, they did, making the score 28-10. They then followed that up with an onside kick, which was recovered by Durham.

Such bold defiance in the face of obvious defeat did not look like surrender to Coach Kaldis, and it infuriated him: "How dare they?" he hissed. Turning to his offensive coordinator, he barked, "Show them no mercy!" But with **Drew Brees** and **Nick Foles** both long since headed to the showers, there was nobody to administer the beating except rookie emergency QB, **Aaron Murray**. Dutifully, Murray took to the field and tried to humiliate the Gladiators with long passes, but succeeded only in checking down to secondary receivers twice and connecting with **Dwayne Bowe** for 13 yards at the 0:05 mark of the final period.

A confused and flustered Birdsall refused to shake hands at mid-field after the game – a gesture reciprocated by Kaldis, who nevertheless tried to get the last word in by yelling across the field, "Next time, surrender! Surrender or Die!"

### **AROUND THE EFL**

The playoff picture is coming into sharp focus now that 15 weeks are in the books. At Thermopylae Stadium in Pickering the Spartans eliminated the Corn Kings from the post-season and kept pace with rival Durham with a 28-21 win. The first half was as close to perfection as it gets, with the first 6 possessions by both teams ending in touchdowns for a 21-21 half time draw. The first team to blink, Cowtown, wound up losing on the only score of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half – a 23-yard touchdown pass from **Peyton Manning** to **Pierre Garçon** in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. Manning showed his mastery with 334 yards, 4 TD passes and a perfect QB rating on the day.

At Joe Ferguson Stadium in Iowa City, the magic of Cubs' quarterback **Russell Wilson** flared up with a 17-point rally in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, tying Chino at 24 with 2:39 remaining in the game. But **Cam Newton** had some last minute tricks of his own to perform, passing his team into field goal range for **Dan Bailey**, who kicked a 44-yarder to take the lead. The Cubs got the ball back with 46 seconds left and the entire State of Iowa chanting 'Russell, Russell...!' But unlike almost every other defence to face the Cubs in a late pressure situation this year, the Convicts' D held off the killer combination of Wilson to **Mike Wallace** to clinch a playoff berth and eliminate the Cubs from the playoff picture.

At the Dawg Pound in Markham, the tenacious North Stars kept their playoff prospects alive by murdering the Excaliburs by the unexpectedly lop-sided score of 30-14. This match-up can hardly be called a "game." Rather, it was more of a "process," featuring York giving the ball away and watching helplessly as the North Stars slowly nudged their way into the end zone or into field goal range. Five different Markham running backs combined for 188 yards rushing while **Alex Smith** treated fans to a rare long pass with a 29-yard completion to **Jordy Nelson** in the third quarter. By the time **Tom Brady** got his act together, it was too late to change the outcome of the game or the misfortune of missing the post-season.

At Santa Clara the Banana Sluggs clinched the West Division title with a 45-30 slamming of the Violators. **Trindon Holliday** returned two punts for touchdowns to push this game out of the "classic shootout" and into the "semi-blowout" category. **Matt Flynn** delivered a surprisingly steady performance in his first start in place of injured RGIII, throwing for 265 yards and 3 TDs. Not surprisingly, Virden dominated the stat sheet in defeat, gaining 465 yards of offence and controlling the ball for over 37 minutes as **Jamaal Charles** rushed for 212 yards. But the obligatory 2 turnovers by Matt Stafford undercut the bottom lime again.

At "Candlestick Park" in Aurora, the Mustangs stomped on the Regulators 30-0 to bring the perfect season countdown to "1". **Matt Forte** rushed for 150 yards and **Matt Ryan** passed for 313 yards and 3 TDs while **James Harrison** led a superlative defensive effort with 2 sacks. **JJ Watt** was curiously silent; the front-runner for defensive MVP recorded no tackles and was flagged for roughing the passer in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter. Despite a dismal performance, the fading Regulators still control their destiny going into the season's final week thanks to York being eliminated at Markham.

At TCF Bank Stadium in Minneapolis, the Triumph survived a 35-31 firefight with Mohave thanks to a 76-yard punt return TD by **Antonio Brown**. The Hellfire were charged up for this game as **Bobby Elder** tried to make good on his 5-win season prediction. Take away the huge special teams play and this one would have been an upset. Instead, Twin Cities has a shot at the East Division title next week against Carthage.

As for Carthage, as expected they took care of the floundering Patriots at Patriot Place by the comfortable but not overly impressive score of 27-12. Charleswood somehow managed to shadow the Cannibals for most of the game by forcing six drives of 6 or fewer plays and by kicking annoying field goals to hang around until mid-way through the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, when **Philip Rivers** finally had enough and connected on a deep TD pass to **Danny Amendola**.

At the Fish Tank, the Swordfish got a career passing yardage day out of **Andy Dalton** as the Swordfish began their long swim to respectability with a 30-20 win over the Blue Eagles. The Fish seem to have Scarborough's number; they are 3-3 against them all time after winning both contests this year, more wins than against any other team.

And finally, the LA Knights continued to charge toward the 0-16 cliff with a feeble effort against the Monarchs. The 27-6 score for Mission Viejo did not reflect the disparity of the match-up. **Mike Glennon** was sacked 7 times, 3 of those by **Olivier Vernon**, who also notched 17 tackles to win Defensive Player of the Week. Yes, a player from the Monarchs won something!



# BUG THE BOOKIE!

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





















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## PLAYOFF PICTURE AT A GLANCE

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

## JIMMY'S WEEK SIXTEEN PICKS

### GAMES TO WATCH

**TWIN CITIES @ CARTHAGE (line – CANNIBALS by 4)**

**INJURIES:** Twin Cities – None; Carthage – TJ McDonald (OUT), Harrison Smith (OUT);

Well, here it is – an all-out final fight for the East Division! The one-game advantage the Cannibals enjoy going in to this game means nothing if they cannot finish off the season with a win. Should Twin Cities “triumph” they take the division title due to a superior record within the division then go home to face these same Cannibals in the first round; should they lose they drop automatically to the no. 4 seed and face a trip to Santa Clara in round one. In that latter scenario, the Cannibals host the Convicts in the quarter finals. Any way you slice it, post-season in the PAC will feature some great match-ups. The last time these teams met

things could not have gone much worse for the Triumph – Jay Cutler struggled in the early going, throwing two interceptions, then fell to injury in a 31-19 loss. Four Triumph turnovers told the tale of that game; take those away and it was a potentially much closer contest. The Triumph have lost just once when Jay Cutler has started and finished the game; that was against Chino in his first game back from injury. Since then he has been dominant, throwing 11 touchdown passes in four straight victories. On the Cannibals' side, quarterback Philip Rivers has been steady throughout most of the season in rising to the no. 2 ranking among starting quarterbacks. He benefits from a superior running game, but the Triumph ground game cannot be discounted with Doug Martin finally healthy again. The difference in this game will likely come down to defence. While Lavonte David is having an MVP-calibre year at middle linebacker, the rest of the Carthage defence has been unreliable. The Twin Cities defence, led by Jurell Casey, is as solid a tackling unit as there is in the league and is ranked third in efficiency despite a lack of star power. Expect the Triumph defenders to make one extra stop and expect that to make the difference. **PICK: TWIN CITIES**

### **PICKERING @ YORK (line – SPARTANS by 2)**

**INJURIES:** Pickering – None; York – Robert Geathers (OUT).

A week after being eliminated from the post-season the Excaliburs might not have much fight left in them. When their season was on the line they fumbled it away. They have nothing left to play for now except the satisfaction of ensuring that the Spartans must travel in the post-season. That might be enough motivation for a team that thinks it should have had that privilege. The Spartans are assured of either the no. 2 or no. 3 seed, which means a first round playoff against Durham is a certainty – just the location is up for grabs. They can still win the North Division, and a home date to start the playoffs, with a win here and a Durham loss to Markham. Peyton Manning has come into his own in Spartans' blue and is currently commanding the most efficient offence in the league with Pierre Garçon and Demaryius Thomas as his main targets and a re-born Chris Johnson featured in the running game. His opponent, Tom Brady, enjoys a solid running game led by Marshawn Lynch, but with rookie Kelvin Benjamin as his only reliable target at wide receiver, he is most effective with a lead, something the Swords have not had enough of this year. The Swords' defence is solid and injury-free which means it will not be a cakewalk for the Manning Machine. The question will be whether Brady and Co. can keep pace. **PICK: PICKERING**

### **MARKHAM @ DURHAM (line – THUNDER LIZARDS by 9)**

**INJURIES:** Markham – Marques Colston (PROBABLE), Jacoby Jones (OUT), Owen Daniels (OUT), Christine Michael (OUT), Jordan Reed (OUT); Durham –None.

This is a surprising line considering the outcome of their Week One contest, an astonishing 20-15 upset with Markham winning at home. In that game Alex Smith broke down the Durham defence with his legs, running for 5 first downs and a touchdown, while the North Stars' defence made the stops when they needed them against an uncertain Drew Brees. Some pundits believe this game helped pave the way for the role of Nick Foles as spot starter for the Lizards, creating controversy along the way. Who the Lizards start at quarterback will be interesting but should not matter. 14 weeks after that unfortunate Week One debacle the Lizards are a team on the rise, while the North Stars continue to be a muddle of contradictions – losing tough against top opponents and winning by the skin of their teeth against the lower echelon. One explanation for this is that the North Stars do not make the mistakes that most inferior teams make against the big boys; therefore they lose slowly to the better teams and take advantage of the mistakes of the weaker. But since they have no firepower they are unable to put any team away in a convincing manner. What this means in the end is that Markham is a sneaky team – never to be counted out or counted in. With the Lizards in a mood to beat on the weak these days, expect no mercy. **PICK: DURHAM**

### **SANTA CLARA @ CHINO (line – CONVICTS by 2)**

**INJURIES:** Santa Clara – Robert Griffin III (OUT), Rob Gronkowski (OUT), Jake Long (OUT), Andrew Whitworth (OUT), Brandon Williams (OUT); Chino – Jamarca Sanford (QUESTIONABLE), Jarvis Jenkins (OUT).

This game between the top teams in the West won't change the pecking order in the division (the Banana Sluggs have a better record in common games) but it could determine whether the Sluggs hold on to the no. 1 seed. A Chino win and a Carthage win will push the Sluggs into the no. 2 seed and see these same teams meet next week in the quarter finals. A Santa Clara win will clinch the #1 seed and have them watching the scoreboard to see who survives the East Division tilt between the Cannibals and the Triumph; a Carthage win would see them hosting Twin Cities while a Triumph victory would see them facing the Convicts. The Sluggs will be in a dog fight in the first round of the playoffs no matter what happens; so closely matched are the playoff teams in the PAC. With RGIII out and currently the center of attention for a team of the best military doctors the Pentagon can

muster, and both starting tackles out of action as well, the Sluggs may be looking past this game and hoping to get healthy for whichever team they play next week. For Chino, a win can assure them of the third seed if Twin Cities loses, but has no bearing on their standing if Carthage loses. If the Convicts have a preference of which team they would prefer to play it's not an obvious one. But I would suspect they would want to avoid a healthy Santa Clara team, which is the team they will play if they take them down this week and Carthage wins. It's all just a little too complicated to think about on game day. Expect the players to play as if it all matters, and for the Convicts to edge out a win. **PICK: CHINO**

## **GAMES OF NOTE**

### **GWINNETT @ SOUTH CAROLINA (line – REGULATORS by 7)**

**INJURIES:** **Gwinnett** – Jabaal Sheard (PROBABLE), Lance Briggs (OUT), Dallas Clark (OUT), Tommy Kelly (OUT), Maurkice Pouncey (OUT); **South Carolina** – Chris Cook (OUT);

The Regulators have their fate in their own hands – a win and they're in. But even if they fumble that fate, the Thunder Lizards could easily give them a helping hand with a win over Markham. It is a good thing that so many things can go right for the Regs in the season's final week because if left to their own devices they might never make the post-season. Granted, they were a big underdog in their loss last week, but they failed to show anything against the Mustangs just like they have failed all season against any team with a winning record. Luckily for the Regs, the Glads are no Mustangs. In fact, Gwinnett is one of the worst teams in the league if one ignores LeSean McCoy and Ben Roethlisberger, who manage to keep games unnaturally close. The Regs have their own offensive stars but they are not intimidating anyone these days. Expect Big Ben to be in fine form and for the Regs to give up an embarrassing number of points as they squeak out a win inside the hefty spread. **PICK: GWINNETT**

### **AURORA @ SCARBOROUGH (line – MUSTANGS by 12)**

**INJURIES:** **Aurora** – Arian Foster (OUT); **Scarborough** – Kroy Biermann (OUT), Tarell Brown (OUT), Will Hill (OUT), D.J. Williams (OUT);

History could be made here: the Mustangs could become just the second team in EFL history to finish with a perfect regular season record while the Blue Eagles could become the first former back-to-back Gale Sayers Trophy winner to finish 3-13. In fairness, no team other than Scarborough has been good enough for so long to be in a position to tarnish its legacy so severely. The steady fall from grace since the Dragons moved north will be written about in books some day, but for now it is enough to point out that it would be splendid irony if the Dragons in Eagles form were the team to break up Aurora's quest for perfection; having been the only franchise to ever reach such a milestone. The Eagles have nothing to lose by going all out to tarnish the Mustangs' season, while Aurora still has a post-season to plan for. I expect Aurora to care about the win, but to take out the starters the moment the win seems safe. This means the 12-point spread, although deserved under normal circumstances, is not safe here. **PICK: SCARBOROUGH**

### **LOS ANGELES @ MOHAVE (line – HELLFIRE by 9)**

**INJURIES:** **Los Angeles** – Cortland Finnegan (OUT), Clyde Gates (OUT); **Mohave** – Chris Houston (OUT), Amini Silatolu (OUT), Aaron Williams (OUT);

Like the Mustangs, but at the opposite end of the achievement continuum, the Knights could become a historically bad team if they lose to the Hellfire this week. Losing 16 games is humiliating enough, but having the Hellfire deliver the death blow is adding insult to injury. For that reason the Knights will be pulling out all stops to win this game, digging deep for that little bit extra that, if only a proportion of what they already have, will indeed be a little bit. It might be time to take the cover off an underutilized Ryan Mathews for this game and see if Jordan Matthews (no relation) can inject some rookie enthusiasm into the LA offence. The Hellfire don't have much to be proud of either, unless one counts a statistically better season for Andrew Luck amid a drop in wins for his team. The defence is just as bad as last season despite some free agent upgrades on the line. At least the coach appears to care about winning again, which is a step in the right direction. With both teams battling to avoid embarrassment expect as good a game as teams with a combined 3 wins in 30 games can produce. **PICK: LOS ANGELES**

## **PLAYING OUT THE STRING**

### **SEBASTIAN @ COWTOWN (line – CORN KINGS by 8)**

**INJURIES:** **Sebastian** – Leon Hall (QUESTIONABLE), Chris Borland (OUT), Patrick Chung (OUT), Sylvester Williams



(OUT), Derek Wolfe (OUT); **Cowtown** – Sammie Hill (OUT).

For the past 4 years the Corn Kings have been a team that stubbornly stays in the playoff hunt despite yearly challenges posed by the play of the league's most perplexingly inconsistent quarterback. Joe Flacco poses a threat to both teams when he is on the field and this makes for interesting football. His team rises and falls with him and no player is more closely identified with Cowtown than "Joe Cool." This week Joe is in unfamiliar territory playing his first meaningless game since 2010. In a similar, but less successful vein, Andy Dalton is the face of the Swordfish. That usually prompts a snide chuckle from opponents' fans but not last week when he threw for a career-high 379 yards and completed 30 of 38 pass attempts against Scarborough. The "Red Rifle" has never played in a meaningful game, unless it is the one at the end of the season to save his job for next season. He is in familiar territory this week, needing a win to sustain the illusion that he is a true franchise quarterback. With Dalton motivated, this figures to be a Cowtown win, but not one to make the home fans particularly proud. **PICK: SEBASTIAN**

### **IOWA CITY @ MISSION VIEJO (line – CUBS by 2)**

**INJURIES:** Iowa City – Tyvon Branch (OUT), Casey Hayward (OUT), Malcolm Jenkins (OUT); **Mission Viejo** – DeMarco Murray (PROBABLE), Brian Cushing (OUT), Russell Okung (OUT).

The Cubs have showed impressive flashes at times, especially on offence, but in the end they proved to be too unbalanced a team to compete at the highest levels of the conference. This week they face a Monarchs team that rarely flashed impressively, except when Josh Sitton was laying down blocks for DeMarco Murray. Murray is banged up and listed as 'Probable' for this game. Without Murray, whether in top form or not, the Monarchs' offence becomes non-dimensional. Going up against one of the statistically best offences in the league, Mission doesn't stand a chance of keeping pace. One of two things will happen here: the Cubs will win or the Cubs will win easily. Either way, it's a Cubs' win by more than 2 points. **PICK: IOWA CITY**

### **CHARLESWOOD @ VIRDEN (line – VIOLATORS by 11)**

**INJURIES:** Charleswood – Jerod Mayo (OUT), Quintin Mikell (OUT), Anthony Spencer (OUT), Daryl Washington (OUT), Vince Wilfork (OUT); **Virden** – Justin Blackmon (PROBABLE), Melvin Ingram (OUT), Julio Jones (OUT).

What might have been originally pictured by the schedule-maker as a dramatic season finale for the division and Manitoba bragging rights has become, due to unfortunate circumstances, an inconsequential 60-minute bore fest. With draft standing at stake, neither team really wants to win this game. In a perfect world, both would lose and put on a great display in defeat. A tie is possible, but highly unlikely, meaning one team will have to emerge "victorious" despite of their efforts to the contrary. This is what makes this game curiously interesting. What happens when two teams that would prefer to lose but must pretend to compete to win face each other in the same game? The strange possibilities are endless. **PICK: VIRDEN**



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*This Week in EFL History*  
*With Professor Sterling Smitherman*

FROM THE EFL ARCHIVES – The Game of the Week in Week 13 of the 2008 EFL Season featured the first ever regular season "championship re-match." The Chino Convicts faced off against the Charleswood Patriots for the first time since Chino turned all conventional predictions upside down with a 24-21 win over the Pats in the first ever EFL Championship Game. This time the result was a more conventional one, with the Patriots squeaking out a 21-19 win on the strength of 3 TD passes from Peyton Manning. With Jay Cutler the starter in Chino in 2008, the outcome was not as meaningful as it would have been had Donovan

McNabb been calling the shots. Cutler had a dreadful day and had to be relieved by Jake Delhomme, making the 2-point margin of victory all the more disconcerting to the Pats' Faithful.

Cowtown QB Chad Pennington won Offensive Player of the Week by completing 18 of 22 passes for 251 yards and 3 TDs while leading the Corn Kings to a 34-17 trouncing of the Knights. With the win, the slow-starting Kings had won 7 of their last 8 games to remain in the hunt for a playoff berth.

The 9-4 Hellfire burnt the 1-12 Outlaws by a score of 28-13. Mohave turned the ball over twice to bring their season turnover total to a shocking 35, almost all of them the fault of QB, Kurt Warner. Take away those turnovers and the talented Hellfire might have been near the top.

Gerald Hayes blocked a punt to set up the game-winning FG as the Ringgold Crimson Hawks escaped universal ridicule with a 23-20 win over Colorado. A fumble and an interception set up the Thundersnow in a position to score double-digit points.

The rest of the week's results were predictable beatings of the rest of the Expansion Division.