

2015

Week Two


EFL NEWS
 ELITE FOOTBALL LEAGUE

2015

Week Two

October 19, 2015



VIR	14	CHP	40	MVM	41	BCR	20	CHI	41	MAR	13	YOR	10	SEB	30	AUR	31	SC	21
CAR	37	TCT	27	MOH	27	ICC	20	LAK	21	DTL	17	PIC	20	COW	36	GWG	28	SBE	38



Heath Miller of the Aurora Mustangs roars in celebration after catching the TD pass that tied the game versus Gwinnett. The Mustangs won in OT, 31-28. (Story Inside....)

LATEST EFL NEWS INSIDE

- LIOTTA REMAINS UNBEATEN AFTER O.T. THRILLER
- FLACCO CATCHES FIRE TO LEAD COMEBACK
- RARE OUTCOME KEEPS CUBS WINLESS
- PATRIOTS MAKE A STATEMENT
- BLUE EAGLES SOAR AGAIN
- AND MORE.....

Also in this issue

- SPATS FEATURE, 'STARBUCKS MENU,' 'THE BALLAD OF ALFRED BLUE,' 'THE RETURN OF BIG BOOB.'
- JIMMY THE GEEK GOES CRAZY TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WEEK 3
- THIS WEEK IN THE EFL HISTORY



*Who was slick
in Week Two?*

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



Joe Flacco
QB
Cowtown
Corn Kings

28 of 39, 359 yards, 4 TDs. Caught fire in 2nd half to guide comeback.



Mario Williams
DE
Iowa City
Cubs

8 tackles, 2 sacks, 2 stuffs, 1 Pr., 2 sacks and 2 stuffs in 2nd half of tie.



2-0-0



GAME OF THE WEEK



1-1-0

Aurora

31

MVP

Matt Ryan

28

Gwinnett

TEAM LEADERS

Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Ryan	32	59	333	3
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Foster	13	90	6.9	0
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Boldin	9	133	14.8	0

Team	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
Aurora	7	0	7	14	3	31
Gwinnett	7	7	3	11	0	28

Play of the Game

With 0:04 left, trailing 28-21, facing 4th & goal at the 3, **Matt Ryan** saw his primary receiver was double-covered, avoided the rush and found **Heath Miller** open for the game tying TD pass.

TEAM LEADERS

Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Big Ben	22	35	198	3
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
McCoy	27	186	6.9	0
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Wayne	7	61	8.7	2

SUMMARY: LeSean McCoy started a big day early, accounting for 69 of 70 yards on Gwinnett's opening TD drive as the Gladiators took a 7-0 lead on Reggie Wayne's 2-yard TD catch from **Big Ben**. The Mustangs tied it on a 66-yard punt return TD by **Julian Edelman**, but the Glads got their lead back on their next possession when Wayne caught a 12-yard pass to convert 4th & 6 then snared a pass in the seam from 17 yards out for the TD. The Gwinnett defence held Aurora at bay for the remainder of the 1st half, but finally cracked on Aurora's first series of the 2nd half when a 26-yard catch by **Anquan Boldin** set up a 5-yard TD pass from **Matt Ryan** to **Heath Miller** to make it 17-14. The Mustangs took their first lead of the game early in the 4th thanks to a 25-yard completion to Edelman followed by a personal foul that set up a 14-yard TD pass to **Brent Celek** to make it 21-17. The Glads responded with a FG to pull within 1 then got a big play from **Vic Beasley**, who strip-sacked Ryan inside the Mustangs' red zone, setting up a 14-yard TD pass to **Jeremy Maclin**. Gwinnett led 28-21 after the 2-pointer, but gave up the lead with 0:04 left when Ryan finished a 60-yard dive with a check down to Miller for a 3-yard tying TD. In OT, Big Ben was picked off by **Eric Weddle** to set up a 30-yard **Nick Folk** FG for the win.

QUOTES: "Matt carried us today, no question. That was a veteran play to tie the game – both receivers covered and he found Heath open. And of course Eric makes that pick in OT to get us close for Nick. It was an all around effort in a big win for us," Aurora coach, **Rich Liotta**.

"There are a few plays we'd like back on that final drive. The out of bounds kick was unfortunate. The big run by Arian hurt. But at the end we had their play covered and Ryan just made a play. When a quarterback makes a play like that you just have to tip your hat," Gwinnett coach, **Dave Birdsall**.



HAPPY FAN



titter

ANGRY FAN



HappyJack @happyjack37

Want to hear the critics who say @M_Ryan02 isn't a clutch QB explain this! Great play by number 2.



Gladiator Mom @gladmom3

It was so much nicer when we came from behind to tie it last week. We missed our chance to be the first to beat the Mustangs.

10-17-2015 Gwinnett Coliseum Temp: 73 Wind: 0-5 None MVP: Matt Ryan

Scoring Summary

1 4:34 Gwinnett	TD Roethlisberger 2 pass to Wayne (Suisham) (12-70-6:33)	0-7
1 1:20 Aurora	TD Edelman 66 punt return (Folk)	7-7
2 12:14 Gwinnett	TD Roethlisberger 17 pass to Wayne (Suisham) (9-67-3:59)	7-14
3 11:07 Gwinnett	FG Suisham 42 (9-53-3:42)	7-17
3 5:36 Aurora	TD Ryan 5 pass to Miller (Folk) (10-76-5:25)	14-17
4 10:26 Aurora	TD Ryan 14 pass to Celek (Folk) (9-91-3:12)	21-17
4 4:09 Gwinnett	FG Suisham 44 (13-49-6:04)	21-20
4 3:35 Gwinnett	TD Roethlisberger 14 pass to Maclin (2 - McCoy) (1-14-0:0)	21-28
4 0:04 Aurora	TD Ryan 3 pass to Miller (Folk) (14-60-3:31)	28-28
5 7:08 Aurora	FG Folk 30 (6-48-2:54)	31-28

	AUR	GWG
First Downs	23	29
Rushes	17-109	35-225
Passes	59-32-333	35-22-198
Sacked	1-6	1-9
Fumble	1	2
Penalties	11-101	4-30
Turnovers	1	3
Missed Tackles	16	5
Blitzes	1	9
Time	30:47	37:05
Third Down	7-19	2-9
Fourth Down	4-5	1-2
Red Att/Td/Fg	3/3/0	3/3/0
Net Offense	436	414

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



PATRIOTS

2-0-0

7

13

17

3

0

40

OT

Lamar Miller

24 carries, 174 yards



TRIUMPH

1-1-0

3

3

14

7

0

27

Melvin Gordon

17 Carries, 119 yards, 2 TDs

Lavonte David forced a **Melvin Gordon** fumble at the Triumph 25-yard line, setting up a 14-yard TD pass from **Peyton Manning** to **Dez Bryant** to put the Pats in front 14-6 in the 2nd. **Ryan Succop** booted 3 straight FGs from less than 30 yards to make it 23-6 Charleswood before Twin Cities found the end zone on a 5-yard run by Gordon to pull within 10 points. But the Pats would match score for score the rest of the way, countering a 73-yard scoring strike from **Jay Cutler** to **Vincent Jackson** with a 97-yard kick-off return for a TD by **Knile Davis**, running out the clock afterwards for the win.



CONVICTS

1-1-0

3

21

0

17

0

41

OT

Cam Newton

14 of 22, 289 yards, 4 TDs, 1 INT



KNIGHTS

0-2-0

7

7

7

0

0

21

Terry Bridgewater

15 of 26, 148 yards, 2 TDs, 1 INT

A pick and 56-yard return by **Charles Woodson** set up the first TD of the game, an 8-yard pass from **Terry Bridgewater** to **CJ Spiller**. **Cam Newton** responded with 3 TDs in the 2nd quarter, running it in from 7 yards, lobbing a 51-yard strike to **Malcom Floyd** and a 36-yard dart to **Eddie Royal**. But a fumbled snap by Newton before the half was recovered by **Robert Quinn**, setting up a 3-yard TD run by **Le'Veon Bell**. The Knights came within 3 on a 12-yard TD pass to **Jordan Matthews**, but another deep ball to Floyd set up a 10-yard TD to **Roddy White** and the Convicts never looked back.



VIOLATORS

0-2-0

7

0

7

0

0

14

OT

Mark Ingram

20 Carries, 83 yards, 1 TD



CANNIBALS

1-1-0

0

17

7

13

0

37

Marcus Mariota

17 of 28, 203 yards, 2 TDs

Amari Cooper darted for a 25-yard catch-and-run to set up **Mark Ingram** for a 4-yard TD run to get the Violators on the board first. The Cannibals then went on a 24-point run, starting with a **Harrison Smith** interception that stopped a Virden drive and set up a 51-yard FG by **Steven Hauschka**. Rookie QB **Marcus Mariota** threaded a 5-yard TD pass to **Doug Baldwin** in tight coverage and snuck it across the goal line for another to cap a 17-point 2nd quarter. **Eddie Lacy** pounded the ball in from 2 yards and Mariota found Baldwin in the end zone from 22 yards to finish off an easy win.



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!



RAVENS

1-0-1

7

3

7

3

0

20

OT

Shaun Hill

28 of 42, 266 yards, 2 TDs, 1 INT



CUBS

0-1-1

7

3

0

10

0

20

Russell Wilson

27 of 45, 336 yards, 1 TD

The Ravens opened with an 80-yard drive, capping it off with an 8-yard TD pass from **Shaun Hill** to **Jonathan Stewart** for a 7-0 lead. The Cubs erased the deficit with a 56-yard TD pass from **Russell Wilson** to **Reuben Randle** then the teams traded FGs before the half to keep it tied. Beaufort made another long drive for the go-ahead TD on an 11-yard pass to **DeAndre Hopkins** and maintained a 7-point lead heading into the final 2 minutes. The Cubs tied it with 0:17 left on a 1-yard TD run by **Jeremy Hill**. The extra frame saw 7 punts and no breaks for either side, yielding the season's first tie.



EXCALIBURS

0-2-0

3

7

0

0

0

10

OT

Tom Brady

14 of 21, 104 yards, 1 TD



SPARTANS

1-1-0

0

14

3

3

0

20

Philip Rivers

12 of 21, 197 yards, 2 TDs, 1 INT

Micah Hyde picked off **Philip Rivers** on the game's opening series to set up a 36-yard **Blair Walsh** FG, giving York a quick lead. The Spartans found the end zone on the first play of the 2nd quarter when Rivers hit **Demaryius Thomas** deep for a 27-yard TD, then again on their next series with a 46-yard long fly to **Golden Tate**. York mounted a 14-play drive of mostly running plays to set up a 6-yard TD pass from **Tom Brady** to **James Jones** before half time. The York offence struggled in the 2nd half while the Spartans controlled the clock and added a pair of FGs to walk away with the win.



SWORDFISH

0-2-0

7

17

0

6

0

30

OT

Andy Dalton

24 of 44, 292 yards, 1 TD, 2 INTs



CORN KINGS

1-1-0

3

7

10

10

6

36

Joe Flacco

28 of 39, 359 yards, 4 TDs

Odell Beckham hauled in a 24-yard TD strike from **Andy Dalton** on the opening drive to start an early barrage by the Swordfish that included a 28-yard fumble return TD by **Perry Riley Jr.** Despite 2 Dalton interceptions, one leading to a Cowtown TD, Sebastian looked in control, leading 24-10 at the half. **Joe Flacco** began the comeback with a 14-yard TD pass to **Larry Fitzgerald** to start the 2nd half and ended regulation with a 59-yard drive for a game-tying FG with 0:00 left on the clock. On the 1st series of OT, Flacco withstood the blitz and hit **Cecil Shorts III** for a 49-yard game-winning TD.

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


MONARCHS

2-0-0

7

20

0

14

0

41

OT

Ryan Tannehill

20 of 31, 208 yards, 2 TDs


HELLFIRE

1-1-0

10

7

3

7

0

27
Julio Jones

7 Catches, 201 yards, 1 TD

The Hellfire scored on their 1st two series and shut down the Monarchs on their first two series to take a 10-0 lead. The tide turned when punt returner **Ace Sanders** fumbled at the Hellfire 8 yard line, setting up an 8-yard TD run by **Ryan Tannehill**. It began a string of 24 consecutive points by the Monarchs, aided by a **Brandon Browner** pick, that put them in front 27-17 at half time. Mohave tied it up on a 99-yard TD pass from **Andrew Luck** to **Julio Jones** but the Monarchs went ahead to stay on a 13-yard TD pass to **Marques Colston** and sealed the win with a 1-yard TD run by **Daniel Herron**.


NORTH STARS

1-1-0

3

0

7

3

0

13

OT

Randy Starks

11 Carries, 80 yards


T-LIZARDS

2-0-0

0

7

0

10

0

17
Drew Brees

25 of 39, 270 yards, 2 INTs

In a defensive struggle in the rain, the Stars scored first when a **Rob Ninkovich** interception and 35-yard run by **Randy Starks** set up an easy **Josh Brown** FG. The Lizards controlled the ball but did not score until late in the 2nd quarter when **Drew Brees** carried it into the end zone from 1 yard out. A tightly contested 3rd broke Markham's way with a **Quinten Rollins** interception of Brees, setting up a 3-yard TD pass to **Anthony Fasano** to make it 10-7. After 49-yard **Phil Dawson** FG tied it, a 40-yard pass to **TY Hilton** set up a 3-yard TD run by **Carlos Hyde** to put Durham ahead for good.


REGULATORS

0-2-0

7

7

0

7

0

21

OT

Tony Romo

20 of 31, 246 yards, 2 TD, 2 INTs


BLUE EAGLES

2-0-0

0

21

14

3

0

38
Aaron Rodgers

20 of 32, 282 yards, 5 TDs, 2 INTs

Frank Gore opened the scoring in the 1st quarter, scoring on a 2-yard run to make it 7-0 Regs. But a 63-yard TD pass from **Aaron Rodgers** to **Mohamed Sanu** tied it and an 8-yard TD pass to **Jordy Nelson** put the Eagles briefly in front. A pick by **Robert McClain** set up a 13-yard TD pass from **Tony Romo** to **Greg Jennings** to tie it, but the Eagles went back in front after Rodgers hit Nelson in the zone from 15 yards to end the 2nd. Scarborough opened the 2nd half with a 5-yard TD pass to **Pierre Garcon** then pulled away when a **Marcus Peters** pick of Romo set up Nelson's 3rd TD catch of the day.

WEEK TWO

STANDINGS

East	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Charleswood	2	0	0	1.000	60	30	37	18.5	11.5	1 0 0	1 0 0	2 0 0
Mohave	1	1	0	0.500	46	23	55	27.5	-4.5	0 1 0	1 0 0	1 1 0
Twin Cities	1	1	0	0.500	57	28.5	54	27	1.5	1 1 0	1 1 0	1 1 0
Carthage	1	1	0	0.500	51	25.5	44	22	3.5	1 0 0	1 1 0	1 1 0
Virden	0	2	0	0.000	28	14	56	28	-14	0 1 0	0 2 0	0 2 0
West	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Mission Viejo	2	0	0	1.000	64	32	48	24	8	1 0 0	1 0 0	2 0 0
Beaufort County	1	0	1	0.750	44	22	37	18.5	3.5	1 0 0	1 0 1	1 0 1
Chino	1	1	0	0.500	58	29	45	22.5	6.5	0 0 0	1 1 0	1 1 0
Iowa City	0	1	1	0.250	41	20.5	43	21.5	-1	0 0 1	0 1 1	0 1 1
Los Angeles	0	2	0	0.000	31	15.5	61	30.5	-15	0 1 0	0 1 0	0 2 0
North	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Durham	2	0	0	1.000	39	19.5	20	10	9.5	1 0 0	2 0 0	2 0 0
Cowtown	1	1	0	0.500	46	23	67	33.5	-10.5	1 0 0	0 1 0	1 1 0
Markham	1	1	0	0.500	50	25	27	13.5	11.5	1 0 0	1 1 0	1 1 0
Pickering	1	1	0	0.500	27	13.5	32	16	-2.5	1 1 0	1 1 0	1 1 0
York	0	2	0	0.000	24	12	37	18.5	-6.5	0 1 0	0 1 0	0 2 0
South	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Scarborough	2	0	0	1.000	55	27.5	35	17.5	10	1 0 0	1 0 0	2 0 0
Aurora	2	0	0	1.000	72	36	38	19	17	1 0 0	2 0 0	2 0 0
Gwinnett	1	1	0	0.500	55	27.5	55	27.5	0	0 1 0	1 1 0	1 1 0
South Carolina	0	2	0	0.000	31	15.5	79	39.5	-24	0 0 0	0 2 0	0 2 0
Sebastian	0	2	0	0.000	54	27	63	31.5	-4.5	0 1 0	0 1 0	0 2 0

PASSING

Rk	Player	Team	Att	Cmp	C%	Yards	In	I%	Lg	TD	TD%	Rate
1	Tannehill	MVM	60	43	71.7	438	0	0	43	3	5	108.9
2	Newton, C	CHI	56	31	55.4	524	2	3.6	56	5	8.9	102.1
3	Roethlisberger	GWG	80	54	67.5	654	3	3.8	63	6	7.5	101.8
4	Wilson, R	ICC	60	36	60	452	0	0	56	3	5	100.1
5	Manning, P	CHP	75	46	61.3	535	1	1.3	71	5	6.7	99.6
6	Flacco	COW	94	58	61.7	649	3	3.2	49	5	5.3	86.7
7	Dalton	SS	82	50	61	623	2	2.4	81	3	3.7	86.6
8	Cutler	TCT	59	35	59.3	455	2	3.4	73	3	5.1	86.5
9	Ryan, M	AUR	80	46	57.5	551	1	1.3	42	3	3.8	86
10	Rodgers, A	SBE	79	46	58.2	608	4	5.1	63	5	6.3	82.7
11	Manning, E	MAR	32	18	56.3	168	0	0	27	1	3.1	81.3
12	Brady, T	YOR	60	37	61.7	332	1	1.7	44	2	3.3	80.7
13	Romo	SC	75	48	64	499	3	4	36	3	4	79.8
14	Hill, S	BCR	73	44	60.3	431	2	2.7	22	3	4.1	79.2
15	Luck	MOH	100	59	59	823	4	4	99	3	3	78.9

RUSHING

Rk	Player	Team	Att	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	Miller, L	CHP	39	281	7.2	23	0
2	McCoy, L	GWG	49	278	5.7	40	0
3	Gordon, M	TCT	33	235	7.1	26	3
4	Hill, J	ICC	34	226	6.6	30	2
5	Forte	PIC	43	226	5.3	36	0
6	Foster, A	AUR	30	219	7.3	34	2
7	Anderson, C	SS	40	214	5.4	24	1
8	Bell, L	LAK	68	200	2.9	23	1
9	Lacy	CAR	37	197	5.3	31	2
10	Ivory	MVM	28	175	6.3	23	3
11	Blue	SBE	46	163	3.5	21	2
12	Gore	SC	30	154	5.1	20	1
13	Murray, D	CHI	40	146	3.7	16	1
14	Charles, J	VV	26	144	5.5	54	0
15	Stewart	BCR	36	143	4	13	0
16	Bell, J	MVM	28	129	4.6	21	0
17	William, Ka	BCR	20	127	6.4	38	1
18	Gurley	COW	27	120	4.4	13	0
19	Coleman, T	MOH	28	119	4.3	12	1
20	Bernard, G	YOR	24	119	5	22	0

RECEIVING

Rk	Player	Team	No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	Maclin	GWG	19	306	16.1	36	4
2	Jones, J	MOH	16	345	21.6	99	1
3	Beckham Jr	SS	15	187	12.5	30	2
4	Boldin	AUR	14	220	15.7	36	0
5	Evans, M	COW	14	157	11.2	19	0
6	Decker	DTL	14	148	10.6	28	0
7	Johnson, C	DTL	13	149	11.5	25	1
8	Hilton	DTL	12	134	11.2	40	0
9	Garcon	SBE	12	115	9.6	20	1
10	Smith Sr.	COW	12	167	13.9	29	2
11	Kelce, T	CAR	12	105	8.8	16	0
12	Bryant, D	CHP	12	221	18.4	71	3
13	Johnson, A	CHP	11	125	11.4	20	0
14	Nelson, J	SBE	11	137	12.5	21	3
15	Fitzgerald	COW	11	122	11.1	17	1
16	Landry, J	GWG	11	97	8.8	14	0
17	Wayne	GWG	11	157	14.3	63	2
18	Gronkowski	BCR	11	91	8.3	13	0
19	Green, A	SC	11	162	14.7	28	1
20	Randle, R	ICC	11	185	16.8	56	2

KICKING

Rk	Player	Team	FGA	FGM	FG%	40	50	Lg	Pts
1	Succop	CHP	7	6	85.7	1	1	51	24
2	Gostkowski	TCT	5	5	100	1	0	47	21
3	Dawson	DTL	6	6	100	3	0	49	21
4	Brown, J	MAR	5	5	100	2	1	54	20
5	Parkey	BCR	5	5	100	3	0	48	18
6	Folk	AUR	3	3	100	2	0	48	18
7	Vinatieri	SS	4	4	100	2	1	50	18
8	Suisham	GWG	5	4	80	2	0	44	17
9	Janikowski	MOH	5	4	80	0	0	33	16
10	Novak	COW	4	4	100	1	0	48	16
11	Bailey, D	CHI	4	3	75	3	1	53	16
12	Carpenter	MVM	4	3	75	3	1	55	16
13	Hauschka	CAR	4	3	75	2	1	51	15
14	Nugent	SBE	2	2	100	1	0	40	13
15	Zuerlein	ICC	2	2	100	0	0	31	11
16	Scobee	PIC	3	2	66.7	1	0	41	9
17	Murray, P	LAK	1	1	100	1	1	53	7
18	Tucker, J	SC	1	1	100	1	0	46	7
19	Walsh	YOR	3	1	33.3	0	0	36	6
20	Crosby	VV	0	0	0	0	0	0	4

TAIPEI SHARKS



TORONTO WOLVERINES
RYAN PRESTON



PYONGYANG SUN



CORVALIS CREEPING DEATH
PAT CREW

You never thought it would happen and you didn't dare to hope, but the world is catching on to the excellence and excitement of the Elite Football League! An All-American sport has caught fire on the other side of the world. The hottest sports entertainment in North America threatens to engulf Asia, beginning in four hot beds: *Beijing*, home of the Red Dragons; *Taipei*, home of the Sharks; *Pyongyang*, home of the Sun, and *Seoul*, home of the Calm. If you think football in the Orient doesn't matter to the North American scene, think again! Each of these spirited Asian teams has a sister EFL franchise to support and guide them - an expansion franchise - and how well they oversee their Asian charges will determine the selection order at the top of the EFL draft in 2016. Yes, the outcome of EFL Asia season will affect more than the teams involved and their worshipping fan bases. And what about those teams? Their rosters are stocked with top grade talent. The Taipei Sharks boast one of the strongest arms in semi-pro football, former Dayton Tractor QB, **Mitch Souza**. The Beijing Red Dragons will defend Worker's Stadium with ex-Billings Outlaws defensive end, **Dalton Yeager**. The Seoul Calm boast hard-hitting safety, former Tijuana Taco, **Orlando Sanchez**. And the Pyongyang Sun will look to run over their hated rival, the Calm, with former Bismarck Steamers running back, **Noah Hopkins**. EFL Asia action begins October 26th as the Taipei Sharks host the Pyongyang Sun on EFL Sunday Ticket and ESPN 7.

GOLDEN HORSESHOE HOOTENANIES
JEFF COHEN



WEEK ONE

Pyongyang Sun @ Taipei
Sharks

October 26 – 8:00 pm CST
ESPN 7 / Local TTC

Seoul Calm @ Beijing Red
Dragons

October 28 – 7:30 pm CST
ESPN 7 / Local BTV

ERIEAU CADILLAC
JAMIE RILETT



BEIJING RED DRAGONS

SEOUL CALM



AROUND THE



With Spats McChad

NEW YORK – I am about to use my weekly football pulpit to air a personal gripe I have against my favourite coffee chain, Starbucks. Or, more accurately, my *former* favourite coffee chain, Starbucks. Although it might appear to be a misuse of my column, at least to those football purists who care only about my incisive football analysis and my access to story-breaking sources, complaining about Starbucks technically falls under the “human interest” clause of my contract with the syndicate. This clause allows me to devote 10% of my gross aggregate column length to *‘stories of a human interest nature that set the contextual framework for professional football in society.’* If you don’t think that what follows falls under the above definition, sue me!

It began about two months ago when I ordered a blueberry oat bar with my usual black bold roast at my favourite local Starbucks on West 49th Street. I was told by my server, a young girl name **Niamh** (pronounced ‘*ni-av*’ – apparently the ‘m’ is not silent, but is pronounced like a ‘v,’ and the ‘h’ is silent, as the letter ‘h’ invariably is when added superfluously to confuse the masses and distinguish its bearer as a product of a deep cultural heritage), that she was so sorry but they didn’t carry the blueberry oat bar any longer. My disappointment was obvious and I muttered something about it being one of the better pastries they offered. She immediately replied, “I know, it was one of my favourites, too! I’m so sorry.” Her face showed her empathy and I detected a measure of concern for my happiness, so I let it go and ordered a regular oat bar instead.

Not long afterwards, at the same Starbucks, I was facing a deadline and needed a caffeine and sugar boost. I ordered my usual bold roast, black, and a ginger molasses cookie. My server that day, **Labhaoise** (pronounced ‘*lau-ee-shuh*’ an Irish form of ‘Louise’) brightly piped, “I’m sorry, we no longer serve the ginger molasses cookie. Would you like our chocolate chip instead?” I responded along the lines that I counted on the ginger molasses cookie to break the chocolate chip rut the world was in and that I hated chocolate chip. She appeared suddenly distraught and, with downcast eyes, replied, “The ginger molasses cookie was my favourite, too. I can’t believe they discontinued it.” Feeling bolstered that I had an ally on the inside of the Starbucks corporation, I relaxed a little and ordered a plain oat bar instead.

About a week later, while catching up on my *Pro Football Focal-Point* subscription Tuesday morning, I went to the same Starbucks and order a *venti* bold roast, black, and a raisin bran muffin to loosen me up. My server, a demonstrably effeminate young Nigerian man named **Lysander**, tsk-tsked, “we don’t have the raisin bran muffin anymore. Can I interest you in a savory spinach croissant?” I was clearly irritated and somewhat incredulous at the lack of a raisin bran muffin – a staple at cafés across the continent – but also momentarily confused by the counter-offer of a spinach croissant which, had I known such a thing existed, I would *not* have placed in the “muffin family” of pastries. Unable to detect a prevailing sentiment in me, Lysander simply smiled hopefully as he waited for my answer. I paused for effect then with a touch of indignation declined to have anything with my coffee; it signalled the beginning of my rebellion. Lysander looked crushed and it made me feel a little guilty. I vowed that the *next time* they didn’t have what I wanted I would order whatever he suggested.

When next time arrived, a couple of weeks later, I was consumed with a craving for an oatmeal raisin cookie, my all-time favourite. Lysander, remembering last time, assumed a suitably grave expression and informed me, “We don’t carry the oatmeal raisin cookie any more. Would you like to try our pumpkin bread instead?” Although I had vowed earlier to take his suggestion, I balked. I hate pumpkin, especially pumpkin baked into anything. I looked at the display case and, to my dismay, saw an abundance of pumpkin-flavoured items and very few traditional offerings. They were “seasonal” features and it was apparently pumpkin season. I struggled to suppress my anger at the decision to remove the oatmeal raisin cookie from the menu, as I surveyed the now quite unfamiliar assortment of baked goods. To buy time, I asked: “When did you stop serving the oatmeal raisin cookie?”

“Oh, it’s been at least a month now, I think,” he answered, clearly unsure exactly when the Starbucks “menuquake” had struck, opening up fissures in display cases across Manhattan and swallowing up all my favourites.

“That’s too bad,” I answered. “It was one of the better oatmeal raisin cookies out there.”

“Oh yes. It was one of my favourites too. I was so sad to see it go,” he lamented, briefly adopting a sad frown before switching gears and smiling as he guided my eyes to a free-range egg salad sandwich with watercress on multi-grain. I felt the blood rising up my neck. I did not believe for one second it had been one of his favourites. Not only was he trying to sell me

something I didn't want, he was lying to me how he felt about the oatmeal raisin cookie. Before I could catch myself, I snapped.

"Look, I don't want an egg salad sandwich, or a gluten-free pumpkin scone, or whatever fancy new thing you have back there that I am sure nobody was asking for," I was quietly seething. "I want an oatmeal raisin cookie! You've been serving it for more than ten years. There was nothing wrong with it! Now, without explanation or apology, it's gone! Well, so am I!" And with that, I walked out of my favourite Starbucks – the one I had been faithfully attending almost every day for more than 10 years.

Since that fateful day, I have surveyed dozens of other Starbucks in Manhattan hoping to find my long-lost favourites. At each one the servers' names are different, and equally weird and unpronounceable, but the answers are all the same. It would appear from their responses that the Starbucks corporation surveyed their employees, identified their favourite food items, and removed them *all* from the menu. Was employee food theft that much of a problem? Or are they simply being stuck up a%%holes? Is an oatmeal raisin cookie or a raisin bran muffin not good enough for Starbucks?

All I know is that it might take me a long time to wean myself off Starbucks coffee – it is *that* good and there are hardly any Seattle's Best Coffee shops in New York. I might not be ready for a personal boycott of the chain yet. But I am certainly boycotting these new menu items suddenly forced upon me by an uncaring corporate entity that programs its menu from a high rise in Seattle and writes the script for their employees on handling irate traditionalists like myself.

Now that I've got that off my chest, let's look at an interesting Week Two in the EFL.....

THE BALLAD OF ALFRED BLUE

The turbulent history of the Scarborough Blue Eagles contains very few satisfying moments and many abysmal failures and misfortunes. Yet, a form of pride remains at the core of the fan base that fuels support for the team; or at least the *ideal* of the team as a contender. It is not always a pretty pride. It can appear suddenly as a downpour of beer cans and food flying onto the field at Bluffs Stadium; it can sound like a cacophonous barrage of profane jeers and taunts that would cause a sailor to blush; it can taste like the backwash from one too many Molson Canadians; and it can smell like the smoke from a dozen Molotov cocktails exploding against a wall of police riot shields. These and other unsettling examples of "Scarborough Football Hooliganism" – as Scarborough Alderwoman, **Blanche Potter**, once described fan behaviour in a speech to City Council calling for a ban of the team – speak to a fierce and nearly homicidal pride in the only major professional sports franchise ever to call Scarborough its home. Scarborough fans *really* care. If they didn't care, they wouldn't be willing to damage property and endanger life. But along with the angst, fury and violence, there is a softer, more jubilant side to Scarborough football fandom. And that softer side rose to forefront this week with **Kenny Loggins**' world premier of '*The Ballad of Alfred Blue*.'

With the arrival of "the dark years" of Blue Eagles football, beginning in 2013, the red zone and end zone area on the east side of Bluffs Stadium was renamed 'The Danger Zone' in recognition of the close proximity of the players to the notoriously unruly gangs of thugs who occupied the cheap end zone bleacher seats. Whenever an opponent would reach the Scarborough red zone, which has been often over the past two years, the PA system would kick in with '*Danger Zone*' by **Kenny Loggins**. That was the cue for the Bleacher Creatures in end zone seats to scream, bellow and make threatening gestures toward the visitors, as if at any moment a gang of them might jump over the wall and attack. The Bleacher Creatures patterned themselves after English soccer

Hooligans in their look and gesticulations, but with one notable exception, never attacked the field or other fans. The exception, of course, had caused them to be officially banned from the stadium.

At the end of the 2013 regular season, the Blue Eagles finished what had started out as a hopeful year with one of the worst showings of their 5-11 campaign, dropping a 34-17 decision to **Tony Romo** and the Regulators, a team than many had predicted would finish where the Eagles had finally ended up. For the devastated and drunken fans staying to the bitter end, a season's worth of disappointment and frustration boiled over and they swarmed the field. While most of these angry fans were content to bellow and swear, steal souvenirs, or attempt to get player's autographs, the Bleacher Creatures tore down the goal posts, damaged benches and led an attack on a Toronto Police riot unit that had been deployed to clear the field. It had been an ugly scene and a stain on the city's already shaky reputation.

As he is wont to do when things, like football teams, collapse around him, Scarborough owner, GM, and occasional Coach, **Chris Dickinson** took it all in stride. "Of course the fans are going to riot after we let them down like



*Who are you, Alfred Blue? / You put the power back in Blue /
Nobody knew you, that is true / But now they sure know you, yes
they do / There's no Eagle Bluer, than Alfred Blue!*



A jubilant gang of Blue Eagles fans take to the field at the finish of a dominant 38-21 win over the Regulators. A gang of thugs looking to start a riot mellowed out as **Aaron Rodgers** threw 5 TD passes and **Alfred Blue** ran for 117 yards.

that,” he had said the next day as clean-up and repair crews dealt with the damage. “We’ll come back from this and give them something to cheer about next year.”

Dickinson reluctantly imposed a ban on the Bleacher Creatures after being advised that he would be sued into destitution if he failed to take action and anyone was hurt by them at future games. But some of these guys had been friends of his in high school and his heart wasn’t really in it. It is said he told security at the stadium to turn a blind eye if the less criminal-minded among them showed up at the gate in small groups wearing “respectable clothes” and not carrying beer into the stadium.

By the end of the 2014 season, the year he had made himself the actual coach, his view had changed as threats against his life,

his family (including his dog), and his home poured in from outraged fans, some of whom were his old friends. “Dickie” was feeling the heat from all angles and even he was not finding it funny anymore having to dress up in drag to escape from angry mobs. This prompted his decision prior to the start of this season to step down from coaching, hire **Rex Ryan**, and focus on being a good owner and GM. Dickinson also took on a public relations role for the team even as he kept his public engagements secret for safety reasons.

The withdrawal from coaching was greeted positively in the local media, since absolutely nobody, including Dickinson’s mother, thought he was a good coach. But a few of the hard core sociopaths at the center of the various movements to remove Dickinson permanently from the team, by lethal force if necessary, were not satisfied. They wanted him to leave the country and gift the team to **Mike Myers** or they would kill him.

So with death threats hanging over his head, “Dickie” appeared in his Party Room at Bluffs Stadium to watch the Blue Eagles’ home opener against the team that had prompted that riot two years ago, the South Carolina Regulators. As with home openers anywhere, the crowd was in a predominantly festive mood, as hope springs eternal when a football season is young. But tarnishing the atmosphere in the east end bleachers was a large group of ruffians dressed in what can only be described as riot gear, but *not* of the kind that would put an end to one. As special guest, **Kenny Loggins** performed his hits ‘Footloose’ and ‘Danger Zone’ live during the upbeat pre-game festivities, this disruptive mob of goons could be heard chanting, ‘BRING OUT DICKIE!’ between numbers, while dozens took turns beating on a hanging effigy of the Blue Eagles owner with large sticks. It was enough of a spectacle that the TV announcers noticed and **Bill Mimes** even commented, “That group of fans in the end zone really love their football, Phil,” he said to booth analyst **Phil Mimms**. “They look like they would kill for a playoff run by their team this year.”

With the menace of sudden and potentially extreme violence in the background, the teams began play with the Regulators receiving to start the game. They took the opening drive to mid-field where **Frank Gore** was stoned for no gain on a daring 4th & 1 attempt, prompting wild cheers from the sellout crowd. The Blue Eagles took over with a short field and soon showed that they were not afraid of 4th down either, going for it on 4th & 1 at the South Carolina 41. With the Regulators in a base defence, **Alfred Blue** swept around the right side for a 7-yard gain and a 1st down, prompting a roar of approval from the crowd.

“Who is Alfred Blue, Phil?” asked play-by-play man, **Bill Mimes**.

“He was signed as a free agent this year, Bill,” **Phil Mimms** replied. “Chris Dickinson paid big money to land him. Blue started for the Moose Jaw Mounties of the CFL and enjoyed some success in that league.”

“And now he’s here enjoying a bit of success in this early part of the game, Phil,” Mimes continued. “Oh! And it looks like the play clock has run down and the Eagles are going to be penalized!”

After gaining a big first down, the Eagles suddenly looked disorganized, taking a delay-of-game penalty. They followed up with a 3-yard gain by Blue and three straight incomplete passes by **Aaron Rodgers**, the last on 4th down, to turn the ball over on downs. The Regulators marched back up the field, covering 69 yards in 10 plays to score the game’s first touchdown on a 2-yard run by Gore. This provoked a rain of boos and renewed chants from the east end bleachers of ‘DEATH TO DICKIE!’

The crowd was a powder keg ready to explode and it was only nearing the end of the 1st quarter. On Scarborough’s next possession, Blue settled things down slightly with back-to-back runs of 4 and 7 yards to gain a quick 1st down. Then Rodgers brought the crowd to its feet with a tight spiral over the middle **Mohamed Sanu**, who shook off safety, **Mike Mitchell** and blazed 63 yards to the house for a 63-yard touchdown pass to tie the game.

Riding the wave of elation after the big play, the Eagles forced a South Carolina three-and-out and came back with another touchdown after **Joe Haden** (the Regulators' answer to Richard Sherman) was flagged for pass interference on a deep ball intended for **Jordy Nelson**. This set up another TD pass from Rodgers to put the Eagles in front 14-7. But on Scarborough's next possession, a poorly-executed screen pass was tipped by Mitchell and picked off by corner **Robert McClain**. The Regulators then struck back with the equalizer when **Tony Romo** found **Greg Jennings** wide open across the middle for passes of 36 yards and 13 yards, the last for a touchdown.

The mob in the end zone seats thought they saw what was coming, and the chanting for Chris Dickinson's head resumed in earnest. 'DOWN WITH DICK! DOWN WITH DICK!' they howled while doing some rather disturbing things to the Dickinson effigy that was beginning to come unstuffed. The police, out in force for this game but tucked away under the stands out of sight, began to mobilize early, just in case. A few riot squad supervisors stepped onto the field to observe.

The Eagles' offence took the field. Rodgers looked crisp on his first throw after the interception, hitting DeSean Jackson with a dart near the sideline for 18 yards. But with the Regulators defence in the nickel, it was clear that the Scarborough quarterback would be called upon to make more perfect throws like that one if they were going to have a chance. The Blue Eagles' running game was a mere afterthought going into the game, but that was about to change. On the next play, Rodgers pitched right to Blue, who was met almost immediately by Kroy Biermann. The hitherto unknown Blue Eagle running back slipped out of Biermann's grasp and burst down the sideline across mid-field to the Regulator 46 where he was finally brought down by Haden for a 21-yard gain. The crowd spontaneously leapt to its feet in joy at the unexpected good fortune.

"Blue showed some elusiveness and a nice burst of speed there, Phil," commented **Bill Mimes**.

"If people were wondering who Alfred Blue was before this game, they won't be wondering after its over if he keeps this up, Bill," replied **Phil Mimms**.

And boy, did he keep it up! The Blue run had put the Regulators back on their heels, as they now did not know what to expect. Five plays later, Rodgers connected with Nelson from 15 yards for the go-ahead touchdown and the Blue Eagles never looked back, going on to thump their southern rivals 38-21. By the end of the day, Blue had racked up 117 yards and 6 first downs on the ground and was acknowledged by the commentators for bringing a dimension to the offence that had been thought to be lacking before the game.

Watching the game from Dickinson's party room was singer **Kenny Loggins**. He picked up on the "Who is Alfred Blue" question at the start of the network broadcast and, with Dickinson's permission, performed an impromptu song over the PA system as the fans celebrated. He called it, "a little number I just composed. I call it, the *Ballad of Alfred Blue*."

*He came down here from Moose Jaw,
Nobody knew his name,
He hoped to find a home here,
To win fortune and fame,
Who are you, Alfred Blue?
You put the power back in Blue,
Nobody knew you, that is true
But now they know you, yes they do,
There's no Eagle Bluer than Alfred Blue*

Music, indeed, can soothe the savage beast. And so can a kick-ass victory over a division rival. Whatever the cause, the mob was pacified and even joined in the fun. **Chris Dickinson** was able to leave the stadium dressed in his usual clothes as the resounding success of the Blue Eagles' home opener bought him a reprieve. And now nobody will ever again ask the question: "who is Alfred Blue?"

BIG BOOB RETURNS

In Gwinnett County, the Aurora Mustangs survived a rare test of their two-minute offence, scoring a touchdown with 4 seconds left in regulation on a 3-yard check down in the end zone from **Matt Ryan** to **Heath Miller**. The play tied the score at 28 and sent the game into overtime, the second consecutive week the Gladiators had been forced into a fifth and deciding frame. The Mustangs got the ball first but were unable to score. The Glads took over at their 23 yard line and gained early success with a pass interference penalty on 'Stangs corner **Patrick Peterson** and some nifty running and receiving by **LeSean McCoy** that brought them into Aurora territory. Sensing an historic victory was within their grasp, the crowd at the Coliseum rose to its feet and started chanting, 'BIG BEN! BIG BEN!' Looking to drive home the *gladius*, so to speak, **Ben Roethlisberger** dropped back to pass, but immediately felt pressure from **JJ Watt** on his left side. **Big Ben** glided out towards his right and fired a ball off target in the direction of **Owen Daniels**. Aurora safety, **Eric Weddle**, who was closest to the ball, dove and snagged it before it hit the ground, securing it tightly as he rolled. It was one of those phantom pressure throws that had earned **Big Ben** the nickname 'Big Boob' years ago during Gwinnett's under-achieving years. Watt had forced him out of the pocket, but he had been immediately

picked up by the center, **Maurkice Pouncey**, slowing him down and giving Ben some breathing space.

It's hard to blame Big Ben for retaining the after-image in the back of his mind of a genetically-engineered super clone bearing down on him, but he still hurried the throw and the team paid the price. The crowd quickly turned and fell into a jeering taunt of 'BOOOOBIE....BOOOOBIE...!' It was Roethlisberger's third interception of the day and this one would turn out to be decisive. As **Matt Ryan** has done so often during a streak of 20 victories, he found **Anquan Boldin** open down field for consecutive catches of 15 and 21 yards to get into easy field goal range for **Nick Folk**. The veteran kicker drilled it high and down the center to give the Mustangs their 21st consecutive victory under head coach **Rich Liotta**, who handled the post-game presser with his usual equanimity.

"They are good team, Ben is great quarterback, we caught some breaks near the end and Eric made a great pick there. Not many players have the anticipation and the athleticism to make that play," Liotta said of his star safety. When asked about his winning streak, he brushed it off: "I'll let you guys talk about what that means. Believe it or not it's not a big deal to me. We go into every game looking to win, expecting to win, and so far we've been good enough to win."

The Mustangs are a great team, most likely the best the EFL has seen, but it is only a matter of time before they fall. The Glads, with a few off-season upgrades, would have enjoyed a different outcome if their star quarterback had been more 'Big Ben' than he was 'Big Boob.' But great teams will do that to great players: force them into errors. The mission for the Gladiators' quarterback is now set for the re-match in Week Fourteen: prove he is a great player by taking down a great team.

AROUND THE EFL

Week Two is in the books and much remains up in the air, as it should be after just two weeks. But there are some interesting early season indicators of surprises yet to come. Let's take a look:

For just the third time in EFL history a game could not be decided during an extra 15 minutes. The Beaufort County Ravens came into Joe Ferguson Stadium and stymied the Cubs, dumping luke-warm water on their home opener by hanging on to a 20-20 tie. The magic of **Russell Wilson** allowed the Cubs to tie the game with 0:17 left in regulation on a 1-yard TD run by **Jeremy Hill** and nearly pull off an OT miracle with a 35-yard pass to **Darren Sproles** to the Ravens' 17 yard line as time expired.

At Tillman Field in Cowtown, the Corn Kings looked completely befuddled by the combo of **Andy Dalton** to **Odell Beckham** and the game-breaking moves of running back **CJ Anderson** as the Swordfish built up a 24-10 half time lead. It could have been worse for the home team, but a pair of interceptions kept the game within reach. In the second half, **Joe Flacco** caught fire, driving his team to the tying field goal, kicked with no time left in regulation, and closing out overtime early with a 49-yard TD pass to **Cecil Shorts III** for a 36-30 win. After an ice-cold start, Flacco's sudden turnaround may have saved his season.

In steady rain at Jurassic Park in Durham the North Stars gave the Thunder Lizards all they could handle but eventually fell, 17-13. **Carlos Hyde** burst into the end zone off left tackle from 3 yards out to break a 10-10 tie with 8:40 left in the 4th quarter. Trailing by a touchdown, Markham coach, **Darrin Jones** continued to pick his quarterback for each series with a coin flip on the sideline. First, it turned up **Alex Smith**; he managed to get **Josh Brown** into field goal range. Second, it turned up **Eli Manning**; he threw for 6 yards and turned the ball over on downs while facing the powerful Lizards' secondary that had deployed 7 DBs with less than 2 minutes remaining. **Drew Brees** continued to be under-whelming with 2 picks and no TDs.

At the Fiery Depths in Mohave, the Monarchs got an efficient performance from **Ryan Tannehill** and 3 picks by their secondary to mug the Hellfire, 41-27. The teams exchanged heavy blows in an exciting first half that fell to Mission Viejo thanks to an interception by **Brandon Browner** on a deflected pass from **Andrew Luck**. The Hellfire tied it at 27 in the 4th quarter on a record-breaking 99-yard TD pass to **Julio Jones** that eclipsed a 95-yard TD pass to **Santana Moss** that had stood on the books since 2008. Tannehill ended up winning this young QB-duel with a 13-yard game-winning TD pass to **Marques Colston** while Luck threw two more interceptions attempting to come back. The Monarchs are now 2-0 and **King Chris Ferraro** is already crowing about playing to the home crowd in this year's EFL Championship game in Mission Viejo.

At Thermopylae Stadium in Pickering, the Spartans got a pair of long TD passes in the 2nd quarter from **Philip Rivers** to put away the punchless Swords, 20-10. When an offence is struggling as much as York's is in the season's early weeks, going for 4th and long prematurely is a good way to dig a team into a deeper hole. That's what the Yorkies did with over 11 minutes remaining in a one-score game on 4th & 13 at the Pickering 33. The result was a **Sen'Derrick Marks** sack of a fuming **Tom Brady**. I'm not saying they would have made the field goal, all I'm saying is they had time and a better chance with **Blair Walsh**.

At TCF Bank Stadium in Twin Cities, the Patriots squarely hammered their main competition in the East Division by a count of 40-27. Turnovers in big games continued to plague the Triumph. A lost fumble and the obligatory **Jay Cutler** interception set up 10 points and helped to stake the Pats to a 20-6 half time lead. Twin Cities struggled to get back in it, but a 97-yard kickoff return for a touchdown by **Knile Davis** made sure that hill was too high to climb.

Finally, we end the weekly round-up with a couple of whitewashings. At Round Table Stadium in LA, **Le'Veon Bell** was completely bottled up by a Chino defence determined to take away the only real threat from the LA offence, and **Cam Newton** stretched the field with a couple of deep touchdown throws as the Convicts took care of business against the Knights, 41-21. And at the Killing Field in Carthage the slow, torturous death of the Violators entered phase II as the Cannibals took advantage of three Virden turnovers to come back from an early deficit and run-up the score, 37-14. With **Emmanuel Sanders** shackled by Virden corner **Vontae Davis**, Carthage rookie **Marcus Mariota** made **Doug Baldwin** his no. 1 target, hitting him for 2 TDs.

BUG THE BOOKIE!

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JIMMY'S WEEK TWO PICKS

CARTHAGE @ IOWA CITY (line – CUBS by 4)

INJURIES: Carthage – Greg Hardy (OUT), David Hawthorne (OUT), Derrick Johnson (OUT) Matt Slauson (OUT); Iowa City – None.

The winless Cubs are not where they expected to be in the standings after two weeks. The good news is that the season is young. There are other early anomalies, such as undefeated Mission Viejo at the top of the West Division, to show the panicky Iowa mob that situations can, and will, change. However, if the Cubs fail to drive a nail into the Cannibals' coffin hard and early this week, it will be pitchfork time in Iowa City. And who could blame them? There would be no excuse for a Cubs loss at home to a rookie quarterback with an un-built team surrounding him. The Vegas line is pitifully low here, partly due to the math of one win versus none in favour of Carthage and partly due to the fading aura of the Cannibals' PAC champion pedigree. Based solely on both teams' fundamentals, the Cubs should win comfortably, if not easily. But this year's early season returns are telling us, more than ever, that anything can happen on the football field, and usually does. There might be some nail-biting moments. **PICK: IOWA CITY**

TWIN CITIES @ VIRDEN (line – TRIUMPH by 16)

INJURIES: Twin Cities – Bobby Wagner (OUT); Virden – Martavis Bryant (OUT), Amari Cooper (OUT).

Okay, we all know the Violators are bad, but are they really 16-point-underdog-at-home bad? Nobody likes to play in the bleak, dank and creepy confines of *TERRORDOME*, let alone Jay Cutler, who has that nervous pick-twitch in his arm that flares up whenever he is unsettled. That trait alone should spell caution for anyone contemplating jumping all over the Triumph here. A blowout of the Violators would be the rightful outcome if Twin Cities played to its potential and Virden played to its lack thereof, but assuming they will play their roles to perfection is dangerous when talking 16 points. Virden still has Jamaal Charles and a solid running mate in Mark Ingram if nothing else. And, yes, they have nothing else. They certainly will not be able to get much going through the air against a top notch Twin Cities secondary as they enter the game dressing just four wide receivers. On the other side, Bobby Wagner is listed as 'OUT,' making the Triumph run defence a little less stout. Otherwise, everyone is on board for the prospective pummelling of what remains of the Virden defence. I still think it might be a little harder than people think. **PICK: VIRDEN**

MOHAVE @ CHARLESWOOD (line – PATRIOTS by 1)

INJURIES: Mohave – Allen Robinson (OUT); Charleswood – None.

Here we go again with another freebie. This is the kind of line that hurts the betting business and begs the question: "what do they know that I don't know?" After suppressing the urge to run out and bet my house and the kids' college funds on Charleswood I focused on that question and found there to be no acceptable answer. The elite Mohave pass rush versus a rather pedestrian Pats offensive line is the only significant match-up advantage favouring the Hellfire. At some point Peyton Manning will be sacked and will probably fumble if Justin Houston gets his mitts on him, but will it be enough to turn the game in Mohave's favour? Since the same fate is likely to befall Andrew Luck behind his decrepit front five, the net benefit will be small unless Bobby Elder can find other ways to keep pace with a varied and dangerous Patriots' attack. After the Hellfire front seven, there is very little in the back end of its defence to oppose playmakers like Dez Bryant and Sammy Watkins, while Lamar Miller is looking like a genuine find at running back. It will fall on Luck to be truly "lucky" for the Hellfire to stand any hope of keeping pace with the expectations of crack-smoking Vegas odds-makers. **PICK: CHARLESWOOD**

LOS ANGELES @ BEAUFORT COUNTY (line – RAVENS by 2)

INJURIES: Los Angeles – DeVante Parker (DOUBTFUL), Brandin Cooks (OUT), CJ Spiller (OUT); Beaufort County – Vontaze Burfict (OUT), Evan Mathis (OUT), Jairus Byrd (IR).

The Ravens are doing fine with Shaun Hill at quarterback, but how they are doing it is one the season's early mysteries. They took out division rival Chino and held a powerful Cubs team at bay with little flair and few noteworthy individual performances. Darrelle Revis is quietly shutting down opposing receivers, rookie Karlos Williams ripped off impressive runs against the Convicts, and Hill was surprisingly efficient against the Cubs, but the Ravens' highlight reel is curiously short for an undefeated team. One expects them to somehow get it done again this week against the sad sack Knights – a team that notches back-to-back sacks and gives up 50-yard pass plays. The 'Blue Shield' kept the Chino offence in check last week except when giving up big those plays for points. If Hill can push the ball downfield to DeAndre Hopkins, Randall Cobb, or "Gronk," the Ravens' highlight reel might become worth watching after all, but that's a big "if." **PICK: BEAUFORT COUNTY**

MISSION VIEJO @ CHINO (line – MONARCHS by 1)

INJURIES: Mission Viejo – Lardarius Webb (OUT); Chino – Ian Williams (OUT).

Get used to the Monarchs being favoured until somebody finally puts them in their place. Ryan Tannehill has this offence moving well and the back-peddalling defence is forcing critical turnovers at key moments to reverse the field. A defence that relies on this strategy, however, is going to fail eventually. But the offence seems to have found a winning formula with a steady ground game keeping opposing pass rushes flat-footed and giving Tannehill time in the pocket. The Chino attack showed uncommon quick strike capability last week with Cam Newton stretching the field for a pair of long touchdowns against the Knights. It was a good time for it since DeMarco Murray struggled to make an impact for the second straight week even if the threat of him helped open up the passing game. This will be a close and interesting game as both teams look to establish the run and keep their defences fresh. I like this underrated Monarchs team, but not enough to bank on them winning an unprecedented third straight game, on the road, against a tough opponent. **PICK: CHINO**

DURHAM @ GWINNETT (line – THUNDER LIZARDS by 2)

INJURIES: Durham – Terron Armstead (OUT); Gwinnett – None.

The 'Brees Reprise' offence in Durham is off to a slow start and critics are already pointing to a rickety offensive line and a no-name running game as key factors in the lack of fireworks in the passing game. Fortunately for George Kaldis, his defence is leading the league with a stingy 3.7 yards per play against. Expect that defence to be challenged if Big Ben gets time in the pocket and LeSean McCoy makes defenders miss like he did last week against Aurora. The ability of the Roethlisberger to bounce back from a three-pick game against the Mustangs will be the key to the Glads' fortunes. On the other side, a retooled Gwinnett secondary will provide some resistance against Durham's trio of accomplished wide receivers while the defensive line is good enough to hold its own against an already questionable offensive line, now missing left tackle, Terron Armstead. It will boil down to Brees vs. Big Ben, or Brees vs. Big Boob. If it is the former, expect an upset. **PICK: GWINNETT**

PICKERING @ MARKHAM (line – NORTH STARS by 6)

INJURIES: Pickering – Damarius Randall (OUT); Markham – None.

The lines out of Vegas in these early games can produce big pay day opportunities for bettors playing close attention and big losses for those caught up in the hype. There are respectable analysts who genuinely view the North Stars as a contender for a playoff spot. On the surface, it certainly appears they are in the mix after a blowout victory over Cowtown and a tough challenge against Durham on the road last week. But a close inspection of the Markham playbook reveals a shell game that uses multiple personnel changes to distract opponents from their lack of quality personnel. No matter what number he may be wearing, Eli McSmith is at best, an average quarterback and wide receiver Percy Harvin remains the most dangerous running back on the team. The Markham defence, on the other hand, is respectable and will hold the key to any future success. Philip Rivers will look to pick apart that defence this week with a multi-level passing game supplemented by 20-25 quality carries from Matt Forte. The Spartans hope to get an early lead and control the ball to keep its uncertain defence off the field. The Pickering back-11 has so far held up, but the long term prospects for the defence remain highly questionable. This game could go either way in the 'W' column, but expect it to be close in either case. **PICK: PICKERING**

COWTOWN @ YORK (line – CORN KINGS by 6)

INJURIES: Cowtown – None; York – None.

Concerns about the York offence after it struggled against an unheralded Pickering defence last week have factored into this surprisingly big point spread in favour of the visitors. The Swords have yet to score in the second half, as defences target Kelvin Benjamin without fear of a quick death stroke from another direction. Marshawn Lynch is yet to get on track to the level needed to make room for the York passing game. That could very well change this week against a Corn Kings defence that has not lived up to its billing so far. The Cowtown pass rush has struggled to penetrate and this has caused problems for less than stellar secondary. However, worries about Joe Flacco have abated some after his torrid finish to pull out a win against Sebastian last week. The danger for Joe in this game will be the menacing blitz pressure of Von Miller, who is overdue for a sack. With the suspect offence line of the Corn Kings, this is a perfect opportunity for the York star to break out. **PICK: YORK**

SCARBOROUGH @ AURORA (line – Pick 'Em)

INJURIES: Scarborough – Will Hill (OUT), TJ Yeldon (OUT); Aurora – Karlos Dansby (OUT).

Two undefeated teams square off to gain the early advantage in the race for the South Division. But when I say 'Aurora' is undefeated I mean it literally, in the infinite – they have never lost. The last time they lost a game was in Week 15 of the 2013 season, when they were the *Garland* Mustangs, dropping a 24-17 decision to Markham. The move to Aurora is the best thing to happen to the Mustangs and they remain the top team in the league; so setting this line at "pick 'em" is a big, if not foolish vote of confidence in the Blue Eagles. If Scarborough can somehow pull this one out, it will undoubtedly turn around Chris Dickinson's tormented team and make believers out of many fickle fans. It would make a nice story, but the fact remains that the Eagles' early successes have come on the backs of two players: Aaron Rodgers and Terrell Suggs, while Aurora has put forth a full team effort. A bet for the Eagles here is a bet on Rodgers and Suggs. As for me, I'll take the better team. **PICK: AURORA**

SEBASTIAN @ SOUTH CAROLINA (line – SWORDFISH by 1)

INJURIES: Sebastian – None; South Carolina – Sam Shields (PROBABLE), Riley Reiff (QUESTIONABLE), Dontay Moch (OUT).

For the second straight week the winless Swordfish are favoured on the road. This is not a vote of confidence in Sebastian as much as it is a harsh indictment of the Regulators. With fans in the Old South hoping for a breakthrough year, the Regs' performance thus far has been depressing. They have the league's worst defence in points allowed and yards-per-play, while their sputtering offence has been far from keeping pace. Pathetically, the Swordfish might have a worse defence than the Regulators', having surrendered 494 net yards per game in a couple of overtime barn-burners. The difference between these teams right now is the performance of the Sebastian offence, which has been refreshingly dynamic with CJ Anderson and Odell Beckham gashing defences and Andy Dalton throwing without fear. It is safe to say that a loss for the Regs here would murder the team's spirit and unhinge their fan base, but a win, no matter how ugly, could lead to a quick recovery. **PICK: SOUTH CAROLINA**



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Sterling Smitherman

FROM THE EFL ARCHIVES – The Hellfire were a contender in the league's formative years. They were never lucky, but they were always dangerous. In Week Two of the 2009 EFL season they showed just how dangerous they could be by jumping on 4 Charleswood turnovers to upend the powerful Patriots 30-15. Those were the days before teams had developed strategies to survive the oppressive Mohave heat. The Pats looked haggard and sloppy before half time, committing a stifling 18 penalties in addition to the turnovers. For the Pats, it was an ugly game. For the

Hellfire, it was a thing of beauty. Especially for Defender of the Week, safety Quintin Mikell, who recorded 10 tackles, 1 deflection, 1 stuff, a forced fumble, and an interception.

As for the rest of the league, it was a week to forget for fans of the game of football. The narrowest margin of victory came in the lightweight division match-up between Pickering and Markham, with a 69-yard TD run by Chris Johnson stretching the final score to 21-11 for the Spartans.

The Thunder Lizards did not look very impressive in besting the even less-impressive looking Corn Kings, 26-14. Actually, Cowtown – the team – performed decently, but Cowtown QB, Chad Pennington turned the ball over 4 times: 2 interceptions and 2 lost fumbles. Dwayne Bowe caught 2 TD passes for Durham despite frequent double-coverage.

Felix Jones of Kutztown made the individual highlight of the week, returning a kick-off 100 yards against Virden to give the Golden Bears a 34-13 victory. This game was actually very competitive in the 1st half, but few outside of cities involved noticed.

Florida, of course, beat Ringgold, 41-17. People were already talking about a perfect season for the Dragons.