

2015

Week Five


EFL NEWS
 ELITE FOOTBALL LEAGUE

2015

Week Five

November 9, 2015



CAR	31	TCT	28	VIR	8	BCR	34	ICC	35	DTL	26	PIC	31	MAR	14	AUR	44	GWG	38
MOH	7	CHI	14	CHP	30	MVM	31	LAK	10	COW	20	SC	14	YOR	28	SEB	27	SBE	17



Eric Decker of the Durham Thunder Lizards gets his feet down in the field of play at the Cowtown 4 yard line in 3rd quarter action at Tillman Field. Decker would later catch a pass at the 1-yard line to set up the game-winning TD. (Story Inside....)

LATEST EFL NEWS INSIDE

- OVERTIME, TAKE-4 IN COWTOWN
- RGIII RETURNS
- KNIGHTS START NEW LOSING STREAK
- NEWTON STALKED
- STARS COLLAPSE AGAIN
- AURORA WINS AGAIN
- UNSTOPPABLE BIG BEN
- MARIOTA A RARE ROOKIE
- AND MORE.....

Also in this issue

- SPATS FEATURE, 'EFL ASIA DEBUTS' 'A BIG BUSINESS,' AROUND THE EFL.'
- JIMMY THE GEEK PREDICTIONS FOR WEEK 6
- THIS WEEK IN THE EFL HISTORY – WEEK FIVE OF 2009



*Who was slick
in Week Five?*

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



Ben Roethlisberger
QB
 Gwinnett
 Gladiators

19 of 22, 288 yards, 4 TDs.
 Unstoppable in big division win.



Jurrell Casey
DT
 Twin Cities
 Triumph

6 tackles, 4 sacks, 2 QBPs, 1 stuff. A
 nightmare for Cam in Week 5 win.



4-1-0



GAME OF THE WEEK



2-3-0

Durham

26

MVP

Drew Brees

20

Cowtown

TEAM LEADERS

Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Brees	36	57	388	1
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Bradshaw	11	50	4.5	0
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Johnson	9	148	16.4	1

Team	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
Durham	3	10	7	0	6	26
Cowtown	7	3	7	3	0	20

TEAM LEADERS

Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Flacco	23	38	272	2
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Morris	21	108	5.1	0
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Fitzgerald	8	100	12.5	2

Play of the Game

In the 1st series of OT, Durham was facing 2nd & 23 at their own 8. **Drew Brees** threw a medium pass to **Calvin Johnson**, who broke 2 tackles for a 41-yard play, sparking the game-winning TD drive.

SUMMARY: The Corn Kings found the end zone first when **Joe Flacco** threw on target to **Larry Fitzgerald** cutting through the Lizard secondary for a 21-yard score and a 7-3 lead. Durham responded with an 80-yard drive that struck pay dirt when **Drew Brees** found **Megatron** on a slant for a 10-yard TD pass and a 10-7 advantage. **Cecil Shorts III** turned a short slant into a 40-yard gain to set up **Nick Novak** for the tying FG from 42 yards, but Durham regained their 3-point edge before half time with their 2nd red zone FG of the day to make it 13-10. The Dinos extended their lead to 20-10 after a 16-yard screen to **Reggie Bush** and a couple of Cowtown penalties helped set up a 1-yard TD dive by **Mike Davis**. The Corn Kings overcame two holding calls on their ensuing possession, scoring on Fitzgerald's second TD catch of the day to cap an 80-yard drive and pull back within 3 points. The Cowtown 'D' kept Durham off the board while the offence assembled a promising drive to the Durham 12, but they were pushed back by a holding flag and a **Demario Davis** sack and were lucky to get close for Novak's tying FG with 3:46 left. The Lizards got the ball first in OT and marched up the field, powered by a 41-yard pass to Johnson and a couple of penalties, to win it in one series on Davis' 2nd 1-yard TD run of the game.

QUOTES: "We normally don't want to throw 57 times a game like we did today, but it worked on this occasion. Luckily we got the ball first in overtime. They have some injuries and we could see we were wearing them down on that last drive." Thunder Lizards coach, **George Kaldis**.
 "Durham has a great offence. We held them off well in the second half but you can't hold them off forever. The rookie played well against one of the best – everyone was a little gassed at the end." - Cowtown coach, **Jim Coghlin**, defending the play of rookie CB, **Ronald Darby**.



HAPPY FAN



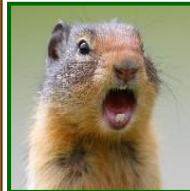
titter

ANGRY FAN



Sir Reginald @RMClapham

Cop the curtain for the flummot marksman, Brees! At the end the Cows were grinning at the daisy roots.



Cornelius @cowtowncornhog

Fourth overtime in four games – Corny predicts a long winter for the 'Kings.

11-04-2015 Tillman Field Temp: 54 Wind: 15-25 MVP: Drew Brees

Scoring Summary

1 7:03	Durham	FG Dawson 22 (13-73-7:01)	3-0
1 4:43	Cowtown	TD Flacco 21 pass to Fitzgerald (Novak) (5-59-2:15)	3-7
2 14:09	Durham	TD Brees 10 pass to Johnson (Dawson) (11-80-5:34)	10-7
2 6:01	Cowtown	FG Novak 42 (7-63-3:35)	10-10
2 1:11	Durham	FG Dawson 27 (11-61-4:41)	13-10
3 7:23	Durham	TD Davis 1 run (Dawson) (9-63-3:20)	20-10
3 1:49	Cowtown	TD Flacco 17 pass to Fitzgerald (Novak) (10-80-5:34)	20-17
4 3:46	Cowtown	FG Novak 35 (9-32-5:42)	20-20
5 6:41	Durham	TD Davis 1 run	26-20

	DTL	COW
First Downs	32	19
Rushes	21-62	23-110
Passes	57-36-388	39-24-288
Sacked	1-12	2-17
Fumble	1	1
Penalties	6-60	12-87
Turnovers	0	0
Missed Tackles	5	4
Blitzes	25	43
Time	38:41	29:38
Third Down	6-13	5-16
Fourth Down	0-0	1-2
Red Att/Td/Fg	5/3/2	2/1/1
Net Offense	438	381

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


CUBS

3-1-1

7

14

14

0

0

35
Russell Wilson

19 of 29, 294 yards, 3 TDs


KNIGHTS

1-4-0

0

3

0

7

0

10
Le'Veon Bell

33 Carries, 110 yards, 1 TD

Russell Wilson found **Brandon LaFell** in the end zone on 4th & goal at the 1 to open the scoring. The Knights recovered a **Marqise Lee** fumble to set up a 25-yard **Patrick Murray** FG that temporarily shaved the lead to 7-3, but the Cubs fired back immediately with a 34-yard TD pass to **Rueben Randle** then a 21-yard scramble TD by Wilson to make it 21-3 at half time. **Mike Glennon** replaced **Teddy Bridgewater** at QB for the Knights but struggled playing catch-up after the Cubs padded their lead with a pair of 3rd quarter TDs: a 1-yard run by **Jeremy Hill** and a 45-yard pass to **Mike Wallace**.


RAVENS

4-0-1

3

10

14

7

0

34
RGIII

12 of 13, 131 yards, 2 TDs


MONARCHS

2-3-0

14

3

0

14

0

31
Joique Bell

19 Carries, 125 yards

Chris Ivory scored on a 6-yard run, Beaufort kick returner **Solomon Patton** fumbled the ensuing kickoff, and **Ryan Tannehill** found **Dwayne Bowe** for a 14-yard TD pass to make it 14-0 for the Monarchs before the Ravens had touched the ball. But a 73-yard run by **Jonathan Stewart** set up a 3-yard TD pass from **Shaun Hill** to **Randall Cobb** that, with debut of **RGIII** to start the 3rd, set off a streak of 24 points to put the Ravens in front 27-17. Tannehill drew close with a 15-yard TD to **Michael Crabtree**, but **RGIII** replied with a 33-yard TD pass to **Alshon Jeffery**, for the winning score.


VIOLATORS

0-5-0

0

0

0

8

0

8
Jamaal Charles

13 Carries, 73 yards, 1 TD


PATRIOTS

5-0-0

10

7

10

3

0

30
Duke Johnson

20 Carries, 114 yards, 2 TDs

Pats rookie **Duke Johnson** crossed the goal line from 5 yards to score the game's first major and put his team in front 10-0 in the 1st quarter then scored again from 2 yards out to make it 17-0 Pats at half time. The Virden attack fizzled through 3 periods while the Pats added to their lead with a **Ryan Succop** FG and a 5-yard TD pass from **Peyton Manning** to **Sammy Watkins** in the 3rd to make it 27-0 heading into the 4th. Trailing 30-0 late in the game, Virden marched 80 yards on the legs and hands of **Jamaal Charles** to finally break the shutout on a 3-yard dive into the end zone.



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!



MUSTANGS

5-0-0

10 7 17 10 0

44

OT

Matt Ryan

28 of 45, 427 yards, 4 TDs, 1 INT



SWORDFISH

0-5-0

3 17 0 7 0

27

CJ Anderson

24 Carries, 136 yards, 1 TD

Interceptions deep in opponent's territory set up early TDs by both teams while Swordfish running back **CJ Anderson** scored a TD and kept the Mustangs' defence off balance and on the field in building a surprising 20-17 half time lead. A different Aurora team appeared in the 2nd half as **Matt Ryan** regained the lead on a 45-yard TD pass to **Andre Holmes** to cap their opening drive then hit Holmes again for 20 yards to set up a 1-yard TD run by **Cameron Artis-Payne**. The Fish briefly drew within a TD on an 8-yard TD pass to Anderson, but Aurora put it away on a 62-yard TD pass to **Corey Fuller**.



SPARTANS

2-3-0

14 10 7 0 0

31

OT

Matt Forte

22 Carries, 101 yards, 3 TDs



REGULATORS

2-3-0

0 0 7 7 0

14

Tony Romo

34 of 47, 308 yards, 2 TDs

The Spartans scored on their first two series with passes of 30 and 26 yards to **Demaryius Thomas** on separate drives setting up a 10-yard TD pass to **Golden Tate** and a 1-yard TD run by **Matt Forte**. The Regs punted 5 times in their first 5 possessions, gaining only three 1st downs. **Josh Scobee** added a FG and Forte crossed the goal line from 5 yards out to make it 24-0 at half time. A 74-yard pass to Tate on Pickering's first possession of the 2nd half set up Forte's third rushing TD of the afternoon to make it 31-0. The Regs' **Keenan Allen** caught 2 TD passes in a fruitless catch-up attempt.



CANNIBALS

2-3-0

7 14 0 10 0

31

OT

Marcus Mariota

15 of 21, 218 yards, 2 TDs



HELLFIRE

1-4-0

0 0 7 0 0

7

Andrew Luck

15 of 28, 226 yards, 1 TD, 1 INT

The **Marcus Mariota-to-Emmanuel Sanders** connection was working early with a 39-yard long fly setting up the Cannibals first TD on a 2-yard bootleg by Mariota and a 41-yard TD pass on their next series putting Carthage in front 14-0. The Hellfire failed to keep the early pace, turning the ball over on downs inside the Carthage 40 on consecutive series. Carthage capped a dominant 1st half with a 4-yard TD pass to **Kyle Rudolph**. In the 3rd, **Paul Kruger** strip-sacked Mariota to set up a 37-yard TD pass to **Robert Woods** but a pick-six by **Harrison Smith** put the game away for Carthage.

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



TRIUMPH

4-1-0

7	7	7	7	0	28
				OT	

Jay Cutler

23 of 30, 250 yards, 3 TDs, 1 INT



CONVICTS

2-3-0

0	14	0	0	0	14
				OT	

Cam Newton

13 of 21, 156 yards, 1 TD

The Triumph opened the scoring with a 14-yard TD pass from **Jay Cutler** to **Antonio Brown** on their first drive, but the Convicts answered that and more with a 31-yard TD pass to **Malcom Floyd** and a 7-yard bootleg for a score by **Cam Newton** on consecutive drives. The Triumph tied it before the half with an 18-yard TD pass to **Vincent Jackson**. Rookie **Melvin Gordon** broke a 26-yard run off tackle for a TD to give Twin Cities a 21-14 lead and they would stay in front the rest of the way thanks to a 7-sack performance by the defence led by **Jurrell Casey**, who bagged Newton 4 times.



NORTH STARS

2-3-0

0	7	0	7	0	14
				OT	

Eli Manning

17 of 24, 179 yards, 2 TDs



EXCALIBURS

2-3-0

3	3	7	15	0	28
				OT	

Marshawn Lynch

26 Carries, 143 yards, 1 TD

A 34-yard pass from to **Stedman Bailey** helped set up a 5-yard TD pass from **Eli Manning** to **Andre Ellington** for the only major score of the 1st half. A pair of **Blair Walsh** FGs made it a 1-point deficit for York heading into half time. York grabbed its first lead on a 74-yard punt return TD by **Micah Hyde** but the North Stars erased that with a 13-yard TD pass to **David Johnson** to start the 4th. York broke the game suddenly with an 87-yard pass play to **Delanie Walker** setting up a 3-yard TD run by **Marshawn Lynch** then **Tom Brady** found Walker for a 10-yard TD pass with 2:25 left to seal the win.



GLADIATORS

3-2-0

7	14	0	17	0	38
				OT	

Ben Roethlisberger

19 of 22, 288 yards, 4 TDs



BLUE EAGLES

3-2-0

3	14	0	0	0	17
				OT	

Aaron Rodgers

30 of 47, 266 yards, 1 TD, 1 INT

A 72-yard pass to **Reggie Wayne** set up a 4-yard TD run by **LeSean McCoy** then the Glads added another score at the start of the 2nd on a 20-yard TD pass from **Big Ben** to **Jeremy Maclin** to give them an early 14-3 lead. The Eagles fired back with a trick play – **Mohamed Sanu** took the lateral and threw deep to **DeSean Jackson** for a 24-yard score, but the Glads countered with a 1-yard TD pass to **Jarvis Landry**. The Eagles closed the gap to 21-17 on an 11-yard TD pass from **Aaron Rodgers** to **Pierre Garcon** but were completely shut down in the 2nd half as the Glads pulled away in the 4th.

WEEK FOUR

STANDINGS

East	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Charleswood	5	0	0	1.000	158	31.6	86	17.2	14.4	3 0 0	4 0 0	5 0 0
Twin Cities	4	1	0	0.800	153	30.6	95	19	11.6	1 1 0	3 1 0	4 1 0
Carthage	2	3	0	0.400	142	28.4	137	27.4	1	1 1 0	2 2 0	2 3 0
Mohave	1	4	0	0.200	73	14.6	147	29.4	-14.8	0 3 0	1 3 0	1 4 0
Virden	0	5	0	0.000	63	12.6	142	28.4	-15.8	0 2 0	0 4 0	0 5 0
West	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Beaufort County	4	0	1	0.900	139	27.8	95	19	8.8	3 0 0	3 0 1	4 0 1
Iowa City	3	1	1	0.700	137	27.4	102	20.4	7	1 0 1	2 1 1	3 1 1
Chino	2	3	0	0.400	120	24	117	23.4	0.6	1 2 0	2 2 0	2 3 0
Mission Viejo	2	3	0	0.400	130	26	140	28	-2	1 1 0	1 3 0	2 3 0
Los Angeles	1	4	0	0.200	88	17.6	142	28.4	-10.8	1 2 0	1 3 0	1 4 0
North	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Durham	4	1	0	0.800	98	19.6	67	13.4	6.2	2 0 0	4 0 0	4 1 0
Cowtown	2	3	0	0.400	127	25.4	154	30.8	-5.4	2 1 0	1 3 0	2 3 0
Markham	2	3	0	0.400	113	22.6	85	17	5.6	2 0 0	2 2 0	2 3 0
Pickering	2	3	0	0.400	92	18.4	108	21.6	-3.2	1 1 0	1 3 0	2 3 0
York	2	3	0	0.400	89	17.8	96	19.2	-1.4	2 1 0	2 2 0	2 3 0
South	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Aurora	5	0	0	1.000	170	34	99	19.8	14.2	3 0 0	4 0 0	5 0 0
Scarborough	3	2	0	0.600	124	24.8	132	26.4	-1.6	2 1 0	2 2 0	3 2 0
Gwinnett	3	2	0	0.600	133	26.6	108	21.6	5	1 1 0	2 2 0	3 2 0
South Carolina	2	3	0	0.400	99	19.8	147	29.4	-9.6	2 1 0	2 2 0	2 3 0
Sebastian	0	5	0	0.000	130	26	179	35.8	-9.8	0 2 0	0 4 0	0 5 0

PASSING

Rk	Player	Team	Att	Cmp	C%	Yards	In	I%	Lg	TD	TD%	Rate
1	Newton,C	CHI	132	84	63.6	1193	3	2.3	56	11	8.3	111.1
2	Wilson,R	ICC	153	96	62.7	1256	0	0	56	10	6.5	110.4
3	Cutler	TCT	154	109	70.8	1271	5	3.2	73	13	8.4	110.1
4	Manning,P	CHP	149	97	65.1	1123	1	0.7	71	10	6.7	107.3
5	Hill,S	BCR	141	99	70.2	1057	2	1.4	54	9	6.4	107.2
6	Tannehill	MVM	176	120	68.2	1270	2	1.1	43	10	5.7	103.2
7	Roethlisbe	GWG	167	106	63.5	1351	3	1.8	72	11	6.6	103.2
8	Romo	SC	197	133	67.5	1315	3	1.5	54	11	5.6	98.4
9	Mariota	CAR	159	95	59.7	1285	5	3.1	57	12	7.5	97.6
10	Flacco	COW	204	131	64.2	1504	5	2.5	49	13	6.4	97.3
11	Manning,E	MAR	101	64	63.4	681	1	1	63	5	5	95.4
12	Ryan,M	AUR	192	111	57.8	1537	4	2.1	62	11	5.7	94
13	Bridgewater	LAK	91	51	56	536	2	2.2	44	7	7.7	89.8
14	Rodgers,A	SBE	206	125	60.7	1410	5	2.4	63	9	4.4	85.6
15	Rivers,P	PIC	116	68	58.6	902	5	4.3	74	6	5.2	82.6

RUSHING

Rk	Player	Team	Att	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	McCoy,L	GWG	118	651	5.5	40	3
2	Anderson,C	SS	109	590	5.4	24	5
3	Bell,L	LAK	166	575	3.5	23	2
4	Forte	PIC	112	541	4.8	36	4
5	Foster,A	AUR	85	534	6.3	34	4
6	Miller,L	CHP	77	492	6.4	23	2
7	Gordon,M	TCT	86	475	5.5	26	4
8	Gore	SC	87	455	5.2	50	1
9	Lacy	CAR	90	445	4.9	31	2
10	Morris,A	COW	80	442	5.5	47	2
11	Lynch,M	YOR	83	405	4.9	33	1
12	Murray,D	CHI	93	377	4.1	16	2
13	Hill,J	ICC	56	348	6.2	30	3
14	Coleman,T	MOH	93	345	3.7	20	3
15	Ivory	MVM	68	338	5	23	5
16	Blue	SBE	81	338	4.2	21	5
17	Johnson,D	CHP	56	336	6	29	4
18	Stewart	BCR	73	336	4.6	73	0
19	Charles,J	VV	63	331	5.3	54	1
20	Ingram,M	VV	71	284	4	15	4

RECEIVING

Rk	Player	Team	No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	Brown,A	TCT	39	440	11.3	27	5
2	Maclin	GWG	39	677	17.4	60	7
3	Evans,M	COW	34	439	12.9	47	2
4	Johnson,C	DTL	31	501	16.2	53	3
5	Fitzgerald	COW	30	338	11.3	21	6
6	Kelce,T	CAR	29	361	12.4	41	4
7	Allen,K	SC	29	342	11.8	42	3
8	Bryant,D	CHP	28	465	16.6	71	5
9	Jones,J	MOH	28	523	18.7	99	1
10	Decker	DTL	28	292	10.4	28	0
11	Hopkins,D	BCR	27	342	12.7	45	4
12	Nelson,J	SBE	27	326	12.1	21	4
13	Johnson,A	CHP	26	278	10.7	20	1
14	Jennings,G	SC	26	285	11	36	1
15	Boldin	AUR	26	440	16.9	40	1
16	Cobb	BCR	25	279	11.2	27	2
17	Jackson,V	TCT	25	423	16.9	73	5
18	Bowe	MVM	25	386	15.4	43	3
19	Crabtree	MVM	25	262	10.5	22	4
20	Garcon	SBE	25	263	10.5	21	3

KICKING

Rk	Player	Team	FGA	FGM	FG%	40	50	Lg	Pts
1	Succop	CHP	14	13	92.9	2	1	51	56
2	Parkey	BCR	14	13	92.9	7	1	54	51
3	Folk	AUR	11	10	90.9	2	0	48	50
4	Brown,J	MAR	14	12	85.7	5	1	54	47
5	Gostkowski	TCT	9	9	100	3	0	48	45
6	Dawson	DTL	14	12	85.7	3	0	49	44
7	Suisham	GWG	10	9	90	4	0	47	41
8	Novak	COW	8	8	100	2	0	48	37
9	Zuerlein	ICC	9	6	66.7	4	0	49	35
10	Hauschka	CAR	7	5	71.4	2	1	51	32
11	Vinatieri	SS	6	6	100	2	1	50	32
12	Bailey,D	CHI	6	5	83.3	5	2	53	30
13	Murray,P	LAK	6	6	100	4	2	53	28
14	Carpenter	MVM	6	4	66.7	3	1	55	28
15	Nugent	SBE	4	4	100	1	0	40	28
16	Tucker,J	SC	6	5	83.3	3	0	46	27
17	Scobee	PIC	7	5	71.4	2	1	53	26
18	Janikowski	MOH	7	6	85.7	1	1	52	25
19	Walsh	YOR	7	4	57.1	1	0	43	21
20	Crosby	VV	2	2	100	2	0	44	13



STANDINGS - WEEK 1

EFL ASIA	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff
Beijing	1	0	0	1.000	38	38	31	31	7
Taipei	1	0	0	1.000	21	21	16	16	5
Pyongyang	0	1	0	0.000	16	16	21	21	-5
Seoul	0	1	0	0.000	31	31	38	38	-7



SUN

0-1-0

7

3

0

16

David Soto
27 of 36, 277 yards, 2 TDs



SHARKS

1-0-0

7

7

7

21

Mitch Souza
15 of 21, 189 yards, 3 TDs

Sharks QB, **Mitch Souza**, connected with **Burl Rider** for a 39-yard TD pass to cap the game's opening drive. **David Soto** replied for the Sun with a 9-yard TD pass to **Percy Russell** to tie it up. **Carlos Tunk** put the Sun in front with a FG, but the Sharks erased that with Rider's second TD catch of the game, from 35 yards out. **Roderick Hodges** recorded 3 sacks in the 1st half, the last killing a late Sun push at the end of the 2nd. After Rider's 3rd TD catch put them up by 11 the Sharks held on with help from a **Noah Hopkins** fumble at the Sharks 2 and a missed 2-point convert after the final Sun TD.



CALM

0-1-0

21

3

0

31

Barry Carroll
26 of 35, 240 yards, 4 TDs, 2 INTs



RED DRAGONS

1-0-0

7

10

21

38

Isaiah Broderick
31 Carries, 203 yards, 2 TDs

Dragons RB, **Isaiah Broderick**, opened the scoring with a 72-yard TD run, but QB, **Barry Carroll** propelled the Calm into a 21-7 lead with 3 straight TD passes, two of those following Beijing turnovers in their own territory. **Wilford Calloway** connected with **Barry Steen** for a 16-yard TD pass to keep Beijing in the game going into half time. In the 3rd, Broderick scored on a 19-yard run to even the score at 24 then Calloway found Steen open for a 32-yard TD to take the lead. A pick-six by Dragons' safety **Fred Holt** extended the Beijing lead to 38-24 and a stand at their own 7 held off the Calm.



AROUND THE



With Spats McChad

NEW YORK – The world-wide debut of EFL Asia produced mixed results and varying reviews. In North America, where fans have three major professional leagues, nearly 750 college teams, and innumerable high school programs to satisfy their football fix, the TV ratings were poor, falling slightly below the NBL but well above Octopush. There were pockets of local interest on the West Coast. For example, Sid's Sushi Sports Bar & Café on Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco promoted both games and reported above average crowds and increased sales of imported Taiwan Beer and Tsingtao Beer during the rebroadcasts. ESPN-7, which owns the broadcast rights, invested heavily in promotion, but difficulty acquiring ESPN-7 in the United States – where it is expensive and often buried in specialty cable packages that include offerings like the Ancient History Channel, Duck World TV, and the Comet Channel – doomed ratings from the start.

In Asia, a combination of curiosity and faultily translated advertising boosted both live and TV audiences above projections. In Taipei, "football" was translated into the Mandarin word for "soccer" with the result that thousands of confused soccer fans bought tickets to see the Taipei Sharks outlast the Pyongyang Sun, 21-16 at Kaohsiung Stadium. Even so, there could not have been more than 20,000 people in the stands at kickoff time. In Beijing, free tickets distributed as perks and bonuses to Communist Party hacks as well as a large group of Markham North Stars fans from Guangdong Province filled out the bottom half of the bowl at Worker's Stadium, temporarily setting an EFL Asia attendance record of 28,540. For players like quarterback **Barry Carroll** of the visiting Seoul Calm, a former pigskin-slinger with the semi-pro Helena Hellions arena football team, the size of the crowd and stadium made it almost like being in the pros.

"The crowd seemed right into it. Biggest crowd I ever played for," Carroll, a former Black Hills State Yellow Jacket, told reporters after the game. "It's a new sport here, we were told. They cheered our first touchdown when their player tackled our guy in the end zone. It'll take time for 'em to learn the game, I guess."

Sports analysts were divided on the product. The numerous chaotic substitutions, broken plays, apparent missed assignments and uncalled penalties in Beijing's 38-31 victory over Seoul caused a snort of derision the morning after from **Cowan Bullherd** on Morning Bull:

"This football is definitely made in China, folks. It's just bad, no other way to describe it. Division II throwaways, semi-pro retreads, one guy on the Dragons who was wearing a sandwich board on a street corner in Reno two months ago (not that there's anything wrong with that if it's all you got). You know what I want to see? I want to see real Asians on the field. Make them swing on a rope over a mud pit and land on a tiny wooden pedestal to score a touchdown. Now, that would be entertainment!"

Chris Hortenson of ESPN took a more corporate view of the action: *"I thought it was entertaining. Both games went down to the wire. There was a really nice pass from Mitch Souza in the Taipei game. That kid, Hodges, could make an EFL roster someday. The fans were very excited, even if half of them didn't know what was going on. I think it's a win for the EFL."*

As I reviewed my tape of ESPN-7 footage from both opening contests I found I could overlook many of the obvious miscues on the field, as they weren't much more egregious than the ones already commonly seen these days at The Fish Tank or at Round Table Stadium. The missed calls were bad, but not much more annoying than the phantom calls we are accustomed to seeing from **Ed Hochuli** at pivotal moments in a big game. What did strike me was the effort these second hand athletes expended on the field; they went all out on *every play*. When was the last time we saw that from an EFL club?

The other things that caught my attention were the glitzy uniforms and the preponderance of team and league logos along virtually every sight line. A lot of work had gone into ensuring that the logos were visible at all times. I watched as the camera zeroed in on a young man at Kaohsiung Stadium in Taiwan sporting an ocean blue Sharks jersey with SOUZA on the back. That is when it dawned on me what was really happening on the other side of the world.....

....IT'S A BIG BUSINESS

A businessman friend of mine from my days at Cornell once told me that I should charge the EFL royalties for my weekly columns. I laughed and replied that if the EFL Committee could, they would probably pay to have me *stop* writing about them, since I have a reputation for not falling in line with the league's corporate message when it runs contrary to plain reality.

“That’s where you’re wrong, Spats,” he said confidently. “People love controversy, and they love the things that generate controversy. Smart marketers realized some time ago that generating controversy is how to keep people interested in a product. Football always was, and always will be, a betting sport, but you saw how fixing the deck brought down the NFL. The betting is still there, but the real money for the owners is coming from those saps who love their team and who love the drama around their team. You aren’t going to suck \$140 for a Peyton Manning jersey out of a compulsive gambler – that guy is betting his money on Peyton, but the league doesn’t get any of that. The guy who shells out more than he can afford for a football jersey is somebody who loves Peyton and the Patriots. The league makes its big money on TV deals, tickets and merchandise. Check out the numbers someday.”

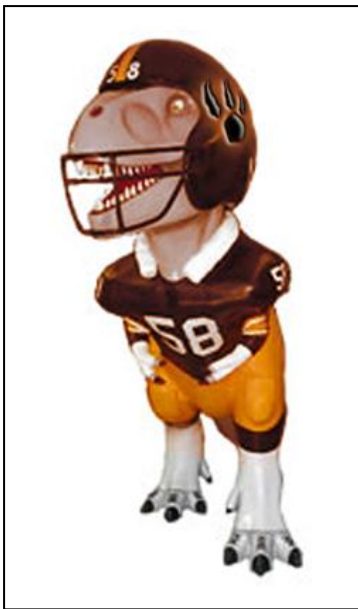
With the memory of my friend’s dissertation flooding back to me in that moment, I decided to do some research. I was stunned at what I found. According to the *Duorbes Magazine*, the combined value of the 20 EFL franchises has skyrocketed since the last expansion to a whopping \$13.5 billion, an average value of \$675 million per team. Following the EFL’s successful inaugural season in 2007, *Duorbes* had pegged the total value of the original 12 franchises at \$635 million, or roughly \$53 million per team, less than half of the salary cap figure. On average, an original franchise has multiplied 12 times in value since the league started.

For Georgia peanut farmer, computer software programmer and Ancient History Channel CEO, **Dave Birdsall**, his \$22 million investment in the Gladiators has paid off big time, with the team now ranking 5th overall in value at \$842 million, an increase of over 3700%. Durham owner, **Celine Dion**, has seen the lowest return on her investment, having fronted a cool \$255 million to relieve the Durham Region of the burden of maintaining the amazing, but financially draining artificial eco-system and genetically-engineered dinosaurs of Jurassic Park, in addition to a \$25 million franchise fee. On the plus side, the Thunder Lizards are now ranked 1st in overall value, topping the billion mark at \$1.35 billion, greater than the combined value of the entire Tex-Mex Football League. According to *Duorbes*, the initial value of the Thunder Lizards, with numerous extraneous liabilities factored in, was estimated at \$125 million at the end of 2007. The most expensive franchise in the league has grown in value over 980%, but not entirely for the reasons one might assume. The Jurassic Park theme park has spawned not only a burgeoning tourist trade, but also an extensive line of recreational and educational toys based on dinosaurs.

Dudley Dino is leader of the *Dino Dolls*, originally a line of toys for kids that became so popular that it formed the basis for an animated cartoon series of the same name on FOX-TV. Now the *Dino Dolls* can be found all over North America. Locally, models of the Durham Thunder Lizards mascot, **Raptorious Blaster**, are difficult to keep in stock. Their lifelike sounds, programmable



EFL merchandise is a booming business, with total sales breaking the \$1 billion milestone in 2014. The *Peyton Manning* jersey pictured above is the all-time best seller, according to the league, while the *Tom Brady* jersey (above right) set a single season record during the Florida Dragons’ Championship run in 2008. Original EFL paraphernalia, like the vintage **Meadowlands Swamp Dawgs** cap (right), is fetching big bucks in the re-sale market.



movements, long-lasting fusion batteries, and the unique ability to actually consume and digest small insects, make it a must-have for boys in the 5 to 10 year range and a bargain for parents at \$99.99 per unit.

With no championships under its belt, it may come as a surprise that Durham is the EFL's most valuable franchise, but value is not measured necessarily by success on the football field. Revenue generated through ticket sales, concessions and, above all, merchandise, determines the real value of a team. Add in live dinosaurs in a world famous theme park, a scientific genius behind it who is willing to work for room & board and a hot bowl of soup a day, and a renowned singer at the helm with her promotional machine working in the background, and you have a football

Dudley Dino (pictured left) is a favourite among children aged 3-6 years. He inspired the popular *Dino Dolls* line and a new animated cartoon series on FOX-TV. The **Raptorious Blaster** model dinosaur (pictured right) is a common sight on bedroom night tables of dinosaur-loving kids in Durham and across central Ontario.

mega-corporation in the making.

Interestingly, while no Durham player has ever broken into the Top Five in jersey sales in a given season, the sheer number of different jerseys used by the club over the years has resulted in a large number of what the industry calls "multiples," or more than one jersey per player per consumer, which increases the gross aggregate number of units sold for that player and team. It is for this reason that **Philip Rivers** stands at #3 in all-time player jersey sales, ahead of **Tom Brady** and **Aaron Rodgers**, both of whom have won championships.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the top five jerseys sales by player are all quarterbacks who have been in the league since the beginning. In order, **Peyton Manning**, **Drew Brees**, **Philip Rivers**, **Tom Brady** and **Aaron Rodgers** top the all-time jersey sales list, according to market data compiled by the EFL Merchandise Committee from sports gear manufacturers *Plode*, *Goat* and *Jubber*. The top two non-QBs sellers on offence are **Adrian Peterson** and **Andre Johnson** while the top two defensive players are **Darrelle Revis**, who at different times wore Florida, Scarborough, Death Valley, Santa Clara and now Beaufort County jerseys; and **James Harrison**, a bit of a surprise choice given that he is associated with the Convicts, a team not very popular with fans outside of southern California.

In 2014, EFL merchandise sales alone hit \$1.2 billion, up 25% over last year when total sales came in at \$960 million. In the league's first season, when fans were unsure of the league's long term prospects, total merchandise sales were a relatively paltry \$37 million. Original EFL merchandise from that inaugural season is now in high demand by sports memorabilia collectors. The value of any item from the original Meadowlands Swamp Dawgs, for example, increases in value every year as it is availability relative to the growing market gets smaller. The original green Thunder Lizards' jersey, the original "prison grey" Chino Convicts jersey and the infamous 2012 Iowa City Cubs "dark blue" jersey are also all sought-after collector's items. Manufacturers are increasing production of such "retro" jerseys, but only the originals are fetching big bucks on the re-sale market.

Game day at the stadium is the major source of revenue for any team; those that sellout often, like Durham, Charleswood, Chino and Aurora, maximize their profits while those that do not, such as Mission Viejo, Mohave, and Sebastian, miss out on the opportunity to gouge their fan base. Below is a list of average EFL prices followed by the league high and the league low:

	<u>AVERAGE COSTS</u>	<u>LEAGUE HIGH</u>	<u>LEAGUE LOW</u>
Ticket	\$72.00	\$145.00 (Durham)	\$28.00 (Sebastian)
Beer	\$ 8.25	\$ 12.00 (South Carolina)	\$ 3.50 (York)
Soda	\$ 4.85	\$ 8.00 (Los Angeles)	\$ 1.00 (Cowtown/Mohave)
Hot Dog	\$ 4.35	\$ 7.50 (Charleswood)	\$ 2.50 (Markham)
Parking	\$36.50	\$ 75.00 (Aurora)	\$12.00 (York)
Program	\$ 4.25	\$ 6.50 (Carthage)	\$ 3.00 (Iowa City/Beaufort County)

TV rights are the principal source of operating revenue for the league and its teams. Last year ESPN bought the broadcast rights to the league's Sunday night games for \$550 million, while CBS, NBC and FOX shelled out \$950 million between them for Friday Night Football and weekend afternoon games. With that revenue set and evenly distributed between the teams, extra revenue can only come from other sources. The data shows that, with spiking merchandise sales almost closing in on broadcast rights revenue, the biggest opportunity for growth is in the merchandise market. And guess where the largest emerging markets, with the most people

are? Asia! A jersey is a jersey, whether it has MANNING or SOUZA on the back. Convince enough people in a new market to buy their quarterback's jersey and it doesn't matter to the bottom line that one will someday be in the Football Hall of Fame in Canton, while the other might at best earn a mention in the Dayton Ohio Hall of Sports Heroes.

AROUND THE EFL (IN TWO MINUTES)

Week Five in the EFL was not a particularly competitive one. If close games are your preference, you might have been better off tuning in to EFL Asia. Nevertheless, there were some interesting developments and a few dramatic outcomes to report:

At Tillman Field in Cowtown, the Corn Kings lost 26-20 in overtime to their arch-rival the Durham Thunder Lizards to fall to 2-3 and a share of 2nd place, or last place, in the North Division. For the Corn King players it must have felt like a 6th game, as this was the 4th consecutive overtime game for Cowtown – an indecisive stretch in which they are 2-2. Oddly, every game was decided on the opening possession of the extra period; the team that won the toss won the game. In Week Five, Durham won the toss embarked on a grueling drive, consuming 7:19 off the clock and covering 89 yards before **Mike Davis** bowled through the winded Cowtown defence for the winning score. **Drew Brees** finally had the kind of game coach **George Kaldis** had been hoping for, passing for 388 yards, 1 TD and no picks. The Lizards rise to 4-1 and sole possession of 1st place in the North Division.

At Camelot in York, the North Stars suffered their second 4th quarter collapse in as many weeks, giving up 15 points in the final period to drop a 28-14 decision to the Swords. **Delanie Walker** broke two tackles on his way to an 87-yard catch-and-run to set up **Marshawn Lynch** for York's go-ahead touchdown and successful two-point conversion. **Tom Brady** delivered the *coup-de-grace* with 2:25 left, hooking up with Walker for a 10-yard TD pass. The Excaliburs got another big play from special teams, with **Micah Hyde** returning a punt 74 yards for a touchdown. It was York's third TD on a punt return already this season.

After dethroning the Monarchs last week in convincing fashion, the Knights marked game one of their next 24-game losing streak with a feeble effort at home in a 35-10 loss to the Cubs. Okay, the Cubs are *supposed* to win this game, I get it. But with nothing to lose (so to speak) I was hoping to see a little more of that "advanced playbook" that **Jeff Dohrn** alluded to last week. Not surprisingly, the "Le'Veon Bell Offence" could not gain traction against the Iowa defensive line. Any coach who thinks the Cubs' line is likely to crack in the face of 30+ carries from Mr. Shifty doesn't understand football in the modern era. On the other side, **Russell Wilson** had his way with the Blue Shield, passing for 294 yards and 3 TDs in making his case for MVP.

At The Big House in Chino, **Cam Newton** got punked by Triumph defensive tackle **Jurrell Casey**, who threw the Convicts' main man on his back 4 times and was in his face all afternoon in helping to lead Twin Cities to a 28-14 victory. The Triumph recovered from an **Antonio Brown** punt return fumble and the mandatory interception from **Jay Cutler** to play an otherwise perfect game. Rookie running back, **Melvin Gordon** is looking like the real deal; he logged his third 100+ rushing day and scored the game-winning touchdown on a 26-yard in the 3rd quarter.

At the Fish Tank in Sebastian, eyebrows around the continent lifted in unison at the sight of the Mustangs trailing Sebastian 20-17 at half time. (Remember, this was a Fish team playing without **Odell Beckham Jr**) The Mustangs turned it on the second half to finish well in front of the league's perennial patsy, 44-27, but their early struggles revealed a team that is no longer getting away scot-free with some of their more aggressive manoeuvres. The Mustangs did not start passing with consistency until the second half, when **Rich Liotta** ditched his too cute 'pass-out-of-run-formation-with-back-up-scarecrow-running-back-not-fooling-anybody' strategy and adopted an actual passing formation. On a side note, Sebastian halfback **CJ Anderson** rushed for 136 yards and a TD in another losing cause. He is simply electric and would make a contender out of almost any other team.

At Bluffs Stadium in Scarborough, grouchy fans renewed their protests against **Chris Dickinson** after the Blue Eagles' offence came up empty in the 2nd half to fall 38-17 to rival Gwinnett. This was a very good game through three quarters, with the Gladiators carrying a 21-17 lead into the final stanza. But **LeSean McCoy** began wearing down the Blue Eagles' defence with 42 yards in 6 carries on a touchdown drive early in the 4th that made it 28-17. Feeling the pressure, **Aaron Rodgers** drilled a ball to **DeSean Jackson** that was knocked loose and into the arms of a diving **Thomas DeCoud** for a game-breaking pick.

At His Majesty the King's Royal Coliseum in Mission Viejo the Pretenders dropped their third straight, 34-31 to the division-leading Ravens. After jumping out to a 14-0 lead, the Monarchs saw that lead dwindle rapidly before the combined efforts of **Jonathan Stewart**, **Shaun Hill**, and a born again **RGIII**, who made his 2015 debut to start the 2nd half. The apparently forsaken former 1st round pick took to the field with a vengeance, completing 12 of 13 for 131 yards and the eventual winning touchdown. When asked why he suddenly made the switch, Ravens' coach **Neil Shannon** simply replied, "It was time."

It was the kind of game a contender in a tight division has to win at home, but in falling without a fight to the Spartans, 31-14, the Regulators made a good argument against their post-season worthiness. This game was hard to watch for somebody indifferent to the fate of **Hal Corson's** Regulators, so it must have been a really tough pill to swallow for their fans. The Pickering offence did its job more or less as expected but it was the dominance of their untrustworthy defence that was the story of this game. The Spartans defence shut out **Tony Romo** in the first half and the early 3rd, forcing 6 punts in 7 possessions, while the offence piled up 31 unanswered points. By the time the Regs got around to answering, it was too little, too late.

And finally, we wrap up with a tight race for worst-game-of-the-week between the 30-8 mauling of Virden by the Patriots and the manhandling of the Hellfire defence by **Marcus Mariota** in the 31-7 Carthage win over Mohave. Neither game was ever in doubt for the victors, but the surprise dominance of the Cannibals' rookie against a team thought at one time by some to be half-decent makes that outcome a little more interesting, and therefore a slightly better blowout.

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JIMMY'S WEEK SIX PICKS

CHINO @ CARTHAGE (line – CANNIBALS by 2)

INJURIES: Chino – Ian Williams (DOUBTFUL); Carthage – David Hawthorne (QUESTIONABLE), Greg Hardy (IR), Derrick Johnson (IR) Matt Slauson (OUT), Andre Smith (OUT).

Both teams are 2-3 but only one is happy about it. The Cannibals are free of high expectations in a rebuilding year and are pleasantly surprised at the ease with which their rookie quarterback is dismantling offences. The defence is terrible, but so far not as terrible as some, which has to feel like a plus. The Convicts suddenly find themselves on the list of good teams that are in trouble heading into Week Six. A heart-breaking loss to the Cubs followed by a frustrating home loss to the Triumph has prompted knee-jerk criticism of the no. 1 ranked passer in the league, Cam Newton. The back-biting of 'De Man' is an indication of how much pressure is on Chino to deliver in a year when the West Division appears to be wide open to one of three teams capable of taking it. Chino won't be one of those teams for long if they fall to Carthage, as the odds-makers suggest. Vegas obviously sees something in this match-up between rookie and vet that I don't see. What I see is a cocky rookie about to get a wake-up call. **PICK: CHINO**

BEAUFORT COUNTY @ TWIN CITIES (line – TRIUMPH by 7)

INJURIES: Beaufort County – Evan Mathis (DOUBTFUL), Vontaze Burfict (OUT), Nick Fairley (OUT), Mason Foster (OUT), Ryan Mathews (OUT), Frank Alexander (IR), Jairus Byrd (IR); Twin Cities – Bobby Wagner (PROBABLE), Melvin Gordon (OUT), LaAdrian Waddle (OUT).

With the unanticipated quarterback switch at half time last week at Mission Viejo, the Ravens now have a full blown QB Controversy on their hands. RGIII is expected to start, but has not been announced. Shaun Hill shared first team snaps with him during practice but reportedly did not look as sharp. For whatever reasons, Neil Shannon elected to lead with Hill this year, but now that he is out, he should probably stay out, as following up RGIII's command performance in relief last week may be too much to ask from him. The Triumph announced after last week's dumping of Chino that Melvin Gordon will be OUT for this game with an ankle sprain. That is a significant setback for an offence that had come to rely on the speedy rookie to take the heat off Jay Cutler. The skittish Cutler is no fan of pressure and we all know what happens when he gets nervous. The Triumph may be a strong 4-1 and they are at home, but the Ravens are undefeated and may have a re-energized RGII at their disposal. Twin Cities is a clear favourite, but I expect the Ravens to give up their first loss grudgingly. **PICK: BEAUFORT COUNTY**

LOS ANGELES @ VIRDEN (line – KNIGHTS by 3)

INJURIES: Los Angeles – Bryan Stork (PROBABLE), John Conner (OUT), Brandin Cooks (OUT), CJ Spiller (OUT); Virden – Prince Amukamara (OUT), Martavis Bryant (OUT), Kelcy Quarles (IR), Stephen Tulloch (IR).

A win can be a wonderful thing, and when there is only one of those between two opposing teams five weeks into the season, it can make a big difference in the line. The Knights being favoured by a field goal on the road is something we have not seen in years and we are only seeing it now because they are facing the only team actually worse than they are right now. The winless Violators are a good bet to remain that way for the entire 16-game schedule unless they can find a way to win this game. It won't be easy, but with Jamaal Charles in the back field and Vontae Davis going up against Jordan Matthews (the only receiver Teddy Bridgewater seems willing to throw to who doesn't have 'BELL' on the back of his jersey), they stand a fighting chance. Speaking of Le'Veon Bell, he is discovering this year that he is no Barry Sanders, but he will have to do at least a half-assed impression of Big Bad Barry if his team is going to cover. **PICK: VIRDEN**

MOHAVE @ IOWA CITY (line – CUBS by 13)

INJURIES: **Mohave** – Allen Robinson (DOUBTFUL), Harry Douglas (OUT); **Iowa City** – None.

At 1-4, with their one win a narrow victory over Virden, the Hellfire are certainly performing like one of the worst teams in the league. They are turning into a classic ‘10-point Team,’ the kind that kicks a field goal to take an early lead then doesn’t score again until a token touchdown late in the 4th. In between those scores, the ‘10-point Team’ usually surrenders between 28 and 31 points. This week, against an increasingly confident and dangerous Cubs squad, I do not expect the Hellfire to get that early field goal. This game could easily turn ugly for Mohave in a hurry, and stay ugly throughout, except for Deron Redding’s practice of giving his stable of running backs much-needed work to finish off blowouts. So the Cubs’ back-off factor comes into play here when considering which way to go. It is possible, however, that Bishop Sankey could get the final 15 carries of the game and still keep the ball moving at scoring levels. It’s a big line, but Mohave is at a nadir right now. **PICK: IOWA CITY**

CHARLESWOOD @ MISSION VIEJO (line – PATRIOTS by 7)

INJURIES: **Charleswood** – Marcus Gilbert (PROBABLE), Duke Johnson (OUT), Lane Johnson (OUT); **Mission Viejo** – Josh Huff (QUESTIONABLE).

Statistically it was another solid day for Mission Viejo on the offensive side of the ball last week, but miscues allowed the Ravens back in the game and the defence could not hold off a resurgent RGIII. I know it is a big “if” when talking Monarchs football, but IF they can avoid turning the ball over they should give the Pats some trouble. Charleswood is missing one side of its dual threat out of the backfield, with Duke Johnson out, which means that Peyton will be called upon to do a little more than he has been asked to do so far. With the Pats leading the league in rushing, the elder Manning has been taking it easy, but he remains an effective if not overly prolific passer to this point in the young season. With the Pats expected to put up points on the lacklustre Monarch defence, it is hard to imagine the Monarchs pulling off an upset here, but if Ryan Tannehill can get into a rhythm, it will be a much closer game than many expect. **PICK: MISSION VIEJO**

SOUTH CAROLINA @ DURHAM (line – THUNDER LIZARDS by 14)

INJURIES: **South Carolina** – AJ Green (OUT), Jason Kelce (OUT), Dontay Moch (OUT). **Durham** – Kam Chancellor (DOUBTFUL), Ahmad Bradshaw (OUT), Alex Carter (OUT), Tyrann Mathieu (OUT).

The sluggish Regulators seem to have misplaced their sense of urgency as the early season passes them by. Statistically they are close to the middle of the pack in terms of moving the ball, but they are not scoring at the rate they are moving and they are giving up almost 30 points a game. There is much to be confused about with Hal Corson’s squad – they are bucking the common trend by posting a losing record with the benefit of a +5 turnover differential, an average of one turnover per game in their favour. Despite off-season improvements in the secondary, the defence has no bite, registering the second lowest sack percentage in the league, better than only Virden. The Thunder Lizards are a shaky 4-1, but with no immediate threat to their standing in the North Division, they can afford to test remedies for an anemic offence that just began to show signs of life last week against the under-achieving Corn Kings. The Lizards are winning with defence, and this week they get the benefit of facing a Tony Romo bereft of no. 1 target AJ Green. South Carolina could not move the ball in prime time against the Spartans, so don’t expect them to move it against Durham unless there is a radical new scheme involved. With Hal Corson being the very antithesis of radical anything, it is unlikely that the Lizards will see anything new or unmanageable from the Regs offence. **PICK: DURHAM**

AURORA @ PICKERING (line – MUSTANGS by 7)

INJURIES: **Aurora** – Karlos Dansby (OUT), Julian Edelman (OUT). **Pickering** – Jason Hatcher (OUT);

Signs that the Mustangs are on the verge of finally losing a game are becoming more obvious each week. Against Markham they almost, some say *should* have, lost. Last week they looked shaky in the first half before trampling the Swordfish under hoof. The Mustangs can expect to create scoring opportunities against a defence without much name recognition, but they will not have a blank cheque against the stubborn Gus Konstantakos, who is squeezing the most out of his mishmash of defenders and preventing red zone opportunities from reaching the end zone at a league-leading pace. The elite thoroughbred defence of 2014 has not yet appeared in 2015. In fact, they sport the worst run defence in the league by measure of yards-per-carry, which is good news for former Mustang Matt Forte, who will be gunning to prove Rich Liotta made a mistake by letting him go. If Philip Rivers could be relied upon to hold on to the ball this game could very well spell the end of Aurora’s winning streak. But Fumbly Phil has a history and reputation that cannot be ignored. Still, expect another close call for Aurora. **PICK: PICKERING**

SCARBOROUGH @ MARKHAM (line – NORTH STARS by 4)

INJURIES: **Scarborough** – Will Hill (QUESTIONABLE); **Markham** – Calais Campbell (PROBABLE), Brandon Marshall (OUT), Max Unger (OUT).

The North Stars are slowly reverting back to who we thought they were at the start of the season. The secret to their early success was right in front of our eyes all along, yet many were so blinded by the coaching charisma of Darrin Jones that they failed to see it. The Stars have “risen” to 2-3 thanks almost entirely to a +10 turnover differential, a number that dwarfs all others by a large margin. Give any team 2 free turnovers per game and they will find success above their baseline strength. Of course, the discipline and opportunism of the Markham defence has had a hand in many of those turnovers, but any good defence will tell you that you can’t count on turnovers, just welcome them when they come. The Blue Eagles are in the middle of a playoff race that could last into the season’s final week provided they don’t drop games they should win – like this one. A weak finish against Gwinnett last week was a curious blip in an otherwise upwardly trending performance so far. **PICK: SCARBOROUGH**

COWTOWN @ GWINNETT (line – GLADIATORS by 12)

INJURIES: **Cowtown** – Brandon Flowers (QUESTIONABLE), Cedric Ogbuehi (OUT), Ryan Wendell (OUT), Todd Gurley (OUT), Koa Misi (OUT); **Gwinnett** – Mychal Kendricks (OUT), Reggie Wayne (OUT).

Apart from a season-opening fiasco against Markham in which they turned the ball over 4 times, the Corn Kings have been in every game, reaching overtime four weeks in a row. The jury is out on their playoff prospects since the defence has been disappointing, but the offensive skill players have been making a shaky offensive line look respectable. Apart from the week they took off in Columbia, the Glads have been demonstrating that they are back and gunning for the post-season. Big Ben is looking very good and league-leading rusher LeSean McCoy has picked up where he left off last year. The defence is surrendering lots of yards but holding teams to field goals in the red zone. The Glads are a deserved favourite here, but the two-digit line seems to exaggerate both Gwinnett’s strengths and Cowtown’s weaknesses. Expect a tighter game. **PICK: COWTOWN**

YORK @ SEBASTIAN (line – EXCALIBURS by 4)

INJURIES: **York** – Giovani Bernard (OUT), De’Anthony Thomas (OUT), Nick Toon (OUT); **Sebastian** – Odell Beckham Jr. (OUT), Alex Mack (OUT), Paul Posluszny (OUT), Perry Riley Jr. (OUT).

The Swordfish dealt their top corner Orlando Scandrick after breaking camp and the move has plunged the secondary into disarray. This may be to the team’s benefit in the long run, but right now they are dropping winnable games due to a putrid pass defence that is surrendering an average of 352 yards per game. This means, for one week at least, Tom Brady doesn’t have to worry about double-coverage taking away Kelvin Benjamin. The herky-jerky Swords attack needs all the help it can get and they can expect full cooperation from Sebastian. On the other side, Andy Dalton is moving the ball well even if he is also turning it over at a worse than *Cutlerian* pace. With Odell Beckham still nursing injury, expect the Red Rifle to misfire. **PICK: YORK**



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This Week in EFL History
With Professor Sterling Smitherman

FROM THE EFL ARCHIVES – Week Five of the 2009 EFL season passed much like Week Five of the 2015 season, with little of significance to report from the gridiron. The Virden Violators, the dysfunctional remnants of the Anchorage Buccaneers – shamefully pillaged by the rest of the league during the final days of **Anthony Fenton’s** tenure as the maddest GM and Coach the league has ever seen – won their second game in a row, knocking off the Winnemucca Outlaws, 22-20. TERRORDOME was a happy as a house of horrors can be at the two-game winning streak,

the franchise’s second since inception.

The big news that week was the “arrest and detention” of the so-called ‘Fat Lady in Row 54,’ a woman so utterly obese that authorities were unable to move her from the Dawg Pound, where she had assaulted numerous spectators and a security guard during a game between Markham and Garland.

On the football field, lop-sided results reflected mostly lop-sided standings. The only tight race at the time was in the West Division, where Chino and LA shared 1st place with identical 4-1 records. Both teams boasted top defences, with the Knights ranked no. 1 and the Convicts ranked no. 4. Defence was the name of the game league-wide to that point, with all division leaders parked near the top of the statistical rankings for defence. The 5-0 Florida Dragons had surrendered less than 10 points a game!

The Iowa City Cubs, at 1-4, were beginning to draw some heat from journalists. Much more had been expected from them and they had been not only losing, but losing badly. The popularity of **Deron Redding** in Iowa had kept criticism voluntarily muted, but national columnist **Spats McChad** sounded off on him, causing others to tentatively follow suit.