

2015

Week Four



# EFL NEWS

ELITE FOOTBALL LEAGUE

2015

Week Four

November 2, 2015



CHP	48	TCT	41	VIR	10	ICC	23	MVM	14	YOR	3	PIC	27	MAR	20	GWG	16	SEB	28
CAR	31	MOH	10	BCR	29	CHI	20	LAK	30	DTL	17	COW	33	AUR	23	SC	20	SBE	38

# HUNTED!



*Sheldon Richardson* of the Cubs chases down Convicts quarterback, Cam Newton in 4<sup>th</sup> quarter action in Chino. The Cub defensive tackle had a monster day, recording 5 sacks to help his team hold off a determined Chino challenge. (Story Inside....)

## LATEST EFL NEWS INSIDE

- OVERTIME, TAKE-3 IN COWTOWN
- ALMOST IN AURORA
- CUBS CUFF CONVICTS
- EAGLES RISE
- SOMETHING HAPPENED IN COLUMBIA
- AND MORE.....

### Also in this issue

- SPATS FEATURE, 'HALLELUJAH,' 'A THOUSAND WAYS TO LOSE,' AROUND THE EFL.'
- JIMMY THE GEEK KNOWS THE SCORE IN WEEK 5
- THIS WEEK IN THE EFL HISTORY – WEEK FOUR OF 2009



*Who was slick  
in Week Four?*

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



**Mike Evans**  
**WR**  
Cowtown  
Corn Kings

11 Catches, 181 yards, 2 TDs.  
Unstoppable target in big OT win.



**Sheldon Richardson**  
**DT**  
Iowa City  
Cubs

6 tackles, 5 sacks, 2 QBP. One-man  
wrecking crew in Chino back field.



2-1-1

*Iowa City*

23

MVP

Russell Wilson

20

*Chino*

2-2-0



## TEAM LEADERS

Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Wilson	24	38	275	1
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Sproles	7	44	6.3	0
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
LaFell	6	71	11.8	0

Team	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
Iowa City	14	6	0	0	3	23
Chino	7	7	6	0	0	20

## Play of the Game

In the first possession of OT, the Convicts had a 1<sup>st</sup> down at their 47 yard line. **Sheldon Richardson** of the Cubs sacked **Cam Newton** twice in 3 plays to shut down the drive.

## TEAM LEADERS

Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Newton	26	36	269	2
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Murray	18	64	3.6	0
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Murray	11	96	8.7	1

**SUMMARY:** The Cubs attacked early as **Russell Wilson** stretched the field with a 30-yard long hitch to **Mike Wallace** for a TD on the opening drive. They then followed up an opening three-and-out by the Convicts with a 63-yard TD drive, capped by a 2-yard scoring scramble by Wilson, to make it a quick 14-0. A great individual effort by **Greg Olsen** on a surprise screen was good for 44 yards and a TD to get Chino back in the game as the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter ended. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, a pair of **Greg Zuerlein** FGs sandwiched a **Cam Newton** check down to **DeMarco Murray** for 17-yards and a score to make it 20-14 for the Cubs at half time. On their first drive of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half the Convicts drew within 3 on a 53-yard FG by **Dan Bailey** then a fumble by Wilson was pounced on by **Antoine Bethea** in Cubs territory, setting up the tying boot from 48 yards out. The Chino defence smothered the Cubs in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half, forcing 3 straight three-and-outs, but the Cubs' defence was equally effective, with **Sheldon Richardson** killing back-to-back Chino drives with a pair of 4<sup>th</sup> quarter sacks. The game went to OT. With Chino approaching mid-field on their opening series Richardson recorded 2 more sacks, pushing them back and getting his offence the ball. Wilson then drove them 62 yards to set up Zuerlein's 49-yard game-winning FG.

**QUOTES:** "How about a big shout out for Sheldon! He was sick, man! Good support from the defence tonight! We have to cut down on the penalties and we'll be good! Rolling with Russell, yeah!" Cubs coach, **Deron Redding**.

"Cam was sacked six times and under pressure all game. It's hard to get a rhythm going on offence when your QB can't get comfortable. Our defence kept us in the game but their defence won them the game," Chino coach, **Rob Nazar**.



## HAPPY FAN



## titter

## ANGRY FAN



**Sparky McGillicuddy @SparkyM**  
As much a victory for the defence as it was for the team as a whole. The critics can hold their tongues for a week at least.



**Quentin San Pedro @QSP**  
Didn't know Richardson was that good. Or was our line that bad?

10-29-2015 The Big House Temp: 94 Wind: Calm None MVP: **Russell Wilson**

## Scoring Summary

1 13:40	<b>Iowa City</b>	TD Wilson 30 pass to Wallace (Zuerlein) (6-69-1:15)	7-0
1 5:50	<b>Iowa City</b>	TD Wilson 2 run (Zuerlein) (10-63-6:06)	14-0
1 1:00	<b>Chino</b>	TD Newton 44 pass to Olsen (Bailey,D) (10-80-4:50)	14-7
2 9:55	<b>Iowa City</b>	FG Zuerlein 40 (13-53-5:53)	17-7
2 5:04	<b>Chino</b>	TD Newton 17 pass to Murray (Bailey,D) (12-80-4:51)	17-14
2 1:11	<b>Iowa City</b>	FG Zuerlein 46 (11-40-3:41)	20-14
3 12:11	<b>Chino</b>	FG Bailey 53 (6-45-2:43)	20-17
3 10:14	<b>Chino</b>	FG Bailey 48 (4-0-0:57)	20-20
5 3:48	<b>Iowa City</b>	FG Zuerlein 49 (11-62-6:32)	23-20

## ICC

## CHI

First Downs	22	19
Rushes	31-138	27-90
Passes	39-24-275	37-27-278
Sacked	1-3	6-43
Fumble	1	0
Penalties	14-122	11-88
Turnovers	1	0
Missed Tackles	2	4
Blitzes	4	25
Time	34:57	36:15
Third Down	6-15	7-20
Fourth Down	0-1	1-1
Red Att/Td/Fg	2/1/0	1/1/0
Net Offense	410	325

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



## SWORDFISH

0-4-0

0

13

8

7

0

28

OT

**Andy Dalton**  
23 of 38, 318 yards, 3 TDs, 2 INTs



## BLUE EAGLES

3-1-0

7

14

7

10

0

38

**Aaron Rodgers**  
23 of 33, 299 yards, 3 TDs

**Landon Collins** picked off **Andy Dalton** on the first series and **Alfred Blue** punched it in from 1 yard for an early 7-0 lead. Sebastian drew even on a 1-yard TD pass to **Kenny Stills** but the Eagles came back with an 18-yard TD pass from **Aaron Rodgers** to **Jordy Nelson**. A 19-yard TD pass to **Pierre Garcon** made it 21-7 but the Fish countered with a 6-yard TD run by **CJ Anderson**. **Mohamed Sanu** snared a 20-yard TD pass for the Eagles then **Kenny Britt** broke a short slant for a 72-yard TD. Blue scored his 2<sup>nd</sup> TD of the game to make it 35-21 Eagles and **Mike Nugent** wrapped up the win with a FG.



## GLADIATORS

2-2-0

7

3

3

3

0

16

OT

**LeSean McCoy**  
19 Carries, 94 yards, 1 TD



## REGULATORS

2-2-0

7

3

7

3

0

20

**Tony Romo**  
27 of 40, 215 yards, 2 TDs

Both teams scored TDs on their opening drives with **Tony Romo** hitting **Ted Wright** for a 10-yard TD pass and the Glads answering with a 3-yard TD run by **LeSean McCoy**. The ensuing punting duel ended when the Glads' **Mychal Kendricks** blocked a punt to set up the go-ahead FG by **Shaun Suisham**. **Justin Tucker** booted the equalizer from 36 yards with 0:05 left in the half to tie it 10-10. Gwinnett opened the 2<sup>nd</sup> half with a FG, but the Regs answered with an 8-yard TD pass to **Frank Gore**. A punt hit the leg of Glads' safety **William Moore** to set up a 43-yard Tucker FG to cap the scoring.



## SPARTANS

1-3-0

7

7

3

10

0

27

OT

**Philip Rivers**  
18 of 24, 256 yards, 1 TD



## CORN KINGS

2-2-0

14

3

3

7

6

33

**Mike Evans**  
11 Catches, 181 yards, 2 TDs

**Joe Flacco** capped the game's opening drive with a 39-yard TD pass to **Steve Smith** but the Spartans got a 32-yard TD pass from **Philip Rivers** to **Miles Austin** to tie it. Cowtown took the lead on a 3-yard TD run by **Alfred Morris** then added a FG, but the Spartans closed the gap with a 5-yard TD run by **Denard Robinson**. The Spartans took a 24-20 lead in the 4<sup>th</sup> but Cowtown countered with a 47-yard TD pass to **Mike Evans** with 1:08 left. The Spartans tied it with 0:04 left on a 24-yard **Josh Scobee** FG but could not hold the Corn Kings offence in OT, as Evans won it with a 5-yard TD catch.





**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!



**EXCALIBURS**

1-3-0

0

3

0

0

0

3

OT

**Marshawn Lynch**

13 Carries, 59 yards



**T-LIZARDS**

3-1-0

0

10

7

0

0

17

**Drew Brees**

17 of 27, 124 yards

**Blair Walsh** broke a scoreless tie with a 43-yard FG to start the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, but **Dominique Rodgers-Cromartie** picked off **Tom Brady** to set up the equalizer by **Phil Dawson** from 30 yards out. With 1:03 left in the half, **Drew Brees** snuck the ball across the goal line to cap off a 64-yard drive and give the Lizards a 10-3 lead. The York offence never got on track against the league-leading Lizard defence, gaining just 7 1<sup>st</sup> downs and 162 total yards. **DJ Hayden** picked off Brady and returned it to the York 13 yard line to set up an insurance TD run 6 plays later from the 1-foot line by **Carlos Hyde**.



**MONARCHS**

2-2-0

0

7

7

0

0

14

OT

**Ryan Tannehill**

27 of 38, 343 yards, 2 TDs



**KNIGHTS**

1-3-0

0

10

10

10

0

30

**Teddy Bridgewater**

14 of 19, 179 yards, 2 TDs

**Teddy Bridgewater** hooked up with **Andre Roberts** for a 13-yard TD pass to open the scoring. **Charles Woodson** forced a fumble that **Connor Barwin** returned to set up a 38-yard **Patrick Murray** FG to make it 10-0 for LA. **Ryan Tannehill** connected on TD passes of 16 yards to **Michael Crabtree** and 9 yard to **Marques Colston** to give the Monarchs a 14-13 lead in the 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Knights charged back with a 44-yard pass to **DeVante Parker** that set up Roberts' second TD catch of the day to make it 20-14. The Knights put it away by forcing 2 more fumbles, with **Brian Orakpo** returning one for a TD.



**VIOLATORS**

0-4-0

3

0

7

0

0

10

OT

**Jamaal Charles**

23 Carries, 105 yards



**RAVENS**

3-0-1

7

7

7

8

0

29

**Shaun Hill**

25 of 28, 256 yards, 3 TDs

**Shaun Hill** threw a 20-yard strike to **DeAndre Hopkins** for a Ravens TD on the opening drive of the game. **Jamaal Charles** carried 11 times on a 14-play Virden FG drive to make it 7-3. A strip-sack of **David Carr** in Virden territory by Raven tackle, **Red Bryant** set up a 7-yard TD pass to **Rob Gronkowski** to make it 14-3. The Violators got a big play from rookie **Devin Smith**, a short quick that went for 28-yards and a TD to close the gap to 14-10. A penalty-assisted 76-yard Raven drive ended with an 11-yard TD pass to Hopkins. A pair of FGs and a Bryant sack for a safety capped the scoring.

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



## PATRIOTS

4-0-0

7

21

14

6

0

48

OT

Peyton Manning

18 of 25, 250 yards, 3 TDs



## CANNIBALS

1-3-0

14

3

14

0

0

31

Marcus Mariota

22 of 40, 306 yards, 3 TDs

The Cannibals jumped out to a 14-0 lead on a 3-yard bootleg by **Marcus Mariota** and a 37-yard TD pass to **Doug Baldwin**. The Patriots responded with a **Peyton Manning** to **Dez Bryant** 43-yard TD pass and an 8-yard TD run by **Duke Johnson**. Another Johnson TD run and Bryant TD pass put Charleswood in front 28-17 at the half. A rapid fire 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter saw Pats TDs on a 26-yard pass to **Sammy Watkins** and 5-yard run by **Lamar Miller** matched by TD passes of 25 yards to **Emmanuel Sanders** and 33 yards to **Travis Kelce**, but 2 missed Cannibal 4<sup>th</sup> down tries set up 2 Pats' FGs to seal the win.



## NORTH STARS

2-2-0

7

3

10

0

0

20

OT

Eli Manning

17 of 28, 205 yards, 2 TDs, 1 INT



## MUSTANGS

4-0-0

0

6

0

17

0

23

Arian Foster

25 Carries, 145 yards

**George Iloka** picked off a pass from **Matt Ryan** and returned it 28 yards, setting up a 2-yard TD pass from **Eli Manning** to **Stedman Bailey** for a 7-0 lead. **Earl Thomas** picked off Manning to set up the second of 2 **Nick Folk** FGs, but the Stars made it 10-6 with a **Josh Brown** FG before the half. The Stars seemed to break the game open with a 63-yard TD pass on a check down to **Andre Ellington** and a FG, but Aurora charged back with a 28-yard TD pass to **Arian Foster**, a recovered onside kick, a 9-yard TD pass to **Brad Celek**, and a 40-yard pass to Celek to set up the game-winning FG with 0:17 left.



## TRIUMPH

3-1-0

7

14

17

3

0

41

OT

Jay Cutler

23 of 29, 287 yards, 5 TDs, 1 INT



## HELLFIRE

1-3-0

3

7

0

0

0

10

Tevin Coleman

18 Carries, 78 yards, 1 TD

Triumph QB, **Jay Cutler** spaced out 5 TD passes over the first 3 quarters, connecting with **Vincent Jackson** twice on throws of 26 and 16 yards, **Antonio Brown** twice on strikes of 4 and 27 yards, and **Charles Clay** on a short cross good for 15 yards. **Tevin Coleman** scored a TD 1-yard out for Mohave at the end of a 14-play, 74-yard drive, but that was the only bright moment for the Hellfire offence. **Andrew Luck** turned the ball over twice to start the second half, losing a fumble on a scramble and throwing an interception that set up 14 Twin Cities points and turned the game into a rout.

## WEEK FOUR

# STANDINGS

East	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Charleswood	4	0	0	1	128	32	78	19.5	12.5	2 0 0	3 0 0	4 0 0
Twin Cities	3	1	0	0.75	125	31.3	81	20.3	11	1 1 0	3 1 0	3 1 0
Mohave	1	3	0	0.25	66	16.5	116	29	-12.5	0 2 0	1 2 0	1 3 0
Carthage	1	3	0	0.25	111	27.8	130	32.5	-4.8	1 1 0	1 2 0	1 3 0
Virden	0	4	0	0	55	13.8	112	28	-14.3	0 2 0	0 3 0	0 4 0
West	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Beaufort County	3	0	1	0.875	105	26.3	64	16	10.3	3 0 0	2 0 1	3 0 1
Iowa City	2	1	1	0.625	102	25.5	92	23	2.5	1 0 1	1 1 1	2 1 1
Chino	2	2	0	0.5	106	26.5	89	22.3	4.3	1 1 0	2 2 0	2 2 0
Mission Viejo	2	2	0	0.5	99	24.8	106	26.5	-1.8	1 0 0	1 2 0	2 2 0
Los Angeles	1	3	0	0.25	78	19.5	107	26.8	-7.3	1 1 0	1 2 0	1 3 0
North	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Durham	3	1	0	0.75	72	18	47	11.8	6.3	2 0 0	3 0 0	3 1 0
Cowtown	2	2	0	0.5	107	26.8	128	32	-5.3	2 0 0	1 2 0	2 2 0
Markham	2	2	0	0.5	99	24.8	57	14.3	10.5	2 0 0	2 1 0	2 2 0
Pickering	1	3	0	0.25	61	15.3	94	23.5	-8.3	1 1 0	1 3 0	1 3 0
York	1	3	0	0.25	61	15.3	82	20.5	-5.3	1 1 0	1 2 0	1 3 0
South	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Aurora	4	0	0	1	126	31.5	72	18	13.5	3 0 0	3 0 0	4 0 0
Scarborough	3	1	0	0.75	107	26.8	94	23.5	3.3	2 0 0	2 1 0	3 1 0
Gwinnett	2	2	0	0.5	95	23.8	91	22.8	1	1 1 0	1 2 0	2 2 0
South Carolina	2	2	0	0.5	85	21.3	116	29	-7.8	2 0 0	2 2 0	2 2 0
Sebastian	0	4	0	0	103	25.8	135	33.8	-8	0 1 0	0 3 0	0 4 0

# PASSING

Rk	Player	Team	Att	Cmp	C%	Yards	In	I%	Lg	TD	TD%	Rate
1	Newton,C	CHI	111	71	64	1037	3	2.7	56	10	9	113.1
2	Manning,P	CHP	126	80	63.5	975	1	0.8	71	9	7.1	107.7
3	Cutler	TCT	124	86	69.4	1021	4	3.2	73	10	8.1	107.6
4	Wilson,R	ICC	124	77	62.1	962	0	0	56	7	5.6	105
5	Hill,S	BCR	124	88	71	892	2	1.6	29	7	5.6	103.3
6	Tannehill	MVM	145	99	68.3	1046	1	0.7	43	7	4.8	102.3
7	Flacco	COW	166	108	65.1	1232	5	3	49	11	6.6	96.8
8	Romo	SC	150	99	66	1007	3	2	54	9	6	96.7
9	Bridgewater	LAK	85	49	57.6	507	2	2.4	44	7	8.2	92.6
10	Mariota	CAR	138	80	58	1067	5	3.6	57	10	7.2	91.7
11	Roethlisberger	GWG	145	87	60	1063	3	2.1	63	7	4.8	90.1
12	Rodgers,A	SBE	159	95	59.7	1144	4	2.5	63	8	5	88.1
13	Ryan,M	AUR	147	83	56.5	1110	3	2	42	7	4.8	88
14	Manning,E	MAR	77	47	61	502	1	1.3	63	3	3.9	87.7
15	Dalton	SS	159	99	62.3	1176	6	3.8	81	7	4.4	83.7

## RUSHING

Rk	Player	Team	Att	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	Foster,A	AUR	85	534	6.3	34	4
2	McCoy,L	GWG	96	525	5.5	40	2
3	Miller,L	CHP	77	492	6.4	23	2
4	Bell,L	LAK	133	465	3.5	23	1
5	Anderson,C	SS	85	454	5.3	24	4
6	Forte	PIC	90	440	4.9	36	1
7	Gore	SC	71	375	5.3	50	1
8	Gordon,M	TCT	65	355	5.5	26	3
9	Lacy	CAR	69	339	4.9	31	2
10	Blue	SBE	80	338	4.2	21	5
11	Morris,A	COW	59	334	5.7	47	2
12	Hill,J	ICC	51	316	6.2	30	2
13	Ivory	MVM	58	285	4.9	23	4
14	Murray,D	CHI	72	270	3.8	16	2
15	Lynch,M	YOR	57	262	4.6	33	0
16	Charles,J	VV	50	258	5.2	54	0
17	Coleman,T	MOH	70	253	3.6	20	3
18	Ingram,M	VV	57	240	4.2	15	4
19	Stewart	BCR	61	240	3.9	15	0
20	Johnson,D	CHP	36	222	6.2	29	2

## RECEIVING

Rk	Player	Team	No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	Evans,M	COW	32	418	13.1	47	2
2	Maclin	GWG	30	542	18.1	60	5
3	Brown,A	TCT	28	322	11.5	27	4
4	Bryant,D	CHP	26	441	17	71	5
5	Kelce,T	CAR	26	320	12.3	41	4
6	Jones,J	MOH	24	447	18.6	99	1
7	Hopkins,D	BCR	23	271	11.8	29	4
8	Smith Sr.	COW	23	299	13	39	3
9	Fitzgerald	COW	22	238	10.8	17	4
10	Bowe	MVM	22	356	16.2	43	2
11	Johnson,C	DTL	22	353	16	53	2
12	Allen,K	SC	22	266	12.1	42	1
13	Stills	SS	22	236	10.7	23	2
14	Boldin	AUR	21	330	15.7	40	0
15	Jackson,V	TCT	21	387	18.4	73	4
16	Johnson,A	CHP	21	236	11.2	20	1
17	Nelson,J	SBE	21	279	13.3	21	4
18	Garcon	SBE	20	221	11.1	21	2
19	Decker	DTL	20	211	10.6	28	0
20	Hilton	DTL	20	245	12.3	40	0

## KICKING

Rk	Player	Team	FGA	FGM	FG%	40	50	Lg	Pts
1	Brown,J	MAR	14	12	85.7	5	1	54	45
2	Succop	CHP	11	10	90.9	2	1	51	44
3	Gostkowski	TCT	9	9	100	3	0	48	41
4	Parkey	BCR	12	11	91.7	6	1	54	41
5	Dawson	DTL	12	10	83.3	3	0	49	36
6	Folk	AUR	8	7	87.5	2	0	48	36
7	Suisham	GWG	9	8	88.9	3	0	47	33
8	Zuerlein	ICC	9	6	66.7	4	0	49	30
9	Novak	COW	6	6	100	1	0	48	29
10	Bailey,D	CHI	6	5	83.3	5	2	53	28
11	Hauschka	CAR	5	4	80	2	1	51	25
12	Tucker,J	SC	6	5	83.3	3	0	46	25
13	Janikowski	MOH	7	6	85.7	1	1	52	24
14	Murray,P	LAK	5	5	100	4	2	53	24
15	Nugent	SBE	3	3	100	1	0	40	23
16	Vinatieri	SS	4	4	100	2	1	50	23
17	Carpenter	MVM	5	3	60	3	1	55	21
18	Scobee	PIC	6	4	66.7	2	1	53	19
19	Crosby	VV	2	2	100	2	0	44	13
20	Walsh	YOR	4	2	50	1	0	43	13



# AROUND THE



## *With Spats McChad*

NEW YORK – Well, it didn't take long for EFL Asia to fall off the tracks. The league's banner opening week was postponed after unforeseen logistical complications made it impossible for the teams to meet their scheduling commitments. First, the Seoul Calm were delayed in their flight to Beijing as team officials engaged in prolonged negotiations with Chinese bureaucrats to secure entry visas for the players and coaches. Visa applications had been approved by a provincial minister but had not been authorized by the Communist Party Central Committee. This had caused quite an internal scandal and an investigation had been ordered by the Minister of Public Security. With at least two bureaucrats ready to be stripped of their party membership and lined up for a term in Organ Donor Central, better known as Qincheng Prison, the investigation was suddenly suspended when the party received "compensation" for the cost of the investigation and the additional fees associated with the central committee approval process. A source informs me the bank wad came from a wealthy South Korean businessman friend of **Jamie Rilett**, owner of the Eriean Cadillac, and EFL sponsor of the Seoul Calm.

While this was going on the Pyongyang Sun simply disappeared for a week. While the Taipei Sharks practiced in Kaohsiung Stadium the day before the big game, panicked EFL Asia officials reached out by mobile phone, Titter and Mugshot in an attempt to reach the Manager, coaching staff, players, trainers, anybody with the team, but mobile communications restrictions in the Hermit Kingdom prevented calls from reaching their intended recipients. When Sun patron, Corvalis Creeping Death owner, **Pat Crew** finally surfaced, he was tight-lipped about the circumstances, simply apologizing for "developments that were beyond the team's control" and moving forward with an upbeat, "it looks like we'll have to postpone our crushing of Taipei for one week."

According to my sources inside the team, one of whom is an eye-witness, Supreme Leader **Kim Jong-un** had shown up at the final practice in Kim Il-Sing Stadium before the team was to leave for Taiwan, dressed in a bright red track suit with an over-sized Sun logo on the back. Backed by a section of elite Unit 963 bodyguards, 'His Supremacy' took over directing the practice in an effort to impose some of his home made plays on the Sun playbook. Communicating through a local translator, an older man who did not have a very good grasp of football jargon and stuck to literal translations, Kim Jong-un oversaw the installation of plays such as 'Crafty Thief Run,' 'Pouncing Leopard Hunting,' 'Heroic Long Missile,' and his apparent favourite, 'Play Number 99' – a version, ironically, of the Statue of Liberty play in which the quarterback fakes a throw, hands off to the halfback, who fakes a throw while handing off to the fullback, who throws it to the quarterback, who is running a fly pattern down the middle of the field after making the original handoff. But that's not all. The quarterback catches the pass and immediately laterals it to the halfback, who was following the quarterback after handing off to the fullback. The halfback then laterals it to the fullback, who was following the half back after throwing to the quarterback. The play is to result in a touchdown, according to the Supreme Leader, and what the Supreme Leaders says goes.

Of course, a play with so many moving parts is tough to master; and there was no way the Sun football team was going to leave North Korea without mastering that play. Five days later, after getting the defence to cooperate with the offence in "mastering" the play, the football team was released from its secret "training camp" and went to Taiwan with detailed instructions delivered to the coach that 'Play Number 99' was to be the "winning play" in the "great game against the Bully's bootlicker" – the "Bully" being the United States and the bootlicker being Taiwan.

Of course, you know we're going to see 'Play Number 99' at some point in Week One – somebody's life may depend on it. Seeing a team try to execute that play in game action will be worth investing in ESPN-7 all on its own.

### ***HALLELUJAH***

Somewhere, beyond the physical realm, the angels themselves are singing *Hallelujah* after the LA Knights broke the longest losing streak in EFL history by upsetting the Mission Viejo Monarchs, 30-14 at Round Table Stadium. An announced crowd of 15,564 was on hand to witness history and celebrate the end of a winless drought stretching back to 2013. The last time LA had registered a game in the 'WIN' column was in Week Eleven of the 2013 season, when **Alex Smith** threw a 26-yard touchdown pass to **Andre Roberts** with less than two minutes remaining to break a 14-14 tie against Carthage and post their 4<sup>th</sup> and final win of the season. **Shonn Greene** was the leading rusher for the Knights that day, with a modest 50 yards on 17 carries, and he reminisced about that long ago victory after this week's game:



“There was no way it occurred to me at the time that we wouldn’t win another game for two years!” Greene told LA Times fashion reporter, **Gabrielle Laurent-Vainluven**. “We kept the faith all along, you know! We thought we could win every game. We never thought we were losers, until people started pointed out that, hey, we hadn’t won a game all last year, and hadn’t won this year. And then we started thinking, like, when *was* the last time we won a game? And somebody checked and it was that game against Carthage when Alex (Smith) came in for Sam on the last drive.”

Quarterback Roulette of the kind alluded to in Greene’s comment has been at the root of many of the Knights’ problems since they last posted a winning record in 2012. The **Sam Bradford** experiment never succeeded in part because he was injured and in part because he never received the full commitment from LA Coach **Jeff Dohrn**. This year, at least so far, Dohrn seems committed to second-year pro, **Teddy Bridgewater**, who spent last year on the bench learning from the mistakes of **Mike Glennon**.

Bridgewater has taken all of the snaps under center in 2015 and most of those – 55% in fact – have been handoffs to **Le’Veon Bell**. But in his limited opportunities, Bridgewater has proven to be a passable game manager. He is not being asked to carry the team, just to keep it from crashing and burning. This week he played an integral role in the Knights’ first win in forever, throwing two touchdown passes to Roberts and avoiding turnovers. It is still too early to say if Bridgewater is the answer at quarterback for the team that, since Day One, always seems to be asking the quarterback question; but he has earned some quality wait-and-see time.

For veteran safety, **Charles Woodson**, who has been a Knight since the beginning, defeating the Monarchs was a sweet victory. Woodson forced a **Larry Donnell** fumble in the second quarter that **Connor Barwin** recovered at the Monarch 36 yard line. It led to LA’s second score of the game, a 38-yard **Patrick Murray** field goal in the second quarter to make it 10-0 at the time. Woodson was emotional after the game, speaking to TV reporters in the locker room:

“As a veteran I know there are going to be good times and bad times because I’ve seen both,” Woodson said. “But this has been a really bad time for us and I admit sometimes I thought I might never see another win in this league. I’m a Knight, man, and I don’t have much time left, you know. But the defence looked like its old self today, the old Blue Shield, and young Teddy did his part too. It was nice.”

Over that 24-game losing streak the Knights had been mostly bad, but they had also been unlucky. This week, the bounces went their way. They forced five Monarch fumbles, recovering four of them, with the last going back the other way for a touchdown to make it 27-14 in the fourth quarter. The bounces might have been lucky, but the fumbles were not; they were the final result of a predatory defence that zeroed in on quarterback **Ryan Tannehill** like a pack of hungry wolves on a lamb. They had effectively stoned Monarch running back **Chris Ivory**, holding him to a paltry 17 yards on 11 carries and causing a frustrated **Chris Ferraro** to give up on the running game. The Monarch front five went into siege mode as wave after wave of blue thudded against the crumbling wall, breaking through for seven sacks, 3 by Barwin alone, and 4 QB pressures.

The offence had its signature moment in the third quarter, after the Monarchs had taken a 14-13 lead on a 9-yard touchdown pass to **Marques Colston**. They responded with an 81-yard touchdown drive composed of basic plays, well executed. They even got a game breaker from **DeVante Parker**, who used his speed and agility to turn a medium sideline pattern into a 44-yard gain. Soon after, **Andre Roberts** scored on a 2-yard pass from Bridgewater, shielding the ball from the tight man coverage with his body, and putting the Knights out in front to stay.

Stung by criticism that his offensive schemes are boring and unimaginative and therefore ineffective, **Jeff Dohrn** made a point to reference this drive in his post-game presser:

“We executed well on that drive,” Dohrn declared firmly as he leaned slightly forward at the podium. “I stress in every practice that execution is the key. We have struggled with our execution at times this year. If you can’t execute a basic pitch or a basic out pattern, you have no business attempting anything more complicated. We will open up the playbook



**Shonn Greene** celebrates by dousing Knights Coach **Jeff Dohrn** in Gatorade after LA beat Mission Viejo 30-14 in Week Four action. Apparently, breaking a 24-game losing streak is as euphoric as winning a division or a championship.

when I feel we are ready. We got a lot closer to opening up those advanced plays with our execution today.”

There has been a lot to criticize about the Knights over their long meltdown after reaching the pinnacle in 2011, but Dohrn’s professionalism is not one of them. To his credit, he has kept himself and his players even-keeled throughout the entire miserable experience of tumbling pell-mell from the top of EFL Mountain. By all accounts, he has maintained a good locker room atmosphere in circumstances that would have broken apart most teams. So, on a day when he and his players are basking in the glow of a well-earned win, this is not the time to point out that Dohrn’s Knights still have a very long way to go to once again be a major force in the league, even if unproven young Bridgewater proves capable of handling a more advanced playbook. Nor is it time to voice skepticism that the “advanced” version of the LA offence will be anything more than the tentative addition of a long pass and possibly a QB option. After all, voicing again the common knowledge that Dohrn is a defensive specialist with marginal acumen in offensive play design would be insensitive in the current climate of celebration. No, it is *not* time to dwell on the reasons why a team would pop out the champagne in Week Four after achieving something almost every other team manages to achieve several times a season as opposed to once every several seasons. I will leave that type of cynical commentary to the Archibald Thackers of the sports writing profession and conclude simply with hearty congratulations to the Knights and their coach: *Well done, men! Well done!*

### **A THOUSAND WAYS TO LOSE**

Occasionally, when searching for one of those thousand ways to win, Markham coach, **Darrin Jones** will stumble on one of those annoying thousand ways to lose. Normally, a team facing the Aurora Mustangs has that manner of loss imposed upon it, rather than having to search for it. But this past Sunday afternoon at Candlestick Park in Aurora the tables shockingly turned on the burgeoning Aurora dynasty and it looked nearly certain as the game neared the half-way point of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter that the invincible Mustangs would finally lose a game for the first time while wearing Aurora red and gold.

Rewind to the beginning. The game unfolded as many others had before it when the North Stars had been considered over-matched. Playing with the purity and determination of 11 Forrest Gumps, the Jones-led legends of the gridiron got their customary early turnover, upsetting the natural flow of Mustang dominance almost immediately. With Aurora on the march and on the edge of field goal range, Markham safety **George Iloka** picked off a long slant intended for **Anquan Boldin** and returned it 28 yards to the Aurora 42 yard line. Markham countered with a long pass to **Brandon Marshall** for 29 yards, penetrating the red zone, and three plays later **Stedman Bailey** snagged a short pass from **Eli Manning** for a touchdown. Aurora had lost serve and a little face in front of its home crowd, but **Rich Liotta** nevertheless looked composed on the sidelines. ‘*Sometimes it starts this way, but it always turns around,*’ he may have been thinking.

The North Stars looked pretty enthusiastic after turning the tables early. Way to Win no. 60 was going according to plan. For the rest of the quarter they looked just a little quicker and hit just a little harder than their unbeaten counterpart. But a missed field goal from 44 yards out by **Josh Brown** left them with nothing to show for it. As the second quarter started the Mustangs were again on the march and in field goal range, facing 1<sup>st</sup> and 10, when a tipped pass was intercepted by rookie corner **Quinten Rollins**. He went down where he caught it to snuff out the Aurora threat. This time the Stars went backwards and were unable to capitalize. They fell into a field position disadvantage and the Mustangs exploited it with a short field goal drive to get on the board.

On Markham’s next possession, Manning was intercepted by **Earl Thomas** at the Markham 23. The Aurora fans turned loud again, sensing an imminent collapse by their upstart and barely worthy opponent. But a hard hit by corner **Orlando Scandrick** caused Boldin to drop a pass in the end zone on 3<sup>rd</sup> down and the Mustangs had to settle for another field goal. They had wanted to secure the lead before half time, but with less than two minutes remaining, would have to be content with a one-point deficit. But, to everyone’s surprise, Markham was not finished scoring. A 17-yard run by **Andre Ellington** and a 23-yard run by rookie **David Johnson** powered a 65-yard drive that set up a 29-yard Brown field goal with 0:02 left in the half. A smattering of discontented catcalls could be heard coming from the cheap seats as the teams filed off the field to their dressing rooms.

The second half started lazily, as if both teams were a little punch drunk after the first two frames and needed a rest. After trading punts, the Stars took over deep in their end. From there they slowly cranked the offence into second gear with a few short passes and two-bit runs to get out of the danger zone. Suddenly, out of nowhere, a play that appeared to be unravelling due to great coverage by the Mustangs secondary, turned into disaster for Aurora. Manning checked down to an uncovered Ellington and the shifty speedster slipped past three tackles to break free for a 63-yard touchdown. The Markham sideline was jubilant while the Mustangs sideline looked on passively. A straight-faced **Rich Liotta** looked at his clipboard and spoke two words into the mouthpiece of his headset. ‘*Run Foster,*’ he might have said.

On the Mustangs next possession, three consecutive runs, two by **Arian Foster** and one by **Cameron Artis-Payne** failed to generate a first down. The North Stars seemed to know the run was coming and were ready for it. The Mustangs punted away and soon Markham was coming back, crossing midfield and into field goal range on a 22-yard end around by **Percy Harvin**. Brown was good from 48 yards out for another 3 points and a 20-6 Markham lead heading into the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter.

Strangely, there was almost no booing as the teams switched ends. The crowd did not know what to do. They had never witnessed anything like this before this late in a Mustangs game. The Northern Dancers went to work kicking up their legs, shaking their pompoms, and beaming smiles into the stands in an effort to cheer the crowd, but the response was muted. Processing the unimaginable seemed to be beyond the thousands of Aurora partisans.

Sitting on their hands, the crowd watched tensely as Markham linebacker **Rob Ninkovich** sacked **Matt Ryan** for an 11-yard



loss, abruptly shutting down an Aurora drive that had started with promise. The Stars got the ball back with a chance to put the game away, but a holding penalty backed them up and stifled the momentum. Aurora got the ball back at their own 39 with 7:57 left, trailing by two converted touchdowns. Had the Mighty Mustangs finally met their match?

With the swiftness of a cobra the Mustangs struck. On the fifth play of their ensuing drive, Ryan checked down to Foster and the Mustangs running back sprinted through a gaping hole in the middle of the field for a 28-yard touchdown. It had taken Aurora 1:48 to pull within one score. With 6:14 remaining there was plenty of time for them to make a stop and get the ball back. But in a bold move, born of understanding the moment and an iron will to win, Liotta rolled the dice and **Nick Folk** kicked onside. The Stars were totally unprepared for it and Thomas recovered for the Mustangs at their 49 yard line. A wide-eyed **Darrin Jones** stared at the field. 'WTF?' he might have been thinking.

It took all of 1:52 for the Mustangs to find the Markham end zone again. A 20-yard pass to **Andre Holmes** and a facemask penalty against Markham propelled Aurora into position for **Brad Celek** to finish it with a 9-yard touchdown catch. In the blink of eye, or the time it takes to make a ham sandwich, the Mustangs were back even again. The pressure was now on the Stars. They had worked their way into a position to pull off a stunning upset and had released their grip.

The North Stars offence gingerly worked its way toward mid-field, but on 3<sup>rd</sup> & 9 **Trent Cole** sacked Manning to force a punt. The Mustangs countered with a backwards drive abetted by the 4<sup>th</sup> sack of the day for Ninkovich. Markham got the ball back but groggily went three-and-out, punting it to the Aurora 23 with 0:51 left. With the crowd on its feet, Ryan and the offence fell into a familiar rhythm. First he threw long and complete to Holmes for 20 yards then fired a strike to Celek that the unheralded tight end carried 40 yards uncontested to the Markham 7 yard line. Leaving nothing to chance, **Rich Liotta** coolly sent out his field goal unit on 1<sup>st</sup> down and Folk made no mistake from 25 yards out. Final: Aurora 23, Markham 20.

In a game pitting the league's two most charmed teams against each other, the underdog North Stars thought they had found a way to win, only to discover that the Mustangs, in furious defence of their winning streak, had found a better one.

#### **AROUND THE EFL (IN TWO MINUTES)**

At Tillman Field in Cowtown the Corn Kings played their third consecutive overtime game, surviving by the husk of their cobs in regulation and knocking out the Spartans with a first-possession touchdown drive it OT to prevail 33-27. The back-and-forth game appeared to shift the Spartans way in the 4<sup>th</sup> when **Joe Flacco** was picked off by **Eric Reid** in the end zone to kill a red zone opportunity with the Kings trailing 24-20. Cowtown eventually got the ball back without further damage and, on 4<sup>th</sup> & 15 with 1:08 left Flacco hit **Mike Evans** deep for a 47-yard TD and a 27-24 lead. **Philip Rivers** drove the Spartans 84 yards to the Cowtown 2, but failed to score a major as time ticked away in regulation. They settled for 3 points and never got the ball again.

At the Big House in Chino, the bitter rivalry between the Convicts and the Cubs spiced up a hotly contested battle in the exercise yard as the visiting Cubs edged the home team 23-20 in overtime. The game was so intense at the outset, that by the second half both teams looked too tired to score. After jumping out to a 14-0 lead in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter, the Cubs gradually slackened the pace on offence. That was the cue for Cub defensive tackle, **Sheldon Richardson** to bring his game up a couple of levels with 5 sacks of **Cam Newton**, 4 of them in the second half. Newton felt the pressure all day, getting sacked 6 times and pressured 7. If the Convicts are serious about the division, they are going to have to find a way to protect Cam, or get better receivers.

At the Carolina Slammer in Columbia, **Tony Romo** and the Regulators won the Battle of the Olde South, beating Gwinnett, 20-16 to even their record at 2-2. If you want to go cross eyed, or fall asleep standing up, try to find a real 21<sup>st</sup> century highlight in this game film. Good luck! A 60-yard pass to the Regs' 3 yard line from **Big Ben** to **Jeremy Maclin** was the finest single play of the day, but the failure of the Glads to gain a single yard or score a point in four tries after that makes it almost pointless, except to point out that the Glads really suck on 4<sup>th</sup> down.

At the Killing Field in Carthage the Cannibals got a spirited performance from their rookie QB, **Marcus Mariota**, who turned in a 3-touchdown, 300-yard passing day against a very good Charleswood defence. It was not enough, however, to overcome the clinical dismantling of their much flimsier defence by the grand master himself, **Peyton Manning**. The 48-31 score is about as competitive as the young Cannibals can hope to get against sagely Charleswood, so give them a nice hand.

In Beaufort County, journeyman QB, **Shaun Hill** continued to baffle the experts with another winning outing for the Ravens as they easily dumped Virden 29-10 to remain undefeated at 3-0-1. Okay, mention that his opponent was the Violators and it is not so baffling after all. Virden could be in the early stages of breaking the "unbreakable" Knights losing streak of 24.

At Bluffs Stadium in Scarborough, **Aaron Rodgers** threw 3 touchdown passes and **Alfred Blue** ran for 2 more as the Blue Eagles buzzed the visiting Swordfish, 38-28. Scarborough fans took another day off from violence as the Eagles delivered a strong victory at home against a team they have struggled to beat. The Fish may be 0-4, but they are the strongest 0-4 out there.

At the Fiery Depths in Mohave, **Jay Cutler** lit up the flammable Hellfire defence, throwing 5 touchdown passes and spacing one interception to turn this game into a 41-10 laughter in favour of the Triumph. There is nothing funny about it for Mohave fans, of course, those few who bother to show up for games. Attendance is dropping in Mohave and **Bobby Elder** is saying his team needs a new stadium paid for by the county. How about a better team first, Bobby?

And finally, Jurassic Park in Durham was the sight of the clunker contest of the week as the supposedly high-powered Durham offence lurched past the hobbled Excaliburs, 17-3. The teams combined for just 349 yards of total offence. Think about it – that is just 6 yards more than Ryan Tannehill passed for by himself this week! And no, it wasn't raining in Durham.

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### JIMMY'S WEEK FIVE PICKS

#### **GWINNETT @ SCARBOROUGH (line – Pick'Em)**

**INJURIES:** Gwinnett – Dri Archer (PROBABLE), Mychal Kendrick (OUT); Scarborough – Will Hill (OUT).

If you are a Blue Eagles Believer you must believe there is room for improvement on the offensive side of the ball. Aaron Rodgers has feasted on the weak and struggled against the strong. The Gladiators are somewhere in the middle defensively so a solid game from the Eagles' star pivot is a reasonable expectation. TJ Yeldon is back and should draw some attention, but whether it will be enough to free up space for Scarborough's under-used deep threats, Jordy Nelson and DeSean Jackson, remains to be seen. LeSean McCoy and Jeremy Maclin are Big Ben's main weapons, accounting for over 65% of the Gladiator offensive output. Shut down one of those engines and it will slow down the entire Gwinnett train, but that is easier said than done. Terrell Suggs is having a monster year so far, averaging 2 sacks per game, but Ndamukong Suh has yet to bag an opposing quarterback and has not impressed against the run. The Glads lacked intensity last week, dropping a game they needed to win against a similarly lethargic Regulators squad.

Expect them to bounce back with a better effort this week against the unpredictable Eagles. **PICK: GWINNETT**

#### **AURORA @ SEBASTIAN (line – MUSTANGS by 15)**

**INJURIES:** Aurora – Karlos Dansby (OUT), Julian Edelman (OUT). Sebastian – Odell Beckham Jr. (OUT), Alex Mack (OUT), Perry Riley Jr. (OUT).

The Mustangs survived a scare last week, ringing up 17 points in the final 6 minutes to nose past Markham and keep their winning streak alive. Coming off an emotionally-charged victory, the risk of a letdown this week is high. Fortunately for the legend of Aurora invincibility they can bring their 'B-game' with them to the Fish Tank and still write another winning chapter in their fairy tale history. The Fish are in a sorrier state than usual with Odell Beckham Jr out of action. Andy Dalton will sorely miss his favourite target while CJ Anderson may be good for a touchdown, but no more, against the league's most talented defence. The most serious problem for Sebastian, however, will be trying to stop a Mustang offence that is tops in the league in yards-per-play and boasts the league's most efficient running game. Julian Edelman is out but Andre Holmes is emerging as a reliable back-up target for Matt Ryan in his absence. Heck, even Sammie Coates could have a big day against the severe coverage deficiencies of the Swordfish secondary. This is a big line but easily covered by the big boys. **PICK:AURORA**

#### **MARKHAM @ YORK (line – NORTH STARS by 6)**

**INJURIES:** Markham – Calais Campbell (OUT), Brandon Marshall (OUT), Max Unger (OUT); York – Paul Richardson (PROBABLE), De'Anthony Thomas (OUT).

The North Stars turned the story around last week, dominating the Mustangs so thoroughly for three-and-a-half quarters that their 4<sup>th</sup> quarter collapse came as a total shock. It was as if undefeated Aurora had pulled off a big upset instead of failing to cover against a team half its size. Markham carries its newfound chic into York, favoured large against a team that has failed to impress much through one quarter of the season. They come in nursing injuries to their best defensive lineman, their best wide receiver and their starting center. This is the first game the North Stars have not been fully healthy and their first real bounce back test following a heart-breaking loss, so we may very well see a different Markham team. With all their troubles on offence, the Excaliburs have been difficult to move against and Von Miller has not even had a breakout game yet. Don't expect Tom Brady to have his way with the stingy Markham defence but count on the Swords defence to parry most of Markham's blows and keep it close. **PICK: YORK**



## **DURHAM @ COWTOWN (line – THUNDER LIZARDS by 6)**

**INJURIES:** **Durham** – Alex Carter (OUT), Kam Chancellor (OUT), Carlos Hyde (OUT), (Tyrann Mathieu (OUT). **Cowtown** – Ka'Deem Carey (QUESTIONABLE), Brandon Flowers (OUT), Cedric Ogbuehi (OUT), Ryan Wendell (OUT), Todd Gurley (OUT), Koa Misi (OUT).

The Corn Kings have already had three games decided in overtime and the extra time on the field seems to have taken a toll on their health. Notably absent for this game is top corner Brandon Flowers, who had been a half hope to limit receiver TY Hilton, the first of many weapons at Drew Brees disposal in the passing game. These weapons have been ``mysteriously misfiring to date. The Durham offence is ranked 17<sup>th</sup> and is in dire need of a breakout game to restore their confidence. The defence, on the other hand, has been lights out due to a secondary that has limited opposing quarterbacks to a 52.4 passer rating. The Lizards can be run on, but with Cowtown's shaky offensive line shakier with loss of Ryan Wendell, they cannot count on the ground game to rescue pick-prone Joe Flacco from Richard Sherman and Devin McCourty. Durham is missing Kam Chancellor, which should help the Corn Kings pick up a few more yards in garbage time as they struggle to overcome a big early deficit. **PICK:**

**DURHAM**

## **IOWA CITY @ LOS ANGELES (line – CUBS by 4)**

**INJURIES:** **Iowa City** – None; **Los Angeles** – Brandin Cooks (OUT), CJ Spiller (OUT), Bryan Stork (OUT).

The Knights snapped the longest losing streak in EFL history last week and did it with their defence, forcing four turnovers and holding the Monarchs to 17 yards rushing. But talk of a revival of the 'Blue Shield' of the Knights' glory years is premature. The problems in the secondary are acute; with a converted safety, J.J. Wilcox, starting at corner opposite elderly Cortland Finnegan. The strength of the LA defence is housed in their front four, but the Cub offensive front five facing them is the most talented in the league. The Cubs win all the match-ups, including at running back, where the combo of Jeremy Hill and Darren Sproles edges out the one skill player LA can claim is a legitimate pro bowl talent in Le'Veon Bell. The Cubs' All World defensive line is starting to flex, with Sheldon Richardson breaking out last week in a big division victory over Chino. If the Cubs are finally finding their stride, look out! Don't expect this game to be a blowout, but don't expect it to be close either. **PICK: IOWA CITY**

## **BEAUFORT COUNTY @ MISSION VIEJO (line – RAVENS by 4)**

**INJURIES:** **Beaufort County** – Vontaze Burfict (OUT), Evan Mathis (OUT), Nick Fairley (OUT), Mason Foster (OUT), Ryan Mathews (OUT), Jairus Byrd (IR); **Mission Viejo** – Lardarius Webb (DOUBTFUL), Josh Huff (OUT).

As I predicted, the Monarchs were the first to fall to the Knights this season, but that does not mean I'm no longer bullish on Ferraro's purple legions. In the process of a very slow development, the Monarchs are in a transition phase between ridiculousness and respectability, often wavering between the two from week to week. They do not know how good they are, or how bad they can be. Last week they were embarrassed by a Knights team better than its 24-game losing streak would suggest. This week, they could benefit from a karmic correction that puts them in a position to take down a Ravens team that is likely not as good as its undefeated record would suggest. Shaun Hill is the 5<sup>th</sup>-ranked passer in the league, a ranking his body of work says he cannot hold on to much longer. Ryan Tannehill is right behind him and looking every bit the blooming franchise quarterback he was drafted to be. The Monarchs have the studs on the offensive line to control the ball and keep their fragile, young, but not talentless defence fresh. For Ravens backers who see glory on the horizon this is a classic trap game. **PICK: MISSION VIEJO**

## **VIRDEN @ CHARLESWOOD (line – PATRIOTS by 19)**

**INJURIES:** **Virden** – Amari Cooper (PROBABLE), Mike Scifres (QUESTIONABLE), Kelcy Quarles (IR), Stephen Tulloch (IR), Martavis Bryant (OUT); **Charleswood** – Marcus Gilbert (OUT), Lane Johnson (OUT);

Last year, when the situation was reversed and the confident Violators came into Patriot Place to face the consensus worst team in the league, they were stunned by a 71-yard touchdown pass from a rookie to a rookie to lose the game in the final minute. Many observers think Virden never recovered from that loss. This week, they have an opportunity to right that historical wrong. Virden is, without question, the worst team in the league....yes, even worse than the Swordfish. The Pats are not merely contenders; they are *the* contender in the PAC – the team to beat. How unbelievable it would be if Virden found a way to win this game. It would be the kind of upset that would irrevocably shatter the natural order. Virden would not have to win another game – its season would be made. On the other side, the Pats would not be able to win enough to erase the stain. Is such an outcome possible? Yes it is, in the same way that it is theoretically possible to travel back in time and trip Sammy Watkins before he reaches the end zone and ruins the Violators season. Beating a 19-point spread, on the other hand, can happen. **PICK: VIRDEN**

## PICKERING @ SOUTH CAROLINA (line – REGULATORS by 5)

**INJURIES:** Pickering – Jason Hatcher (OUT); South Carolina – AJ Green (OUT), Dontay Moch (OUT).

The optimism that prevailed coming out of Regulator training camp has dampened slightly after what can fairly be described as a slow start. They are fortunate to be 2-2 after dropping the first two games without a fight and scraping by Gwinnett in a game that could have gone either direction. It is hard to peg down exactly what is wrong, but it has been a nonchalant effort to this point. The Spartans are 1-3 after losing a ball-buster to Cowtown last week. They have put forth their usual all out effort under the direction of their berserk coach, but they just aren't very good – at least not their defence. With that defence on the field the Regulators should be able to control the line of scrimmage and move the ball, even without their top weapon, AJ Green. But they will have to work with some urgency as the Spartans have weapons that can break through the unbalanced Regs defence, which is light up front and stronger in the back. The Regs will win, but by no more than a field goal. **PICK: SOUTH CAROLINA**

## TWIN CITIES @ CHINO (line – TRIUMPH by 1)

**INJURIES:** Twin Cities – LaAdrian Waddle (OUT), Bobby Wagner (OUT); Chino – Ian Williams (OUT).

This line is a bit of a surprise given the Convicts are at home and the 3-1 Triumph lost decisively to the only tough team they have faced. It could be that odds-makers don't trust the no. 2 ranked Chino defence to stop the no. 4 ranked Triumph offence, and there is a case to be made that the ageing 'Lockdown Crew' has been playing above its balding head. In addition, some analysts remain suspicious of the long term prospects for the Cam Newton-led offence, despite the Chino pivot leading the league in passer rating. What does a guy have to do to earn respect? If respect is what Cam is after, beating the Triumph will earn him some. But another leading quarterback who feels disrespected will be doing everything in his power to snatch a valuable road win. Jay Cutler is definitely looking to prove he isn't a choker against the good teams. This is his chance. **PICK: TWIN CITIES**

## CARTHAGE @ MOHAVE (line – CANNIBALS by 2)

**INJURIES:** Carthage – Greg Hardy (IR), David Hawthorne (OUT), Derrick Johnson (IR) Matt Slauson (OUT), Andre Smith (OUT). Mohave – Allen Robinson (OUT).

On its face it is strange when a road 1-3 team is favoured over a home 1-3 team, but if you take a look at how they got there you will understand why. The Hellfire's lonely win was a closely contested pillow fight over softie Virden. Since then, the team's best showing came in a low-scoring loss to the Patriots when the pass rush corralled Peyton Manning and forced a couple of fumbles. Offensively, the Hellfire are all too "lucky" to have the 19<sup>th</sup>-ranked passer attempting to compensate for the worst running game in the league. And maybe that is at the root of Andrew Lucks' struggles to date – he has no run support. His counterpart, rookie Marcus Mariota, can count on Eddie Lacy to draw the attention of linebackers and his offensive line is a touch more stalwart in protection. While the Cannibal defence has been as effective as a picket fence against a tank, its offence is lighting up the scoreboard. The Hellfire need to get to Mariota to stand a chance, but the rookie is elusive. **PICK: CARTHAGE**



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

FROM THE EFL ARCHIVES – The scare suffered by Durham at the hands of the North Stars the previous week turned into a real nightmare in Week Four of the 2009 EFL season when the Lizards fell to the lowly Garland Mustangs, 20-16. Yes, the mighty Mustangs used to be lowly, long ago. Direct descendants of the Colorado Thundersnow – a really bad expansion team – the 2009 Mustangs were not actually that bad by comparison; they had **Matt Ryan** and **Wes Welker** and **Frank Gore** and...well that's about it. But on this day they also had the Ryan-to-**Mark Clayton**

connection that upended Durham with two TD passes in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter and turned a 16-6 deficit into a 20-16 advantage.

Coming off a year when they went to the final and lost to the Dragons, the Iowa City Cubs were playing horrible football to start the 2009 season. In Week Four they dropped their third straight game, this one to another relocated team, the Virden Violators. The former Anchorage Bucs had **Drew Brees** and **Clinton Portis** and that was about all. The pressure was on Brees to carry the team and finally, on this week, he did. He threw for 399 yards and his team's only TD in a 25-20 upset of the Cubs. The bulk of the point-scoring came on 6 **Adam Vinatieri** field goals.

The Florida Dragons were the only unbeaten team left by the end of the week, sleep-walking to a 23-0 win over the North Stars. Since the 2009 Dragons will inevitably come up in discussions about the best team ever, it is worth noting that the Dragons offence tended to just play half a game. They would get their business done early and rely on the defence to keep the other team off the board in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half.

**Lance Briggs** of the Gladiators, who intercepted 2 passes in a 31-10 win over Pickering, won defensive honours.