

2014

Week Fourteen


**EFL NEWS**  
 ELITE FOOTBALL LEAGUE

2014

Week Fourteen

January 25, 2015



CHP	17	CAR	38	MVM	10	ICC	22	CHI	37	MAR	17	YOR	17	SBE	27	AUR	38	SC	33
MOH	30	VIR	17	TCT	38	SCB	27	LAK	3	COW	13	DTL	44	PIC	30	GWG	6	SEB	17



Ray McDonald of Pickering reaches out for Scarborough's Ray Rice in 4<sup>th</sup> quarter action at Thermopylae Stadium. Rice scored two TDs in short yardage situations but was completely bottled up otherwise, gaining 29 yards on 16 touches. McDonald and the rest of the Spartans defence faced a stiff challenge from a revived Blue Eagles' offence, but held on to win 30-27. (STORY INSIDE).

### LATEST EFL NEWS INSIDE

- CANNIBALS GOBBLE UP VIOLATORS
- ROGERS RETURN SPARKS NEAR UPSET
- DURHAM DEMOLISHES YORK
- MUSTANGS TROT ON
- AND MUCH MORE.....

#### Also in this issue

- SPATS FEATURE, 'PARKPOURRI II' 'ABRA CADABRA 'PLOOF!', 'AROUND THE EFL.'
- JIMMY THE GEEK
- THIS WEEK IN EFL HISTORY



Who was slick  
in Week  
Fourteen?

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



**Matt Ryan**  
QB  
Aurora  
Mustangs

OFFENSE

30 of 36, 323 yards, 3 TDs. Deep passing got ball rolling vs Gwinnett.



**Charles Johnson**  
DE  
Santa Clara  
Banana Sluggs

DEFENSE

4 Tackles, 3 Sacks, 1 TFL, 1 FF. 3 sacks in 4<sup>th</sup> qtr to stop Cubs.



3-11-0

Scarborough

27

MVP  
Peyton Manning

30

Pickering

10-4-0



## TEAM LEADERS

Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Rodgers	28	41	322	1
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Rice	14	22	1.6	2
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Adams	10	126	12.6	1

Team	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
Scarborough	3	3	7	14	-	27
Pickering	7	6	7	10	-	30

## Play of the Game

Tied at 27 with 3:06 left, **Jordan Cameron** fought through a double team to catch an 11-yard pass, drawing an added personal foul in the process, for a 26-yard total advance to edge of FG range.

## TEAM LEADERS

Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Manning	20	31	333	3
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Johnson	26	102	3.9	0
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Thomas	6	134	22.3	2

**SUMMARY:** The first break of the game went Scarborough's way when **Justin Tuck** blocked a **Dustin Colquitt** punt at the Pickering 32 yard line, leading to a 50-yard **Jay Feely** FG and an early lead. It would be the only lead of the game for the Blue Eagles, but they would make it a tense finish for playoff-bound Pickering by staying close until the very end. **Peyton Manning** struck quickly in response to the early setback, connecting on a long fly to **Demaryius Thomas** for a 36-yard TD pass. Three FGs finished the 1st half scoring, with **Josh Scobee** making good on 2 of them to give Pickering a 13-6 half time lead. Scarborough tied it at 13 early in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter after **Aaron Rodgers** found rookie **Davonte Adams** for 24 yards and **DeSean Jackson** for 15 yards to set up a 1-yard TD run by **Ray Rice**. Spartans' running back **Chris Johnson** got the lead back when he took a dump-off from Manning 11 yards in for a TD. **Brandon Carr** picked off Manning in the 4<sup>th</sup> to set up another Rice plunge from 1 yard to tie it at 20, but the Spartans quickly regained the lead on a 40-yard deep strike from Manning to Thomas. Rodgers then led Scarborough 80 yards to tie the game at 27 on an 11-yard TD pass to Adams, but Manning led a time-consuming final drive to the 3 yard line set up Scobee for the easy game-winning kick.

**QUOTES:** "People seem to think that they are an easy team to beat, but that's definitely not the case. You can't take any team for granted in this league, especially a team with Aaron at quarterback." – Pickering QB, **Peyton Manning**.

"I never thought we couldn't win this game. I know what this team is made of and we don't quit. We're just a player or two away. Take Peyton and DeMarius out of it, give us Chris Johnson, trade Melvin White for Joe Haden and we win that game!" – Scarborough coach, **Chris Dickinson**.



## ANGRY FAN



## titter

## HAPPY FAN



Mike Myers @MikeMyers

Aaron Rodgers worked his mojo, baby, but Peyton out-mojofied him!



Aristedes @AristedesKalogiannis

It is in victories such as these that true greatness reveals itself. Wounded last week by fate's errant arrow, the brave Spartans surrendered not to despair!

01-21-2015 Thermopylae Stadium Temp: 22 Wind: 0-10 None MVP: Peyton Manning

## Scoring Summary

1 3:04	Scarborough	FG Feely 50 (4-0-0:17)	3-0
1 0:00	Pickering	TD Manning 36 pass to Thomas (Janikowski) (5-76-2:58)	3-7
2 5:16	Pickering	FG Scobee 28 (11-66-5:17)	3-10
2 0:41	Scarborough	FG Feely 33 (13-64-4:24)	6-10
2 0:03	Pickering	FG Scobee 44 (6-54-0:34)	6-13
3 7:41	Scarborough	TD Rice 1 run (Feely) (9-76-4:29)	13-13
3 3:53	Pickering	TD Manning 11 pass to Johnson (Scobee) (9-64-3:43)	13-20
4 10:29	Scarborough	TD Rice 1 run (Feely) (9-51-3:41)	20-20
4 6:28	Pickering	TD Manning 40 pass to Thomas (Scobee) (2-53-0:56)	20-27
4 3:19	Scarborough	TD Rodgers 11 pass to Adams (Feely) (9-80-3:09)	27-27
4 0:29	Pickering	FG Janikowski 21 (9-61-2:43)	27-30

	SBE	PIC
First Downs	23	24
Rushes	20-50	31-136
Passes	41-28-322	31-20-333
Sacked	4-28	1-6
Fumble	2	4
Penalties	4-35	6-50
Turnovers	0	1
Missed Tackles	8	4
Blitzes	44	15
Time	30:54	29:06
Third Down	5-12	5-11
Fourth Down	0-0	0-0
Red Att/Td/Fg	4/3/1	3/1/2
Net Offense	344	463



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



## REGULATORS

8-6-0

3

14

10

6

0

OT

33

Tony Romo

29 of 37, 307 yards, 2 TDs



## SWORDFISH

3-11-0

14

3

0

0

0

17

Andy Dalton

18 of 32, 199 yards, 2 TDs, 2 INTs

A stop for the defence and an efficient drive by the offence for a TD on an 11-yard pass to **Wes Welker** put the Swordfish in front early. They added to that lead with an **Andy Dalton – Nate Washington** connection for a 32-yard TD. But the Regs stormed back, scoring 30 of the game's remaining 33 points on a pair of **Tony Romo** TD passes, to **Keenan Allen** and **AJ Green**, a 9-yard TD run by **Frank Gore** and 3 **Justin Tucker** FGs. Interceptions by **Justin Gilbert** and **Terrence Brooks** and two 4<sup>th</sup>-down stops in Sebastian territory kept the Swordfish off the scoreboard in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half.



## MUSTNGS

14-0-0

3

14

21

0

0

OT

38

Matt Ryan

30 of 36, 323 yards, 3 TDs



## GLADIATORS

4-10-0

0

6

0

0

0

6

Ben Roethlisberger

23 of 40, 205 yards, 1 INT

A tenacious stand inside their 10 and a strip sack of **Matt Ryan** by **James Laurinaitis** in Aurora territory had the Glads in front 6-3 well into the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter. But the Mustangs turned the game around quickly in the last 6 minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> half with TD passes of 33 and 16 yards to **Anquan Boldin**. Aurora went on to dominate the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, scoring on TDs runs of 21 and 66 yards by **Matt Forte**, and on a 4-yard TD pass to **Julian Edelman** while an interception of **Big Ben** by **Eric Weddle** and a 4<sup>th</sup> down stop at the Aurora 27 yard line kept the Gladiators from scoring any points in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half.



## PATRIOTS

3-11-0

0

10

0

7

0

OT

17

Sammy Watkins

10 Catches, 182 yards, 1 TD



## HELLFIRE

3-11-0

14

7

6

3

0

30

Andrew Luck

27 of 41, 333 yards, 2 TDs

A 21-yard pass interference penalty against **Desmond Trufant** and a 60-yard punt return by **Tandon Doss** set up two **Andrew Luck** TD passes, of 5 yards to **Harry Douglas** and 17 yards to **Hakeem Nicks**, to put Mohave in front 14-0. **Blake Bortles** connected with **Sammy Watkins** for 43 yards to set up an 8-yard TD pass to **Terrance Williams** to cut the lead in half, but Mohave charged back with a 24-yard completion to **Robert Woods** and a 20-yard scramble by Luck setting up an 18-yard TD run by **Mike Tolbert**. The Hellfire controlled the ball in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half, driving for 3 FGs to stay well in front.



**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**

11-3-0

10	7	7	14	0	38
OT					

**Eddie Lacy**

25 Carries, 121 yards, 2 TDs



**VIOLATORS**

6-8-0

0	3	7	7	0	17
OT					

**Matt Stafford**

14 of 23, 213 yards, 2 TDs, 1 INT

**Eddie Lacy** started a big day with a 12-yard TD catch on the Cannibals' opening drive. **Matt Stafford** was pulled after getting picked off by **TJ McDonald** and strip-sacked by **Domata Peko** on Virden's first two possessions. **Jamaal Charles** broke off a 46-yard run to set up a Violators' FG but Lacy added another big score with a 19-yard TD run before the half. Lacy rumbled for 41-yards on a pass play to set up a 27-yard TD pass to **Josh Gordon** to take a 24-3 lead. Virden drew closer with a pair of Stafford TD passes but a 5-yard TD run by **LeGarrette Blount** punt the Cannibals in firm control.



**EXCALIBURS**

7-7-0

3	0	0	14	0	17
OT					

**Tom Brady**

19 of 36, 210 yards, 2 TDs, 1 INT



**T-LIZARDS**

10-4-0

3	17	14	10	0	44
OT					

**Fred Jackson**

12 Carries, 108 yards, 2 TDs

A defensive 1<sup>st</sup> quarter ended in a 3-3 deadlock but a 26-yard completion to **Eric Decker** on 3<sup>rd</sup> & 18 followed by a 39-yard TD pass from **Drew Brees** to **Calvin Johnson** sparked a 17-point Durham outburst in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter. On the first possession of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half, **Fred Jackson** broke a 37-yard run to set up his second TD of the game on a dive from half a yard then **Thomas Davis** picked off **Tom Brady** to set up a **Carlos Hyde** 7-yard TD run to make it 34-3. York got rolling in the 4<sup>th</sup> with a pair of TD passes to **Victor Cruz**, but **Aaron Murray** threw his first career TD pass to clinch it for the Dinos.



**MONARCHS**

4-10-0

0	3	7	0	0	10
OT					

**Ryan Tannehill**

22 of 31, 199 yards



**TRIUMPH**

10-4-0

21	7	7	3	0	38
OT					

**Jay Cutler**

16 of 20, 220 yards, 3 TDs

**Jay Cutler** threw 3 TD passes to 3 difference receivers on his first 3 possessions, hitting **Kendall Wright**, **Vincent Jackson** and **Antonio Brown** all in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter to stake his team to a 21-0 lead. The Triumph added a 4<sup>th</sup> TD on their 4<sup>th</sup> possession when **Doug Martin** capped off a drive set up by a 17-yard Brown punt return with a 9-yard TD run. The Monarchs closed out the 1<sup>st</sup> half with a FG but, after going 3-and-out to start the 2<sup>nd</sup> half, surrendered a 77-yard punt return for a TD to **Antonio Brown** to make it 35-3. **Ryan Tannehill** then scrambled 10 yards for the Monarchs' only TD.

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



## CONVICTS

10-4-0

10	3	10	14	0	37
					OT

**Cam Newton**  
 212 yd pass, 70 yds rush, 3 TDs



## KNIGHTS

9-4-0

0	0	0	3	0	3
---	---	---	---	---	---

**Sam Bradford**  
 23 of 33, 190 yards, 1 INT

**Cam Newton** scrambled for a 41-yard TD run on Chino's first possession of the game and **Dan Bailey** kicked two red zone FGs to stake the Convicts to a 13-point lead by half time. The LA offence was no match for the Chino defenders, turning the ball over 3 times and having 2 drives end with sacks. But a 36-yard pass to **Garrett Graham** did set up a FG that broke the shutout early in the 4<sup>th</sup>. The Knights' defence proved tough inside the red zone, but big plays brought them down. A 28-yard TD pass to **Brian Hartline** and a 90-yard TD run by **Adrian Peterson** turned the game into a rout.



## CUBS

9-5-0

6	3	0	13	0	22
					OT

**Russell Wilson**  
 22 of 40, 235 yards, 2 TDs



## SLUGGS

11-3-0

0	10	10	7	0	27
---	----	----	---	---	----

**Knowshon Moreno**  
 17 Carries, 98 yards, 3 TDs

A 29-yard pass to **Steve Smith** and a **Trindon Holliday** kick return fumble set up 2 **Greg Zuerlein** FGs, giving the Cubs a 6-0 1<sup>st</sup> quarter lead. But a 53-yard pass play to **Andre Johnson** set up the first of 3 TD runs by **Knowshon Moreno** to put the Sluggs in front. The teams traded FGs in the 2<sup>nd</sup> to give the Sluggs a 1-point lead at half time. Moreno broke a 36-yard TD run and **Alex Henery** booted a 41-yard FG to give the Sluggs a 20-9 advantage. **Russell Wilson** tossed a pair of TD passes on either side of a Moreno TD run to bring the Cubs close, but the Sluggs defence held off the comeback.



## NORTH STARS

7-7-0

10	7	0	0	0	17
					OT

**Alex Smith**  
 12 of 24, 125 yards, 2 TDs



## CORN KINGS

7-7-0

0	10	3	0	0	13
---	----	---	---	---	----

**Alfred Morris**  
 23 Carries, 121 yards

Markham opened with a drive to the Cowtown 2 only to see **Alex Smith** turn the ball over on a fumbled snap. But 3 plays later **Antonio Cromartie** intercepted **Joe Flacco** to set up a 49-yard **Josh Brown** FG. Smith made up for his earlier miscue, scrambling for 26 yards on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 25 to keep a drive alive that ended with a 10-yard TD pass to **Marques Colston**. Cowtown countered with a 5-yard TD pass to **Cecil Shorts**, but a **George Selvie** strip-sack of Flacco set up a 21-yard TD pass to **Jordy Nelson** to make it 17-7. It turned out to be enough as the Kings managed just 2 FGs in reply.

## WEEK FOURTEEN STANDINGS

East	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Carthage	11	3	0	0.786	446	31.9	380	27.1	4.7	6 1 0	5 1 0	8 2 0
Twin Cities	10	4	0	0.714	354	25.3	269	19.2	6.1	5 2 0	5 1 0	8 2 0
Virden	6	8	0	0.429	391	27.9	375	26.8	1.1	4 3 0	1 6 0	3 7 0
Charleswood	3	11	0	0.214	214	15.3	392	28	-12.7	3 4 0	2 4 0	2 8 0
Mohave	3	11	0	0.214	342	24.4	436	31.1	-6.7	1 6 0	3 4 0	3 7 0
West	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Santa Clara (y)	11	3	0	0.786	457	32.6	323	23.1	9.6	6 1 0	7 0 0	10 0 0
Chino	10	4	0	0.714	400	28.6	288	20.6	8	6 1 0	5 1 0	7 3 0
Iowa City	9	5	0	0.643	413	29.5	368	26.3	3.2	5 2 0	3 3 0	6 4 0
Mission Viejo	4	10	0	0.286	277	19.8	379	27.1	-7.3	3 4 0	1 5 0	3 7 0
Los Angeles	0	14	0	0	181	12.9	431	30.8	-17.9	0 7 0	0 7 0	0 10 0
North	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Durham (y)	10	4	0	0.714	456	32.6	289	20.6	11.9	6 1 0	6 1 0	8 2 0
Pickering (y)	10	4	0	0.714	411	29.4	332	23.7	5.6	5 2 0	3 3 0	6 4 0
Cowtown	7	7	0	0.5	336	24	361	25.8	-1.8	3 4 0	3 4 0	4 6 0
Markham	7	7	0	0.5	285	20.4	271	19.4	1	3 4 0	3 3 0	5 5 0
York	7	7	0	0.5	297	21.2	307	21.9	-0.7	3 4 0	1 5 0	4 6 0
South	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Aurora (z)	14	0	0	1	474	33.9	167	11.9	21.9	7 0 0	6 0 0	10 0 0
South Carolina	8	6	0	0.571	350	25	338	24.1	0.9	4 3 0	5 1 0	6 4 0
Gwinnett	4	10	0	0.286	272	19.4	392	28	-8.6	1 6 0	3 4 0	4 6 0
Scarborough	3	11	0	0.214	275	19.6	364	26	-6.4	0 7 0	1 5 0	2 8 0
Sebastian	3	11	0	0.214	268	19.1	437	31.2	-12.1	1 6 0	1 6 0	1 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	417	271	65	3714	9	2.2	80	36	8.6	113.1
2	Cutler	TCT	274	186	67.9	2156	8	2.9	56	25	9.1	109.7
3	Brees	DTL	235	169	71.9	1994	4	1.7	66	12	5.1	107.3
4	Newton,C	CHI	416	295	70.9	2992	4	1	47	25	6	107.2
5	Foles	DTL	222	140	63.1	1852	2	0.9	57	14	6.3	106.7
6	Rivers,P	CAR	459	295	64.3	4220	13	2.8	75	31	6.8	104.7
7	Griffin II	SCB	385	242	62.9	3348	5	1.3	73	22	5.7	104.3
8	Ryan,M	AUR	536	360	67.2	3997	10	1.9	76	36	6.7	103.7
9	Wilson,R	ICC	352	237	67.3	2829	6	1.7	69	19	5.4	102.6
10	Stafford,M	VV	445	275	61.8	3939	13	2.9	80	23	5.2	95.5
11	Smith,A	MAR	358	217	60.6	2222	3	0.8	48	19	5.3	92.7
12	Romo	SC	569	362	63.6	3685	11	1.9	71	28	4.9	90.4
13	Luck	MOH	495	292	59	3568	9	1.8	77	21	4.2	87.8
14	Glennon	LAK	220	137	62.3	1282	2	0.9	55	7	3.2	85.1
15	Flacco	COW	521	317	60.8	3668	19	3.6	80	28	5.4	84.8
16	Rodgers,A	SBE	278	169	60.8	1944	8	2.9	54	11	4	83.1
17	Manziel	TCT	233	143	61.4	1514	6	2.6	45	8	3.4	81
18	Brady	YOR	407	228	56	2838	11	2.7	73	17	4.2	80.5
19	Roethlisbe	GWG	445	270	60.7	2938	14	3.1	63	18	4	80.5
20	Tannehill	MVM	439	263	59.9	2630	11	2.5	51	17	3.9	79.4

## RUSHING

#	Player	Team	Att	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	Johnson,C	PIC	298	1403	4.7	35	5
2	Morris,A	COW	255	1366	5.4	48	6
3	McCoy,L	GWG	309	1335	4.3	56	10
4	Lynch,M	YOR	269	1248	4.6	48	10
5	Charles,J	VV	251	1206	4.8	51	11
6	Moreno	SCB	226	1150	5.1	36	20
7	Gore	SC	217	1081	5	56	10
8	Forte	AUR	220	1079	4.9	66	14
9	Lacy	CAR	235	1069	4.5	57	16
10	Peterson,A	CHI	211	1057	5	90	14
11	Murray	MVM	227	1012	4.5	62	9
12	Bell,L	LAK	248	898	3.6	44	1
13	Spiller	ICC	156	875	5.6	55	4
14	Ivory	CHP	206	813	3.9	50	6
15	Blount	CAR	165	695	4.2	24	6
16	Ellington	MAR	135	678	5	43	3
17	Ball,M	MOH	132	648	4.9	50	6
18	Jackson,F	DTL	136	645	4.7	37	15
19	Pryor	SBE	79	625	7.9	36	4
20	Newton,C	CHI	84	615	7.3	55	4

## RECEIVING

#1	Player	Team	No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	Bryant,D	VV	93	1555	16.7	69	10
2	Brown,A	TCT	92	996	10.8	45	12
3	Green,A	SC	92	1195	13	71	9
4	Edelman	AUR	86	834	9.7	52	12
5	Johnson,A	SCB	85	1207	14.2	53	4
6	Boldin	AUR	83	1448	17.4	76	16
7	Wright,K	TCT	81	792	9.8	35	8
8	Graham,J	MOH	77	1065	13.8	65	6
9	Douglas,H	MOH	75	900	12	42	6
10	Jackson,D	SBE	74	1071	14.5	60	8
11	Olsen	CHI	72	669	9.3	36	7
12	Watkins,S	CHP	72	1027	14.3	71	6
13	Garcon	PIC	72	1023	14.2	71	15
14	Jackson,V	TCT	71	1230	17.3	56	11
15	Forte	AUR	71	503	7.1	41	4
16	Jennings,G	SC	69	645	9.3	58	7
17	Woodhead	CHI	69	567	8.2	35	4
18	Thomas,D	PIC	68	1225	18	80	11
19	Jeffery	SCB	68	1092	16.1	65	12
20	Gordon,J	CAR	68	1316	19.4	75	7

## KICKING

#	Player	Team	FGA	FGM	FG%	40	50	Lg	Pts
1	Zuerlein	ICC	43	40	93	14	4	52	159
2	Crosby	VV	34	30	88.2	8	3	54	131
3	Prater	MOH	35	31	88.6	8	3	56	126
4	Dawson	DTL	24	24	100	9	2	57	126
5	Folk	AUR	28	23	82.1	14	7	55	126
6	Henery	SCB	25	22	88	8	1	50	121
7	Bailey,D	CHI	31	24	77.4	12	2	52	118
8	Hauschka	CAR	26	21	80.8	9	2	53	116
9	Novak	COW	26	23	88.5	9	3	56	104
10	Tucker,J	SC	27	21	77.8	9	3	54	104
11	Feely	SBE	30	24	80	6	2	52	101
12	Brown,J	MAR	27	23	85.2	12	5	53	99
13	Walsh	YOR	26	20	76.9	6	3	54	91
14	Vinatieri	SS	22	19	86.4	5	2	54	86
15	Gostkowski	TCT	14	14	100	6	0	49	84
16	Carpenter	MVM	20	17	85	5	1	53	83
17	Suisham	GWG	18	16	88.9	6	0	47	80
18	Bironas	CHP	16	13	81.3	6	2	53	64
19	Janikowski	PIC	7	6	85.7	0	0	38	62
20	Scobee	PIC	19	19	100	13	3	56	61





# AROUND THE



## With Spats McChad

NEW YORK – Are we in the pre-season or in the middle of a playoff race? Come on, EFL! What the hell?

With so much still undecided going into Week Fourteen, the scene was set for a compelling drama to unfold, as it usually does this time of year, in the still very tight playoff races. Well, something indeed unfolded but it wasn't very compelling or dramatic. When Scarborough tops the weekly list of sensations you know it is either retro week on the EFL Network or.....well there is actually no other precedent for this; unless you count Week Nine. But as tedious as play was that week, it had far more reality to it than this week. This was, hands down, the least competitive slate of games this year and – as far back as my memory goes – *ever*.

The one broadly interesting point I can surmise, as a result of studying the game videos until the toothpicks propping my eyelids open penetrated my skin, is that the wheat is separating from the chaff quite emphatically. The gnats previously buzzing around the divisional and wildcard races are now being casually waved aside by the swishing of a Mustangs' tail here and the thump of a Lizards' tail there. The Pacific-Atlantic Conference will finish with four solid playoff teams while the Can-Am Conference will field three, but those three are each good enough to win it all. If there is a true Cinderella in the bunch, she has no hope of making it to the Ball. The post-season (i.e., *real* season) can't come soon enough.

In times like this I turn to my *Bulldog Gridiron Tours Ltd.* Stadium Ratings Guide to plan my 20-teams-in-16-weeks travel bonanza for the 2015 regular season. Let me share some of my research with you, dear readers:

### **PARKPOURRI II**

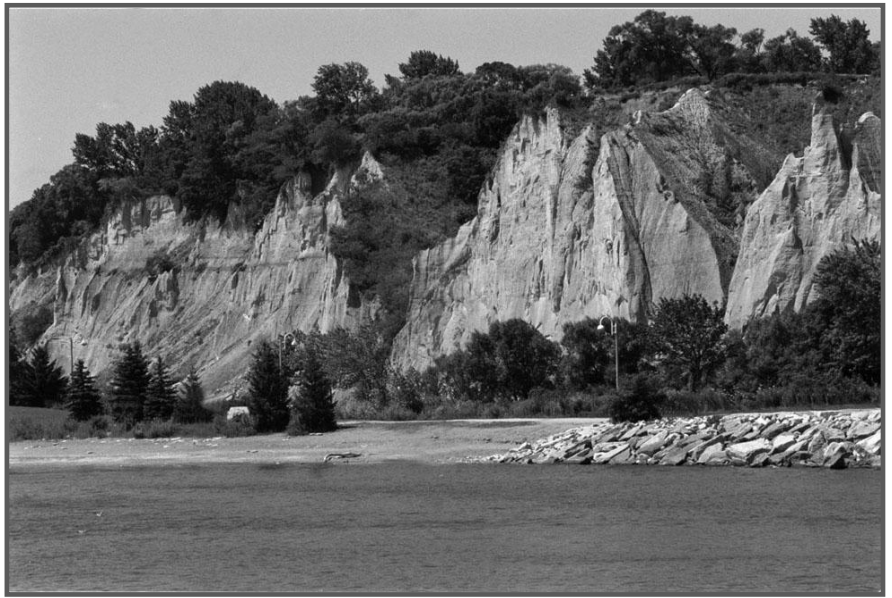
A few weeks ago I shared samples of some of the best experiences that EFL stadiums have to offer. But travel planning, properly done, is not just about finding attractive destinations. It also includes searching for those that are to be avoided. While I am not planning to avoid any of the EFL venues in my 20-team tour, being forewarned of their shortcomings can't hurt.

**TAILGATING – “Candlestick Park,” Aurora** (officially Magnets International Stadium). The private consortium, headed by local businessman **Franky Stomach**, that built a full size football stadium in the space just three months, pulled off an impressive feat of engineering. But in their haste to prepare for the arrival of the Mustangs they neglected two things: lighting and a parking lot. A prudish City Council approved zoning for a stadium on an undeveloped piece of land but not for extensive paving around it. As for the lights, that was just an embarrassing gaffe rooted in too many workers and not enough managers. The lights arrived after the stadium had been built and currently they sit in a field next to it waiting until the off-season to be installed. The collateral damage to EFL game-day traditions has been extensive. Cars line both sides of Leslie Street through the city and up into Newmarket, creating traffic chaos on game day. As for tailgating, there is none, unless one counts the illegal activity in the woods north of St. John's Sideroad. If drinking before the game is the reason you go to the game, *Bulldog* recommends you take one of the new “Mustangs Party Buses” that take the scenic route from Toronto and drop you off in front of the stadium. **DISHONOURABLE MENTION – Carolina Slammer, Columbia, SC.** Possibly worse than no tailgate is a tailgate where no fun is allowed. The Regulators officially encourage their fans to come out to the park early for a pre-game “pep rally.” But, true to their namesake, they attempt to regulate everything within the confines of *Regs Rally Alley*, the official designated tailgate zone. With a security to fan ratio of approximately 1 – 5, strictly enforced “dry” areas and “quiet zones,” and a two-beer per person limit, the atmosphere is more like a church fair than a booster bash. On the plus side; the food, especially the Southern BBQ, is top notch.

**VENUE – Bluff's Stadium, Scarborough, ON.** If you are looking for reasons other than poor coaching, questionable trades and general mismanagement to explain why the Blue Eagles have mostly sucked since they came to Scarborough, look no further than their home field. Built in 1940 at the low point of WWII, during a time when few professional sports were thriving, the rickety structure has withstood the continuous assault of nature for far too long. The stunning view of Lake Ontario and the continuous cool breeze during hot summer months are its only positive aesthetic qualities; and the latter turns into a hardship during the cold months of the football season. The place survives because the Scarberia Historical Society has invested a small fortune in keeping it standing using “period materials.” Most of these are illegal under modern building codes but are subject to an “historical exemption” under Ontario Heritage Law. While key portions of the stadium have been modernized (such as Chris Dickinson's 75-person capacity Party Room) the vast majority of the “cheap seats” remain as uncomfortable and as dangerous



as they were back in 1940, when war-effort rationing meant no frills using the bare minimum of necessary materials. With 156 long rows climbing the side of the cliff on one side and a much shorter 2 rows forming a breakwater against the Lake Ontario tide on the other, the stadium is amazing to look at because it is hard to believe it exists at all. Why it was built in such a way is actually interesting as well as bizarre. But, unfortunately, the history is irrelevant to visitors suffering its inconveniences and discomforts for the first (and usually only) time. **DISHONOURABLE MENTION – The Big House, Chino, CA.** Chino's home park lives up to its name, but that is about the only impressive thing about it. The biggest stadium in the league can seat 85,000 fans in the open air and house about 5,000 prisoners in maximum security reinforced concrete covered



The Scarborough Bluffs as they looked prior to World War II. Fear of conscription prompted a local architect to submit a government proposal to build a stadium on the lake to observe and evaluate naval exercises. It sounded like a good idea at the time.

viewing areas. Originally built to be the State of California's first Super-Duper Prison, a virtual "Convict City," the plan was scrapped when residents of Chino complained that the planned convict population would be almost half that of the entire City of Chino. With the inmate population scaled back to a manageable 10,000, the unused space was converted to "public use" and, thus, the EFL's largest stadium was created. The playing field is the original exercise yard and the stands are built around giant guard towers. Comfort was never part of the original design and the government ran out of money to finish upgrades. With the Warden's Office the only luxury box and the general seating composed of concrete benches with serial numbers painted on them, the Big House is about as uncomfortable as it gets for the average fan.

**CONCESSIONS – The Dawg Pound, Markham, ON.** A team nicknamed the North Stars that plays its games at the "Dawg Pound" and features a dancing hot dog as its mascot clearly lacks a strategic branding strategy. Is it any wonder then that the marketing of concessions appears to be equally neglected? If you consider beer a food group, then *Budweiser*, which owns the liquor rights at the Dawg Pound, has that area covered – just don't ask for anything other than *Bud* or *Bud Light*. The food contract was awarded to the father of an old hockey buddy of **Lanny McDonald's**, a now ancient Québécois named **Guy Gosselin**, who used to organize the peanut sellers at Jarry Park in Montreal after a skidoo accident cut short a promising hockey career. Guy's crew of peanut sellers led Major League Baseball in peanut sales for three years running in the early 70's despite relatively sparse attendance at Expos games. Not surprisingly, the concessions strategy, if you can call it that, centers on the peanut, which makes the Dawg Pound a very dangerous place for today's many young peanut-allergy sufferers. Peanut stands and peanut sellers are ubiquitous, but try finding a hot dog and you can expect to miss most of the third quarter. Hot Dogs are available at the concession stand at field level on the east side of the stadium and nowhere else. That is because the main concession stand at field level on the east side of the stadium is the *only* full service concession stand. And to call it "full service" is to use a relative term. In addition to hot dogs; French fries, peanut butter poutine, giant pretzels, soda pop, 'Mae Wests' (a twinkie-like chocolate-coated dessert cake) and cigarettes (smoking is permitted at the Dawg Pound) are the main sellers. Not surprisingly, Markham leads the EFL in peanut sales again this year, for the 7<sup>th</sup> year running. **DISHONOURABLE MENTION – The Killing Field, Carthage, US Samoa.** When you live on a remote island and have to import most of life's daily staples, you can expect high prices and occasional shortages. When those happen on game day in Carthage, the locals step in to fill the gap with an array of traditional Polynesian delicacies. Some of these, such as kalua pork and fried banana chips, are fare a visiting mainlander can stomach. But hot dogs made from actual dog meat, saltwater eel skewers, and deep fried "fish mash" formed into shapes of human appendages (to simulate "deeply traditional" fare available, once upon a time, at the ancient human meat market) can be off-putting to those without an acquired taste for such things.

**AMBIENCE – TERRORDOME, Virden, MB.** The Violators' core fan base is an unsavory-looking group that likes to dress up and make a raucous display on game day. They get very little attention in the national media, however, due to the deliberate shock value of some of their antics and the sinister undertones associated with having a hooded hangman as the official mascot and playing games on the grounds of a decommissioned insane asylum. Virden home games are rated PG in local media guides and family outings to **TERRORDOME** are becoming less common every year. The atmosphere is crackling and upbeat when compared with an average death metal concert, but for the average Bruce Springsteen-loving football fan it can be too offbeat. Not

to say that it isn't impressive when 30,000 screaming fans in punk rock-style outfits start chanting 'KILL, KILL!' when the opposing team takes the field. But when the same chant is aimed at the home team's quarterback after an interception it can become quite frightening and more than a little de-motivating. **DISHONOURABLE MENTION – Round Table Stadium, Los Angeles, CA.** Discounting the Championship years of 2009 (finalist) and 2011 (Champ), this park consistently ranks as one of the league's quietest. Visiting teams like to play here, not just because the Knights are usually a bad team, but because the fan noise poses no challenge for visiting quarterbacks. Let's face it: LA has other things on its mind. The *gliteratti* attend Knights' games more to be watched than to watch and many of the fans come to watch the celebrities in the stands. The weather is pleasant, the place is clean, the music trendy and in no way chant-provoking. Close your eyes at Round Table Stadium on a typical game day and you might imagine yourself at a giant trade convention.

#### **ABBRA CADABRA <ploof!>**

'*The Magic of Russell Wilson*' was being promoted on the network in the days leading up to the critical Week Fourteen match-up between the Cubs and Banana Sluggs at Santa Clara. My connection at the EFL Network tells me that the ad campaign began around the same time that Iowa City coach **Deron Redding** received a visit from the stern **Member No. Four** of the shadowy EFL Committee. (**Member No. Four** is usually dispatched when the league wishes to "send a message" to an owner that might create "inconveniences" if it were recorded in any for). He apparently carried a clear message from the league that Wilson would be the starter and that **Colin Kaepernick** was to report to the league offices for a drug test – no further explanation given.

Sure enough, come game day, **Russell Wilson** was behind centre for the Cubs and Kaepernick was nowhere to be seen; neither on the sidelines nor anywhere in MetLife Stadium. The league's banner contest between **RGIII** and the "*Wizard of Wa*" would go on display in front of a national television audience, much to the delight of sponsors.

Wilson was a ratings winner. His magical comebacks against Durham and Cowtown had been so impressive that Iowa fans had embraced him as a hero while his opponents were left to pour over the game film in an effort to understand how he managed to consistently thread the needle on deep passes into double coverage while on the run. If he could do it against the Durham secondary, no team was safe from him. But then, without an explanation beyond the formulaic "he-gives-us-the-best-chance-to-win" one, Coach Redding benched Wilson and put Kaepernick behind centre for three consecutive games. The only plausible explanation was that he was showcasing Kaepernick for a future trade, but the risk that Wilson would lose his confidence and therefore his "magic touch" outweighed the benefits of propping up Kaepernick's falling stock by having him dismantle three of the conference's frailest lightweights. **Archibald Thacker** of the *Des Moines Register* was, as usual, quick to criticize Redding for the switch, even though he had also been critical of Redding benching "Kap."

"Too late, disastrously late, Coach Redding has decided to try and make good with the stud he locked up in the stable," wrote Thacker. "His waffling is now more than destabilizing; it is dangerous. What is Russell Wilson to make of all this? What has he been told? No matter what it is, it can be of no consolation. Wilson is a tough-minded competitor, but making sense of his benching might require more rationalization than even his strong mind is capable of. He is human, after all, and bound to be



Benji the "peanut guy" smiles for the camera during a pre-season game at the Dawg Pound in Markham. Benji is one of many happy peanut sellers who have helped make Markham the top peanut-selling franchise in the EFL.

affected."

Whether it had to do with diminished confidence, rust from three weeks on the bench, or a great Santa Clara defence, is hard to say. But whatever the cause, the *Magic of Russell Wilson* flashed but briefly and fizzled in the end.

It was hard to ignore the notion that the game had been scripted, WWE-style, to live up to the prime time pre-game hype. After the Sluggs spotted the Cubs two field goals in the first quarter, they charged back over the course of the second and third quarters to build up a solid 11-point lead, leading 20-9, going into the fourth quarter. It was not a prohibitive lead by any stretch, but it was the kind that a team like Santa Clara should be able to defend against the majority of teams in the league. The perfect conditions for a comeback were in place for the 'Wizard of Wa' to flash his powers.

Sure enough, Wilson flashed some of that magic when he scrambled for 11 yards on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 10 inside the Sluggs' red zone to set up an 8-yard touchdown pass to **Dexter McCluster**



three plays later to make it 20-16. But **RGIII** flashed some magic of his own, going a perfect 6 for 6 for 58 yards and a touchdown on the ensuing drive to regain an 11-point cushion, 27-16.

With tension building in Santa Clara, Wilson brought Iowa fans in bars everywhere to their feet when he evaded the rush and connected with **Tony Gonzalez** for 25 yards on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 17 at his own 28. Then in accordance with the script he marched them all the way to the end zone, but missed the two-point convert to keep the deficit more than a field goal, at 5. Drama demanded that Wilson would win it with a touchdown, not tie it with a field goal.

The Banana Sluggs suffered a major blow on their next possession when **RGII** went down with an apparent knee injury after taking a hit from **Muhammad Wilkerson**. His replacement, **Matt Flynn**, led the offence to a pair of first downs to take some time off the clock, but ultimately the script demanded that Wilson get his final shot. The Sluggs punted on 4<sup>th</sup> and 2 and the Cubs took over at their 18 yard line with 1:26 left and one timeout.

Sluggs' fans groaned; Cubs' fans ordered another beer and settled in to watch the show. But this time Wilson would not be able to pull a rabbit out of his helmet; defensive lineman **Charles Johnson** made sure of that. Playing like a man possessed, Johnson charged through the line and took Wilson down on the Cubs' first play from scrimmage before he had even set his feet. The hit seemed to have an effect on Wilson the rest of the way. He did not look quite as sure of himself. The Cubs managed to convert two third downs to reach mid-field, but both came on penalties against the defence. On the next third down attempt, Johnson took down Wilson again, forcing a fumble in the process that center **Travis Frederick** jumped on. Then, on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5, Wilson missed McCluster on a routine pass to the sideline. <ploof!> Just like that, it was all over – a far from magical finish. Is Wilson's magic gone for good? Next week's marquee match-up against Chino could very well tell the tale.

#### **AROUND THE EFL**

It is almost too much for me to dignify the Week 14 slate by writing anything about them. But there were some tidbits that, for the sake of the record, need to be revealed:

At Thermopylae Stadium in Pickering the Spartans survived another near-miss against a routable team by edging the Blue Eagles, 30-27. This brings the number of near-misses to 4 to go along with one humiliating loss to Cowtown in Week One. Although they remain a hair out of first place in the North and remain at no. 3 in the ESPN Power Rankings, the Spartans' 'Mojo Ranking' took another hit to knock them out of the Top 5 after peaking at no. 2 in Week 11.

The Mustangs continued their trot to perfection by bucking the Gladiators 38-6 at the Coliseum. While it never figured to be difficult, the loss of **LeSean McCoy** for more than half the game put **Big Ben** to the test against the formidable Aurora defence; a test that proved to be too much. On the other side, **Matt Ryan** toyed with the Glads' defenders, throwing three touchdown passes and posting his sixth 300+ yard passing game of the season.

At Tillman Field in Cowtown, Markham's **Alex Smith** looked and played like a dangerous quarterback for two brilliantly executed touchdown drives to stake the North Stars to a 17-10 lead at half time, before reverting back to "pass safe" mode and getting shutout in the second half. A drowsy-looking, near-sighted **Joe Flacco** could not take advantage of 2<sup>nd</sup> half opportunities, however, failing to throw a pass longer than 12 yards in 26 completions in overseeing his team's 17-13 loss.

At **TERRODOME** in Virden, the misery continued for the Violators as they were toppled 38-17 by the Cannibals. Four turnovers by Virden made it just too easy for the quick-striking **Philip Rivers** who threw for 252 yards and 2 touchdowns. **Matt Stafford** was pulled at the end of the first quarter after his first two drives ended in an interception and a sack and fumble. **Jake Locker** replaced him but he did not stay past the third quarter when it became obvious that the Violators would only lose worse.

At Jurassic Park in Durham the Dinosaurs stomped on York 44-17 to stay a nose ahead of Pickering in the North Division race. A game that showed early promise of being competitive suddenly turned sideways against the visitors in the second quarter after the Lizards overcame consecutive holding penalties and converted a 3<sup>rd</sup> and 18 with a 26-yard pass to **Eric Decker**. On the very next play **Calvin Johnson** grabbed a pass from **Drew Brees** and sliced through the York secondary on his way to a 39-yard touchdown. The game was a complete rout after that. Sometimes overmatched teams just need a firm reminder that they are inferior before they will expose their throat and move on to next week.

At the Fiery Depths in Mohave, **Andrew Luck** toasted the Pats' defence for 333 yards passing and a couple of touchdown passes as **Bobby Elder** hurdled a rather low first obstacle on his way to his promised five-win season by frying Charleswood 31-17. Mohave's porous defence revived a slumping **Blake Bortles-Sammy Watkins** connection to the tune of 10 completions for 182 yards and a TD, but it was not enough to close the point gap.

At the Fish Tank in Sebastian, **Andy Dalton** was as red hot as the hair on his head while passing his team to a 14-3 first quarter lead. But during two long second-quarter scoring drives by the Regulators he had time to remember who he is and what his team is like. Dalton and the Fish laid two eggs in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half as **Frank Gore** and **Justin Tucker** put the game away to win 33-17 and hold on to the 4<sup>th</sup> seed in the Can-Am playoff race.

At TCF Bank Stadium in Minneapolis the Triumph rocketed out to a 21-0 lead over the Monarchs as **Jay Cutler** threw 3 touchdown passes in the first 14 minutes of the game. Twin Cities backed off early and still won 38-10.

And finally, at Round Table Stadium in LA the balance of the universe was maintained by the Knights as they fell 37-3 to the Convicts and kept their imperfect season intact. Legend says that if perfect Aurora loses, the Knights will win and break the curse. But if the Knights win when the Mustangs win, the world will fall off its axis and we will be destroyed.

# BUG THE BOOKIE!

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





















*Your source for fantasy and on-line betting solutions*



RECORD VS THE SPREAD AFTER WEEK 14:

86-49-5

## PLAYOFF PICTURE AT A GLANCE

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

## JIMMY'S WEEK FIFTEEN PICKS

### GAMES TO WATCH

#### CHINO @ IOWA CITY (line – CUBS by 2)

**INJURIES:** Chino – Jarvis Jenkins (OUT), Jamarca Sanford (OUT); Iowa City – Jamar Taylor (PROBABLE), Stephon Gilmore (DOUBTFUL), Tavon Austin (OUT), Tyvon Branch (OUT), Casey Hayward (OUT).

The Convicts can clinch a playoff berth and eliminate the Cubs with a victory; while the Cubs are looking to hang on for another week and hope to control their own destiny in a game against the Monarchs in the season finale. The Cubs lost a nail-biter to the Convicts in Week One in a game that saw plenty of scoring and over 900 yards of net offence. Since that game the Cubs have continued to set the pace for offensive efficiency while the Convicts' defence has risen to the top end of the second-tier of defences



in the league. The statistical edge clearly favours the Convicts, mostly because the Iowa defence disappears for long stretches and backs its offence into a corner. But the ability of Russell Wilson and the Cubs's receivers, particularly Mike Wallace, to fight their way out makes them one of the hardest teams in the league to put away. The game is never over if the Cubs have the ball, time on the clock, and are within a score of their opponent. These traditional rivals always put on a great show against each other and, with so much on the line, expect the atmosphere at Joe Ferguson Stadium to be electric; enough to power the Cubs to victory. **PICK: IOWA CITY**

### **VIRDEN @ SANTA CLARA (line – BANANA SLUGGS by 7)**

**INJURIES:** **Virden** – Branden Albert (PROBABLE), Melvin Ingram (OUT), Justin Blackmon (OUT), Julio Jones (OUT); **Santa Clara** – Randall Cobb (DOUBTFUL), Robert Griffin III (OUT), Rob Gronkowski (OUT), Brandon Williams (OUT);

The Banana Sluggs can relax in the knowledge that they are in the post-season regardless of what happens in this game. But if they were to actually relax and drop one to the wretched but still menacing Violators it could put their top playoff seed in jeopardy. With competition so close among the conference's top teams, the home field edge is a boon worth fighting for. Not that their digs in their temporary stadium feel like home sweet home, but at least it's not that of their opponents. RGIII suffered a most untimely and potentially disastrous injury against the Cubs and is out for this game and possibly the first playoff game, leaving the team's fate in the hands of back-up Matt Flynn. Flynn is a better-than-average back-up, but there is a reason he is riding the pine this year. Neil Shannon is hoping that the Violators don't know what that reason is and miss something in the game plan. Whether they do or not, Virden's downfall this season has been less because of game plan and more because of execution. They are tied for the league lead in giveaways with 27 and those usually come at the worst times, like when the game is in the balance. This should be an interesting, competitive game – an upset is definitely in play. **PICK: VIRDEN**

## **GAMES OF NOTE**

### **SOUTH CAROLINA @ AURORA (line – MUSTANGS by 11)**

**INJURIES:** **South Carolina** – Sam Shields (QUESTIONABLE), Bradley Fletcher (DOUBTFUL), Chris Cook (OUT); **Aurora** – Duane Brown (OUT), Arian Foster (OUT);

Judging from the way they laid into the ripe-for-picking Gladiators last week the Mustangs are not holding back because they have clinched the no. 1 seed. Rich Liotta appears to be successfully keeping his players in fighting form, although what he is doing to motivate them to excel even in certain victory is not known. Perhaps they practice well, or just love to kick butt. With Scarborough on the schedule in the final week, this may be the Mustangs' last conceivable challenge to their perfect season. I say "conceivable" because it really is not much more than a mental exercise, ungrounded in much tangible evidence, to imagine a Regulators' victory on the road against the league's best-by-far regular season team. However, with a double-digit spread it may be worth it to pause and consider that South Carolina scored a league-high 27 points against the Mustangs in Week One. And they have Tony Romo, the ultimate "wild card" quarterback. Maybe....just maybe.... **PICK: SOUTH CAROLINA**

### **MOHAVE @ TWIN CITIES (line – TRIUMPH by 9)**

**INJURIES:** **Mohave** – Reed Doughty (DOUBTFUL), Chris Houston (OUT), Amini Silatolu (OUT), Aaron Williams (OUT); **Twin Cities** – Henry Melton (QUESTIONABLE).

With Mohave uncharacteristically and openly playing for pride in the final stretch of a dismal 2014 campaign it is at least certain that they will actually *try* to win this game – a factor I do not normally consider when predicting an outcome involving the Hellfire. With Mohave trying in mind, I still like the Triumph to prevail in the 'W' column for the mundane reasons that they are at home and have many more weapons on both sides of the ball. The Jay Cutler-led Triumph is one of the most dangerous offences in the league and is so without a single running back with 500 yards rushing or one hundred carries. The Mohave defence is woefully ill-equipped to handle a full throttle Triumph attack, which means Andrew Luck will have to keep pace with Jay Cutler on the scoreboard. Luck may have the arm to impress, but he is unlikely to be able to sustain a 'Cutlerian' pace against what many consider to be one of the best-coached and well-disciplined defences in the league. The Triumph still have their sights

aimed at the East Division title and must win this game to stand a chance. The only thing standing in the way of a high-flying Triumph triumph would be an unwelcome appearance of the “Bad Jay” at quarterback for Twin Cities. It could happen, but we might not even notice much against the horrendous Mohave defence. **PICK: TWIN CITIES**

### **YORK @ MARKHAM (line – NORTH STARS by 2)**

**INJURIES:** York – Rashean Mathis (PROBABLE), Robert Geathers (OUT);, Markham – Owen Daniels (OUT), Jordan Reed (OUT);

The depressing thing about this game is that one of these teams of questionable worth will remain in contention when it is over. The loser, at least, will be eliminated. Of the two, Markham has over-stayed its welcome on the island of potential playoff contestants longest. This edition of the North Stars may be the most boring yet; and that is saying something. Combining a highlight-free offence with a mistake-free offence might be the worst entertainment mix imaginable, even if it keeps the coach’s blood pressure at healthy levels. If the North Stars were playing takeaway on defence at the pace of their Championship season it would be a different story. But they aren’t, and so the sooner they are off the prime time viewing slate the better for fans and sponsors alike. The Magic Blades have been somewhat dull on offence, but the defence has looked very impressive at times; even if it has proven slow to turn the game around with takeaways. The line looks pretty innocuous, almost close to a pick’em, but at the rate these teams are expected to score it is cavernous. The tires of the Markham running game are beginning to look a little threadbare while “Beast Mode” is showing no such fatigue. It is Tom Brady versus Ninny Pants with the season on the line. I’ll go with the future Hall-of-Famer. **PICK: YORK**

### **COWTOWN @ PICKERING (line – SPARTANS by 8)**

**INJURIES:** Cowtown – Mike Evans (OUT), Sammie Hill (OUT); Pickering – Charles Tillman (QUESTIONABLE).

This is an important game for both teams, even if the outcome seems to be a foregone conclusion for anyone who has even briefly looked at the analytics. Unquestionably the Spartans should win this game, and win big, even taking into account their recent stumbles. But that was the same analysis that preceded the Week One match-up between these teams – a game that turned out to be one of the biggest upsets of the year. Can lightning strike twice for Joe Flacco and the Corn Kings? Of course it can, but this time it is more likely to strike them down than charge them up. The Corn Kings would lose a tie-breaker against the Regulators, meaning they need to win their last two games and hope for help to make the playoffs. A loss here eliminates them and keeps the Spartans alive in their quest to chop down Durham. Cowtown will get Ryan Clady back, which is a plus, but star rookie Mike Evans has been ruled out, which is a blow to their deep strike capability. Peyton will take his shots downfield regardless, but expect Pickering to soften up the Cowtown line and control the ball with a heavy dose of rushing leader Chris Johnson. With so much on the line for Pickering and Cowtown’s season fading fast, expect a thrashing. **PICK: PICKERING**

## **HOLIDAY LEFTOVERS**

### **MISSION VIEJO @ LOS ANGELES (line – MONARCHS by 3)**

**INJURIES:** Mission Viejo – Brian Cushing (OUT), Russell Okung (OUT); Los Angeles – Cortland Finnegan (OUT).

The Knights are running out of weeks to avoid becoming the first team in EFL history to finish the regular season winless. With the 1<sup>st</sup> pick in the draft locked up, the Knights have nothing to lose by winning, but a lot to lose if they fail. When one considers that even the historically inept Meadowlands Swamp Dogs and Winnemucca Outlaws, not to mention the Peyton-less Charleswood Patriots of 2012, managed to win at least one game in each of their seasons, the black mark on the Knights’ legacy if they were to fail to win a game becomes a truly dreadful thing to contemplate. If the Knights are going to do it, the Monarchs are the perfect target. Chris Ferraro’s minions have been slowing down on offence and were never really good at defending. Sam Bradford should be able to find the end zone against the least efficient pass defence in the league. Meanwhile, the ‘Blue Shield’ has been gamely showing up to work every week in spite of no support from the offence. They are getting the job done under poor conditions and should have no trouble handling Ryan Tannehill. Here I go, my boldest prediction yet! **PICK: LOS ANGELES**

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

**INJURIES:** Durham –None; Gwinnett – Tommy Kelly (OUT), Maurkice Pouncey (OUT), Jabaal Sheard (OUT);

Fans at the Coliseum are having difficulties getting up for games these days. A proud franchise is experiencing, perhaps for the first time, what it is like to give everything you have and still fall short almost every week. For the fans, it is an impotent feeling; for the players, ditto. But the good news for Gladiators' fans is that the season is almost over and soon they can try to forget about the humiliations of this year. If only that time could come before the Thunder Lizards have their way with a frazzled, confused Big Ben and a spread-eagled defence vulnerable to the most abrupt intrusions. Durham is fixated on preserving the home field advantage for the inevitable post-season showdown against arch-rival Pickering. They won't be showing any mercy on the down-and-out Glads until they know they're finished with them. **PICK: DURHAM**

### **CARTHAGE @ CHARLESWOOD (line – CANNIBALS by 8)**

**INJURIES:** **Charleswood** – Michael Crabtree (OUT), Jerod Mayo (OUT), Quintin Mikell (OUT), Anthony Spencer (OUT), Daryl Washington (OUT), Vince Wilfork (OUT). **Carthage** – Donte Moncrief (DOUBTFUL), Kyle Rudolph (DOUBTFUL), Rashad Johnson (OUT), Harrison Smith (OUT);

Surprisingly, the East Division-leading Cannibals have not clinched anything with just two weeks to go in the regular season. It would take a complete disaster for them not to make at least a wild card spot, but if they lose their remaining two games and a bunch of other things happen, a tie-scenario with the Cubs could break against them in the later stages. In other words, Carthage won't be resting their starters just yet. But then, if they did, it would probably not make a difference in the bottom line here; the Pats have been collapsing for several weeks and probably could not beat Los Angeles right now. It turns out that the Pats *were* who we *thought* they were, but weren't who we thought they were early enough to save some unfortunate people money in Vegas. Expect EJ Manuel to see some action mere minutes into the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of a complete blowout. **PICK: CARTHAGE**

### **SCARBOROUGH @ SEBASTIAN (line – BLUE EAGLES by 1)**

**INJURIES:** **Scarborough** – Ray Rice (DOUBTFUL), Kroy Biermann (OUT), Tarell Brown (OUT), Will Hill (OUT), D.J. Williams (OUT); **Sebastian** – Rahim Moore (QUESTIONABLE), Patrick Chung (OUT), Leon Hall (OUT), Derek Wolfe (OUT);

Aaron Rodgers returned from injury last week and looked pretty good in pushing the Spartans to the wall in defeat. So good that some analysts are spouting on about what could have been for the Blue Eagles if only their quarterback had not been injured. Well, I am here to remind those of you with a pecuniary interest in this game that the Blue Eagles were a 3-4 team before Terrelle Pryor took over and lost every game he started. Sure they were better with Rodgers....*duh*....but to suggest they were a playoff team ignores reality. It is all water under the bridge now that the Blue Eagles prepare to play a meaningless game against a meaningless opponent. Are they good enough to wallop Sebastian? Of course they are, as is any team not nick-named the Knights. But *will* they? Well, yes, probably they will....because they are facing the Swordfish. **PICK: SCARBOROUGH**



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

FROM THE EFL ARCHIVES – After opening with 11 losses, the Colorado Thundersnow (the team that would go on to become the Garland and Aurora Mustangs) finally won a game and did it in fine style. **Matt Ryan** threw 3 TD passes and **Calvin Pace** notched 8 tackles and a critical 4<sup>th</sup> quarter sack to help put the game away in a 27-21 victory over Winnemucca. The point total of 27 was particularly notable for a team that had been shut out 4 times already that season. It would hold up as the franchise record until it was eclipsed in Week 5 of 2009 with a 31-point output in a victory over Markham. But I get ahead of myself....

The Patriots became the first team to clinch a division title when they knocked off the listless Thunder Lizards 27-6. The Florida Dragons, the last team to be defeated in 2008, still had Mohave to contend with had to be content with clinching just the wild card with a 34-14 win over the Gladiators

In further news from the Expansion Division, the Markham North Stars upset the Pickering Spartans 16-12 in what most speakers agreed was an “ugly” win. Markham's only TD came on a **Charles Tillman** interception and lateral to **James Sanders** for a 15-yard score. Tillman added another interception in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter to help preserve the win.

Just when commentators were starting to speak about the Corn Kings again, after a 6-game winning streak had them at 6-5 after a 0-5 start, Coach Coghlin made a switch at QB, putting in **Chris Redman** in place of **Chad Pennington**. This brought bad results; Redman completed just 8 passes and threw an interception without a TD in a 24-14 loss to Kutztown.

To round off a strange week, the 4-8 Ringgold Crimson Hawks knocked off the 8-4 Mohave Hellfire 34-9. **Big Ben** won weekly MVP honours with 4 TD passes against one of the league's top defences.