

2017



WILD



EFL

ELITE FOOTBALL LEAGUE

In our 1st season and still going strong!
February 12, 2018

2017



CARD



EAST



CENTRAL



WEST



LOS ANGELES

14



BROOKLIN

30



WILDCARD



COWTOWN

6



SCARBOROUGH

27

NORTH



COASTAL



SOUTH



Jordan Howard
Scarborough Blue Eagles



RUN EAGLE RUN!

Scarborough RB, *Jordan Howard* ploughs into the Cowtown line for a 1st down in first quarter wildcard action in Scarborough. Two plays later, Howard burst free for a 55-yard TD run, the first of two 50+ yard TD runs in a 27-6 Scarborough win.



*Who was slick
in Wildcard
Weekend?*

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



OFFENCE



Jordan Howard
RB
Scarborough
Blue Eagles

13 carries, 207 yards, 2 TDs. 70% of team total offence and all off TDs.



DEFENCE



Vontaze Burfict
LB
Brooklyn
Hawks

16T, 4 Stuffs, 1 PD, 1-3 PA. One-man wrecking crew at LOS in win.



14

Los Angeles

GAME CENTER
2017
Pacific Wildcard

30

Brooklin

TEAM LEADERS

Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Dalton	15	31	202	1
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
West	18	49	2.7	0
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Fleener	5	85	17.0	0

Team	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
Los Angeles	0	0	0	14	-	14
Brooklin	0	13	3	14	-	30

Play of the Game

In the 4th quarter, facing 3rd & 2, 2:12 left, leading by 2, **Alex Smith** threw short to **DeAndre Hopkins** who skirted the sideline 16 yards for a TD to put the game away for Brooklin.

TEAM LEADERS

Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Smith	29	44	325	4
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Stewart	14	83	5.9	0
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Hopkins	13	176	13.5	1

BLOWN TO SMITH-EREENS!

ALEX SMITH THROWS 4 TDs, HOPKINS CATCHES 13 PASSES IN HAWKS WIN!

SUMMARY: The game began as many had expected, with both defences giving no ground to their opposing offences. **Le'Veon Bell** was knocked out on the first play of the game then **Charles Johnson** stuffed **Terrance West** to help bring an end to LA's opening series and forced a fumble for a turnover on the next. The 'Blue Shield' replied in their own way, sacking **Alex Smith** 3 times in the 1st quarter to keep the contest scoreless heading into the second. Smith's connection to **Alshon Jeffery** for 13 yards on 3rd & 12 got the Hawks rolling, however; then passes of 12 and 26 yards to **DeAndre Hopkins** and a 27-yard screen pass to **Will Tye** helped move Brooklin into position to draw first blood with a 6-yard TD pass to **Rob Gronkowski**. The Brooklin defence continued to do its part: a 3rd & inches stuff by safety **Quintin Demps** and a 6-yard sack by **Markus Golden** kept LA quiet on their next two possessions. Meanwhile, Smith continued to pick away at the LA secondary while **Jonathan Stewart** had his say with a 25-yard run around left end to help set up a 14-yard TD pass to Jeffery to make it 13-0, Hawks. The LA defence held off the Hawks' opening series of the 2nd half, but the LA offence went backwards on their first attempt, with **Paul Perkins** getting stuffed for a loss and Golden bagging **Andy Dalton** for his second sack of the game. After **Cody Parkey** added a chip shot field goal to make it 16-0, the Knights took to the air in an attempt to get back in the game, but Dalton threw the ball straight into the arms of **Jairus Byrd** on 3rd down to turn it over. With the game about to get out of hand, the 'Blue Shield' held strong on the Hawks' ensuing possession and the LA offence responded with a touchdown drive fueled by passes of 13 and 38 yards to **Coby Fleener**. Dalton finished it off with a 7-yard scramble to narrow the Brooklin lead to 16-7. Brooklin was stymied on their next series and the Knights pushed back once more with a 27-yard TD pass to **Brandin Cooks** to make it 16-14. With the momentum shifting to the visitors, Smith turned to his top play-maker on his next series, completing 4 of 4 to **DeAndre Hopkins** for a total of 62 yards and a touchdown to take a 23-16 lead. **Brent Grimes** finished it off with a pick of Dalton with less than 2 minutes left and Gronkowski put it out of reach with his second TD catch of the game.

QUOTES: "The league needs to take a look at the hit on Le'Veon. I know we will be looking at it carefully. That's no excuse, I realize, but it did have an effect on our game plan, I'll be honest." – LA coach, **Jeff Dohrn**.

"I thought Alex had a great game today and DeAndre was a big part of that. I think losing Le'Veon Bell hurt them a ton. Not taking anything away from my guys when I say it would have been a lot closer if that hadn't happened." – Brooklin coach, **Tom Jones**.



ANGRY FAN



titter

HAPPY FAN



GabbyV @ladailynews

I feel so bad for Le'Veon. He looked like he was really hurt when he left. Get well, Le'Veon!



Bird Man of Brooklin @BirdMan

A strong win today sets up big showdown in Bruxelles against our nemesis.



Los Angeles 14 Brooklin 30

	1	2	3	4	F
Los Angeles	0	0	0	14	14
Brooklin	0	13	3	14	30



Complete

* Playoff * 02-11-2018 Optimist Park Temp:31 Wind:0-5 None No Line MVP:Smith H

2	10:20	Brooklin	TD	Smith 6 pass to Gronkowski (no good) (11-83-6:03)	0-6
2	0:58	Brooklin	TD	Smith 14 pass to Jeffery (Parkey) (8-77-2:23)	0-13
3	6:14	Brooklin	FG	Parkey 20 (8-51-4:16)	0-16
4	14:04	Los Angeles	TD	Dalton 7 run (Zuerlein) (12-81-4:36)	7-16
4	5:42	Los Angeles	TD	Dalton 27 pass to Cooks (Zuerlein) (13-97-3:35)	14-16
4	2:12	Brooklin	TD	Smith 16 pass to Hopkins (Parkey) (7-75-3:30)	14-23
4	1:08	Brooklin	TD	Smith 13 pass to Gronkowski (Parkey) (2-13-0:33)	14-30

Player Stats

Passing	Att	Cmp	Yds	25	In	Td	Sk	Rate
Dalton	31	15	202	2	3	1	2	40.7
	31	15	202	2	3	1	2	40.7

Rushing	Att	Yds	Avg	FD	10	Lg	Td
West	18	49	2.7	4	2	13	0
Dalton	3	28	9.3	2	1	13	1
Perkins	8	25	3.1	2	1	11	0
Bell	1	6	6.0	0	0	6	0
	30	108	3.6	8	4	13	1

Receiving	No	Dp	Att	Yds	Avg	FD	25	Lg	Td
Cooks	5	0	8	74	14.8	5	1	27	1
Fleener	5	0	9	85	17.0	5	1	38	0
Parker	3	0	9	31	10.3	1	0	11	0
Perkins	1	0	1	3	3.0	0	0	3	0
Barnidge	1	0	2	9	9.0	0	0	9	0
West	0	1	2	0	0.0	0	0	0	0
	15	1	31	202	13.5	11	2	38	1

Fumbles	No	Rec	Td
West	1	0	0
	1	0	0

Kick Returns	No	Yds	Avg	Lg	Td
Roberts	2	44	22.0	24	0
	2	44	22.0	24	0

Punt Returns	No	Fc	Yds	Avg	Lg	Td
Roberts	2	1	18	9.0	17	0
	2	1	18	9.0	17	0

Kicking	FG	Lg	XP	Pts
Zuerlein	0-0	0	2-2	2

Punting	No	Yds	Avg	Tb	20	Bk	Lg
Martin	5	229	45.8	0	2	0	54

Defense	Tkl	Sk	Def	Str	Hur	FF	Int
Young	10	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
White	9	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Lee	6	0	0	1	0	0	0-0
Short	5	1	0	0	0	0	0-0
Williams,L	5	0	0	1	2	0	0-0
Bucannon	4	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
Bennett	2	1	0	0	3	0	0-0
Peppers	2	1	0	0	1	1	0-0
Alexander	2	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
Wilcox	1	0	0	0	0	1	0-0
Nassib,C	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Jones	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Sheard	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Murray	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Amerson	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Martinez	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Adams	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
	53	3	2	2	6	2	0-0

Passing	Att	Cmp	Yds	25	In	Td	Sk	Rate
Smith	44	29	325	3	0	4	3	118.1
	44	29	325	3	0	4	3	118.1

Rushing	Att	Yds	Avg	FD	10	Lg	Td
Stewart	14	83	5.9	2	2	25	0
Smith	4	5	1.3	0	0	6	0
Felton	1	0	0.0	0	0	0	0
	19	88	4.6	2	2	25	0

Receiving	No	Dp	Att	Yds	Avg	FD	25	Lg	Td
Hopkins	13	0	13	176	13.5	10	2	30	1
Jeffery	9	0	16	92	10.2	7	0	14	1
Gronkowski	3	1	6	26	8.7	2	0	13	2
Develin	2	0	4	6	3.0	1	0	3	0
Tye	2	0	3	25	12.5	1	1	27	0
Stewart	0	0	1	0	0.0	0	0	0	0
Cobb	0	0	1	0	0.0	0	0	0	0
	29	1	44	325	11.2	21	3	30	4

Fumbles	No	Rec	Td
Smith	1	1	0
Royal	1	0	0
Johnson	0	1	0
McCoy	0	1	0
	2	3	0

Kick Returns	No	Yds	Avg	Lg	Td
Shepherd	1	18	18.0	18	0
	1	18	18.0	18	0

Punt Returns	No	Fc	Yds	Avg	Lg	Td
Royal	4	0	19	4.8	8	0
	4	0	19	4.8	8	0

Kicking	FG	Lg	XP	Pts
Parkey	1-1	20	3-4	6

Punting	No	Yds	Avg	Tb	20	Bk	Lg
Norman	6	267	44.5	1	4	0	57

Defense	Tkl	Sk	Def	Str	Hur	FF	Int
Burfict	16	0	1	4	0	0	0-0
Golden	7	2	0	1	0	0	0-0
Foster	5	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
Byrd	4	0	1	0	0	0	1-0
Grimes	3	0	2	0	0	0	1-43
Jenkins	3	0	0	0	0	0	1-3
Johnson	3	0	0	1	0	1	0-0
Demps	2	0	2	1	0	0	0-0
Adams,A	2	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
Jones	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Verner	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Williams,B	1	0	0	0	1	0	0-0
McCoy	1	0	0	0	1	0	0-0
Shepherd	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Matthews	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Fairley	0	0	0	0	1	0	0-0
	53	2	8	7	3	1	3-46



325 yards and 4 TD passes to 3 different receivers made for the win.

	Los Angeles	Brooklin
First Downs	20	24
Rushes	30-108	19-88
Passes	31-15-202	44-29-325
Sacked	2-11	3-15
Fumble	1	2
Penalties	1-5	7-45
Turnovers	4	0
Missed Tackles	7	3
Dropped Passes	1	1
Bad Passes	4	3
Passes 25+	2	3
Runs 10+	4	2
Blitzes	21	5
Time	27:42	32:18
Third Down	6-13	5-11
Fourth Down	1-1	0-0
Red Att/Td/Fg	1/1/0	5/4/1
Net Offense	299	398



6

Cowtown



27

Scarborough

TEAM LEADERS				
Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Flacco	13	35	106	0
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Blount	14	80	5.7	0
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Fitzgerald	4	26	6.5	0

Team	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
Cowtown	3	0	3	0	-	6
Scarborough	7	3	17	0	-	27

Play of the Game

Pick one: the 55-yard TD run by **Jordan Howard** with 1:13 left in the 1st quarter for Scarborough's 1st score; or the 59-yard TD run by **Jordan Howard** to start the 2nd half that sunk his opponent.

TEAM LEADERS				
Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Rodgers	14	25	62	0
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Howard	13	207	15.9	2
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Howard	4	17	4.3	0

HOWARD, HOWARD, HOWARD!

JORDAN HOWARD RUNS FOR 207 YARDS TO POWER EAGLES TO VICTORY!

SUMMARY: These teams faced each other in Cowtown the final week of the regular season, making this game the second round of a rare back-to-back series. In many ways this contest looked a lot like the first one, with neither team executing with consistency on offence. But a few double-digit plays, including runs of 23 and 11 yards by **LeGarrette Blount**, over the course of three possessions translated into an early field position win for Cowtown and a 50-yard **Nick Novak** field goal to break the scoreless deadlock late in the 1st quarter. Scarborough took over at their 29 looking for their first 1st down. They got it and more when **Jordan Howard** followed up runs of 7 and 8 yards with a 55-yard run off a right-side pitch that went the distance for a 7-3 Scarborough lead. The Corn Kings took over at their 49 after a 43-yard **Lucky Whitehead** kick return but would immediately squander their good field position; under pressure from **Dont'a Hightower**, **Joe Flacco** threw hurriedly underneath to a double-covered **Mike Evans** and was picked off by **Dre' Kirkpatrick**. The Eagles converted the turnover into a 23-yard **Mason Crosby** field goal to stretch their lead to 10-3. The rest of the 1st half played out as a punting duel between **Johnny Hekker** and **Dustin Colquitt**, with neither coming out on top. Scarborough got the ball first in the 2nd half and wasted no time setting the tone. On 2nd & 10, Howard took a pitch left around a stretched-out Cowtown line and found a huge crease, going all the way for a 59-yard touchdown run. Trailing by two majors, Flacco went to the air on 3rd & 11 and found **Chris Hogan** wide open for a 25-yard completion. But the Cowtown drive would stall at the Scarborough 10, leaving Novak to salvage the effort with a field goal. That turned out to be the best the Corn Kings' offence would do on this day. The Eagles got the 3 points back quickly with a 12-yard bootleg from **Aaron Rodgers** and a 44-yard run by Howard setting up Crosby for a 28-yard field goal. With Scarborough now in all-out pass defence mode, **Derrick Morgan** tipped a pass intended for **Steve Smith** and **Eric Weddle** charged in on it, snatching it in the air and returning it 31 yards for his second pick-six in as many weeks. The Corn Kings turned the ball over two more times in a scoreless 4th quarter while the Eagles ran out the clock for the victory.

QUOTES: "Two things impacted this game: our inability to get the ball into the hands of our playmakers at wide receiver and a guy name Jordan Howard. Hats off to him, he made us look pretty silly out there." – Cowtown coach, **Jim Coghlin**.

"We learned last week that their running game can beat you if you leave it alone so we were determined not to let them beat us that way. Jordan stole the show on offence. They were ready for him, but he made plays – just a great running performance." – Scarborough coach, **Chris Dickinson**.



ANGRY FAN



titter

HAPPY FAN



Orville Smucker @Smuckerscoop
Jordan Howard reminded me of when I used to go watch Jim Thorpe play. Jim could take over a game like that.



Mike Myers @MikeMyers
Wow that was a nice win! I can take the bag off of my head now!



Cowtown 6 Scarborough 27



	1	2	3	4	F
Cowtown	3	0	3	0	6
Scarborough	7	3	17	0	27

Complete

* Playoff * 02-11-2018 Bluffs Stadium Temp:16 Wind:5-15 None No Line MVP:Howard

1	2:48	Cowtown	FG	Novak 50 (9-28-4:20)	3-0
1	0:15	Scarborough	TD	Howard 55 run (Crosby) (4-71-2:26)	3-7
2	12:12	Scarborough	FG	Crosby 23 (10-35-2:44)	3-10
3	13:54	Scarborough	TD	Howard 59 run (Crosby) (2-59-1:01)	3-17
3	6:46	Cowtown	FG	Novak 28 (12-55-6:58)	6-17
3	1:47	Scarborough	FG	Crosby 28 (8-65-4:50)	6-20
3	1:29	Scarborough	TD	Weddle 31 interception return (Crosby)	6-27

Player Stats

Passing	Att	Cmp	Yds	25	In	Td	Sk	Rate
Fiacco	35	13	106	1	3	0	2	9.9
	35	13	106	1	3	0	2	9.9

Rushing	Att	Yds	Avg	FD	10	Lg	Td
Blount	14	80	5.7	4	3	23	0
Gurley	7	17	2.4	0	0	6	0
Washington	3	16	5.3	1	1	11	0
Whittaker	1	5	5.0	1	0	5	0
Fiacco	4	2	0.5	1	0	3	0
	29	120	4.1	7	4	23	0

Receiving	No	Dp	Att	Yds	Avg	FD	25	Lg	Td
Fitzgerald	4	1	8	26	6.5	2	0	9	0
Smith Sr.	2	0	5	21	10.5	2	0	11	0
Hogan	2	0	3	32	16.0	1	1	25	0
Gurley	2	1	5	7	3.5	0	0	4	0
Thomas	1	0	2	11	11.0	0	0	11	0
Celek	1	0	1	2	2.0	0	0	2	0
Evans	1	1	9	7	7.0	0	0	7	0
Burton	0	0	1	0	0.0	0	0	0	0
Blount	0	0	1	0	0.0	0	0	0	0
	13	3	35	106	8.2	5	1	25	0

Fumbles	No	Rec	Td
Mancz	2	0	0
Gurley	1	0	0
Fiacco	0	2	0
	3	2	0

Kick Returns	No	Yds	Avg	Lg	Td
Whitehead	4	130	32.5	43	0
	4	130	32.5	43	0

Punt Returns	No	Fc	Yds	Avg	Lg	Td
Humphries	2	4	3	1.5	2	0
	2	4	3	1.5	2	0

Kicking	FG	Lg	XP	Pts
Novak	2-2	50	0-0	6

Punting	No	Yds	Avg	Tb	20	Bk	Lg
Hekker	8	333	41.6	0	3	0	50

Defense	Tkl	Sk	Def	Stf	Hur	FF	Int
Newman	6	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Addae	5	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Tankersley	5	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Watt	4	0	0	0	1	0	0-0
Harris	4	0	0	3	0	0	0-0
Quin	4	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Long	3	0	0	0	2	1	0-0
Crick	3	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Darby	3	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Kerrigan	2	1	0	0	0	0	0-0
Ayers Jr.	2	1	0	1	0	0	0-0
Dareus	2	0	0	0	2	0	0-0
McLeod	2	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
LeBlanc	1	0	2	0	0	0	0-0
Webster	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Burton	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Irving	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Pierce	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Wilson	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Johnson	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Coleman	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Kpassagnon	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Mayowa	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
	55	2	3	4	5	1	0-0

Passing	Att	Cmp	Yds	25	In	Td	Sk	Rate
Rodgers	25	14	62	0	0	0	2	61.3
	25	14	62	0	0	0	2	61.3

Rushing	Att	Yds	Avg	FD	10	Lg	Td
Howard	13	207	15.9	5	3	59	2
Rodgers	5	11	2.2	1	1	12	0
Yeldon	5	8	1.6	0	0	6	0
Clement	2	8	4.0	0	0	6	0
Sims, C	3	7	2.3	0	0	6	0
Jackson, D	1	0	0.0	0	0	0	0
Toussaint	1	-1	-1.0	0	0	0	0
	30	240	8.0	6	4	59	2

Receiving	No	Dp	Att	Yds	Avg	FD	25	Lg	Td
Howard	4	0	4	17	4.3	0	0	8	0
Sims, C	3	0	4	6	2.0	0	0	3	0
Yeldon	3	0	4	16	5.3	1	0	12	0
Garcon	2	0	5	10	5.0	1	0	5	0
Crowder	1	0	2	10	10.0	1	0	10	0
Hill, J	1	0	1	3	3.0	0	0	3	0
Jackson, D	0	3	5	0	0.0	0	0	0	0
	14	3	25	62	4.4	3	0	12	0

Fumbles	No	Rec	Td
Sims, C	1	0	0
Rodgers	0	1	0
Fowler Jr.	0	1	0
	1	2	0

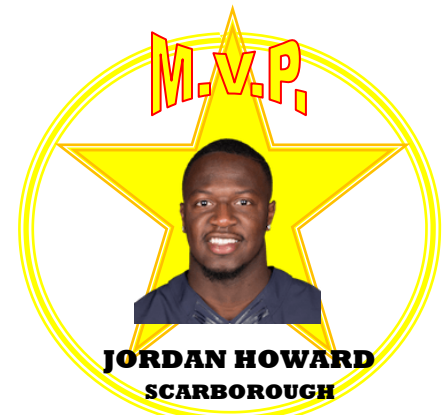
Kick Returns	No	Yds	Avg	Lg	Td
Toussaint	2	54	27.0	27	0
Clement	1	7	7.0	7	0
	3	61	20.3	27	0

Punt Returns	No	Fc	Yds	Avg	Lg	Td
Crowder	2	4	5	2.5	3	0
	2	4	5	2.5	3	0

Kicking	FG	Lg	XP	Pts
Crosby	2-2	28	3-3	9

Punting	No	Yds	Avg	Tb	20	Bk	Lg
Colquitt	8	313	39.1	0	3	0	47

Defense	Tkl	Sk	Def	Stf	Hur	FF	Int
Thomas	9	0	0	1	1	0	0-0
Kirkpatrick	8	0	0	0	0	1	1-16
Morgan	6	0	1	1	0	1	0-0
Peters	5	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Weddle	4	0	0	0	0	0	1-31
Jones	4	0	0	2	0	1	0-0
Collins, L	4	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Hightower	3	2	1	0	0	0	0-0
Hull	3	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Suh	2	0	1	1	1	0	0-0
Hill, T	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Fowler Jr.	1	0	0	0	1	0	0-0
Weatherspoon	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Butler	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Condo	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Taylor	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Anzalone	1	0	0	1	0	0	0-0
Ryan	0	0	2	0	0	0	1-19
	56	2	5	6	3	3	3-66



13 carries, 207 yards, 2 TDs. He was almost the entire Blue Eagles offence

	Cowtown	Scarborough
First Downs	12	11
Rushes	29-120	30-240
Passes	35-13-106	25-14-62
Sacked	2-15	2-12
Fumble	3	1
Penalties	7-46	1-15
Turnovers	4	0
Missed Tackles	9	4
Dropped Passes	3	3
Bad Passes	10	1
Passes 25+	1	0
Runs 10+	4	4
Blitzes	16	33
Time	31:39	28:21
Third Down	7-17	2-15
Fourth Down	0-0	0-1
Red Att/Td/Fg	1/0/1	2/0/2
Net Offense	211	290



AROUND THE



With Spats McChad

NEW YORK – In other sports “news” the Winter Olympics are now underway in PyeongChang, South Korea. The main concern leading up to the opening ceremonies was cold temperatures. Well, ah, <duh!> It’s the *Winter* Olympics; it’s supposed to be cold. The -17° C (1.4°F) temperatures reported as possible for the opening ceremonies would make it the coldest games since Lillehammer, Norway in 1994. This prompted organizers to supply small blankets, rain coats and heating pads for spectators. Wait a minute....*rain coats*? I’m confused. When has it ever rained when the temperature is -17°C?

It turns out (and good luck finding this fact easily on Google) that the actual temperature at the Opening Ceremonies was 32°F (0° C) reaching a high of 33°F (1° C) but the wind chill would make it feel colder, between -9 and -6°C (15-20F). So, the big news leading up to the games revolved around a *possible* temperature that *could* make the PyeongChang games the coldest since the Lillehammer, Norway games in 1994. But it didn’t happen. Instead we had a very un-newsworthy temperature, hovering around freezing, which was in line with the seasonal average for the city.

Is it just me or is the mainstream news (when it’s not reporting on mass shootings or war zones) getting sillier and sillier? And when they try hard to be serious – like when CNN talks breathlessly about Russians “hacking” our election with no evidence to back up the claim – they come across as hysterical and doltish? The Russians did not hack the US Election. The American people “hacked” the US Election because they were desperate for somebody – *anybody* – even a guy like *Trump* – to address what they really care about; and not what the media would have us think we care about: like possible cold weather at the *Winter Olympics* on the other side of the world.

PLEASE MAKE IT STOP!

Just two years into the league’s new “wildcard weekend” playoff format and I have had enough. It’s bad football, pure and simple. What makes it even worse is that an entire weekend, with all the ballyhoo and analytical bluster the networks can muster, is devoted exclusively to the four worst teams to make the post-season. If I were **Joe Flacco** and **Andy Dalton** right now, I’d be seriously embarrassed. Two continents (maybe more if Asia is still watching) watched, but likely not for long, as those two birdbrains gave their respective teams between zero and no chance of winning. If I were **Aaron Rodgers**, I’d be in a perpetual state of embarrassment, but in the spirit of empty-headed analysis he gets a pass this week because his team won.

I have always had my suspicions about Dalton’s true caliber as a so-called “franchise” quarterback going back to the 2012 pre-season when **Deron Redding** went on the traveling roadshow (by phone) to sell his qualities to the highest bidder before he had even started a game. The Iowa coach and GM, notorious for clutching his assets to his chest and not letting go until another team’s first born (or first pick) was securely in his hands, shopped the *Red Rifle* around with unseemly desperation – a sure red flag for anyone paying attention. When he finally found a mark and shipped off Dalton to the first-year Swordfish I thought it would not go well for the expansion franchise in the long run. I admit that I paused last year to reconsider my opinion in light of Andy’s effective, if injury-prone, contribution to Sebastian’s crusade for the Gale Sayers Trophy. But as we can all see now, that was undoubtedly in large part due to the presence of **Doug Baldwin** and **Odell Beckham Jr.** Even **Jameis Winston**, a Dalton in the making, carved out some unlikely success with those two roadrunners at his disposal this year. Dalton’s average of 2 interceptions per game over the last 8 games of 2017 was a portent of things to come in the playoffs and Andy did not let us down. He threw 3 against the Hawks, 2 of them of the “right-to” variety, i.e., right to the defender, to tie a few ragged, dis-coloured bows around the gift-wrapped Brooklin victory. Dalton falls into that category of strong-armed, sturdy, good-looking quarterback who simply cannot get the job done under pressure.

Joe Flacco, on the other hand, seemed a proper fit to wear the “franchise” tag after winning an MVP award in 2011 and following that up with 68 TD passes to just 25 interceptions over the following two years. But beginning in 2014, ‘Good Ol’ Joe,’ as Cowtowners like to call him, started showing signs of a decline, leading the league in interceptions with 21, most coming in big games. Although he has led the Corn Kings to playoff berths the past three years, including this one, (some would argue that **Matt Hsselbeck** did more than Joe to get his team to the wildcard last year) he has yet to win a playoff game. His accuracy has declined and he is processing the game slower. Rumours circulate about this and that, but it seems to me that Joe is taking like a local to the slower pace of his adopted town and no longer feels the need to rush anything, including getting rid of the football as blitzing linebackers charge towards him. Cowtown is the only EFL locale Joe has ever lived in and I can picture him retiring in the not-too-distant future and spending his days with retired farmers at Bob’s Barber Shop on Maple Street.

ROUND TWO

The re-match between the Corn Kings and the Blue Eagles at Bluffs Stadium in Scarborough was the game we should have seen in Cowtown the week before. Had the Week 16 showdown gone the way of the wildcard game, we would have been spared the sight, on national TV, of Cowtown's prematurely aged quarterback throwing passes so bad they couldn't even be intercepted. But as poorly as Flacco played, for the second week in a row, **Aaron Rodgers** was almost as bad; it just turned out that his play was irrelevant to the final outcome.

The big differences in this game were the presence of Blue Eagles' running back **Jordan Howard** (missing for most of Week 16) and the aggressive play of the Scarborough corners, **Logan Ryan** and **Dre Kirkpatrick**. Oh, yes, and the menacing presence of masked men, posing as embarrassed Eagles fans, standing in a long line in the first row at mid-field, prepared to rush the field and do something awful to **Chris Dickinson** and **Aaron Rodgers** if things went the way they had the previous week. "Homefield advantage" in Scarborough was entirely fear-based and carried a hefty price tag if the home team played poorly.

I will spare you the weary details of this tedious, choppy-played contest and jump right to the highlights, of which there were a few, all on the Scarborough side. After the Corn Kings had moved heaven and earth to scratch out a 50-yard field goal to culminate a nearly quarter-long field position battle with the, to that point, totally inert Scarborough offence, Eagles running back ***Jordan Howard*** blew up the mind-numbing pace of play with a 55-yard touchdown run that seemed to come out of nowhere. Moving to the right, Howard took a pitch from Rodgers that Cowtown looked to have covered. But a powerful and sudden inside move against the grain made containment safety ***Glover Quin*** miss and Howard was off to the races, outrunning ***Terence Newman*** racing across the field to the corner pylon to make the score 7-3 Eagles.

On the very first play of the next series, ***Dre Kirkpatrick*** jumped a short inside route and picked off ***Joe Flacco*** to set up a Scarborough field goal drive to make it 10-3. “Drive” is debatably too kind a word to describe the Blue Eagles movement, since it received a generous assist from the officials when a 4th & 4 sack of Rodgers was nullified by a questionable encroachment penalty on ***Chris Long*** and ***Ryan Kerrigan*** was later flagged for brushing against Howard’s facemask to put them in “gimme” field goal range.

ZZZZZzzzzzz.....rest of 1st half goes by.....zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz.....half time show features some rapper named 'Blo Mi' who the crowd ignores.....ZZZZZZzzzzzzzzzzzz...Eagles receive kickoff to start 2nd half

On the second play from scrimmage, Howard struck again. Moving to the left this time, he took a pitch from Rodgers that ***Robert Ayers Jr*** seemed to have contained. But a powerful and sudden inside move against the grain broke Ayers' ankles then a juke to the outside made ***Ronald Darby*** miss and Howard was off to the races, outrunning ***Jahleel Addae*** to the pylon to make the score 17-3 Eagles. ZZZZZZ.....teams exchange field goals....zzzzzzzzz.....***Eric Weddle*** intercepts a wounded duck from Flacco and returns it 31 yards for his second pick-six in as many weeks to turn the game into a laughier, 27-6. ZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ <turn off TV> zzzzzzzzzz <nap time> zzzzzzzzzz <wake up to see final score was 27-6 for Scarborough and Howard rushed for 207 yards>.....<tune in hoping for better from Brooklin-LA game>

DOLTON STRIKES AGAIN!

In keeping with the theme of bad quarterbacking dominating Wildcard Weekend, let's look at how the play of *Andy Dalton* in his team's 30-14 loss to the Brooklyn Hawks closely replicated his up and down season.

Le’Veon Bell, the best offensive player the Knights have, went down on the first play from scrimmage and never returned – not a good start and likely pivotal. The reaction of the LA coaching staff to this setback speaks volumes about how they felt about the nominal “leader” of the offence. They opted to continue with the game plan they had worked on during practice but with **Terrance West** and **Rob Perkins** running the ball instead of Bell. The Hawks soon observed that the LA running game, without Bell, was limited in what it could achieve. Their emphasis on stopping the run shifted as the game progressed to more basic and pass defence sets. When the Hawks did load up to stop the run, West and Perkins turned into sitting ducks.

What LA needed in this situation was a quarterback who could make plays. The Hawks' QB, **Alex Smith** was making plays. He threw effectively at long and short distances, and deftly executed a screen pass that went for 27 yards to **Will Tye** to set up their first TD. The 'Blue Shield' was playing hard but Smith still managed to slowly build a 16-0 lead heading into the quarter. What the Knights got was a quarterback who failed to make a single play until that 4th quarter when, down 16-0, he threw a 38-yard pass to **Coby Fleener** in the face of the blitz to set up his own 7-yard scramble to make it 16-7. This sparked a mini-revival for Dalton, who went 6 of 10 for 89 yards, including a 27-yard long toss to **Brandin Cooks** for a TD, on the next series to narrow the gap to 16-14.

With the game in danger of slipping away, Smith stepped up, hitting *DeAndre Hopkins* for 30 yards to set up a 16-yard TD pass, also to Hopkins, to make it 23-14 Hawks with 2:12 left. It was now do-or-die for Dalton and, as all informed fans might have predicted, he died, throwing 2 interceptions in the final two minutes, one of those a pick-six. Three quarters of doltish play behind center was not going to get fixed in one, especially when his opposite number was cool in the crunch and the opposing defence boasted world-class corners. The Knights had started 2017 poorly, went on a 6-game tear, then lurched and stumbled over the final few weeks to make the playoffs thanks mainly to a Chino collapse. They did not deserve a better fate in Brooklin.

DR. McCHAD'S POST-SEASON POST-MORTEM

As we focus our attention on the post-season battle between the final ten, let us consider how they measure up, as a group, against those left behind. 14 teams gave their seasons so that 10 could move on. How and why did they fall? As a certified Sports Coroner, it is my solemn duty to examine the fallen and determine what caused their failure. Here, dear Readers are my findings:

CHARLESWOOD (8-8) – Cause of Death: *Distracted Driving*. Patriots management handed the keys to the Patsmobile to 2nd round

rookie pick, DeShaun Watson, while their 1st round draft pick of 2014 stood with a clipboard on the sidelines, giving birth to a QB controversy that never died. It might have been better if the Pats had tanked. Watson was encouraged to develop within a paint-by-numbers game plan that was as predictable as it was conservative. By Week 8 it was clear he was in over his head, prompting such loud and distracting second-guessing that he took the wrong exit off the Playoff Highway while chasing Virden down the stretch.

CHINO (8-8) – Cause of Death: *Nervous Breakdown*. The Convicts seemed to have a playoff spot well in hand, maybe even a shot at a Division title. And then Seattle came along in Week 15 and something went horribly wrong. Things went from bad to worse for Chino against the weakling of the west. The team lost its collective mind in that game, beginning with quarterback Dak Prescott. Still stunned and drooling come Week 16, the Convicts were put out of their misery effortlessly and savagely by the merciless Cubbies.

PICKERING (8-8) – Cause of Death: *Choking*. Sometimes teams that have the talent to win simply choke. That is what happened with Pickering. An early season victory over the Cubs put the Spartans in the spotlight then they melted under the glare. A rude wake-up call for Philip Rivers' offence against Budapest was followed by three blown 4th-quarter leads to Sebastian, Chino and Georgia in the ensuing weeks to humble the defence. Their swagger gone, it was only a matter of time before they were too.

YORK (8-8) – Cause of Death: *Congenital York Disease*. With little changed from the year before, sports doctors gave the sons of the York-2016 only eight weeks to live in a tough division. But the Excaliburs confounded the experts by continuing to breathe once they were removed from life support in Week 11. The defence came alive and the offence with it, sparking hope for a last-minute miracle. They got one – a Week 16 blowout of Budapest – but not the other, as bad genes dictated their inevitable playoff demise.

GEORGIA (7-9) – Cause of Death: *Fatal Bender*. Few if any people thought the Glads of 2017 would be a great team, but most expected them to be a good team. One reason was Ben Roethlisberger; the other was LeSean McCoy. “Shady” held up his end but Big Ben dropped his – big time. Losing in football is usually a team effort, but not this time. The Glads' lost season was Ben's doing. The main contributor to his team's league-high 29 turnovers, Ben shone against weak teams and sh*t the bed against everyone else.

SEBASTIAN (7-9) – Cause of Death: *Glory Ride*. The defending Conference Champs always expected to be in the dance after Week 16. The media did not agree, pronouncing the Fish dead in the water due to their quarterback. A defiant Russ Lemmon tossed aside caution and let his QB loose to find his way with the help of two great receivers. His ultra-aggressive game plan, built on long passes and risky 4th down gambles, won victories and caused defeats. Who can say if it was right or wrong; but it was indeed glorious.

TWIN CITES (7-9) – Cause of Death: *Undetermined*. Still waiting for the toxicology results to come back after examining the corpse of the Triumph and finding nothing. Yes, an ageing Carson Palmer did not help, but a QB transplant at that stage carried risks. The offensive line was not very good, but it was better than last year. Antonio Brown was not a demi-god this year, but he was still very good. The defence generated a league-low 14 turnovers, but the offence only made 18. Could it have been loss of Doug Martin?!

MOHAVE (7-9) – Cause of Death: *Bad Luck*. When Andrew Luck was playing, he struggled more than he should have. When he was injured, which was more often than he should have been, his back-up Conner Cook was worse. The Hellfire turned to 70's-style football to start winning games and their success running the ball boosted the passing game and kept them alive longer than expected. But when it mattered most their quarterback was nowhere to be found. It was a very *Luckless* final season in Mohave.

ST. CHARLES (6-10) – Cause of Death: *Blunt Force Trauma*. The confident Chargers entered the fray expecting to build on last year's success. But the second-year expansion team was not equipped to handle the rigors of a full season facing opponents who no longer considered them pushovers. They gave as good as they got for a while, but a sacked and harassed Carson Wentz wore down as the season progressed. Constantly battered at the line, Michael Thomas checked out; and the running game could not save the day.

SOUTH CAROLINA (4-12) – Cause of Death: *Regicide*. The only thing the Regulators did moderately well was throw for a lot of yards each game. That was because they had no running threat, not because it was a winning strategy with Kirk Cousins at quarterback. After a decent start, the defence stopped stopping when Luke Kuechly could not stay on the field. Soon word got around that the Regs were an easy mark – easy to defend against and easy to move on. That meant one thing: weekly regicide!

ERIEAU (3-13) – Cause of Death: *Staff Infection*. Just ask Virden about quarterback Matt Stafford. The high-priced free agent came to Erieau to give the franchise credibility and instead gave it fits. The Cadillac did manage to win three games, but only one of those due to Stafford. True, the makeshift offensive line and lack of a respectable run threat did not make things easier, but Stafford did not make any of it better. The defence, a rare collection of top-grade, young pass-rush talent, might have powered another team to the playoffs. But the Stafford offence was so bad that the defence was dragged down with it.

TORONTO (3-13) – Cause of Death: *Battery*. The Wolverines were high on their quarterback, their receivers and their running backs; as high as a second-year expansion team can be about having a group of players capable of starting on established teams. Unfortunately, that was all they had. The offensive line was patched together with duct tape and the defence, save for Jalen Ramsey, was basically in shambles. That defence was battered mercilessly; and the odd interception interrupted, but did not stop the beating.

SEATTLE (2-14) – Cause of Death: *Crash*. When a plane's wings are too small even the best pilot can't get it off the ground. Captain Eli tried, firing all jets in a vain attempt to get his jerry-rigged offence to take off. But the plane that Mitch Gangwish had taken apart and rebuilt didn't have a hope of flying. The offence jetted along the runway on a pair of sturdy wheels in Kareem Hunt and Bilal Powell. But when it came time for takeoff, the Pilots' offence skidded off the runway and crashed into a ditch.

NEW JERSEY (1-15) – Cause of Death: *Karma*. An aggressive off-season build appeared to position the Wrecking Balls for a strong run at a playoff berth, if not their division. But appearances turned out to be deceiving. The team could not buy a break; Sam Bradford was awful; the defence was a paper tiger; and Michael Crabtree turned in the most unproductive 122-catch year in football history. It was wall-to-wall misery some say was well-deserved for management taking a stance against the Anthem. Karma's a bitch.

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PACIFIC CONFERENCE QUARTER FINALS

BROOKLIN @ BRUXELLES (line – BOMBERS by 3)

INJURIES: Brooklin – Jonathan Stewart (OUT), Manti Te'o (OUT); Bruxelles – None.

The Hawks have something to prove against the Bombers, having lost both of their regular season match-ups, but they will have to prove it without Jonathan Stewart. While his back-up Ryan Mathews certainly has shown a nose for the goal line – 11 touchdowns in limited action – he is not a workhorse type who will tire out the defence, which is what Alex Smith needs to be fully effective. Smith dropped off his torrid first half pace down the stretch but rebounded with an impressive performance in the wildcard game against a sturdy Knights' defence. His receivers are all healthy and they are a versatile bunch with playmakers, possession receivers and a running threat in Randall Cobb. On paper the Hawks have a significant advantage over the Bombers' defence in the passing game; but on the field the Bruxelles' D somehow finds a way to limit opponents to field goals, instead of touchdowns in the red zone – a true bend-not-break defence. Going the other way, the Hawks have the second most efficient pass defence in the league, holding opposing quarterbacks to a collective 63.2 passer rating. This is partly due to sharing a division with the likes of Carson Wentz and Conner Cook, but it is also because Janoris Jenkins and Brent Grimes are top-notch corners who get to cheat on the aggressive side when Markus Golden is blitzing and Gerald McCoy commits to the bull-rush. Marcus Mariota will have to carefully choose his moments to stretch the field with breakaway threats Terrelle Pryor Sr and Travis Kelce. The key will be to establish Leonard Fournette on the ground and maybe even throw in a couple of designed runs for Mariota, the team's second-leading rusher. While Bruxelles is the deserved favourite based on the season, the odds favour a rebound by the better team. **PICK: BROOKLIN**

VIRDEN @ IOWA CITY (line – CUBS by 4)

INJURIES: Virden – Vadal Alexander (OUT); Iowa City – None.

The Cubs appear to be peaking when it counts, having thrashed division rivals LA and Chino by a combined score of 72-10 in the final two games of the year. Criticized by some for being soft and for taking games off, the team displayed a mean streak in those two wins that nobody thought the Cubs possessed. If it carries on into this week, it could be a very unwelcoming return to the playoffs for Virden, a team that has made it to the post-season only once, in 2012, and that one time was a loss. The recent history between these two teams is not an encouraging one for the Violators. The Cubs overwhelmed them with big plays from receiver Mike Wallace and special-teamer Tyler Lockett in a 38-10 shelling in their only meeting of the season. But history need not repeat itself this week. The Violators are almost totally healthy, a rarity for them, and they have weapons. Simply put, they have the best running back tandem in football with league-leading rusher Ezekiel Elliott spear-heading the ground attack and Mark Ingram maintaining the pace behind him. Virden will run the ball – a lot. But, while running the ball will be the key staying in the game and keeping their defence fresh, the key to actual victory will be the ability of David Carr to get the football to Amari Cooper in space. If the Violators are unable or unwilling to pass the ball, they will lose. On the other side Russell Wilson will be looking at a defence that features the new single-season sack record holder, Mark Ingram and ball-hawking safety, Eric Berry. The slippery Wilson is hard to sack and takes good care of the ball, but he will still need to keep that dangerous pair of defenders honest by getting traction from his running game. Who will provide that traction is not clear, as the Cubs ran the ball over 500 times using a total of five running backs in addition to Wilson himself and hybrid threat, Tavon Austin. The reputation of the Cubs' offensive MVP took a bit of a hit this year due to weak performances against good defences in his team's four losses. This is his chance to clear his name. The Cubs are on a mission and will not let the Violators stand in their way. **PICK: IOWA CITY**

ATLANTIC CONFERENCE QUARTER FINALS

SCARBOROUGH @ AURORA (line – MUSTANGS by 14)

INJURIES: Scarborough – Vincent Jackson (OUT); Aurora – None.

If the Blue Eagles are to stand a chance of beating the Mustangs on the road they will need to get a positive contribution from Aaron Rodgers. But the Scarborough starting quarterback of 9 years, going back to his Dragons days, is pressing more than ever. He threw for just 62 yards in the wildcard game – his longest completion a mere 12 yards – and looked at all times uncomfortable in the pocket. The two other things they will need are: a sterling performance by their defence, in particular the secondary; and another great game from Jordan Howard. Take Howard out of the picture, like he was in their Week 16 loss to Cowtown, and the Blue Eagles could lose this game by 20 points. The Mustangs and Matt Ryan are as confident as they have ever been and will not back down from challenging the Scarborough corners. With secret weapon Kenyan Drake fully rested, the Eagles cannot afford to completely ignore the ground game either. But with the power of the Mustangs' attack centered mainly around the Ryan-to-Julian Edelman / Davante Adams combos, the Blue Eagles' defensive game plan should be a relatively easy one, with success or failure boiling down to execution. The two-touchdown line says more about how Vegas views the dysfunctional Scarborough offence than the defence. Ryan could well survive two or three interceptions, as long as they aren't going back the other way for scores. Due to that sense of immunity, the Mustangs will air it out against the best pass defence in the league and succeed more than not. **PICK: AURORA**

DURHAM @ BUDAPEST (line – THUNDER LIZARDS by 3)

INJURIES: Durham – None; Budapest – None.

The rehabilitation of Drew Brees' reputation over a four-game winning streak to end the season has turned the season's logic on its head and pushed the Lizards into the "favourite" category. That the Lizards will be flying across the ocean two days before the game due to the lack of practice facilities in Hungary is an intangible factor to be considered, however; as is the fact that the North Stars will have been home for two weeks and fully recovered from the jet lag they experienced in their final game of the season at York. While I understand that the impact of the 'Brees vs Hoyer' billing wproduces a bias in favour of the Durham starter in the public's psyche, the pedigree of the quarterbacks should not blind anyone to the presence alongside Brian Hoyer of do-it-all running back David Johnson and three pretty good playmakers at wide receiver. The North Stars have the personnel to control the ball and score, which means Brees will have fewer opportunities to get the ball to TY Hilton, which is his ultimate goal. In order to achieve that goal, Carlos Hyde will need to keep running as effectively as he has been over his last three starts (not including Week 16). The Budapest defence has been steady but not stupendous over the course of the season, but it also features a trio of impact front-seven defenders in Calais Campbell, Cameron Jordan and Lavante David, anyone of whom could take over a game. The Durham D ranks with Budapest in overall efficiency but has an edge versus the pass. Nevertheless, they could be as exposed as any other if the Stars get the running game on track. I put my money on "close" for this one and close games are the Stars' specialty. **PICK: BUDAPEST**



ANCIENT HISTORY
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This Week in EFL History
With Professor
Sterling Smitherman

FROM THE EFL ARCHIVES – In the 2011 EFL season the wildcard weekend did not yet exist, but each Conference had a wildcard team that went straight to the quarter finals against the no.1 seed in the Conference. The difference in calibre between the wildcard entry in the PAC and the one in the CAC had never been greater, before or since, than it was that year. The Iowa City Cubs, at 6-10, were and remain the worst team by record ever to make the post-season. Going into the quarters they were considered mere fodder for the no.1 seed LA Knights. However, this great disparity in record brought a certain amount of pressure to bear on the favourite: what a

potentially franchise-killing disaster it would be to lose!

In the CAC, the wildcard Pickering Spartans stood at 14-2, the second-best record in the Conference. They had held the North Division all year until a Week 16 loss to Cowtown knocked them down. The Spartans were and remain the best team by record to ever enter as a wildcard. For the no.2 seed 11-5 Gwinnett Gladiators, drawing Pickering in the first round was unfortunate. After taking the South from the powerful Blue Eagles, one-and-done was a likely possibility.

The Cowtown Corn Kings finished with the no.1 seed in the CAC and the best record in football at 14-2. Although this remained a shock, fans and media had finally accepted that they belonged in the playoffs and should be favoured. But that was as far as most would go. The playoffs were different and their opponent, the Durham Thunder Lizards, were a hot bet heading into the quarters.

A fierce showdown was brewing at Patriot Place between the 11-5 Patriots and the 9-7 Undertakers. The Pats wanted revenge for a Week 13 loss in which they fell behind early. The **Drew Brees-Peyton Manning** match-up was being hyped, with Vegas siding with Peyton as 4-point favourites.