

2015

Week Fifteen



# EFL NEWS

ELITE FOOTBALL LEAGUE

2015

Week Fifteen

January 25, 2016



CAR	9	ICC	33	VIR	28	BCR	34	LAK	31	DTL	38	GWG	29	MAR	20	AUR	37	SBE	17
CHP	41	TCT	14	MOH	35	CHI	11	MVM	16	YOR	17	PIC	27	COW	24	SC	10	SEB	13

*Morgan Burnett*



## LATEST EFL NEWS INSIDE

- GLADIATORS STAVE OFF SPARTANS COMEBACK
- CORN KINGS ALIVE AND WELL IN PLAYOFF HUNT
- BLUE EAGLES CLIP FISH
- VIOLATORS FALL SHORT
- PATS FORCE TIME OUT FOR MARIOTA
- AND MORE.....

Also in this issue

- SPATS FEATURE, 'ASIAN BOMB,' 'CURSE OF THE BLUE EAGLES - PART III' & 'AROUND THE EFL.'
- NO NEED TO FLIP THE CHANNEL, JIMMY THE GEEK TELLS YOU THE GAMES TO WATCH IN WEEK 16
- THIS WEEK IN EFL HISTORY - WEEK FIFTEEN OF 2009

Gwinnett safety, *Morgan Burnett* breaks up a pass in the end zone to foil a two-point conversion attempt that would have tied the game with 0:21 left. The Gladiators eliminated the Spartans with a 29-27 win. (Story Inside....)



*Who was slick  
in Week  
Fifteen?*

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



**Arian Foster**  
RB  
Aurora  
Mustangs

32 for 233 yds rush, 2 TDs, 7 for 49 Rec. An offensive machine all day.



**JJ Watt**  
DL  
Aurora  
Mustangs

5 Tackles, 3 Sacks, 2 PD, 1 Hur, 1 FF. Dominated line of scrimmage.



9-6-0



## GAME OF THE WEEK



7-8-0

Gwinnett

29

MVP

Jarvis Landry

27

Pickering

## TEAM LEADERS

Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Big Ben	23	34	268	2
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
McCoy	18	77	4.3	0
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Landry	11	130	11.8	0

Team	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
Gwinnett	7	10	6	6	-	29
Pickering	0	0	7	20	-	27

## Play of the Game

Clinging to a 2-point lead with 0:15 left in the game, the Glads lined up to stop Pickering's 2-point conversion attempt. **Morgan Burnett** broke up the pass, preserving the lead and win.

## TEAM LEADERS

Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Rivers	25	42	281	2
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Robinson	17	51	3.0	1
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Cameron	3	77	25.7	1

**SUMMARY:** With a brisk wind blowing at Thermopylae Stadium, **Big Ben** defied the elements with a long hitch into the wind to **Jeremy Maclin** for a 42-yard TD pass to open the scoring. The Spartans drove to the Gwinnett 35, but could not convert 4<sup>th</sup> & 2, turning the ball over the Glads for a scoring drive, ending with a 16-yard hitch for a TD to **Owen Daniels**. Another 4<sup>th</sup> down failure for the Spartans set up a return drive for a 49-yard FG by **Shaun Suisham**, his first of five FGs in the game. Gwinnett looked poised to add to its 17-0 lead, but **Damarious Randall** intercepted **Big Ben** in the end zone with 0:09 left. A 25-yard pass to **Jarvis Landry** on the 1<sup>st</sup> play of the 3<sup>rd</sup> set up a 47-yard FG by Suisham and a 17-yard punt return by Landry after a Spartan 3-and-out set up another FG to make it 23-0, Glads. A **Pacman Jones** 65-yard kick return set up a 1-yard TD run by **Denard Robinson** to get Pickering on the board, but two more Suisham FGs made it 29-7 with 3:52 left. Then came a furious Spartan comeback, starting with an 89-yard kick return for a TD by Jones then a TD pass to **Scott Chandler**, a recovered onside kick, then an incredible 52-yard TD on a long cross from **Philip Rivers** to **Jordan Cameron** with 0:21 left. Needing to convert 2 to tie, **Morgan Burnett** broke up the pass from Rivers to save the day.

**QUOTES:** "I don't think we let up at the end. Pacman made something out of nothing to get it started – he can do that. The 2<sup>nd</sup> TD was a trade for time. Cameron made a great play for the last TD. If we let up, it was lack of compete on that onside kick," – Gladiators Coach, **Dave Birdsall**.

"This game was like our season – nobody thought we would be in it but we refused to surrender. We went all out on every play and in the end we had a chance to force overtime with one play. Now it looks like we are out, but we hold our heads high!" – Pickering Coach, **Gus Konstantakos**.



## HAPPY FAN



titter

## ANGRY FAN



Marcus Aurelius @MAXIV

A good game plan by Coach Birdsall was executed just well enough to win. The Glads lack of killer instinct almost cost the game in the end.



Aristedes @AristedesKalogiannis

This is what it is to never surrender! This is Sparta! We lost with honour and won eternal glory!

01-21-2016 Thermopylae Stadium Temp: 34 Wind: 10-20 Light Snow MVP: Jarvis Landry

## Scoring Summary

1 9:18 Gwinnett	TD Roethlisberger 42 pass to Maclin (Suisham) (7-77-3:43)	7-0
2 14:08 Gwinnett	TD Roethlisberger 16 pass to Daniels (Suisham) (10-64-5:0)	14-0
2 3:46 Gwinnett	FG Suisham 49 (8-41-3:04)	17-0
3 10:02 Gwinnett	FG Suisham 47 (8-35-4:48)	20-0
3 3:42 Gwinnett	FG Suisham 31 (8-31-4:00)	23-0
3 1:02 Pickering	TD Robinson 1 run (Scobee) (7-30-2:33)	23-7
4 14:10 Gwinnett	FG Suisham 41 (5-23-1:38)	26-7
4 3:52 Gwinnett	FG Suisham 30 (6-26-3:49)	29-7
4 3:44 Pickering	TD Jones 89 kick return (Scobee)	29-14
4 0:47 Pickering	TD Rivers 3 pass to Chandler (Scobee) (11-86-1:56)	29-21
4 0:21 Pickering	TD Rivers 52 pass to Cameron (2 - failed) (2-52-0:21)	29-27

## GWG

## PIC

First Downs	22	19
Rushes	29-109	23-55
Passes	34-23-268	42-25-281
Sacked	1-10	1-9
Fumble	0	1
Penalties	3-10	4-33
Turnovers	1	0
Missed Tackles	3	6
Blitzes	2	11
Time	32:48	27:12
Third Down	5-13	1-10
Fourth Down	0-0	1-5
Red Att/Td/Fg	5/1/3	2/2/0
Net Offense	367	327

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



## CANNIBALS

6-9-0

3

3

3

0

0

9

OT

Eddie Lacy

20 Carries, 90 yards



## PATRIOTS

14-1-0

14

21

3

3

0

41

Peyton Manning

15 of 16, 211 yards, 3 TDs, 1 INT

**CJ Mosley** (LB) intercepted **Marcus Mariota** on the game's first series, setting up a 15-yard TD pass from **Peyton Manning** to **Dez Bryant** to kick-start a Patriots blowout. A 39-yard pass to **Jason Witten** and a 21-yard toss to Bryant set up Bryant's second TD catch to make it 14-3 then a 22-yard run by **Duke Johnson** set up a 9-yard TD pass to Witten to make it 21-6. Mosley (LB) returned a **Travis Kelce** fumble 37 yards for a TD and **Aqib Talib** cashed in with a 34-yard pick-six to wrap up a barrage of Pats scoring in the 1<sup>st</sup> half. Carthage could not get a comeback off the ground in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half.



## CUBS

10-4-1

10

3

7

13

0

33

OT

Russell Wilson

282 pass yds, 82 rush yds, 3 TDs



## TRIUMPH

10-5-0

7

7

0

0

0

14

Melvin Gordon

23 Carries, 136 yards, 1 TD

Back-up **Al Woods** strip sacked **Jay Cutler** at the Triumph 6-yard line, setting up a **Russell Wilson** scramble for a TD to give the Cubs an early lead. **Melvin Gordon** answered with 9 carries for 72 yards, the last a 1-yard dive for a TD to tie it. Two **Greg Zuerlein** FGs were eclipsed by a 15-yard TD pass to **Antonio Brown** to give the Triumph a 14-13 half time lead. **Brian Quick** raced for a 55-yard catch and run to set up an 8-yard TD pass to **Coby Fleener** that put the Cubs in front to stay. Pressure from the Cubs front four, especially **Mario Williams**, kept Cutler under wraps in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half.



## NORTH STARS

3-12-0

7

0

3

10

0

20

OT

Eli Manning

23 of 39, 244 yards, 2 TDs



## CORN KINGS

8-7-0

14

7

3

0

0

24

Todd Gurley

17 Carries, 158 yards, 2 TDs

**David Harris** forced an **Andre Ellington** fumble on the Stars' first series and **Todd Gurley** capitalized with a 7-yard TD run to open the scoring. A 46-yard TD run by Gurley made it 14-0 before an 81-yard kickoff return by **Phillip Dorsett** and 15-yard TD pass to **Brandon Marshall** got Markham on the board. Gurley broke a 40-yard run to set up a 6-yard TD pass to **Steve Smith**, giving Cowtown a 21-7 half time lead. Down by 14 in the 4<sup>th</sup>, **Kendrick Lewis** picked off **Joe Flacco**, setting up a 4-yard TD pass to **Stedman Bailey** then a Gurley fumble set up a Markham FG, but the Stars rally fell short.

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



## MUSTANGS

14-1-0

10	10	14	3	0	37
OT					

**Arian Foster**  
32 Carries, 213 yards, 2 TDs



## REGULATORS

7-8-0

0	10	0	0	0	10
OT					

**Star Lotulelei**  
7 Tackles, 3 Sacks, 1 Hur, 1 FF

The Mustangs opened with a 17-play drive lasting 9:32 and finished it with a 2-yard TD pass from **Matt Ryan** to **Heath Miller**. A 45-yard run by **Arian Foster** set up a chip shot Aurora FG before the Regs came back with a **TJ Ward** interception and 2-yard TD pass from **Tony Romo** to **Marcel Reece**. The Mustangs countered with a **Patrick Peterson** pick and 17-yard TD pass to **Andre Holmes** before the teams traded FGs to end the half. Foster rushed for 9-yard and 4-yard TD runs in the 3<sup>rd</sup> to open up a big lead. Hope for a Regs comeback was dashed when Romo went down in the 4<sup>th</sup>.



## RAVENS

11-3-1

0	14	10	10	0	34
OT					

**Shaun Hill**  
23 of 31, 210 yards, 1 TD, 1 INT



## CONVICTS

8-7

3	0	0	8	0	11
OT					

**Kirk Cousins**  
10 of 19, 166 yards

A 46-yard FG by **Dan Bailey** was the only scoring in a fumbling 1<sup>st</sup> quarter but the Ravens found the end zone on the 1<sup>st</sup> play of the 2<sup>nd</sup> when **Karlos Williams** followed a block by **Taylor Lewan** for an 8-yard TD run. Chino failed to convert 4<sup>th</sup> & 1 at the Ravens 22 and **Shaun Hill** countered with an 18-yard TD pass to **Rob Gronkowski** for a 14-3 lead. **Brent Grimes** picked off **Cam Newton** to set up a 13-yard TD run by Williams early in the 3<sup>rd</sup> to make it 21-3. The Ravens defence took control the rest of the way, bringing **Kirk Cousins** into the game after a second Newton interception.



## KNIGHTS

5-10-0

21	0	10	0	0	31
OT					

**Jordan Matthews**  
5 Catches, 85 yards, 2 TDs



## MONARCHS

5-10-0

0	9	7	0	0	16
OT					

**Ryan Tannehill**  
29 of 45, 265 yards, 2 TDs

**Teddy Bridgewater** went 6 of 7 for 59 yards and a TD to **Jordan Matthews** on the game's opening drive to make it 7-0 LA. Mission's **Josh Huff** fumbled away the ensuing kick-off, setting up a Knights' TD on a Bridgewater 1-yard scramble. On the Monarchs' 2<sup>nd</sup> play, **Charles Woodson** jarred the ball loose from **Dwayne Bowe**, leading to an LA TD on a 15-yard pass to **Le'Veon Bell**. Mission got on the board in the 2<sup>nd</sup> with a 30-yard TD pass to Bowe, but in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half a 37-yard TD pass to Matthews from **Mike Glennon** and a FG after a botched 4<sup>th</sup> down try put the Knights on cruise control.

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



## VIOLATORS

0-15-0

7

14

7

0

0

28

OT

David Carr

17 of 24, 232 yards, 3TDs



## HELLFIRE

3-12-0

0

7

7

21

0

35

Andrew Luck

34 of 50, 408 yards, 5 TDs, 1 INT

**David Carr** connected with **Amari Cooper** for TD passes of 10 yards and 26 yards on Virden's first two series to give the winless team a 14-0 lead. **Andrew Luck** fired back with a 19-yard TD pass to **Julio Jones** but the Violators added a TD with 0:37 left before half time on a 22-yard pick-six by **Vontae Davis** for a 21-7 lead. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> half the Hellfire went into full passing mode, getting TD passes of 14 yards to Jones, 2 yards to **Tevin Coleman** and 8 yards & 13 yards to **Allen Robinson** to take a 35-28 lead with 3:08 left. Virden drove from their 36 to the Mohave 4 where they ran out of time.



## T-LIZARDS

13-2-0

14

10

14

0

0

38

OT

Drew Brees

28 of 36, 389 yards, 4 TDs



## EXCALIBURS

7-8-0

7

10

0

0

0

17

Tom Brady

18 of 27, 192 yards

York hit the scoreboard first with a 35-yard TD pass from **Tom Brady** to **James Jones** but the Lizards came straight back with a 7-yard TD pass from **Drew Brees** to **Calvin Johnson**. York went 3-and-out and **Devin Hester** returned the punt 66 yards for a score to put Durham in front. York tied it on a 2-yard TD run by **Marshawn Lynch** but the Lizards' offence kept coming. The teams traded FGs before **Eric Decker** snared a 29-yard TD pass to end the 1<sup>st</sup> half. Johnson caught 2 more TD passes to start the 2<sup>nd</sup> half and the Durham defence went into shut down, blanking York the rest of the way.



## BLUE EAGLES

8-7-0

7

0

0

10

0

17

OT

Aaron Rodgers

19 of 27, 245 yards, 2 TDs



## SWORDFISH

1-15-0

7

3

3

0

0

13

CJ Anderson

21 Carries, 109 yards, 1 TD

**CJ Anderson** got the Fish the early lead with an 8-yard TD run but the Eagles returned fire with a 16-yard TD pass from **Aaron Rodgers** to **Jermaine Gresham** to tie. The Fish threatened again but came up short on a 4<sup>th</sup> down attempt inside the Eagles red zone. On their next trip they settled for an **Adam Vinatieri** FG to take a 3-point lead into the locker room. The Fish added another FG on their first series of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half but missed a 49-yard attempt later. That set up a 26-yard TD pass to **Jordy Nelson** to give the Eagles a 1-point lead. The Eagles' D held and **Mike Nugent** added a late FG to cinch.

## WEEK FIFTEEN

# STANDINGS

East	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Charleswood (z)	14	1	0	0.933	440	29.3	254	16.9	12.4	7 1 0	7 0 0	10 1 0
Twin Cities (y)	10	5	0	0.667	431	28.7	318	21.2	7.5	5 3 0	5 2 0	8 3 0
Carthage	6	9	0	0.4	440	29.3	425	28.3	1	3 4 0	4 3 0	4 7 0
Mohave	3	12	0	0.2	300	20	453	30.2	-10.2	2 6 0	2 6 0	2 9 0
Viriden	0	15	0	0	195	13	460	30.7	-17.7	0 7 0	0 7 0	0 11 0
West	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Beaufort County (z)	11	3	1	0.767	429	28.6	343	22.9	5.7	6 1 0	6 0 1	9 1 1
Iowa City (y)	10	4	1	0.7	477	31.8	299	19.9	11.9	6 0 1	4 2 1	8 2 1
Chino	8	7	0	0.533	334	22.3	330	22	0.3	3 5 0	4 3 0	6 5 0
Los Angeles	5	10	0	0.333	284	18.9	431	28.7	-9.8	1 6 0	2 6 0	3 8 0
Mission Viejo	5	10	0	0.333	321	21.4	397	26.5	-5.1	2 6 0	1 6 0	4 7 0
North	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Durham (z)	13	2	0	0.867	428	28.5	235	15.7	12.9	7 0 0	7 0 0	9 2 0
Cowtown	8	7	0	0.533	334	22.3	368	24.5	-2.3	5 3 0	4 4 0	6 5 0
York	7	8	0	0.467	342	22.8	383	25.5	-2.7	5 3 0	3 4 0	5 6 0
Pickering	7	8	0	0.467	380	25.3	371	24.7	0.6	3 5 0	2 5 0	4 7 0
Markham	3	12	0	0.2	261	17.4	315	21	-3.6	3 4 0	2 5 0	3 8 0
South	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Aurora (z)	14	1	0	0.933	496	33.1	286	19.1	14	6 1 0	7 0 0	11 0 0
Gwinnett (y)	9	6	0	0.6	410	27.3	376	25.1	2.3	5 2 0	4 3 0	6 5 0
Scarborough	8	7	0	0.533	342	22.8	409	27.3	-4.5	4 3 0	4 4 0	5 6 0
South Carolina	7	8	0	0.467	381	25.4	406	27.1	-1.7	4 4 0	3 4 0	5 6 0
Sebastian	1	14	0	0.067	335	22.3	501	33.4	-11.1	1 7 0	0 7 0	1 10 0

(z)-clinched division

(y)-clinched wildcard

# PASSING

Rk	Player	Team	Att	Cmp	C%	Yards	In	I%	Lg	TD	TD%	Rate
1	Griffin II	BCR	233	174	74.7	1990	5	2.1	84	18	7.7	116.7
2	Brees	DTL	507	354	69.8	4057	6	1.2	65	35	6.9	111.7
3	Wilson,R	ICC	381	245	64.3	3099	4	1	56	26	6.8	107.9
4	Manning,P	CHP	451	313	69.4	3679	9	2	88	30	6.7	107.8
5	Romo	SC	491	332	67.6	3693	8	1.6	56	35	7.1	106.7
6	Cutler	TCT	435	299	68.7	3500	10	2.3	80	28	6.4	104.8
7	Mariota	CAR	466	280	60.1	4016	11	2.4	86	37	7.9	104.7
8	Hill,S	BCR	260	183	70.4	1948	5	1.9	56	15	5.8	103.2
9	Rivers,P	PIC	368	222	60.3	3127	8	2.2	74	26	7.1	102.3
10	Roethlisberger	GWG	505	324	64.2	3921	9	1.8	72	32	6.3	101.6
11	Newton,C	CHI	362	230	63.5	3158	11	3	87	23	6.4	99.9
12	Ryan,M	AUR	594	379	63.8	4463	11	1.9	62	32	5.4	96.8
13	Manning,E	MAR	301	189	62.8	2066	4	1.3	65	12	4	90.8
14	Flacco	COW	503	306	60.8	3328	13	2.6	66	32	6.4	90.8
15	Brady,T	YOR	479	305	63.7	3188	6	1.3	87	18	3.8	90.2
16	Rodgers,A	SBE	571	342	59.9	4026	10	1.8	63	26	4.6	89.3
17	Bridgewater	LAK	397	246	62	2586	10	2.5	62	22	5.5	88.8
18	Tannehill	MVM	497	320	64.4	3126	9	1.8	52	19	3.8	87.1
19	Dalton	SS	545	334	61.3	3769	16	2.9	81	27	5	86.3
20	Luck	MOH	601	341	56.7	4205	15	2.5	99	24	4	81.4

## RUSHING

Rk	Player	Team	Att	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	McCoy,L	GWG	333	1743	5.2	40	12
2	Murray,D	CHI	365	1569	4.3	40	11
3	Forte	PIC	289	1524	5.3	36	12
4	Lacy	CAR	290	1459	5	31	10
5	Foster,A	AUR	231	1346	5.8	45	15
6	Bell,L	LAK	340	1281	3.8	26	6
7	Lynch,M	YOR	291	1263	4.3	33	15
8	Gore	SC	240	1245	5.2	50	4
9	Gordon,M	TCT	210	1213	5.8	44	12
10	Miller,L	CHP	215	1158	5.4	23	8
11	Anderson,C	SS	217	1033	4.8	24	6
12	Morris,A	COW	210	1015	4.8	47	3
13	Hill,J	ICC	160	995	6.2	30	7
14	Stewart	BCR	196	992	5.1	73	7
15	Charles,J	VV	216	930	4.3	54	2
16	Ingram,M	VV	203	897	4.4	36	5
17	Ivory	MVM	185	864	4.7	70	12
18	Johnson,D	CHP	159	854	5.4	29	8
19	Coleman,T	MOH	194	837	4.3	80	5
20	Yeldon	SBE	167	826	4.9	50	2

## RECEIVING

Rk	Player	Team	No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	Brown,A	TCT	109	1442	13.2	80	16
2	Jones,J	MOH	99	1636	16.5	99	11
3	Cobb	BCR	98	1325	13.5	67	11
4	Johnson,A	CHP	90	912	10.1	23	3
5	Hopkins,D	BCR	86	1083	12.6	84	11
6	Maclin	GWG	84	1510	18	61	16
7	Landry,J	GWG	82	874	10.7	31	7
8	Graham,J	MOH	82	850	10.4	36	4
9	Bryant,D	CHP	80	1316	16.5	88	17
10	Boldin	AUR	77	1282	16.6	40	9
11	Kelce,T	CAR	77	821	10.7	41	8
12	Decker	DTL	77	843	10.9	43	8
13	Beckham Jr	SS	73	1031	14.1	66	14
14	Gronkowski	BCR	72	652	9.1	54	5
15	Nelson,J	SBE	72	1042	14.5	47	9
16	Fitzgerald	COW	70	782	11.2	61	13
17	Johnson,C	DTL	70	1105	15.8	65	15
18	Jones,J	YOR	69	715	10.4	50	3
19	Stills	SS	69	807	11.7	44	6
20	Jackson,D	SBE	68	1058	15.6	49	6

## KICKING

Rk	Player	Team	FGA	FGM	FG%	40	50	Lg	Pts
1	Parkey	BCR	33	31	93.9	12	3	54	137
2	Folk	AUR	32	25	78.1	6	1	50	134
3	Zuerlein	ICC	33	27	81.8	10	0	49	133
4	Gostkowski	TCT	25	22	88	9	0	48	117
5	Succop	CHP	23	21	91.3	5	1	51	116
6	Dawson	DTL	25	22	88	5	0	49	116
7	Suisham	GWG	24	22	91.7	10	1	51	112
8	Brown,J	MAR	33	29	87.9	10	3	56	111
9	Hauschka	CAR	21	16	76.2	7	2	51	102
10	Novak	COW	25	21	84	8	3	53	100
11	Bailey,D	CHI	26	22	84.6	15	5	53	100
12	Scobee	PIC	22	17	77.3	6	2	53	96
13	Nugent	SBE	20	19	95	4	0	43	96
14	Vinatieri	SS	22	20	90.9	10	2	53	95
15	Tucker,J	SC	17	15	88.2	8	2	53	93
16	Murray,P	LAK	21	20	95.2	12	5	53	92
17	Janikowski	MOH	22	19	86.4	7	3	57	90
18	Walsh	YOR	23	16	69.6	6	1	54	88
19	Carpenter	MVM	14	12	85.7	7	2	55	73
20	Crosby	VV	17	16	94.1	9	1	52	67



BEIJING RED DRAGONS



PYONGYANG SUN




SEOUL CALM



TAIPEI SHARKS

STANDINGS - WEEK 5

ASIA	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Pyongyang	3	2	0	0.6	101	20.2	103	20.6	-0.4	2 1 0	3 2 0	3 2 0
Taipei	3	2	0	0.6	106	21.2	83	16.6	4.6	2 0 0	3 2 0	3 2 0
Seoul	2	3	0	0.4	111	22.2	103	20.6	1.6	1 2 0	2 3 0	2 3 0
Beijing	2	3	0	0.4	91	18.2	120	24	-5.8	1 1 0	2 3 0	2 3 0



CALM

2-3-0

-

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-


-

0

-

[Star Player]

[Stats]



SHARKS

3-3-0

-

-

-

-


0

-

[Star Player]

[Stats]

\*Games postponed due to lost baggage\*



SUN

3-2-0

-

-

-


-

0

-

[Star Player]

[Stats]



RED DRAGONS

2-3-0

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0

-

[Star Player]

[Stats]

\*Game postponed after fake hydrogen bomb test in North Korea\*



# AROUND THE



## With Spats McChad

NEW YORK – It was inevitable. But for those who dared to dream, no less disappointing. The imminent demise of EFL Asia could have been predicted – in fact was predicted by many – but, for a tiny moment in time, the league appeared to be on a different path from the dead end road it now travels. That brief spark of optimism may yet ignite a flame of passion for football in Asia at some future date, but for now it is overshadowed by the many and varied troubles the league has faced in its brief, turbulent existence.

Scheduling conflicts, language barriers, travel problems, border detentions and health issues related to the poor Beijing air are just a few of the recurring difficulties endured by players, managers and league officials. But the disappearance of Pat Crew in North Korea and the extreme politicization of the sport in Pyongyang and Seoul seem to have been the critical factors in the league's decision to pull out of Asia at the conclusion of a truncated 6-game schedule.

Crew and the head coaching staff of the erstwhile expansion Corvalis Creeping Death vanished during a team retreat at a non-publicized location on North Korea's 'Day of Great Concentration.' The lack of reliable information about their whereabouts and the official line from the North Korean government that they were never inside the country to begin with (despite contrary evidence from dozens of independent witnesses), have created a climate of scandal and intrigue that has eclipsed the football story almost entirely. The matter of Crew's disappearance has been referred to the United Nations and the recent fake hydrogen bomb test by the North Koreans has been linked to the heated rhetoric containing accusations and counter-accusations spilling out of both the State Department and Kin Jong-un's Ministry of State Security.

The EFL is trying to tip-toe out of its Asian mess with as little egg on its face as possible and minimal liability. It steadfastly maintains that its football "experiment" in Asia was successful as an important "first step in laying the groundwork for a new international sport" and valuable as an investment for future endeavours. The loss of the Corvalis franchise is being dismissed as an impediment to the EFL's expansion plans in 2016:

*"We are cooperating with US Government Officials and negotiating with the Ministry of Physical through our EFL Executives in North Korea to bring about a successful conclusion to the search for Pat Crew and the Corvalis Creeping Death coaching staff,"* **Member No. 4** of the EFL Committee said in a public statement last Tuesday. *"We hope for the best, but fans can rest assured that we are committed to moving forward with a four-team expansion at the conclusion of this season without the Creeping Death as one of the expansion franchises. An announcement naming the fourth expansion franchise will be forthcoming soon."*

The sanguine attitude of the EFL toward the international incident it indirectly caused is in keeping with its new found sense of invulnerability. The league is making money while other professional leagues, notably the SFL and CFL, are struggling to attract top grade talent while maintaining the bottom line. Every business venture connected to the EFL is making money – and that carries weight in the halls of governments on both sides of the border. People want in on the action and regulators likely don't have the stomach for another NFL scandal and the political and economic fallout it created.

So, the role of the EFL in the disappearance of American citizens and the testing of a quasi-hydrogen bomb by the world's only nuclear-armed lunatic is being soft-pedalled with lines like this one from Congressman **Buford Sanborn**, a staunch Beaufort County Ravens fan: "Football doesn't test hydrogen bombs to get people's attention, crazy megalomaniacs do!" As for Pat Crew and his coaching staff? It's better for business to forget about them and move on to the next in line.

### **CURSE OF THE BLUE EAGLES – PART III**

The North American Big Foot Hunters Association (NABFHA) (they are a serious bunch with no time for cute acronyms) temporarily broke off its never-ending hunt for the legendary Sasquatch and joined the increasingly broad search for the mysterious cowed figure that has been spotted on TV footage recently at two EFL games. Nicknamed "Big Beak" for its over-sized bird-like mask/features and its elusive qualities, the cowed figure has so far managed to avoid capture. Big Foot hunters could hardly believe their luck at the opportunity to add the mysterious *thing* to its quarry list of one.

*"It was a natural fit for us,"* explained **Vinton Troutfur**, Executive Director of NABFHA. *"We have the world's leading experts at tracking Big Foot among our members. Having a big beak is a little different from having a big foot, of course, but we believe that we can track the beak using techniques adapted from our foot tracking skills. We estimate we will*

have the creature captured and in custody before the end of the football season.”

Custody? Capture? Has anyone stopped to ask what, exactly, the cowled figure could be detained for? What has it done? Let’s look at the “evidence,” if that is the appropriate term to use.

It has been spotted, briefly, at two football games. In both of those games, things have gone extraordinarily badly for one of the teams involved – so badly that some serious people have been moved to comment that maybe supernatural forces were at work on the field. In the first, the cowled figure appears to make a gesture at the precise moment a **Mike Nugent** field goal goes astray, losing the game for Scarborough. Then the figure disappears into the crowd. In the second, the Corn Kings looked abnormally bad in a 42-7 loss to Durham – worse than Virden bad. So bad, that not one thing, but almost everything, contributed to the loss. After the game, for about 3 seconds, the cowled figure can be spotted on the field walking casually away from the TV camera as it focuses on **Drew Brees** giving a post-game interview. Despite a hue and cry and frantic search, the cowled figure again cannot be found.

Alright, I am willing to concede that the disappearing act needs to be explained and I can’t readily explain it based on the limited number of incidents and not enough information. But when it comes to the idea of a “curse” on the Blue Eagles, or the Corn Kings, or any other team, I have to put on my skeptic’s hat.

Whatever happened to the concept of teams simply having a bad or unlucky day on the same day that their opponent is having a good or lucky day? I mean, come on! It’s not as if Scarborough is the first team to be bad and unlucky at the same time over a prolonged period. Look at the New Orleans Saints for the first 20 years of their existence! We don’t even have to go back that far: look at the Mohave Hellfire of the past 6 seasons – painful and futile every one!

It all started with a math geek’s umbrage at being wrong every single year when it came to the Blue Eagles. **Arpin Plunderflunder’s** math didn’t work out so there must be a curse on the team! Give me a break! I rely on the proverbial ‘math-guy’ to give me something rooted in reality, not to throw up his hands at the first anomaly and cry “magic!” All that did was encourage **Chris Dickinson’s** friends in the Scarborough media to push the theory that the team Chris had run into the ground with ridiculous trades, inept contract negotiations and incompetent coaching was actually the subject of a curse!

I have referred the [FootballOutriders.Org](http://FootballOutriders.Org) football simulation system over to my geek nephew, Byron – in case you had forgotten about him: the socially mal-adjusted boy genius who once hacked into a secret Pentagon reality simulator computer and the super secret Q-1400 Espa stealth satellite network to predict the outcome of the 2009 EFL Championship Game between the Florida Dragons and Los Angeles Knights. Not surprisingly to anyone who knows Byron, he has grown up to be, at 16, the youngest computer science professor in the history of MIT and he eats football simulation systems for breakfast. In fact, he may be too bored with football to reply. In the event that he ignores my e-mail, I am currently creating an online ‘World of Warcraft’ character to search for his “Level 100” human warlock *Mr. Heater* and contact him that way.

Now, just because I am skeptical does not mean I am close-minded to possibilities beyond my present understanding. That is the crux of the matter: understanding. All I am saying is that we should not make the deductive leap to something as irrational and

unexplainable as a curse to make sense of the complex web of causes and effects that is the reality matrix. At least, the reality most of us share.

I do think that based on the available evidence, scant though it may be, something strange is indeed going on. It probably just has nothing to do with a so-called curse. We have seen other strange things this year, such as professional football in Pyongyang and **Hal Corson** sending **Tamba Hali** on a blitz, to name just a couple of things that people never thought they would live to see.

But strange doesn’t necessarily mean unnatural. There are plenty of plausible, if unlikely, theories spreading around the net and swirling in the media. The most popular one is that this is some kind of publicity stunt engineered by the EFL, or its media relations firm, *Big Smile Inc.*, to increase attendance and viewership during a portion of the season when many teams are falling out of the race. Interesting, but I have yet to hear any eye-witness accounts of this cowled figure being assisted in any way by officials or “men in black” types after it has made its public appearances. In fact, the lack of physical eye-witnesses stands out as one bizarre aspect of this mystery. Only six people have come



Does this look like the kind of man who would fake a hydrogen bomb test to distract the world from his kidnapping of an EFL expansion team owner and his entire head coaching staff?

forward to claim they actually saw the cowled figure “in the flesh” so to speak. One of those was a fellow named **Clem Cummings** from Clinch County, Georgia, a UFO enthusiast and four-time alien abduction survivor who claims to have travelled to the Pleiades to be used as a sperm donor to help repopulate a dying race of super-advanced aliens. Why a race of super-advanced beings would turn to Clem to revive its species is one of many open questions that crimp this crackpot’s credibility.

The other five, four from Gwinnett and one from Durham, have little to add to what has already been captured on video except for an 8-year old boy from Atlanta who was sitting to the side and one row above the cowled figure and remembers watching the figure intently for most of the Scarborough-Gwinnett game.

“I was a little scared of him,” said **Nathaniel Beemster** in an exclusive interview with Gladiator correspondent, **Marcus Aurelius**. “My dad said ‘what are you talking about’ when I pointed to him. I don’t think my dad saw him. The man laughed weird for no reason and made funny noises, like <pff-pff> [boy giggles] farting sounds. He smelled funny. I wanted him to take his mask off but he didn’t.”

This testimony from a boy and the events of this past week in Chino have kept alive the theory that this “thing” is actually real and not some hologram or doctored image projected or superimposed on the video by deceivers desperate to keep your eyes on EFL action. Yet, it remains possible that the few reliable witnesses who remember being in the vicinity of the “cowled figure” are mistaken and unduly influenced by what they saw on TV. The possibility of a technological hoax remains open.

While NABFHA split up its resources between Sebastian and Cowtown – the two places considered by



**Cam Newton** gazes at the scoreboard after being pulled in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of a 34-11 Week 15 loss to the Ravens. In the background, the cowled figure is visible for a brief instant. Shortly afterwards, Newton is forced to hurry to the locker room after appearing to wet himself.

the new found “experts” to be the most likely haunt of the “cowled figure” this week – the Chino Convicts, on the verge of elimination and needing a win to stand any hope of making it to the post-season, were stinking up the Big House. It was the worst performance of the year for **Cam Newton** – so bad that he was yanked in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter in favour of **Kirk Cousins** with his team trailing 24-3 to **Shaun Hill** and the Beaufort County Ravens.

The surprisingly durable Ravens have been playing intelligent, tough football for most of the year. So a convincing win over a demoralized Chino team playing in front of their furious and notoriously violent fans was not on the list of events considered impossible if not for a “curse” being involved. In fact, several analysts had predicted such a flat performance by the Convicts as a team. But the ineffectiveness of Newton, bordering on gross incompetence, was not predicted by anybody. While the team around him had been hit-and-miss at times, Cam had always been “the Man.” All of a sudden, on a day when he had boldly guaranteed a win “to keep the fans believin’” Cam turned into something of a cross between **Tim Rattay** and **JP Losman** on the football field. It certainly was ugly and it brought a storm of debris onto the field and riots in the bleachers like only Convicts fans can riot.

After an official delay of 25 minutes while the The Big House Riot Squad brutally and efficiently cleared “the Hole” (the portion of the stands where the actual convicts and most of the raucous bikers were sitting), play resumed and the network cameramen looked around the stadium for shots to help the announcers fill the time. Newton was on the bench to start the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, prompting the cameras to focus repeatedly on him as he sat on the bench, looking despondent. After everything the guy had done for his team, one might think the media would capture the shot once or twice and leave him alone to sulk in dignity; but no. Twelve times the camera returned to shoot Cam in various poses of grief on the sideline.

One of those shots caught, for a brief moment, the cowled figure in the background – its head poking up from behind the wall of the front row of the stands for about two seconds before it slipped slowly but steadily downward behind the wall. Within a matter of a second or less, almost simultaneously, a look of horrified surprise came over Cam’s face and he reflexively looked down at his waist. His head jolted back as if in shock then he furtively looked about before hurriedly rising from the bench to make an awkward beeline for the tunnel, his hands covering his mid-section – not in pain, but in an effort to conceal a wet stain spreading from his lower

abdominal area. All was broadcast as the camera mercilessly followed a humiliated Newton as he sprinted into the tunnel out of view.

It was a small mercy that the sighting of the cowed figure, again on national TV, over-shadowed somewhat the awkward spectacle of the Chino quarterback wetting himself on the sideline. Within minutes of the replay showing on the Big Board (as they call the Big House Jumbotron) the Big House Security, the most efficient in the league, sprinted into action in an effort to locate and contain the cowed figure. But, except for 9-year old **Isabelle McToon** of Ponomo, California, daughter of a Convicts cheerleader waiting for her mother to come off the field as the game wound down; nobody actually saw where the cowed figure went.

According to young Isabelle, *"He went straight up the stairs. He was laughing meanly and he knocked over a man's drink. Then he went past the policemen. Nobody stopped him or talked to him. He was a man in a bird mask."*

Meanwhile, at the Fish Tank in Sebastian, where the Blue Eagles were fighting for their playoff lives against the Swordfish, the so-called curse on the Blue Eagles was not in evidence. Or maybe it was, but just not powerful enough to overcome the curse on the Swordfish. As expected, it wasn't a pretty or particularly well-played game, but it did have a few moments of beauty. The 26-yard game-winning touchdown pass from **Aaron Rodgers** to **Jordy Nelson** was elegantly executed – like poetry in motion. Rodgers dropped back 7 steps, paused, stepped forward and delivered a laser to a spot in the middle of the end zone that appeared to be vacant at the moment of delivery. But Nelson made a slight feint to his right before curling around to his left and stepping into the previously empty space in the nick of time to receive the ball. That is trust. When Rodgers makes a play like that a skeptic must pause to consider the possibility that only a curse could thwart such brilliance over a 16-game season. That is, until that skeptic reminds himself that that play came against the Swordfish and their top corner, **EJ Gaines** – whoever he is! Anyway, if the curse was on anybody that day it was on Sebastian field goal kicker **Adam Vinatieri**, who missed two field goals that would have made the difference in a 17-13 loss.

### AROUND THE EFL

At Tillman Field in Cowtown the Corn Kings prevailed 24-20 over Markham in a typically tense and stultifying contest between these traditional rivals. Rookie running back **Todd Gurley** was the difference, busting runs of 35 and 40 yards on top of two TD bursts of 7 and 46 yards to power the Kings to a 24-7 lead. **Joe Flacco**, who seems to struggle against Markham, helped the Stars to get back in it with an interception to end an imminent scoring drive and set up a Markham TD. Then the hero, Gurley, almost grew goat horns with a fumble on the next play that set up a Markham field goal, shrinking the deficit to 4 points. In the end, the Cowtown defence held on with steady pressure on **Eli Manning** and the Corn Kings finished the day controlling their destiny heading into Week 16.

A number of teams on the periphery of the playoff races saw their hopes finally dashed this week:

At Thermopylae Stadium in Pickering, it was one of those games where things only started to get interesting once half of the fans had already filed out of the bowl. With the Gladiators seemingly in command 23-0 late in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, the Spartans scored what looked like a token TD after a 65-yard kick return by **Pacman Jones** gave them a short field. Unperturbed, the Glads added a pair of field goals to make it 29-7 with just over 3 minutes left. Then all hell broke loose starting with an 85-yard kick return for a TD by Jones, followed by an improbably quick long drive for a TD, an onside kick recovery, and a nearly impossible 52-yard TD pass from **Philip Rivers** to **Jordan Cameron** to make it 29-27, Gwinnett, with 0:21 left in the game. The Spartans went for the 2-point convert to tie but a desperation pass break-up by Glads safety, **Morgan Burnett** popped the miracle bubble and set off another discharge of the life-saving "Gun Gun" to sedate the Pickering coach. Mark a +1 in the 'W' column for Gwinnett despite a near historic choke.

At TCF Bank Stadium in Twin Cities, the Iowa City Cubs clinched a playoff berth and sentenced the Convicts to hard time for what remains of the 2015 season by dominating the second half in a 33-14 win over the Triumph. Cubs QB, **Russell Wilson** danced over, through and around the Triumph defenders, racking up 82 yards and 2 TDs on the ground to go along with 282 yards and 1 TD through the air. Half time adjustments by Cubs defensive coordinator, **Buddy Ryan**, turned a tight game into a bit of a romp as the Cubs line sacked and pressured **Jay Cutler** into complete ineffectiveness in the second half. At 81-years, the oldest coach in the league by far, Ryan kept the half time speech to his defence simple: *"I told the boys to go out there and kick their pansy asses!"*

At the Carolina Slammer, the Mustangs continued their charge into the record books with a comfortable 37-10 busting of the Regulators, ending **Hal Corson's** hopes for a post-season re-match at Candlestick Park. Aurora is now 33-1, including playoff games, since moving north from Garland – the most dominant run in football history. **Ryan Lindley** was pressed into action at QB for the Regs after **Tony Romo** went down with a season-ending injury, eliminating all hope of a Pickering-style surge in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter.

At Camelot in York, the Excaliburs got a taste of their own medicine when Durham's **Devin Hester** broke a 7-7 tie with a 66-yard punt return for a TD to kick-start an easy ride to a 38-17 victory. The Swords lead the league in special teams TDs with 6, but when they needed one to keep the candle burning for a playoff berth their nimble whirlwinds, **De'Anthony Thomas** and **Micah Hyde**, could not deliver. That put **Tom Brady** and **Kelvin Benjamin** in the unenviable position of trying to make progress through the minefield of the Durham secondary while the York defence bent to the strong **"Brees"** of Drew's 4 touchdown passes.

At the Fiery Depths in Mohave, the Violators came *this close* [index finger and thumb ¼ inch apart] to winning a game, but saw a 28-14 lead melt away in the second half as a panicked **Andrew Luck** got hot and strung together three consecutive TD drives in a 21-point 4<sup>th</sup> quarter to keep Virden winless, 35-28. The Hellfire struggled in both contests against the league's worst team, making them just slightly better than the league's worst team.

And finally, the Knights rode a three-TD pass performance by **Teddy Bridgewater** in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter and hung on through half-a-game of **Mike Glennon** at QB to top the Monarchs 31-16 in a fight to stay out of the West Division basement; while the Pats humbled cocky rookie, **Marcus Mariota** with a pair of TDs off interceptions in a 41-9 romp over the Cannibals at Patriot Place. Mariota was unable to add to his league-leading TD pass total of 37, while having the worst game of his brief professional career.

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





















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RECORD VS THE SPREAD AFTER WEEK 15:

88-57-5

## PLAYOFF PICTURE AT A GLANCE

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

## JIMMY'S WEEK SIXTEEN PICKS

### GAMES TO WATCH

#### COWTOWN @ SCARBOROUGH (line – Pick 'Em)

**INJURIES:** Cowtown – Cedric Ogbuehi (QUESTIONABLE), Rob Havenstein (DOUBTFUL), Larry Fitzgerald (OUT); Scarborough – Chris Canty (DOUBTFUL), Dont'a Hightower (OUT).

The last wildcard spot in the Can-Am Conference comes down to one game in a winner-take-all scenario with no outside help required. Actually, the Corn Kings, who currently occupy the spot due to a better conference record, can also clinch a post-season berth with a tie. The pick'em line is just about right – both teams have fluctuated wildly throughout the season, with the Corn Kings showing marginally better consistency and scoring their victories against tougher opponents; but the Blue Eagles are at home and are currently on a modest hot streak, winning their last two games coming from behind. Aaron Rodgers played some of his best

football of the season in those two games, showing gamesmanship in the clutch. If he remains in top form this week, it could be a relatively easy win for the Blue Eagles. However, nothing so far has come easy for Scarborough and there is little reason, beyond a continued Rodgers resurgence, to expect an easy ride here. After a strong first half of the season, the play of Joe Flacco has dropped off somewhat; sometimes he has looked simply bad and other times his offensive line has let him down. With right tackle Rob Havenstein listed as “doubtful,” protection could be a problem against the pass-rushing prowess of Ndamukong Suh and Terrell Suggs. If his line gives him time to throw, however, Cool Joe should find a soft target in the often-harried Scarborough secondary. The emergence of rookie Todd Gurley as a big play threat out of the backfield should also keep the Eagles D honest and buy some time in the pocket. The Cowtown defence has taken its lumps this season but has also caused a few, making them an unknown quantity heading in. Despite their big name stars, the Blue Eagles have struggled on the back end, surrendering almost 400 yards per game, which puts them in dubious company, ranked 18<sup>th</sup> overall. Expect both teams to turn the ball over at some point and for the game to come down to the timing and location of those breaks. In other words, the luckiest team will win. **PICK: COWTOWN**

### **CHINO @ IOWA CITY (line – CUBS by 9)**

**INJURIES:** **Chino** – Michael Schofield (DOUBTFUL), Bruce Carter (OUT), Haloti Ngata (OUT), Victor Cruz (IR), Leodis McKelvin (IR); **Iowa City** – None.

The Cubs are in the post-season as a wildcard and can clinch the no.3 seed with a win or a tie here. It is a significant prize; the powerful Patriots are looming for unlucky no.4 and, while no team is unbeatable in the Pacific-Atlantic Conference, the well-balanced Pats look like the toughest nut to crack. The Convicts ended their race for the post-season on a down with a shabby effort against the Ravens last week. Cam Newton was off his game and was yanked in favour of Kirk Cousins, who posted decent numbers in garbage time. There is talk of Cousins possibly getting the starting nod, but don't expect Rob Nazar to undermine the confidence of his franchise quarterback or give the hated Cubs a free pass, even in a meaningless game. Cam will be back and looking to end his season on a positive note. Iowa City is a powerhouse of talent that has struggled at times to maintain its rhythm. They are the most penalized team in the league and prone to lapses at critical times. Nevertheless, there is no reason why they should not win this game and I expect that they will. Whether or not they beat the generous spread will depend on which Chino team shows up: the beaten down chain gang of last week; or the ruthless death row killers of the glory years. **PICK: IOWA CITY**

## **GAMES OF NOTE**

### **TWIN CITIES @ CARTHAGE (line – TRIUMPH by 2)**

**INJURIES:** **Twin Cities** – Nate Allen (QUESTIONABLE), Jerrell Freeman (OUT), Tre Mason (OUT), Bobby Wagner (OUT); **Carthage** – Marcus Mariota (OUT), Justin Durant (IR), Greg Hardy (IR), Derrick Johnson (IR), Manti Te'o (IR), Jason Verrett (IR).

Stock in the Triumph is down after two uninspired showings in consecutive losses to their current playoff rivals, Charleswood and Iowa City. But with rookie phenom Marcus Mariota ruled out for Carthage and untested Sean Mannion getting the start at quarterback, it is puzzling that the Triumph are giving less than a field goal to the spread. Professional money may be betting on a Triumph “rest day” as Guy Williams looks to preserve key players for the playoffs. A start for Johnny Manziel could certainly make things exciting, but with the Triumph needing a win for a shot at the no.3 seed, it would be mystifying to see anyone other than Jay Cutler given the nod to tear the anemic Carthage defence to shreds – nothing like a little confidence booster heading into the elimination round. The Cannibals' only hope of beating Twin Cities on a normal day would lie in their offence, but with Mariota's second-worst performance of the season coming against this Triumph team back in Week One, it is hard to imagine his back-up bucking the trend. If the Triumph rest starters in a calculated risk that back-ups will be good enough, anything could happen against the crazy and surprising Cannibals. But if Cutler sees even one half, it could be over in 30 minutes. **PICK: TWIN CITIES**

### **SOUTH CAROLINA @ GWINNETT (line – GLADIATORS by 6)**

**INJURIES:** **South Carolina** – Riley Reiff (PROBABLE), Terrence Brooks (OUT), Tony Romo (OUT); **Gwinnett** – Bruce Ellington (OUT), Charles Gaines (OUT).

The Gladiators are already in the post-season but a victory here could mean the difference between the no.3 seed and the no.4 seed, depending on the outcome of the Cowtown-Scarborough game. A Cowtown win and a Gladiators loss will relegate them to no.4 and a trip to Aurora to face the almighty Mustangs. A win here guarantees a visit to Jurassic Park and a shot at a team they have already

beaten once this year. They face a Regs team that beat them in Week Four but that is now at its most vulnerable with Tony Romo out due to injury. Coming off a demoralizing pair of losses that scuttled their playoff hopes and starting Ryan Lindley at quarterback (a player with 4 EFL career pass attempts), it is hard to imagine a team less primed to explode in a scoring frenzy than the Regulators. The Glads' game plan on defence will be a simple one: stop Frank Gore and Ameer Abdullah and let Lindley show-off the stuff that won him the title of Mr. Irrelevant in the 2012 rookie draft. The only game-changer here would be if Dave Birdsall decided to throw his own stooge into the ring and start Brandon Weeden over Big Ben. Not that it will happen, but even a late appearance in relief increases the risk of a freaky pick-six and a chance for the Regs to duck in under the spread. More likely, however, is that the Glads will take care of business early and the Regs will want to get off the field. **PICK: GWINNETT**

## **HOLIDAY LEFTOVERS**

### **PICKERING @ DURHAM (line – THUNDER LIZARDS by 12)**

**INJURIES:** **Pickering** – Ray McDonald (QUESTIONABLE), Miles Austin (OUT), Eric Kendricks (OUT), Ronald Leary (OUT), Breshad Perriman (IR); **Durham** – None.

Predicting Week 16 games between teams with nothing at stake is like playing pin the tail on the donkey. Great teams with nothing to play for can indeed look like asses in the last game before the post-season as key starters get a breather before the games get real again. The Lizards will need all hands on deck in the playoffs and this could impact their starting line-up here. Consider also that there is no such thing as a meaningless game in the mind of Pickering coach, Gus Konstantankos and an upset scenario begins to take shape through the “fog” of Week-16-War. The Spartans went down hard in a season that began with faint hope for contention. The spirit that kept them in the playoff picture through Week 14 is more than enough to keep them in this game, even if an upset is unlikely. Pickering will not be afraid to test the Durham secondary and if Philip Rivers can catch the elite Durham defenders going through the motions, the Spartans may end their season with a nice little consolation prize. **PICK: PICKERING**

### **SEBASTIAN @ AURORA (line – MUSTANGS by 19)**

**INJURIES:** **Sebastian** – Jerry Attaochu (OUT), Aaron Dobson (OUT), Jamell Fleming (OUT), Mike Pouncey (OUT), Justin Pugh (OUT), Adrian Clayborn (IR), Jadeveon Clowney (IR), Paul Posluszny (IR); **Aurora** – None.

With just one quarterback on the Mustangs roster, the option to rest Matt Ryan in a meaningless game is not available to Rich Liotta – not that he would opt for it if it were. Of all the top contenders in the EFL, Aurora is least likely to take it easy in a game that makes no difference in the standings. For the Mustangs, winning is everything and that's what makes them great. Nor have they shown much inclination in the past to take it easy once a game is well in hand. What we might see here is an opportunity for their fringe players to see game action once the score is differential in their favour is comfortably large. The Swordfish, as usual, are playing for a sliver of pride as another hapless season comes to a close. If they were to pull off the impossible and actually win, all of the pain of perennial losing would magically disappear for a day. Ah – to dream! The reality is that another bloodbath is in the offing, potentially avoidable only if the Swordfish offence can pull off some of its occasional razzle-dazzle. The last time I picked the Fish to beat a stupidly large spread I was burned. I won't make the mistake twice. **PICK: AURORA**

### **MOHAVE @ LOS ANGELES (line – KNIGHTS by 4)**

**INJURIES:** **Mohave** – Ronnie Hillman (OUT), Shareece Wright (OUT), Donnie Avery (IR); **Los Angeles** – Teddy Bridgewater (OUT), Chase Ford (OUT), Chad Greenway (OUT), Rolando McClain (OUT), Andrew Norwell (OUT), Brian Orakpo (OUT), Leonard Williams (OUT).

The Knights are a team one can count on to give it everything they have in a meaningless game; having played nothing but meaningless games for the past three years, they simply don't know any better. On the other hand, the Hellfire have been mired in mediocrity, or worse, for so long that they can't seem to get up for a game anymore. After struggling mightily last week to subdue possibly the worst team in EFL history, it is hard to imagine them standing a chance on the road against a plucky opponent with real players, like the Knights. But fortunately for the Hellfire, a few of those real players are out for this game, Teddy Bridgewater being the most notable. The Knights will also be without rookie stalwart, defensive tackle Leonard Williams and sturdy linebacker Rolando McClain. If Andrew Luck can survive the depleted first and second levels of the Knights' defence, he will find the Knights secondary almost as knock-kneed as the Violator one he gouged for 408 yards and 5 TDs last week. Mike Glennon will start at quarterback for Los Angeles. He brings a different and unwelcome dimension to the Knights attack – the ability to stand in the pocket and get sacked. I will probably kick myself for this later, but I see a Hellfire win. **PICK: MOHAVE**

## CHARLESWOOD @ VIRDEN (line – PATRIOTS by 14)

**INJURIES:** **Virden** – Mark Ingram (PROBABLE), Branden Albert (OUT), Anthony Barr (OUT), Melvin Ingram (OUT), Trumaine Johnson (OUT), Alex Carrington (IR), Eric Berry (IR), Todd Herremans (IR), Kelcy Quarles (IR), Demeco Ryans (IR), Stephen Tulloch (IR), Aldon Smith (IR); **Charleswood** – None.

Why would I bother writing anything about this almost certain impending pasting of the Violated by the Patriots? Because it is *almost* certain, that's why. One look at Virden's injury list will reveal that I am stretching credulity to its breaking point by considering the possibility that Charleswood will not slaughter Virden with a butcher's ease. The spread is probably not high enough, even considering the possibility of a Blake Bortles start to give old Peyton a rest. Virden missed its best chance for a win last week when they forced Andrew Luck to rally in the 4<sup>th</sup> to save face for the Mohave franchise. The thought of losing to Virden was so terrifying that it snapped the groggy Hellfire out of their stupor. Of course, with the shame of a winless season hanging over their heads, Virden will give it their all – as little as that is – and that could be quite entertaining. **PICK: CHARLESWOOD**

## YORK @ MARKHAM (line – EXCALIBURS by 2)

**INJURIES:** **York** – None; **Markham** – Percy Harvin (OUT), Geoff Schwartz (OUT), Chris Long (IR).

Markham's season seemed to slip away slowly, hardly acknowledged until a 20-point loss to Sebastian snapped the fans out of their delusional belief in a heroic Markham surge to end the season. The culprit, as it often is with Markham teams, was an ineffectual, lumbering offence that had no leader and no identity. This is the same offence that will try to finish on a high note against a York defence that suddenly collapsed after dominating opponents over the first half of the season. With the fall of the defence came a downturn in Excalibur fortunes as the Tom Brady-led York attack struggled to maintain consistency. While Markham needs no motivation to compete, the Swords just seemed to switch off in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half against Durham last week. This game is a toss-up, but the Stars' desire to avoid a double-digit losing streak will inspire a better effort. **PICK: MARKHAM**

## MISSION VIEJO @ BEAUFORT COUNTY (line – RAVENS by 10)

**INJURIES:** **Mission Viejo** – Kareem Jackson (OUT), Kevin White (OUT), Brandon Browner (IR), Jerod Mayo (IR); **Beaufort County** – Janoris Jenkins (PROBABLE), Stevan Ridley (OUT), Larry Warford (OUT), Frank Alexander (IR), Jairus Byrd (IR), Alfonzo Dennard (IR).

Mission Viejo fell into the West Division basement with a rough outing at home against the Knights last week. This is not sitting well with coach, Chris Ferraro, who had made a bold prediction that his team would make the post-season this year. Of course, he predicts that every year, but this season there was actually enough talent on the team to cause some to take him seriously. This is important when we consider that the Ravens have clinched the West and cannot advance in the seedings, so they have a chance to rest some tired and fragile starters. Don't be surprised if Bryce Petty gets the start at quarterback for Beaufort and, if he does, don't be surprised if the Monarchs make mincemeat out of the 10-point spread. **PICK: MISSION VIEJO**



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FROM THE EFL ARCHIVES – In Week 15 of the 2009 EFL season, Kutztown QB, **Tony Romo**, who likes to set records, whether they are his or somebody else's, threw 4 interceptions, all to safety **Ed Reed**, as the Patriots destroyed the Bears 31-7. Reed returned two of those interceptions for TDs, establishing two records that still stand today.

In the category of history repeating itself, the Corn Kings defeated the down-and-out North Stars 26-13 to rise to 8-7 and stay alive in the playoff race. The Corn Kings of 2009, however, had the situation a little more in hand than

their 2015 descendants. Rather than giving up 3 turnovers, the 2009 version forced 3 Markham turnovers on 2 interceptions by **Walt Harris** and a recovered fumble.

The Gladiators clinched a playoff berth, locking in the no.3 seed in the Can-Am Conference with a 24-17 victory over the fading Garland Mustangs. **Thomas Jones** rushed for 124 yards and 1 TD on 22 carries. The Cinderella Mustangs now no longer controlled their playoff destiny and would need a win and help in the season's final week to make it in.

In Week 15, football in LA was as fashionable as it would ever get in the days prior to the Knights' championship in 2011. Their proposed "third" uniforms were unveiled at the Golden Globe Awards at the behest of LA Gossip Columnist and Knights sports writer, **Gabrielle Laurent-Vainluven**. Designer, **Ralph Lauren** was unrestrained in his efforts to make the LA gay community feel welcome at Round Table Stadium, unveiling a jersey that featured a "classic cut" and "traditional numbers" in bright pink supported by tangerine orange slacks. Despite overwhelming approval from Hollywood, the uniforms never saw the field due to objections from the Knights' official sports apparel provider, *Goat*.