

2015

Week Eight



EFL NEWS

ELITE FOOTBALL LEAGUE

2015

Week Eight

November 30, 2015



SC	24	COW	31	VIR	20	MOH	20	CHP	31	AUR	31	DTL	49	MAR	16	MVM	17	LAK	24
CAR	27	TCT	28	PIC	38	GWG	24	SEB	18	BCR	17	CHI	32	ICC	23	SBE	21	YOR	14

OOPS!



Triumph star, **Antonio Brown** looks on in shock after muffing a punt in the final minute of their Week 8 game versus Cowtown, and the Corn Kings would take full advantage. (Story Inside....)

LATEST EFL NEWS INSIDE

- CORN KINGS COBBLE WIN
- DINOS OUTSHOOT CONVICTS
- COLOR RUSH
- MARIOTA MAGIC
- AND MORE.....

Also in this issue

- SPATS FEATURE, 'AMERICA'S TEAM,' 'MID-TERM REPORT CARDS' & 'EFL ROUND-UP.'
- JIMMY THE GEEK
- THIS WEEK IN EFL HISTORY – WEEK EIGHT OF 2009



Who was slick in Week Eight?

"BRYLCREEM" THE EFL'S FIRST SPONSOR



Drew Brees
QB
Durham Thunder
Lizards

19 of 27, 287 yards, 4 TDs. Led 49-point effort in win over Chino



Trent Cole
OLB
Aurora
Mustangs

7 Tackles, 3 Sacks, 1 PD. Standout in a big team effort by Aurora D.



4-4-0



GAME OF THE WEEK



5-3-0

Cowtown

31

MVP

Joe Flacco

28

Twin Cities

TEAM LEADERS

Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Flacco	21	34	201	4
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Morris	27	143	5.3	0
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Fitzgerald	10	84	8.4	3

Team	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
Cowtown	7	7	7	10	-	31
Twin Cities	0	21	0	7	-	28

TEAM LEADERS

Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Cutler	18	30	292	1
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Gordon	20	126	6.3	3
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Brown	8	126	15.8	1

Play of the Game

With 0:52 left in the game, tied at 28, **Johnny Hekker** punted from the Cowtown 18. **Antonio Brown** muffed the punt and **Anthony Castonzo** recovered at the Triumph 38 to set up the winning FG.

SUMMARY: The Corn Kings drove 90 yards in 15 plays on their first series to score first on an 8-yard fly to the end zone from **Joe Flacco** to **Larry Fitzgerald**. The Triumph evened the score on their next series, crossing mid-field on a 42-yard screen to **Shane Vereen** and scoring on a 14-yard TD pass from **Jay Cutler** to **Antonio Brown**. **Mike Evans** countered for Cowtown by taking a short slant 48 yards to pay dirt, but **Vincent Jackson** retaliated with a 52-yard catch-and-run to set the Triumph up for the equalizer on an 11-yard TD run by **Melvin Gordon**. Twin Cities pulled ahead on their next series when Gordon spearheaded an 83-yard drive, finishing with a 3-yard score to cap a 21-point 2nd quarter. A botched fake punt on Cowtown's opening series of the 2nd half had the Triumph threatening again, but safety **Glover Quin** picked off Cutler and returned it 64 yards to the Triumph 14. Two plays later Fitzgerald had his 2nd TD catch of the day to make it 21-21. The Triumph went ahead 28-21 on a 1-yard TD run by Gordon, but Cowtown assembled a 15-play drive to tie the game on Fitzgerald's 3rd TD of the day. With 0:52 left, Cowtown punted from their own 18 yard line and caught a break when **Anthony Castonzo** recovered Brown's muff at the 38. 4 plays later, **Nick Novak** kicked the 42-yard game-winner.

QUOTES: "Offensively, we took what they gave us. Defensively, we struggled to contain their weapons, but Glover and Smitty made a couple of standout plays in the second half. In the end, the ball bounced our way at the key moments. That's football." – Cowtown coach, **Jim Coghlin**.

"We accomplished most of what we set out to do today except win the game. Darius forced that fumble on their late touchdown drive; if we recover that, I think we win. Antonio has to catch that punt obviously, but our defence has to make a stop there too!" – Triumph coach, **Guy Williams**.



HAPPY FAN

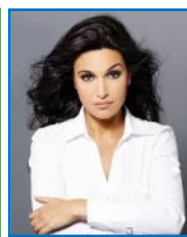


titter

ANGRY FAN



Orville Smucker @Smuckerscoop
How can a person follow the game and this Titter thing at the same time?



Molly @Mollyqerim
We still love you @AntonioBrown84

11-28-2015 TCF Bank Stadium Temp: 58 Wind: 5-15 None MVP: Joe Flacco

Scoring Summary

1 3:34 Cowtown	TD Flacco 8 pass to Fitzgerald (Novak) (15-90-9:02)	7-0
2 14:53 Twin Cities	TD Cutler 14 pass to Brown (Gostkowski) (11-83-3:36)	7-7
2 11:54 Cowtown	TD Flacco 48 pass to Evans (Novak) (6-70-2:52)	14-7
2 9:37 Twin Cities	TD Gordon 11 run (Gostkowski) (4-80-2:17)	14-14
2 2:36 Twin Cities	TD Gordon 3 run (Gostkowski) (9-83-4:33)	14-21
3 6:36 Cowtown	TD Flacco 6 pass to Fitzgerald (Novak) (2-14-0:52)	21-21
4 10:43 Twin Cities	TD Gordon 1 run (Gostkowski) (13-88-6:50)	21-28
4 3:32 Cowtown	TD Flacco 11 pass to Fitzgerald (Novak) (15-76-7:04)	28-28
4 0:01 Cowtown	FG Novak 42 (5-14-0:40)	31-28

	COW	TCT
First Downs	23	25
Rushes	33-159	33-168
Passes	35-21-201	30-18-292
Sacked	0-0	2-12
Fumble	1	3
Penalties	6-46	4-32
Turnovers	0	2
Missed Tackles	13	9
Blitzes	22	15
Time	32:36	27:24
Third Down	7-11	4-11
Fourth Down	2-2	3-3
Red Att/Td/Fg	3/3/0	4/4/0
Net Offense	360	448

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



VIOLATORS

0-8-0

0

10

7

3

0

20

OT

Mark Ingram

21 Carries, 108 yards, 1 TD



SPARTANS

4-4-0

7

7

17

7

0

38

Philip Rivers

13 of 17, 243 yards, 3 TDs

Denard Robinson finished off a 73-yard opening drive with a 4-yard TD run to give Pickering the early 7-0 lead. Virden responded with a 92-yard drive finished off by **Mark Ingram's** 4-yard TD run to tie it. **Mason Crosby** put Virden out in front on a 25-yard FG but the Spartans charged back with **Matt Forte** finishing a 69-yard drive with a 2-yard TD run. An Ingram fumble to open the 2nd half set up a 35-yard TD pass from **Philip Rivers** to **Demaryius Thomas**. A 74-yard TD pass to **Golden Tate** and a 32-yard FG by **Josh Scobee** wrapped up a 17-point 3rd quarter that put the Spartans in control.



KNIGHTS

3-5-0

7

3

0

14

0

24

OT

Teddy Bridgewater

17 of 23, 207 yards, 2 TDs



EXCALIBURS

4-4-0

0

7

7

0

0

14

Tom Brady

17 of 29, 175 yards, 2 TDs, 1 INT

Teddy Bridgewater scrambled for 13 yards to set up a 3-yard TD pass to **Andre Roberts** to give LA a 1st quarter lead. The Excaburs responded with a 4-yard TD pass from To Brady to **Kelvin Benjamin** to even the score, but the Knights took a 3-point lead into half time on a 42-yard FG by **Patrick Murray**. A 15-yard TD pass to **Delanie Walker** put York in front heading into the 4th quarter, but the Knights soon erased that lead on a 2-yard TD run by **LeVeon Bell**. York drove back into the Knights' red zone, but an end zone interception of Brady by **JJ Wilcox** ended the threat and set up LA's final TD.



NORTH STARS

3-5-0

3

0

3

10

0

16

OT

James Starks

12 Carries, 82 yards



CUBS

6-1-1

6

14

3

0

0

23

Russell Wilson

19 of 29, 190 yards, 1 TD, 1 INT

Cubs safety **Malcolm Jenkins** picked off **Alex Smith** and returned it 59 yards for a TD to give the home team a quick 6-0 lead. **James Starks** broke a 46-yard run to set up a Markham FG, but the Cubs regained control of the play with back-to-back TD drives ending in a 25-yard TD pass from **Russell Wilson** to **Brandon LaFell** and a 1-yard TD run by Wilson to establish a 20-3 half time lead. The Stars' defence held the Cubs at bay in the 2nd half and scored on a 43-yard fumble recovery by **Rob Ninkovich**, but the offence could not find the red zone in the 2nd half against a strong Cubs defence.



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!



HELLFIRE

1-7-0

7

3

0

14

0

24

OT

Ronnie Hillman
19 Carries, 104 yards, 1 TD



GLADIATORS

5-3-0

0

14

0

14

0

28

Big Ben
21 of 34, 315 yards, 2 TDs

The Hellfire scored first with **Andrew Luck** hitting **Julio Jones** for a 7-yard TD pass then **Jeremy Maclin** capped a 90-yard drive with a 16-yard TD catch from **Big Ben** to tie it. A 47-yard FG by **Sebastian Janikowski** gave Mohave back the lead, but a 52-yard pass play to Maclin and 10-yard TD pass to **Reggie Wayne** made it 14-10 Gwinnett at half time. Mohave struck first in the 2nd half with a 3-yard TD pass to **Jimmy Graham**, gave up the lead on a **LeSean McCoy** 5-yard TD run, went ahead again on a 41-yard TD run by **Ronnie Hillman**, but lost it when McCoy scored on a 1-yard run with 1:26 left.



REGULATORS

3-5-0

0

10

0

14

0

24

OT

Frank Gore
20 Carries, 164 yards, 1 TD



CANNIBALS

4-4-0

6

14

0

7

0

27

Eddie Lacy
22 Carries, 123 yards, 1 TD

A 66-yard TD pass on a check down from **Marcus Mariota** to **Jared Cook** and a red zone pick of **Tony Romo** by safety **TJ McDonald**, leading to a 73-yard drive and 4-yard TD run by **LeGarrette Blount**, were the main blows contributing to a 20-10 Cannibals lead at half time. **Frank Gore** got the Regs back on track early in the 4th quarter with an 11-yard TD run then **AJ Green** put them in front, 24-20, with a 9-yard TD catch with 6:38 left. Mariota drove the Cannibals across mid-field, where 3 straight penalties on the Regs defence got them close for the game-winning 3-yard TD run by **Eddie Lacy**.



PATRIOTS

8-0-0

0

7

14

10

0

31

OT

Peyton Manning
23 of 30, 313 yards, 3 TDs, 1 INT



SWORDFISH

0-8-0

0

10

8

0

0

18

Kenny Stills
5 Catches, 72 yards, 2 TDs

A fumble by **Duke Johnson** in the Sebastian red zone and an interception of **Peyton Manning** by **Darrin Walls** kept the Pats off the board in the 1st quarter and set up an early 2nd quarter FG for the Fish. A 29-yard TD pass to **Dez Bryant** put the Pats ahead but **Andy Dalton** countered with a 3-yard TD pass to **Kenny Stills** to lead 10-7 at the half. The Pats scored on their first two 2nd-half series: a TD pass of 43 yards to **Sammy Watkins** and a 4-yard run by **Lamar Miller**. A 44-yard TD pass to Stills brought the Fish with a FG, but a 94-yard, 15-play TD drive by the Pats to start the 4th sealed it.

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



T-LIZARDS

7-1-0

7

14

7

21

0

49

OT

Drew Brees

19 of 27, 287 yards, 4 TDs



CONVICTS

4-4-0

3

14

0

15

0

32

Cam Newton

24 of 31, 347 yards, 2 TDs, 1 INT

Turnovers played a key role in a game with 992 yards of offence split evenly between the teams. A fumble by **TY Hilton** set up a 12-yard TD run by **DeMarco Murray** to give Chino a 10-7 lead. But a 65-yard catch-and-run TD pass from **Drew Brees** to **Calvin Johnson** put Durham ahead to stay, 14-10. A Murray fumble was returned by **Linval Joseph** to the Chino 20, setting up a **Carlos Hyde** TD on the next play to make it 21-10 Durham. The Convicts came within 4 points twice, but each time the Lizards countered with a TD to hold a two-score advantage before blowing it open mid-way thru the 4th.



MONARCHS

2-6-0

7

7

3

0

0

17

OT

Joiue Bell

11 Carries, 64 yards, 2 TDs



BLUE EAGLES

4-4-0

7

7

0

7

0

21

DeSean Jackson

5 Catches, 72 yards, 2 TDs

An interception in the end zone by **Buster Skrine** thwarted the Eagles opening drive, but **Aaron Rodgers** got it back on the next with a 20-yard TD pass to **Jordy Nelson**. **Ryan Tannehill** scrambled for 27 yards on 4th & 3 to set up a 12-yard TD run by **Joiue Bell** to tie it then a **Jarret Johnson** 41-yard fumble return set up a 27-yard TD by Bell to make it 14-7, Monarchs. Scarborough tied it with 0:43 left in the 1st half on an 18-yard TD to **DeSean Jackson** then went ahead to stay in the 4th on Jackson's second 18-yard TD catch of the day, after which the Scarborough 'D' held the Monarchs at bay.



MUSTANGS

7-1-0

0

21

0

10

0

31

OT

Matt Ryan

25 of 37, 281 yards, 2 TDs



RAVENS

5-2-1

0

7

3

7

0

17

Randall Cobb

9 Catches, 134 yards, 1 TD

Two turnovers in Aurora territory held the Ravens scoreless in the 1st quarter, but early in the 2nd they broke through with a 16-yard TD pass from **Shaun Hill** to **Randall Cobb**. **Matt Ryan** struck back with a 57-yard TD strike to **Andre Holmes** to tie it then the Mustangs galloped in front with 2 TDs in less than 2 minutes, the first a 33-yard TD run by **Pierre Thomas** and the second a 14-yard TD pass to **Julian Edleman** after a **Solomon Patton** fumble. Back-up QB, **RGIII** started the 2nd half but could not bring the Ravens back, facing constant pressure from **JJ Watt** and the Aurora defence.

WEEK EIGHT STANDINGS

East	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Charleswood	8	0	0	1.000	237	29.6	121	15.1	14.5	4 0 0	4 0 0	6 0 0
Twin Cities	5	3	0	0.625	228	28.5	177	22.1	6.4	2 2 0	3 1 0	5 1 0
Carthage	4	4	0	0.500	249	31.1	208	26	5.1	2 2 0	2 2 0	2 4 0
Mohave	1	7	0	0.125	111	13.9	245	30.6	-16.8	0 4 0	1 3 0	1 5 0
Virden	0	8	0	0.000	105	13.1	239	29.9	-16.8	0 4 0	0 4 0	0 6 0
West	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Iowa City	6	1	1	0.813	229	28.6	135	16.9	11.8	4 0 1	2 1 1	4 1 1
Beaufort County	5	2	1	0.688	203	25.4	160	20	5.4	4 1 0	3 0 1	4 1 1
Chino	4	4	0	0.500	198	24.8	201	25.1	-0.4	1 3 0	2 2 0	3 3 0
Los Angeles	3	5	0	0.375	142	17.8	192	24	-6.3	1 3 0	1 3 0	2 4 0
Mission Viejo	2	6	0	0.250	189	23.6	209	26.1	-2.5	1 3 0	1 3 0	2 4 0
North	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Durham	7	1	0	0.875	212	26.5	132	16.5	10	4 0 0	4 0 0	5 1 0
Cowtown	4	4	0	0.500	184	23	226	28.3	-5.3	2 1 0	1 3 0	3 3 0
Pickering	4	4	0	0.500	181	22.6	167	20.9	1.8	2 2 0	1 3 0	2 4 0
York	4	4	0	0.500	175	21.9	160	20	1.9	2 2 0	2 2 0	3 3 0
Markham	3	5	0	0.375	152	19	134	16.8	2.3	3 1 0	2 2 0	3 3 0
South	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Aurora	7	1	0	0.875	251	31.4	199	24.9	6.5	3 1 0	4 0 0	6 0 0
Gwinnett	5	3	0	0.625	209	26.1	161	20.1	6	2 2 0	2 2 0	3 3 0
Scarborough	4	4	0	0.500	165	20.6	199	24.9	-4.3	3 1 0	2 2 0	3 3 0
South Carolina	3	5	0	0.375	167	20.9	215	26.9	-6	2 1 0	2 2 0	2 4 0
Sebastian	0	8	0	0.000	177	22.1	284	35.5	-13.4	0 4 0	0 4 0	0 6 0

PASSING

Rk	Player	Team	Att	Cmp	C%	Yards	In	I%	Lg	TD	TD%	Rate
1	Newton,C	CHI	217	143	65.9	2002	5	2.3	60	15	6.9	108.9
2	Wilson,R	ICC	212	135	63.7	1711	1	0.5	56	14	6.6	108.8
3	Cutler	TCT	222	153	68.9	1903	6	2.7	73	16	7.2	108
4	Manning,P	CHP	254	175	68.9	2034	4	1.6	71	16	6.3	107.3
5	Roethlisberger	GWG	257	167	65	2141	4	1.6	72	16	6.2	105.2
6	Hill,S	BCR	220	151	68.6	1609	4	1.8	54	13	5.9	101.9
7	Rivers,P	PIC	179	108	60.3	1548	5	2.8	74	13	7.3	101
8	Romo	SC	281	188	66.9	1920	4	1.4	56	17	6	100.5
9	Mariota	CAR	260	155	59.6	2126	7	2.7	66	20	7.7	100.3
10	Bridgewater	LAK	164	102	62.2	1146	2	1.2	52	11	6.7	100.3
11	Brees	DTL	304	206	67.8	2279	4	1.3	65	14	4.6	99.7
12	Flacco	COW	302	189	62.6	2037	5	1.7	49	19	6.3	96.4
13	Manning,E	MAR	149	96	64.4	982	2	1.3	63	6	4	91.1
14	Brady,T	YOR	230	142	61.7	1495	4	1.7	87	12	5.2	90.8
15	Ryan,M	AUR	331	205	61.9	2543	8	2.4	62	15	4.5	90.7
16	Tannehill	MVM	255	166	65.1	1709	6	2.4	47	11	4.3	88.8
17	Rodgers,A	SBE	301	185	61.5	2073	7	2.3	63	14	4.7	87.8

RUSHING

Rk	Player	Team	Att	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	Bell,L	LAK	263	1001	3.8	25	4
2	McCoy,L	GWG	182	923	5.1	40	7
3	Murray,D	CHI	185	824	4.5	40	6
4	Forte	PIC	166	811	4.9	36	6
5	Gordon,M	TCT	137	808	5.9	44	8
6	Lacy	CAR	152	773	5.1	31	5
7	Morris,A	COW	143	738	5.2	47	2
8	Gore	SC	135	735	5.4	50	2
9	Anderson,C	SS	139	698	5	24	5
10	Miller,L	CHP	118	685	5.8	23	4
11	Lynch,M	YOR	142	624	4.4	33	3
12	Foster,A	AUR	89	555	6.2	34	5
13	Ivory	MVM	101	540	5.3	70	6
14	Ingram,M	VV	117	532	4.5	36	5
15	Stewart	BCR	113	532	4.7	73	1
16	Johnson,D	CHP	99	526	5.3	29	5
17	Bell,J	MVM	94	512	5.4	27	6
18	Charles,J	VV	93	446	4.8	54	1
19	Hill,J	ICC	70	441	6.3	30	3
20	Blue	SBE	86	356	4.1	21	5

RECEIVING

Rk	Player	Team	No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	Brown,A	TCT	53	653	12.3	31	6
2	Maclin	GWG	51	865	17	60	8
3	Kelce,T	CAR	50	540	10.8	41	6
4	Fitzgerald	COW	49	502	10.2	21	9
5	Johnson,A	CHP	48	514	10.7	20	1
6	Boldin	AUR	47	748	15.9	40	2
7	Bryant,D	CHP	45	683	15.2	71	9
8	Decker	DTL	45	461	10.2	28	3
9	Johnson,C	DTL	44	770	17.5	65	8
10	Hopkins,D	BCR	42	504	12	45	6
11	Evans,M	COW	42	554	13.2	48	3
12	Graham,J	MOH	42	384	9.1	28	1
13	Cobb	BCR	41	477	11.6	54	4
14	Allen,K	SC	40	486	12.2	42	3
15	Stills	SS	39	485	12.4	44	4
16	Hilton	DTL	38	457	12	40	0
17	Nelson,J	SBE	38	498	13.1	47	6
18	Jones,J	MOH	38	616	16.2	99	2
19	Jackson,D	SBE	37	490	13.2	25	3
20	Jennings,G	SC	37	413	11.2	36	4

KICKING

Rk	Player	Team	FGA	FGM	FG%	40	50	Lg	Pts
1	Folk	AUR	19	16	84.2	3	0	48	77
2	Succop	CHP	18	16	88.9	4	1	51	75
3	Parkey	BCR	19	18	94.7	7	1	54	73
4	Dawson	DTL	17	15	88.2	4	0	49	68
5	Brown,J	MAR	21	18	85.7	7	1	54	68
6	Gostkowski	TCT	14	13	92.9	5	0	48	66
7	Zuerlein	ICC	15	12	80	5	0	49	59
8	Novak	COW	14	13	92.9	6	2	52	58
9	Bailey,D	CHI	14	12	85.7	9	4	53	58
10	Hauschka	CAR	11	8	72.7	4	1	51	55
11	Vinatieri	SS	12	12	100	6	1	50	53
12	Suisham	GWG	11	9	81.8	4	0	47	51
13	Scobee	PIC	11	9	81.8	4	1	53	49
14	Tucker,J	SC	10	9	90	5	0	47	47
15	Murray,P	LAK	11	10	90.9	6	3	53	46
16	Walsh	YOR	11	7	63.6	2	0	48	41
17	Carpenter	MVM	7	5	71.4	4	1	55	39
18	Nugent	SBE	6	6	100	1	0	40	39
19	Crosby	VV	9	9	100	7	0	47	37
20	Janikowski	MOH	9	7	77.8	2	1	52	33



STANDINGS - WEEK 2

EFL ASIA	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff
Taipei	2	0	0	1.000	45	22.5	19	9.5	13
Seoul	1	1	0	0.500	54	27	48	24	3
Beijing	1	1	0	0.500	41	20.5	55	27.5	-7
Pyongyang	0	2	0	0.000	26	13	44	22	-9



SHARKS

2-0-0

0	0	0	0	0	-
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[Star Player]

[Stats]



CALM

1-1-0

0	0	0	0	0	-
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[Star Player]

[Stats]

The game between the Taipei Sharks and the Seoul Calm has been postponed until next week



RED DRAGONS

1-1-0

0	0	0	0	0	-
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[Star Player]

[Stats]



SUN

0-2-0

0	0	0	0	0	-
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[Star Player]

[Stats]

The game between the Beijing Red Dragons and the Pyongyang Sun has been postponed. No official reason given



AROUND THE



With Spats McChad

NEW YORK – The terrorist attacks in Paris have caused us in the west to turn the spotlight back to the Middle East – a place the vast majority of us who are not soldiers have never been to but which, nevertheless, places constant demands on our fragile attention span.

Our Mideast policy, if there is one, has been difficult to follow under the current Administration. People who like to stay informed about events that could lead to World War III struggle to reconcile the concepts of “Regime Change” and “Democracy” with the states of anarchy that exist wherever an “Arab Spring” has popped up. Revolution by *Titter* has its limits, I suppose. The question of who, or what, we are supporting remains discomfortingly unanswered.

On the other hand, we seem to know exactly who we are *not* supporting. **Bashar Al-Assad**, head of Syria, must go – apparently, we are told, for doing all the things his family has been doing for 44 years but which, suddenly, have become intolerable to some of his people and the West. Graver still, in Syria and northwestern Iraq, the enemy of western civilization, ISIS (or ISIL or Daesh), is attempting to carve out a medieval Caliphate in the middle of an oil patch while murdering thousands of non-believers and dozens of Western journalists. ISIS even has a crudely designed black flag, like an Arabic version of a pirate flag, to make it abundantly clear (if the mass murders weren’t enough to convince us) that they are BAD people. It is pretty much a given that ISIS needs to be annihilated. Yet there they are, with the world’s last remaining superpower on its doorstep, seemingly prospering and growing.

Something is not right.

Nothing says “f&^*ed up” like a cursory glance at the battle lines in Syria and Iraq. The Syrian Regime is fighting for its existence against literally dozens of rebel groups, ranging from moderate to fanatic to ultra-fanatic. Among those groups is ISIS, a group so crazy that the other rebel groups choose to fight them at the same time that they and ISIS are fighting the Regime. The Kurds are fighting ISIS while exploiting that group’s rapid expansion to seize new ground in Iraq and strengthen Kurdish insurgents in Turkey. The Turks support the Turkmen rebels in Syria, work to suppress the growth of the Kurds, and purchase pirated Syrian and Iraqi oil at bargain rates from ISIS while giving them free rein to fight the Kurds and Assad in Syria. The Saudis and Qataris, our ostensible allies, support fanatic Syrian rebels and, allegedly, ISIS. What exactly *WE* are doing apart from limited bombing is not clear, but certainly the CIA is involved in whatever it is.

Enter, unexpectedly, the Russians. I never thought I would live to see the day when the Russians would appear, even just a little, like the good guys. Sure, they have a motive that appears to thwart us, propping up their puppet in Syria who we want out (nothing shocking there), but in two months of bombing Assad’s enemies, including ISIS, the Russians have been effective and have shed light on what has been a shadowy Great Game in the Middle East. What’s more, their policy actually *makes sense*, whether you agree with it or not; which is more than I can say about what has been divulged about our policy.

Tellingly, we did not start targeting ISIS oil and gas infrastructure until the Russians published satellite photos of industrial-sized oil truck convoys passing freely from the Islamic State into Turkey. Equally telling, the downing of a Russian bomber by Turkey had the unequivocal signature of an aggressive move, not a defensive one, as claimed by the Turks. We either have lost control of our allies, or we tacitly gave Turkey the green light to send a message. Either way, both are signs that we have no idea what we are doing in that theatre, or we know very well what we are doing and are ashamed to divulge it because, for once, we may not occupy the moral high ground.

ISIS should have been wiped off the map the week after it seized Mosul from the demoralized Iraqi government forces. After taking a direct hand in Iraqi regime change by ousting Saddam Hussein, we cannot simply wash our hands and leave. If we have an interest in creating stability in the Middle East and preventing terrorist attacks like the ones in Paris from hitting home, we have to walk the walk....like the Russians are doing now.

AMERICA’S TEAM

With the demise of the NFL also came the passing of America’s Team, the Dallas Cowboys. How, exactly, they came to be known as America’s Team was something I never understood at the time, but my subsequent research has revealed that they, in effect, proclaimed themselves America’s Team, based on their frequent television appearances and a straw poll of how many Cowboys jersey were visible in the stands on road games. Whether America asked for them or not was irrelevant.

They say history repeats itself. So it should come as no surprise that the void created by the loss of America's Team would need to be filled eventually. The EFL has never had an "America's Team" in its 8½ year history. The closest would have been the Patriots, when they were quickly dubbed "Manitoba's Team" in reaction to the arrival of the Virden Violators in 2009. There was also a one-off reference to the Cubs as America's Team during the public unveiling of their new helmets and dark blue uniforms in 2012. *"And here it is! A new look for your Cubbies, a fresher, bolder look, more befitting of America's Team,"* announced then team vice-president, **Parsnell Klee**. The Cubs' dismal 1-15 finish that year doomed the uniforms, the term, and Parsnell himself to the dustbin of Cubs' history.

Beaufort owner, **Neil Shannon** is determined to make his Ravens "America's Team." The addition of a US flag patch on select locations on the uniform: the jersey, the back of the helmet, the hip of the pants, and the back of the shoe; is merely one small step in that direction. *"Will you please rise and welcome, your Ravens - America's Team!"* spoken by the PA announcer when introducing the players, is another small step; as is the giant 450 meter banner around the front of Bank of America Stadium that reads **'HOME OF AMERICA'S TEAM'**; and the team's Titter handle **@AmericasTeam**.

Of course, none of this is likely to convince America without a good team and a charismatic star leading it. The Cowboys had **Roger Staubach**, "Captain America," to back up their claim to be America's Team. The Ravens have **Shaun Hill**, at best, "Private America." While Hill has been a bit of a folk hero since taking over and succeeding at starting quarterback, he is largely unknown outside the Beaufort – Charleston area. On Sunday Night Football this week, under the glare of the national spotlight, he sweat out his worst performance of the year, throwing two interceptions in the 1st quarter against the Aurora Mustangs.

The odds were always against him. He had to face powerful Aurora one week after its first loss in 26 games and the first under head coach **Rich Liotta**. As a result, it was an angry but relatively loose Mustangs squad that took the field in Beaufort. Freed from the pressure of endless wins and impossible expectations, the team played freely and with an edge.

After a shaky start, the Mustangs got their bearings in the 2nd quarter. **Matt Ryan** threw one of the nicest balls you are likely to see all year, slinging it through double coverage deep down field on a hitch route to **Andre Holmes** for a 57-yard TD. It was the kind of play that inspires a team while throwing ice cold water on its opponent. In the final two minutes of the 1st half, Aurora delivered a staggering one-two punch in classic Mustangs style: **Pierre Thomas** broke free on a draw for a 33-yard TD run then **Josh Norman** delivered a mean hit on Ravens kick returner, **Solomon Patton** to force a fumble. Three plays later, **Julian Edelman** was dancing in the end zone after catching a check down from Ryan for a 14-yard score. Beaufort County never recovered from that first half haymaker. Coach Shannon made the switch to **RGIII**, looking for a spark, but the talented former 1st overall pick looked very ordinary in relief. The Mustangs were back with a vengeance and the coming out party for America's Team would have to wait for another day.

THOUSAND YARD STARE

At the Big House in Chino, the Convicts got drawn into a shootout with **Drew Brees** and the Thunder Lizards and found they were



ill-equipped for the event. In a game without much of a semblance of defence on either side, the race to score was won handily by an ageing master over his younger, more athletic opponent, **Cam Newton**. Brees quieted the increasingly loud whispers that he is washed up with a surgically precise dissection of the Chino secondary. He got help from a lively running game spearheaded by **Reggie Bush** and his 102 yards on 10 carries, but most who watched the game would agree that the Convicts' pre-occupation with Durham's future hall-of-fame quarterback had a lot to do with the success of the Durham ball-carriers. Even with the attention, Brees completed 19 of 27 passes for 287 yards and 4 touchdown passes. He was not sacked or hurried by a Chino front four that played with all the ferociousness of bunny rabbits. Frozen with indecision, the Chino defensive line was repeatedly moved around by a Durham offensive

Iowa City corner **Corey Graham** tips a ball intended for Markham's **Phillip Dorsett** in Week 8 action at Joe Ferguson Stadium. The Cubs prevailed 23-16 in the league's first 'Color Rush' game, featuring solid-coloured Jubber 'Sensex' fabric uniforms.

line that is on nobody's Top Ten list.

The Durham defence was not much better and, in some ways, worse. *Pro Football Focal Point* low-lighted the fact that Durham defenders missed 23 tackles, many of them routine. While the defensive line had little to be proud of, it was the usually airtight Durham secondary that was playing like their arms were coated in Crisco. **Richard Sherman**, **Dominique Rodgers-Cromartie** and **Devin McCourty** combined for 10 missed tackles. Rodgers-Cromartie also struggled in coverage, resulting in a PFFP game rating of -4.2 awarded to him by the increasingly influential player-rating service.

In the end the Lizards won a 49-32 scorcher where the teams combined for almost 1000 yards of offence and 53 first downs.

AROUND THE EFL

Possibilities abound at the halfway point of the 2015 season as relative parity among the middle two-thirds of EFL teams creates countless possible playoff scenarios. Among the few things we can predict with confidence is that the Pats, Lizards and Mustangs will all win their respective divisions, and the Colour Rush fad will claim more unsuspecting victims as the season progresses.

At Joe Ferguson Stadium in Iowa City, sports gear manufacturer *Jubber*, with the full complicity of the EFL, foisted 'avant-garde' football fashion on an unsuspecting and innocent public. The debut of *Color Rush*, a "fresh" line of uniform wear made out of futuristic fabric *Sensex*, caused an upward blip in sales of *Tylenol* during and immediately after the telecast on Friday Night Football. The bright red Cub uniforms and muddy brown North Star uniforms clashed garishly against the bright green artificial turf, causing headaches not just for the colour blind, but for all. Reactions to the new duds ran from one extreme to the other, with fans largely mirroring pre-game reactions from the players: "Why do we have to always look like shit?" tweeted @alexbbb of Markham. "That is a fly red on the Cubs! Theyz keepers," tweeted @LeDeronius of Des Moines. Personally, I did not mind the new look, even the Markham 'Beaver Brown' looked okay – it contrasted well with the bright orange North Stars helmet. What bothered me more was the pace of play. Why does every Markham game look like it belongs on a black & white movie intermission newsreel from the 1950s? Even the Cubs, with the league's most efficient offence, couldn't complete a pass down field against Markham's "Dead Zone D." Instead, the game turned on a 59-yard pick-six by **Malcolm Jenkins** and a 25-yard touchdown pass on a short cross to **Branden LaFell** to give the Cubs a comfortable 23-6 lead heading into the 4th quarter. A fumble return for a touchdown by **Rob Ninkovich** late in the 4th quarter and a desperation field goal with 10 seconds left made the final 23-16 and gave the false impression of a close contest.

At TCF Bank Stadium in Twin Cities, the Triumph let one get away from them, literally dropping a 31-28 decision to the Corn Kings. A fumble by **Antonio Brown** on a fair catch attempt at the Triumph 38 yard line with 46 seconds remaining in a tie game set up a 42-yard game-winning field goal by **Nick Novak**. It was a gut-wrenching loss for **Guy Williams** and one of those "I'll-take-it" wins for **Jim Coghlin** and his up and down team. At one point in the game it appeared that Twin Cities could and would score at will against the disorganized Cowtown defenders. But at the very moment it seemed like the Triumph were about to lay down the hammer, the "bad" **Jay Cutler** served up a flying duck that Cowtown safety, **Glover Quin** intercepted and returned 64 yards to set up the touchdown that tied the game at 21. When coupled with the Brown fumble, bitter Triumph faithful can mount an argument that two mistakes cost them the game. But credit **Joe Flacco** with doing his part with the game on the line in the 4th quarter. He coolly led a 15-play, 75-yard touchdown drive against one of the league's better defences to register the tying score that made it all possible.

At the Killing Field in Carthage, **Marcus Mariota** followed up his virtuoso performance against the Mustangs with a slick showing against the Regulators to lead his team to a 27-24 victory, its third in four games. For South Carolina it was a truly unfortunate loss. The team showed rare pluck in recovering from two early turnovers to fight back with a pair of 4th quarter touchdowns to take a 24-20 lead. But Mariota and **Eddie Lacy** were both too much for the faint-hearted Regulators defence over the course of an 80-yard touchdown drive. Lacy bowled over **Kroy Biermann** in the game's final minutes for the winning touchdown run.

At the Coliseum in Gwinnett, Mohave coach, **Bobby Elder** had to be restrained from attacking referee **Walt Coleman** after the Hellfire were flagged 11 times for 92 yards in a relatively close 28-24 loss to the Gladiators. Elder, who has been subdued of late, grown a long beard, and reportedly taken to living under a bridge and foraging dumpsters for food during the week between games, "just snapped" according to offensive line coach, **Tony Mandarich**. The play was a check down with less than 2 minutes remaining to **Jarvis Landry** in the end zone that was batted away by Mohave corner, **Dwayne Gratz**. Coleman threw the flag for pass interference, putting the ball at the Mohave 1 yard line. Two plays later, **LeSean McCoy** was in the end zone for the game-winning touchdown. No question it was pass interference, but when your team is playing so poorly and you come so close, you just can't help yourself.

At Bluffs Stadium in Scarborough, Blue Eagles' quarterback, **Aaron Rodgers** looked like the Rodgers of old when he fired a long slant in the 4th quarter to **DeSean Jackson** in the end zone for what would turn out to be the winning touchdown in a 21-17 besting of Mission Viejo. Prior to that, however, he had looked like the Rodgers of now: a turnover-prone ninny with a stunned look on his face. Scarborough controlled the play throughout most of the game, but Rodgers' three turnovers allowed the Monarchs to hang around and, for an uncomfortable half hour, had the Scarborough Lynch mob knotting their ropes.

At Camelot in York, the maddeningly erratic Excaliburs had one of their "off" games against a team they didn't require an "on" game to beat. The LA Knights trotted in and dumped **Tom Brady**'s merry men 28-14 on a strong outing by LA quarterback **Teddy Bridgewater** and the rebuilding 'Blue Shield.' Among York's many problems was **Marshawn Lynch** being held to 2.8 yards per carry.

Finally, we wrap up the half point of the season with a pair of landslides: at Thermopylae Stadium in Pickering, a **Mark Ingram** fumble turned the tide against the Violators and the Spartans surfed on to a 38-20 win; and at the Fish Tank in Sebastian, **Peyton Manning** threw for 313 yards and 3 touchdowns as the Patriots drowned the Swordfish, 31-18.



Professor McChad's Mid-Term Report Card

November 2015

In the Hallowed Halls of High Learning in the Living Football University called the EFL only the strictest standards apply. As a Senior Fellow of said EFL University it falls on me to maintain those standards by applying rigour to my grades. No team is spared the most exacting analysis and criticism based on my profound and every-increasing knowledge of this wonderful sport. For the sake of the sport, I spare no one. But if you meet or exceed the standard, you will be recognized and, in rare cases, praised. Here is my rating scale:

A: Excellent B: Good C: Fair D: Poor F: Fail

A plus (+) indicates slightly above the grade; a minus (-) slightly less.

Aurora (A-): It is hard to quibble with 7-1, but with most of their key players returning and a standard of perfection to live up to, it is easy to find fault with this year's edition of the Mustangs. The offence remains the league's most efficient at moving the ball but it is also turnover prone, with Matt Ryan (8 interceptions) looking more reckless than bold. The run defence is struggling mightily and keeping the entire unit on the field longer than they are accustomed to. Looking back, they could easily be 5-3. Getting dusted by Carthage takes away the psychological edge they once enjoyed with their status of invincibility.

Beaufort County (B+): At 5-2-1, the Ravens are holding their own. New coach, Neil Shannon is getting something extra out of B-grade talent at quarterback and just enough out of his star players to land his team in a playoff spot if the season were to end today. To say they are a strong contender going forward would be premature. Good timing and a measure of resiliency have played a role in their success, with good red zone performance by the defence outshining the unit's performance as a whole. Questions about the QB will persist until Shaun Hill gets the hook permanently or wins League MVP.

Carthage (B+): Given the class they were in to start the season a 4-4 record and a shot at the post-season is nothing short of incredible. Although the record includes wins over Mohave and Virden, there is still no question that this team is outperforming its manpower, as demonstrated by its blowout victory over Aurora and follow-up snuffing out of the Regulators. Marcus Mariota is performing far above expectations while the hideous defence is generating turnovers and doing just enough to support its top 5 offence. It seems to be the Cannibals' lot to be underestimated and that appears to be a powerful motivator.

Charleswood (A): A great deal was expected from Peyton Manning and so far he has delivered the goods, albeit conservatively, with the help of a powerful backfield tandem and an intimidating receiving corps. But the difference between good and great for the Pats is the performance of the defence, the most efficient in the league overall and no. 1 defending the pass. Their last place schedule and weak divisional opposition has played into some of that statistical dominance to this point, but there is plenty of talent underneath the radar and the sense that it will really shine once the offence starts to flex its muscles.

Chino (B-): The 4-4 Convicts are in a familiar place: good with a small "g." Certainly, the first half of the season has played out as if this is a team that will finish with more wins than losses, but no wins against serious competition. The defence showed its age against the Thunder Lizards and the offence fell short against Iowa City and Twin Cities, two conference rivals they will have to beat. All this is happening with Cam Newton at the top of the league's QB passer rankings. A slip up by "the Man" and it could end up being a very different scenario for the Felons in the second half of the season.

Cowtown (B-): Half of the Corn Kings' games have gone to overtime and half of those went their way. At 4-4 they are where they should be, based on their performance, but they are behind pre-season expectations based on potential. Despite two clunkers against Markham and Charleswood, Joe Flacco (19 TD passes) has been the standout performer under less than ideal conditions, operating behind a questionable line. It is the play of the defence that is bringing the team down from week to week, making every game an adventure. Never projected to be elite, the Cowtown back-eleven still need to be better than average.

Durham (A): A slow start for the offence had detractors snickering about a washed up Drew Brees. It turns out that he was just getting warmed up after half a season of warming the bench behind upstart Nick Foles. The Lizards offence is hitting rapid fire mode and, with it, increasing prospects of a runaway win in the North Division. The defence took a week off against the Convicts, but otherwise has been formidable against the pass, with the result that teams are simply avoiding Richard Sherman and trying vainly to beat the Lizards on the ground. At 7-1, against decent competition, the Lizards are looking 'A' okay.

Gwinnett (B+): At 5-3 with a win over Durham, the sense is that the Gladiators have the inside track on one of the wildcard berths in the Can-Am Conference. But they also turned in flat performances in losses to South Carolina and Cowtown, raising questions about whether they are a serious contender for anything more. This is really Ben Roethlisberger's grade. In the team's 3 losses he posted a QB passer rating of 72.4 with 4 picks and in its 5 wins, a 130.1 rating with no picks. The improved defence has been good enough to support Big Ben but not up to the task of supporting Big Boob. As Ben goes, so go the Glads.

Iowa City (A-): An embarrassing opening day loss to Mission Viejo and a lacklustre tie against the Ravens brings the grade down half a notch, but since then the Cubs have won 6 in a row and with each victory look more and more like the team to beat in the chippy West Division. Loaded with talent in the trenches on both sides of the ball, they are getting the most out of

rising star, Russell Wilson and underrated halfback, Jeremy Hill, while stopping opponents in their tracks on most days. Bigger tests are yet to come, starting with a tough 3-game road trip to start the season's second half, but so far so good for the Cubbies.

Los Angeles (C+): The Knights are on the upswing after a 0-3 start and a winless 2014. They have won 3 of their last 5 games and, dare I say, have actually looked *good* at times – or at least not bad. As is customary with the Knights their success has been based on defence, particularly against the run, but also through pressure on opposing quarterbacks and takeaways (13). The offence is as imaginative and interesting as a plain buttered scone for breakfast, but keeping it simple and slow seems to have produced ball security (a league low 4 giveaways) as a fringe benefit. It's not exciting football, but it's not unwatchable anymore.

Markham (B-): The North Stars easily win the award for the league's best 3-5 team, garnering more respect for their losing effort than many 4-4 teams ahead of them. They are both well-coached and lucky – a deadly combination on game day. A league-high turnover differential of +12 is one obvious explanation for their weekly competitiveness, but the shutdown effectiveness of their no. 2 ranked pass defence is another one, less obvious. A willingness to gamble and blitz at the right times appears to be raising the play of the defence and giving the chronically lagging offence opportunities to catch up.

Mission Viejo (C): After grabbing everyone's attention by upsetting the Cubs and thumping the Hellfire to start the season, the Monarchs have slid back into their customary state of quasi-anonymous losing despite marked improvements in the roster and game-day play. The difference between this year's version and every other past Monarchs team is that this one carries modestly higher expectations. Fans do not unreasonably expect them to be at least ahead of the Knights. Yet, 6 straight losses have relegated them to the West Division dungeon; needless to say, a strange place for a Monarch.

Mohave (D-): With their only victory coming against Virden, it can be argued that the Hellfire are turning in the worst performance against pre-season expectations of any team in the league by far. Either the football world grossly miscalculated the potential of this team, or it is being grossly mismanaged. The reality is likely somewhere in the middle. Few, if any, predicted playoffs, but most expected to see Mohave battle it out with Mission Viejo for best of the also-rans in the PAC. Andrew Luck is looking more skittish than ever behind unsteady pass-blocking and the defence is simply AWOL.

Pickering (B): The deconstruction of the Spartans defence during the off-season has not had a proportional degrading effect on its performance. Credit the varied looks and schemes employed by a resourceful and cunning Gus Konstantakos with confusing opponents and elevating the unit to mediocrity. The offence is falling short of being the poor man's juggernaut most had anticipated it would be, but it still poses a threat; even if one gets the impression that Philip Rivers is not completely trusted. At 4-4, the curiously flawed Spartans are about where they should be, even if they feel they should be 6-2.

Scarborough (C+): Any evaluation of the Blue Eagles must account for the "Dickinson Effect" – a phenomenon that subtracts effectiveness from a player's performance at a rate equal to the talent differential above the mean. In other words, to the level that a player is above average, that player will perform that much below average when executing plays called by the befuddled Scarborough coach. Taking this into account, at 4-4 and in the hunt for a playoff spot, it has been a pretty good season for the Eagles so far. But if anyone else was in charge of Aaron Rodgers and got these results, the mark would be as above.

Sebastian (D): Every year I count on the Swordfish to provide comic relief to the sometimes tedious and always serious task of grading EFL teams. This year, with Mohave and Virden stinking up the standings in far more unpleasant ways, I would prefer to say something good about this...well...marginally competitive 0-8 team. With two OT losses to start the season it can be fairly pointed out that the Fish could easily be 2-6 and well on their way to another 4-win season. Sure, the defence is horrendous, but the offence has provided some highlight reel material, with Andy Dalton....oops! Just lost all credibility!

South Carolina (C-): Many thought this would be the Regulators year to perhaps do some damage in the playoffs. Strategic off-season upgrades to the secondary and offensive line looked good enough on paper, but as soon as the pigskins started to fly the paper Regulators were swept away and the real Regulators took over. A single, somewhat fluky victory over a Big Boob-led Gwinnett team remains their only win against a +500 opponent. At 3-5, and alone in 4th place in the South Division, it is depressing to contemplate where they would be now without the benefit of a +7 turnover differential.

Twin Cities (B): The Triumph appeared to be manoeuvring into position for an early assault on Charleswood at the top of the East Division, but back-to-back cross-conference hits from former division rivals Durham and Cowtown knocked them out of immediate striking distance. They are a team with the potential to knock off anybody, but they turned one-dimensional against the Lizards and shot themselves in the foot against Cowtown. Not much has changed from last year, it seems, despite the addition of a flashy rookie running back.

Virden (D-): At 0-8 and counting, the Violators appear destined to reach the benchmark of badness set by the 2014 Knights. If every team's schedule was a bingo card, Virden would be the free space in the centre. Unlike the winless Knights of last year, the Violators of 2015 do not carry the air of a team that can win a game even if they tried; and whether or not they are actually trying is the subject of debate in those few places where people actually care about the team. Matt Stafford is smiling.

York (B): The Excaliburs have compensated for an on-again, off-again offence with impressive defensive play and a league-leading four special teams touchdowns. Tom Brady may not be tearing it up, but his surgical skills have come into play in most games, either to keep the score close or pull out the victory. At 4-4, with a couple of nice wins and a couple of head-scratching losses, this is a solid 'B' effort with potential to rise or fall a grade in the second half.

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JIMMY'S WEEK NINE PICKS

CARTHAGE @ GWINNETT (line – GLADIATORS by 4)

INJURIES: Carthage – Justin Durant (IR), Greg Hardy (IR), Derrick Johnson (IR) Russell Okung (OUT), Matt Slauson (OUT), Andre Smith (OUT); Gwinnett – Kyle Williams (DOUBTFUL), Mychal Kendricks (OUT).

Marcus Mariota played another card in his bid for Rookie of the Year by engineering an 80-yard drive for the winning touchdown late in the fourth quarter against the Regulators last week. The unflappable rookie leads the league in touchdown passes and is making plays in the clutch with both his arm and his legs. Since his opening day 4-pick debacle against Twin Cities, Mariota has posted game-day QB ratings of 100+ in 6 of 7 games. Just as importantly, he has thrown only 3 interceptions since that first game, with two of those coming in a 2-point loss to Chino. The unexpectedly early emergence of Mariota has forced teams to pay attention to the Cannibals. How long they will remain in contention will depend almost entirely on the rookie's continued success, as there is little in support behind him. This week he faces another team that relies largely on its quarterback to be successful, but the big difference here is that Big Ben is a seasoned vet and the Gladiators have a defence that can actually stop teams. You can bet the Glads are not taking any team that dismantled Aurora lightly and that preparation will make the difference. **PICK: GWINNETT**

TWIN CITIES @ SEBASTIAN (line – TRIUMPH by 10)

INJURIES: Twin Cities – Dwayne Allen (OUT), Charles Clay (OUT), LaAdrian Waddle (OUT); Sebastian – Sharrif Floyd (QUESTIONABLE), Perry Riley Jr. (QUESTIONABLE), Jadeveon Clowney (IR), Chandler Jones (OUT), Alex Mack (OUT), Paul Posluszny (OUT).

The Triumph's bid for an East Division crown sustained a pair of heavy body blows in back-to-back losses to Durham and Cowtown. The combative reaction of the Triumph coach to the Durham loss had fans primed for an exercise of dominance over the Corn Kings, but the stunning manner of their fall at home to a team coming off a mauling by the division-leading Pats seems to have knocked the stuffing out of the Triumph faithful and spooked their coach. In this first big test of their mettle and resolve, a road trip to Sebastian is just what they need to regain their poise and confidence. They should be wary of too much success, however, as an overinflated Jay Cutler is potentially dangerous long term; a blown ego in a high speed playoff race would certainly run them off the road. For Twin Cities, this is as close to a must-win as a Week 9 game gets. With nothing to lose, the Swordfish will do their best to spoil the Triumph's plans. With Odell Beckham back in action, the Fish have a weapon that could get the job done, if a dozen other things go their way at the same time. But then, when has anything gone Sebastian's way this year? **PICK: TWIN CITIES**

VIRDEN @ SCARBOROUGH (line – BLUE EAGLES by 11)

INJURIES: Virden – Martavis Bryant (DOUBTFUL), Prince Amukamara (OUT), Eric Berry (IR), Kelcy Quarles (IR), dEmECO Ryans (OUT), Stephen Tulloch (IR), Aldon Smith (IR); Scarborough – None.

This is Game 2 of a relatively sweet three-game run for the Blue Eagles in which they face some of the worst teams the PAC has to offer. Last week they overcame 3 turnovers to snuff out the Monarchs on a rare money throw in the 4th-quarter from Aaron Rodgers. The defence also made a couple of stops to finish off a nice team victory. The game was a blueprint of how Scarborough would like to play every game, minus the three turnovers, of course – or maybe not. Strangely, 6 of the 7 picks thrown by Aaron Rodgers have come in victory, a whacky piece of trivia that underscores the difficulty in analyzing what makes this team click or – more often – shut down. As for the Violators, they get to play the scout team this week for Scarborough's more challenging Week 10 match-up against the Knights. Expect some experimentation on the Scarborough side, not necessarily designed for Virden. **PICK: VIRDEN**

MOHAVE @ AURORA (line – MUSTANGS by 14)

INJURIES: Mohave – Ace Sanders (QUESTIONABLE), Tevin COLEMAN (OUT), Harry Douglas (OUT), Jimmie Ward (OUT); Aurora – Kevin Pierre-Louis (OUT).

The Mustangs rebounded nicely following their only loss under Rich Liotta, winning by a 14-point margin over the Ravens while being the first team to make Shaun Hill look like the guy most of us think he is. This week they host the flaming wreck from the Mohave Desert in a match-up that nobody with credentials expects to be close. However, the under-20 line is provoking speculation that Aurora may be planning to rest some of its starters for this game, which could throw a wrench in the works of the Aurora blowout machine. For Mohave's Andrew Luck, it has been a truly hellish season so far. With the Mustangs' defence all business after being embarrassed by Carthage two weeks ago, don't expect to see an improvement from him this week unless he can find a way to get the ball to Julio Jones, something he has struggled to do to this point. **PICK: AURORA**

CHARLESWOOD @ MARKHAM (line – PATRIOTS by 4)

INJURIES: Charleswood – Lane Johnson (DOUBTFUL); Markham – Stedman Bailey (OUT), Jordan Reed (OUT), Max Unger (OUT).

This game marks the beginning of a relatively tough 4-game segment in Charleswood's otherwise lightweight schedule. With the Triumph reeling from recent setbacks the Pats are in a position to secure a stranglehold on the division if they can get through this stretch unscathed, or even with just one loss. The North Stars are near the bottom of a heavily clogged stairway leading to the Can-Am post-season, but with no dominant team in the pack behind Durham and Aurora, a win on any given week could push them up near the top. Even so, the Stars can ill-afford to lose this game and still remain optimistic about the post-season. They enter losers of two-straight for the second time this season and, although they have kept their games close, their offence is not scaring anybody. With the Pats and Stars ranked one-two respectively in pass defence, this game will end up being fought primarily in the trenches. The Stars can move the ball in that scenario, but so can the Pats – and much better too. It's hard *not* to imagine a last second field goal winning this game, but my I am going to override my imagination. **PICK: CHARLESWOOD**

BEAUFORT COUNTY @ PICKERING (line – RAVENS by 2)

INJURIES: Beaufort County – Evan Mathis (QUESTIONABLE), Vontaze Burfict (OUT), Nick Fairley (OUT), Mason Foster (OUT), Ryan Mathews (OUT), Gerald McCoy (OUT), Stevan Ridley (OUT), Frank Alexander (IR), Jairus Byrd (IR); Pickering – David Cobb (OUT).

Losing decisively to a wounded and angry Aurora team coming off the bad end of a blowout is no reason for the Ravens to worry about their playoff hopes. The reason to worry is the quality of play at quarterback in that game. Everyone is entitled to a bad game, but when everyone is expecting, even waiting, for a bad game from your journeyman starting quarterback, the "I told you so" crowd is just a little more obnoxious about reminding you that they told you so. RGIII did nothing in relief to put pressure on Neil Shannon to give Shaun Hill the permanent hook, but people will be watching carefully to see who gets the nod this week against a competitive, but beatable Spartans team. Pickering is coming off a win over Virden, which doesn't say a lot about how well they're playing, but I'll leave it to you to draw whatever inferences you may from the fact that they surrendered 20 points to a team that had maxed out at 17 in its previous 7 games. The Ravens are hurting on the D-line, with Nick Fairley and Gerald McCoy both listed as 'OUT.' The Spartans may nevertheless pass on the opportunity for Matt Forte to really go two-dimensional; as it is in their interests to speed up the scoring to bail out a defence full of holes. **PICK: BEAUFORT COUNTY**

YORK @ CHINO (line – CONVICTS by 5)

INJURIES: York – Da'Qwan Bowers (PROBABLE), Nick Toon (QUESTIONABLE), Giovanni Bernard (DOUBTFUL), Vincent Brown (OUT); Chino – Roddy White (DOUBTFUL), Michael Schofield (OUT).

York is tough team to gauge from week-to-week. Four special teams touchdowns and a hit-and-miss offence contribute to an element of randomness in their performances. Fortunately, the play of the defence has been fairly reliable, keeping the Swords within closing distance of their opponent in every game. Understanding this point is the key to winning this bet. The 5-point line favouring Chino could have been plucked out of thin air, for all the sense it makes to me. Don't get me wrong, the Convicts have the edge offensively, the home field advantage and a better resume in 2015; they deserve to be the favourites. The Chino offence has been good, but certainly not deadly enough to be comfortable killers of a York defence tied for no. 2 in the league in efficiency. I see this game developing slowly – as most York games do – and building toward a 4th quarter climax where something small could turn into something big, but not big enough for Chino to beat the spread. **PICK: YORK**

IOWA CITY @ DURHAM (line – THUNDER LIZARDS by 5)

INJURIES: Iowa City – None; Durham – Ahmad Bradshaw (OUT), DJ Hayden (OUT).

ESPN Sunday Night Football is promoting this game as a preview of the 2015 Championship with a glitzy, over-the-top, pre-game ad campaign. What *message* does Deron Redding really want to send the Lizards? The network leaves that question hanging, so I'm dying to know. Will George Kaldis *never* be *satisfied* until his team wins a Championship? Likely yes – I think they nailed that obvious point. Bold, meaningless phrases and action montages of Drew Brees and Russell Wilson aside, this promises to be a whale of a football game. The no. 1 ranked Cubs offence goes to work against the no.2 ranked Durham defence while the hottest offence in the league under a revived Brees attempts to penetrate the league's most menacing defensive front four. On a normal day, the Cubs running game has the effect of bolstering an average group of receivers, but that is not a given here against the Durham secondary. Ground 'n pound is nothing new to the Cubs, so expect a heavy dose of Jeremy Hill. Durham may decide to forgo the ground game from the start and roll the dice that Brees can continue to wield a hot hand. With so much talent on the field, coaching and luck will come into play and overtime is a distinct possibility. **PICK: IOWA CITY**

MISSION VIEJO @ COWTOWN (line – CORN KINGS by 6)

INJURIES: **Mission Viejo** – Timmy Jernigan (OUT), Jerod Mayo (IR), Kevin White (OUT); **Cowtown** – Koa Misi (PROBABLE), Todd Gurley (DOUBTFUL), Jay Bromley (OUT), Terence Newman (OUT), Cedric Ogbuehi (OUT).

The Monarchs are riding a 6-game losing streak and for the first time since they entered the league that just doesn't seem right. This is a better team than its record, but it is still a team that Cowtown should beat 4 out of 5 times at home. The Corn Kings have not had a streak of any kind yet this year, having alternated Ws and Ls since an opening day loss to Markham. If the pattern holds, they will lose this game. However, the Kings have been anything but predictable this year. The secret to both success and failure for them has been third down: on offence they are ranked no. 1 (51.9%) and on defence they are ranked no. 19 (___%). Expect the Monarchs to keep the Kings' D on the field by running the ball and picking their moments to air it out. On the other side, Joe Flacco will keep hurling the pigskin, for better or worse, in an effort to keep pace. **PICK: MISSION VIEJO**

LOS ANGELES @ SOUTH CAROLINA (line – REGULATORS by 2)

INJURIES: **Los Angeles** – John Conner (OUT), Brian Orakpo (OUT), CJ Spiller (OUT); **South Carolina** – Jason Kelce (OUT), Dontay Moch (OUT).

LA is coming off a big win over York last week in which they actually completed a pass downfield. You know things are going well for Jeff Dohrn's hard luck Knights when that happens! The Regs are coming off a tough loss to Carthage that will certainly haunt them later when its crunch time for a playoff spot. These 3-5 teams are going in opposite directions and confounding the odds-makers in the process. The Regs cannot be trusted to live up to the talent on its roster on any given Sunday, while the Knights are hanging tough by making few mistakes and taking away the run from their opponents. Look for LA to focus on ball control against a Regs defence that ranks dead last in 3rd down conversions allowed. Hal Corson will have to answer with Tony Romo and AJ Green and cross his fingers that they perform as advertised against a poor Knights secondary. **PICK: SOUTH CAROLINA**



ANCIENT HISTORY
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With Professor
Sterling Smitherman

FROM THE EFL ARCHIVES – Week Eight of the 2009 EFL season featured what the networks billed as “The Game of the Year.” The Florida Dragons took their unbeaten record to Charleswood to face the 6-1 Pats and the game did not disappoint. The two best teams in the league went toe-to-toe in a heavyweight struggle that went back-and-forth and ended dramatically with **Jason Elam** making good on a 45-yard FG in the final minute to give Florida a 26-24 victory. But the game was not without controversy. With the Pats leading 24-20 in the 4th quarter, **Quentin Jammer** was

flagged for pass interference while trying to defend a deep pass to **Aaron Rodgers** to **Brandon Marshall** on 3rd and 29. It looked like the players got tangled up as they both went for the ball but **Ed Hochuli** saw it differently. It would not be the last time Mr. Hochuli attracted the spotlight in questionable circumstances.

It was this week that the first teams made announcements that they were ditching traditional sports apparel manufacturers such as ‘Nike,’ ‘Reebok,’ and ‘Adidas’ in favour of brands not tainted by association with the recently defunct NFL.

A few weeks previous, the Court of Appeal had quashed the NFL's suit seeking recommission and references in the judgement to corruption in “everything from sports betting to running shoes” had caused nervous owners to breach their contracts with the traditional big three almost immediately and look elsewhere. The first team to make the jump was the Dragons when they signed a supply contract with the Italian merchandise line ‘Goat.’ It was during the game against Charleswood that ‘Goat’ made its first appearance in the league. More would soon follow.