

QUARTER

FINALS

2012 EFL 2012

February 10, 2013



EAST



YORK

41



VIRDEN

21

WEST



LOS ANGELES

24



DEATH VALLEY

45

NORTH



COWTOWN

27



DURHAM

38

SOUTH



MARKHAM

30



SCARBOROUGH

19

Durham wide receiver **Calvin Johnson** flexes after beating Cowtown's **Brandon Flowers** deep for a 37-yard TD pass during 4th quarter action at Jurassic Park. The Thunder Lizards rallied in the 4th quarter to overcome a 14-point deficit and advance to the Conference Final. In other Wildcard action, the York Excaburs had a nasty surprise in store for the Violators while the Champs fell for the third time this season to their Western Nemesis, Death Valley in record-breaking cold weather at the Graveyard. Finally, at Bluff's Stadium the Blue Eagles were the perfect hosts, handing Markham their first playoff victory in franchise history. In other news, syndicated EFL columnist **Spats McChad** gets to keep his job after a court ruling in New York. (MORE INSIDE)



*Who was slick
in the Quarter
Finals?*

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



Tom Brady
QB
York
Excaburs

21 of 30, 341 yards, 5 TDs, QB
rating 147.4 Led big road upset.



Adrian Clayborn
DE
Death Valley
Undertakers

3 tackles, 3 sacks, 2 forced fumbles.
Held LA at bay in 2nd half.



14-3-0

41

EFL

PACIFIC-ATLANTIC

WILDCARD



13-4-0

21

BRADY IS BACK!

YORK QB IN PRIME PLAYOFF FORM WITH 5
TD PASSES IN ROMP OVER VIRDEN!

EXCALIBUR OF THE GAME

Tom Brady

21 of 30, 341 yards, 5 TDs

Team	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
York	14	10	10	7	-	41
Virden	0	7	0	14	-	21

VIOLATOR OF THE GAME

Fred Davis

10 Receptions, 108 yards, 1 TD

GAME SUMMARY: After literally throwing away the game and the East Division with 3 interceptions in a pivotal Week 13 match-up against the Violators, **Tom Brady** felt he needed to prove that he could beat this particular team. And prove it he did – in the most convincing fashion. To the surprise of many, the Excaliburs entered the **TERRORDOME** and made short work of this year's "Cinderella" team with a 41-21 victory that was not as close as the score might indicate. The ringleader in administering this beating was Brady, but he had a lot of help, particularly from his defence. York charged out of the gate with an efficient 8-play opening drive that covered 80 yards and culminated with the first of five TD passes Brady would throw this evening – a short slant beneath the coverage that **Anquan Boldin** took 24 yards to the end zone. The Violators responded with **Matt Stafford** hitting on 4 of his first 5 pass attempts to delve into York territory, but an off-target pass on 4th and 4 at the 35 ended the threat. The Excaliburs went three-and-out and were forced to punt, but caught their first big break when **Dez Bryant** tried to dodge excellent coverage and was levelled by **Oshiomogho Atogwe**, who stripped the ball loose. **Brian Waters** pounced on it and York was suddenly on the Virden doorstep at the 19. Five plays later, from the 9, Brady threaded the needle to a diving **Kellen Winslow** in the end zone to give York a 14-0 lead. Virden survived another lost fumble on their next possession then seemed to steady themselves in the 2nd quarter with an impressive 80-yard drive that finished with Stafford finding a wide open Davis for a 13-yard TD pass to close the gap to 14-7. But the Excaliburs slashed right back at them with Brady hitting Boldin for 21 yards then firing a perfect spiral to **Victor Cruz**, who took it on the run for a 62-yard scoring play and a 21-7 lead. Virden went to the air in reply, but York's **Michael Johnson** got penetration and pressured Stafford into a bad throw that **Asante Samuel** picked off, setting up a 38-yard **Blair Walsh** field goal to end the scoring in the 1st half. After 30 minutes, York was in control 24-7. They did not let up in the 3rd. After forcing a Virden three-and-out, they scored on their first series of the 2nd half with Brady hitting **Tony Scheffler** for 22 yards then launching a bomb that Cruz glided under for a 38-yard score. With a 31-7 lead, the Excalibur defence sat on the pass and got immediate results when **Ryan Clark** picked off Stafford on their next series to set up a 20-yard Walsh field goal. With the score 34-7, Virden finally got a break when **DeMarcus Ware** forced a fumble during a scramble by Brady and recovered it. That set up a 1-yard TD run by **Beanie Wells** in the 4th, but it was too little too late for Virden. Interceptions by **Rashean Mathis** and **Mike Adams**, the 3rd and 4th thrown by Stafford on the day, sabotaged any hope of a Virden comeback. With few fans remaining, the teams traded TDs to finish the scoring.

QUOTES OF THE GAME

"I had this dream where we, like, couldn't play because it was snowing really hard inside the dome, and the funny thing was, in the dream, I didn't think it was weird that it was snowing inside the dome or anything. During the game I got thinking that maybe it was a premonition or something, and all those white flakes were us in our white jerseys falling all over the Violators." – York coach, Jay Hammond.

"It's not like we hadn't seen them before – we know what they like to do. We just didn't stop them this time. They executed well on offence and we absolutely did not. They flooded the field with defensive backs and our receivers could not get open – hats off to them!" – Virden coach, Lance Barrate.

"I did my part, but let's not get carried away. This is a team game and the team played well tonight!" – York QB, Tom Brady.

FAN RATING



FANS' THUMB UP

Brady's 5 TD passes

FANS' THUMB DOWN

Stafford's worst day



titter

CAME ALOT @hotdagger

Let them have the regular season. We'll take the playoffs. #York

Bill Hampton @sword4play

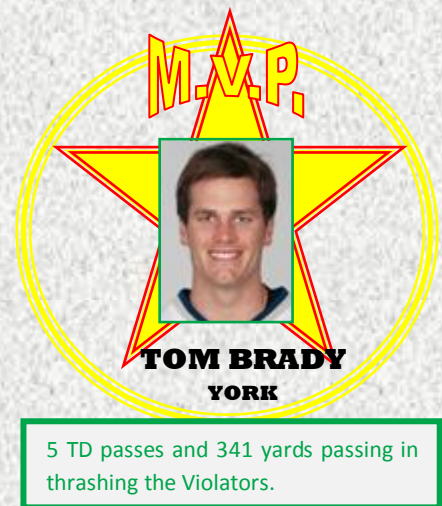
The whiz kid was schooled by the master Tom Terrific. #Brady

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2011 York (1-0)	14	10	10	7	41
2011 Virden (0-1)	0	7	0	14	21

1	9:46	York	TD Brady 24 pass to Boldin (Walsh) (8-80-5:14)	7-0
1	1:45	York	TD Brady 9 pass to Winslow (Walsh) (5-19-1:42)	14-0
2	4:12	Virden	TD Stafford 13 pass to Davis (Tynes) (13-80-7:55)	14-7
2	2:28	York	TD Brady 62 pass to Cruz (Walsh) (3-85-1:44)	21-7
2	0:59	York	FG Walsh 38 (4-0-0:40)	24-7
3	12:55	York	TD Brady 38 pass to Cruz (Walsh) (4-66-1:36)	31-7
3	6:05	York	FG Walsh 20 (10-49-5:05)	34-7
4	12:09	Virden	TD Wells 1 run (Tynes) (11-88-4:04)	34-14
4	5:11	York	TD Brady 7 pass to Jones (Walsh) (6-64-3:59)	41-14
4	0:08	Virden	TD Stafford 7 pass to Bryant (Tynes) (7-83-1:26)	41-21

York									Virden										
Passing	Att	Cmp	Yds	25	In	Td	Sk	Rate	Passing	Att	Cmp	Yds	25	In	Td	Sk	Rate		
Brady	30	21	341	3	0	5	1	147.4	Stafford	54	32	432	1	4	2	1	66.3		
									Cassel	1	1	5	0	0	0	0	87.5		
Rushing	Att	Yds	Ave	FD	10	Lg	TD		Rushing	Att	Yds	Ave	FD	10	Lg	TD			
Jacobs	11	67	6.1	2	1	28	0		Tate	8	28	3.5	2	0	6	0			
Turner	15	37	2.5	2	1	11	0		Tomlinson	1	2	2.0	1	0	2	0			
Brady	2	9	4.5	0	0	6	0		Wells	1	1	1.0	1	0	1	1			
									Stafford	3	-3	-1.0	0	0	0	0			
Receiving	No	Dp	Att	Yds	Ave	FD	25	Lg	TD	Receiving	No	Dp	Att	Yds	Ave	FD	25	Lg	TD
Cruz	6	0	8	177	29.5	6	3	62	2	Davis,F	10	0	14	108	10.8	7	0	19	1
Boldin	5	0	8	77	15.4	5	0	24	1	Bryant	6	0	10	127	21.2	6	1	47	1
Winslow	3	1	4	24	8.0	2	0	10	1	Jones	6	0	13	86	14.3	4	0	20	0
Jones	2	0	4	15	7.5	1	0	8	1	Blackmon	5	0	5	54	10.8	2	0	17	0
Turner	2	0	3	14	7.0	0	0	9	0	Tomlinson	2	1	3	17	8.5	1	0	12	0
Scheffler	2	0	2	32	16.0	1	0	22	0	Smith,T	2	1	7	29	14.5	1	0	24	0
Jacobs	1	0	1	2	2.0	0	0	2	0	Daniels	1	0	2	16	16.0	1	0	16	0
										Kuhn	1	0	1	0	0.0	0	0	0	0
Fumbles	No	Rec	TD	Fumbles	No	Rec	TD		Fumbles	No	Rec	TD							
Jacobs	1	0	0	Bryant	1	0	0												
Brady	1	0	0	Davis,F	1	0	0												
Scheffler	1	0	0	Barnett	0	1	0												
Waters	0	2	0	Ware	0	1	0												
Manning	0	1	0																
Kick Returns	No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD	Kick Returns	No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD								
Mariani	1	15	15.0	15	0	Lefeged	8	126	15.8	25	0								
Turner	1	0	0.0	0	0														
Punt Returns	No	Fc	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD	Punt Returns	No	Fc	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD						
Mariani	0	1	0	0.0	0	0	Bryant	1	0	5	5.0	5	0						
Kicking	Fg	Lg	Xp	Pts	Kicking	Fg	Lg	Xp	Pts										
Walsh	2-2	38	5-5	11	Tynes	0-0	0	3-3	3										

Punting	No	Yds	Ave	Tb	20	Bk	Lg	Punting	No	Yds	Ave	Tb	20	Bk	Lg
Kluwe	3	129	43.0	1	2	0	46	Masthay	1	47	47.0	0	0	0	47
Defense	Tkl	Sk	Def	Stf	Hur	FF	INT	Defense	Tkl	Sk	Def	Stf	Hur	FF	INT
Clark	10	0	0	0	0	0	1-3	Barnett	16	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Samuel	6	0	0	0	0	0	1-40	Posluszny	7	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
Babin	5	1	1	0	3	0	0-0	Landry	6	0	0	0	0	1	0-0
Mathis	5	0	1	0	0	0	1-0	Ware	3	1	0	0	0	1	0-0
Atogwe	5	0	1	0	0	1	0-0	Williams	3	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Urlacher	5	0	1	1	0	0	0-0	Routt	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Manning	3	0	0	0	0	0	0-0	Ingram,M	2	0	0	1	0	0	0-0
Gay	3	0	0	0	0	0	0-0	Davis,V	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Timmons	2	0	0	0	1	0	0-0	Mebane	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Cody	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0	Smith,A	1	0	0	0	1	0	0-0
Adams	1	0	2	0	0	0	1-25	Lefeged	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Atkins	1	0	0	1	1	0	0-0	Marks	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Miller	1	0	1	0	0	0	0-0	Mikell	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Bolden	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0	Smith,A	0	0	1	0	1	0	0-0
Bowers	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0								
Florence	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0								
Wright	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0								
Jenkins	1	0	0	1	0	0	0-0								
Robinson	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0								
Johnson	0	0	1	0	3	0	0-0								



	YOR	VV
First Downs	19	27
Rushes	28-113	13-28
Passes	30-21-341	55-33-437
Sacked	1-5	1-15
Fumble	3	2
Penalties	3-17	3-15
Turnovers	2	6
Missed Tackles	3	9
Dropped Passes	1	2
Bad Passes	1	0
Passes 25+	3	1
Runs 10+	2	0
Blitzes	22	22
Time	31:21	28:39
Third Down	10-15	5-12
Fourth Down	0-0	2-4
Red Att/Td/Fg	5/2/2	3/3/0
Net Offense	449	450



10-7-0

24

EFL

PACIFIC-ATLANTIC

WILDCARD



16-1-0

45

CHAMPS KNOCKED OUT!

BREES DELIVERS DEATH BLOWS AS UNDERTAKERS REAP VICTORY!

KNIGHT OF THE GAME

Alex Smith

26 of 42, 304 yards, 1 TD

Team	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
Los Angeles	10	0	7	7	-	24
Death Valley	7	24	7	7	-	45

UNDERTAKER OF THE GAME

Drew Brees

27 of 36, 386 yards, 4 TDs

GAME SUMMARY: In bone-chilling weather that reached -56 degrees with the wind chill, the Undertakers laid to rest the Knights' hopes of a Championship repeat with a 24-point outburst in the second quarter, staking them to a 31-10 half time lead that LA could not overcome. After Death Valley was stopped on its first possession and the Knights got on the board first with a 38-yard **Dan Carpenter** field goal, it was **Randall Cobb** who ignited the Undertakers' attack with a 102-yard kickoff return for a TD and a brief 7-3 lead. The Knights soon regained the advantage after a 15-yard personal foul penalty on **Jerod Mayo** and a 14-yard dump-off to **Shonn Greene** set up a 3-yard **Cedric Benson** touchdown run to make the score 10-7. The first quarter finished with LA in the lead, but it would be the last time they would enjoy the advantage. Death Valley struck quickly in the 2nd when **Drew Brees** completed the first of 4 touchdown passes on the evening, connecting with **Marques Colston** on a bomb down the right sideline for a 55-yard score. On their next possession facing 3rd and inches they went for broke as the Knights crowded the line looking for the run – a perfect play action gave Brees time and he made it count with another bomb to Colston, who made a diving catch in the end zone to make the score 21-10. In what is becoming a trademark of their style, the Undertakers followed up the two deep blasts with a surprise onside kick that **Vontaze Burfict** recovered at their 46 yard line. A 24-yard screen to **Ryan Mathews** was the key play in a 5-play drive that ended with Brees connecting with **Aaron Hernandez** at the pylon from 9 yards out; suddenly it was 28-10 and the Knights looked stunned. On their next possession a short hitch intended for **Darren Sproles** fell incomplete on 4th down at their 49 yard line, setting up the final Death Valley score of the first half – a 20-yard field goal by **Graham Gano** as time expired. The second half started well for LA as **Alex Smith** scrambled for 10 yards and completed 3 straight passes for 44 yards to set up a 4-yard TD run by Sproles. But the Undertakers stole back whatever momentum that had generated by answering with a time-consuming 12-play, 66-yard scoring drive that ended with a 3-yard run up the gut by **Willis McGahee** to make it 38-17 with 6 minutes left in the 3rd. The Knights responded with a long drive, surviving a 15-yard personal foul against guard **Leroy Harris** and a Smith fumble on a sack by **Adrian Clayborn** to reach the Undertakers' 9 yard line, where the drive stalled on a perfectly defended pass attempt to **Steve Smith** on 3rd and 9. The Knights' came away empty-handed and deflated after Carpenter missed from 27 yards, signalling that this would not be their day. The teams played out the final frame, trading TDs in the process, but there was never any doubt by then which team would advance to play for the Pacific-Atlantic Conference title. The Champs had fallen and the powerful Undertakers had advanced.

QUOTES OF THE GAME

"I don't have much to say about this. You all saw it ...it speaks for itself, I think. We could not stop their quarterback....again! It's frustrating but we're just going to have to get better in the secondary next year, get Charles some help back there. I tip my hat to them – they are one Hell of a team!" – LA Coach, **Jeff Dohn**.

"You never know what the Knights are going to be like. Fortunately we made the most of our opportunities and Drew was Dead-eye-Dick again! I hear some of you say that onside kick was a sign of disrespect. Nothing is further from the truth – it was a sign of respect. We were on a roll and I didn't want them getting back in it. It worked and they never got back in it. " – Undertakers' coach, **Chris Worthley**.

"We got it done today, but there are two more to go. We won't rest until it's done!" – QB, **Drew Brees**.

FAN RATING



½



titter

FANS' THUMB UP
Drew "MVP" Brees

FANS' THUMB DOWN
Blue Shield

DEAD GUY @graveyard32

Brees is sick! Hot as Hell on the coldest day of the year! #BreesMVP

AVERAGE ZOMBIE @burialmound

Nothing will stop this team this year. We just stomped the team that could. GO TAKERS! #Savers

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2011 Los Angeles (0-1)	10	0	7	7	24
2011 Death Valley (1-0)	7	24	7	7	45

1	3:35	Los Angeles	FG Carpenter 38 (13-57-8:04)	3-0
1	3:28	Death Valley	TD Cobb 102 kick return (Gano)	3-7
1	0:47	Los Angeles	TD Benson 3 run (Carpenter) (5-58-2:35)	10-7
2	12:44	Death Valley	TD Brees 55 pass to Colston (Gano) (6-80-2:58)	10-14
2	6:20	Death Valley	TD Brees 34 pass to Colston (Gano) (7-75-3:55)	10-21
2	3:19	Death Valley	TD Brees 9 pass to Hernandez (Gano) (5-54-2:56)	10-28
2	0:00	Death Valley	FG Gano 20 (12-47-2:07)	10-31
3	12:57	Los Angeles	TD Sproles 4 run (Carpenter) (5-58-1:57)	17-31
3	6:07	Death Valley	TD McGahee 3 run (Gano) (12-66-6:42)	17-38
4	4:36	Los Angeles	TD Smith 1 pass to Gonzalez (Carpenter) (15-80-4:56)	24-38
4	2:51	Death Valley	TD Brees 57 pass to Gronkowski (Gano) (3-56-1:38)	24-45

Los Angeles								Death Valley							
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Passing	Att	Cmp	Yds	25	In	Td	Sk	Rate	Passing	Att	Cmp	Yds	25	In	Td	Sk	Rate
Smith,A	42	26	304	1	0	1	3	91.8	Brees	38	27	386	3	0	4	1	138.7

Rushing	Att	Yds	Ave	FD	10	Lg	TD	Rushing	Att	Yds	Ave	FD	10	Lg	TD
Sproles	8	41	5.1	3	2	12	1	McGahee	12	42	3.5	5	0	8	1
Smith,A	6	30	5.0	2	1	10	0	Mathews	9	39	4.3	3	0	9	0
Benson	5	14	2.8	1	0	6	1	Brees	1	1	1.0	0	0	1	0
Greene	4	2	0.5	0	0	4	0								
Graham	1	2	2.0	0	0	2	0								

Receiving	No	Dp	Att	Yds	Ave	FD	25	Lg	TD	Receiving	No	Dp	Att	Yds	Ave	FD	25	Lg	TD
Smith,S	8	0	12	103	12.9	4	1	25	0	Gronkowski	8	0	10	133	16.6	6	1	57	1
Gonzalez	7	0	9	62	8.9	4	0	16	1	Hernandez	7	0	10	58	8.3	3	0	11	1
White	4	0	5	53	13.3	3	0	21	0	Colston	5	0	8	121	24.2	4	2	55	2
Sproles	4	2	10	54	13.5	3	0	23	0	Mathews	3	0	4	37	12.3	1	0	24	0
Graham	1	0	1	9	9.0	1	0	9	0	McGahee	2	0	2	15	7.5	1	0	10	0
Greene	1	0	1	14	14.0	1	0	14	0	Johnson,A	2	0	4	22	11.0	1	0	14	0
Benson	1	0	1	9	9.0	1	0	9	0										
Nelson	0	0	3	0	0.0	0	0	0	0										

Fumbles	No	Rec	TD	Fumbles	No	Rec	TD
Smith,A	3	2	0				
Bulaga	0	1	0				

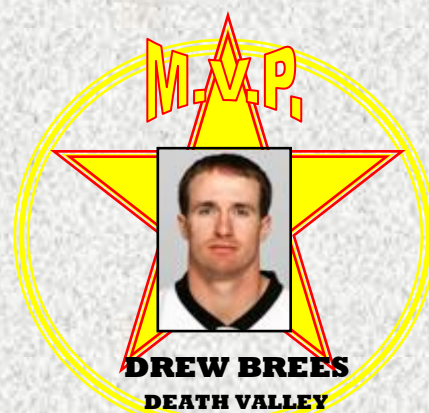
Kick Returns	No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD	Kick Returns	No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
Sproles	3	87	29.0	35	0	Cobb	4	185	46.3	102	1
Roberts	1	24	24.0	24	0	Marecic	1	0	0.0	0	0
Muhlbach	1	0	0.0	0	0						
Gooden	1	0	0.0	0	0						

Punt Returns	No	Fc	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD	Punt Returns	No	Fc	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
Sproles	1	0	11	11.0	11	0							

Kicking	Fg	Lg	Xp	Pts	Kicking	Fg	Lg	Xp	Pts
Carpenter	1-2	38	3-3	6	Gano	1-1	20	6-6	9

Punting	No	Yds	Ave	Tb	20	Bk	Lg	Punting	No	Yds	Ave	Tb	20	Bk	Lg
Weatherford	1	23	23.0	0	0	0	23	Mesko	2	94	47.0	1	0	0	52

Defense	Tkl	Sk	Def	Stf	Hur	FF	INT	Defense	Tkl	Sk	Def	Stf	Hur	FF	INT
Bell	8	0	0	0	0	0	0-0	Mayo	10	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Bethea	7	0	0	0	0	0	0-0	Wilson	8	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
Wimbley	6	0	1	0	0	0	0-0	Ryans	6	0	4	1	0	0	0-0
Bennett	5	1	0	1	0	0	0-0	Mathews	5	0	0	0	0	1	0-0
Woodson	5	0	0	0	0	0	0-0	Moore,W	4	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Jackson	4	0	0	0	1	0	0-0	Brown,S	4	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Kelsay	3	0	0	0	0	0	0-0	Clayborn	3	3	0	0	0	2	0-0
Asomugha	2	0	1	0	0	0	0-0	Johnson,C	3	0	0	2	2	1	0-0
Williams,K	2	0	0	0	1	0	0-0	Grimes	3	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Spikes	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0	Long,C	2	0	0	0	1	0	0-0
Raji	1	0	0	0	1	0	0-0	Hicks	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Johnson	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0	Jenkins	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Sash	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0	Huff	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Fua	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0	Fletcher	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Braman	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0	Smith	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
								Worthy	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
								McCoy	0	0	0	0	1	0	0-0



27 of 38, 386 yards, 4 TDs. Put up 45 points and made it look easy.

	LAK	DVU
First Downs	26	24
Rushes	24-89	22-82
Passes	42-26-304	38-27-386
Sacked	3-20	1-7
Fumble	3	0
Penalties	2-20	7-65
Turnovers	0	0
Missed Tackles	7	4
Dropped Passes	2	0
Bad Passes	0	5
Passes 25+	1	3
Runs 10+	3	0
Blitzes	34	11
Time	29:24	30:36
Third Down	5-13	7-11
Fourth Down	3-5	1-1
Red Att/Td/Fg	6/3/1	3/2/1
Net Offense	373	461



9-7-1

27

EFL

CAN-AM

WILDCARD



15-2-0

38

SCHAUB SHOCKS!

DURHAM QB TRIGGERS 25-POINT RALLY IN 4TH QUARTER TO SAVE THE DAY!

CORN KING OF THE GAME

Larry Fitzgerald

5 Receptions, 71 yards, 1 TD

Team	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
Cowtown	10	7	10	0	-	27
Durham	0	10	3	25	-	38

LIZARD OF THE GAME

Matt Schaub

25 of 43, 360 yards, 3 TDs

GAME SUMMARY: By the end of the 3rd quarter it appeared that the Corn Kings were poised to upset the Thunder Lizards and avenge their quarter final loss to them last year at Tillman Field. Late in the 3rd quarter, blitzing linebacker **DJ Williams** ran unblocked into the blind side of **Matt Schaub** and forced a fumble that **Stephen Tulloch** recovered at the Durham 26 for the game's first turnover. **Joe Flacco** calmly led the Cowtown offence into the end zone on three plays, finishing the drive with a perfectly thrown flare-out to **Larry Fitzgerald** from 7 yards for the TD and a 27-13 lead. The momentum was in the visitor's favour and the erratic performance of the Lizard offence to that point did not give much hint of what was soon to come. But the 4th quarter was as a total turnaround. Early in the final period, facing 4th and 4 at the Cowtown 37 yard line, the Lizards boldly struck deep. **Calvin Johnson** got behind the tight coverage of **Brandon Flowers** and Schaub connected with him on a deep crossing pattern for a 37-yard TD pass. **Mason Crosby** missed the extra point to give to make it 27-19, but the successful gamble had energized the crowd and the team. The Corn Kings tried to run the ball but found the going tough, as they had all day, on the soggy Jurassic Park turf. A 3rd and 8 pass intended for **Kevin Walter** fell incomplete and **Brad Maynard** came on to punt, giving Durham the ball back at their 20 yard line. After initial success, the drive stalled at the Corn King 30, but Crosby gave them 3 more points by driving home a 48-yard field goal to make the score 27-22. The teams traded punts, but with a chance to regain the initiative, the Cowtown offence misfired again, and soon they were punting after a second consecutive three-and-out. **Eric Decker**, pressed into service as a punt returner after returning just 3 all season, ripped off an 18-yard return to the Lizards' 37 yard line. From there Schaub would mount what would turn out to be the winning TD drive by calmly checking down to secondary receivers on 4 of his next 5 completions, including a 9-yard TD toss to **Dwayne Bowe** for the receiver's second scoring catch of the game. Leading now 28-27, Durham went for two but was unsuccessful, setting up an opportunity for Cowtown to rescue their performance if they could get into field goal range. But three straight incompletions by a suddenly ice cold Flacco gave the ball back to Durham then the frustration of the afternoon boiled over with a personal foul and ejection of star corner Flowers after a 19-yard pass to **Antonio Gates**. Cowtown burned their remaining timeouts then Crosby made it a 4-point advantage with a 29-yard field goal. Now needing a TD to win, the Corn Kings' rally was suddenly cut short when **Richard Sherman** eliminated all doubt that the Lizards would advance with a 46-yard pick-six to make the final 38-27.

QUOTES OF THE GAME

"This game was a real chess match, right until the end. They should all be like this. It was a great game and I'm not just saying that because we won it. We stuck to our game plan and in the end it worked; but it was a lot closer than the final score indicated." – *Durham coach, George Kaldis.*

"Whenever you have a two-touchdown lead heading into the fourth quarter you are supposed to win the game. We had them where we wanted them but I wouldn't say our defence is completely to blame for letting it slip away. Their quarterback got really hot in the last 15 minutes and there is no good defence for that. If we could have answered with plays of our own, I still think we win that game, but we couldn't move it either." – *Cowtown coach, Jim Coghlin.*

"We're used to the rain and I think it helped us at the end of the game. My receivers were great too." – *QB, Matt Schaub.*

FAN RATING



FANS' THUMB UP

Matt Schaub in 4th quarter

FANS' THUMB DOWN

Cowtown offence in 4th quarter

titter

DINOSAUR @schaubrulers

He won't win league MVP because he didn't play enough but Durham's MVP is Schaub!

Reginal Clapham @claphamdiggat

Wins like this are like climbing mountains – good for the heart and soul! #Lizards

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2011 Cowtown (0-1)	10	7	10	0	27
2011 Durham (1-0)	0	10	3	25	38

1	4:38	Cowtown	FG Kasay 21 (8-65-4:25)	3-0
1	0:32	Cowtown	TD Flacco 5 pass to Moss (Kasay) (8-73-2:26)	10-0
2	14:48	Durham	TD Schaub 47 pass to Bowe (Crosby) (2-78-0:36)	10-7
2	6:02	Durham	FG Crosby 25 (12-60-5:03)	10-10
2	0:20	Cowtown	TD Jones-Drew 2 run (Kasay) (18-71-5:36)	17-10
3	12:38	Durham	FG Crosby 40 (4-8-2:02)	17-13
3	2:15	Cowtown	FG Kasay 38 (13-59-6:49)	20-13
3	0:13	Cowtown	TD Flacco 7 pass to Fitzgerald (Kasay) (3-26-1:29)	27-13
4	14:20	Durham	TD Schaub 37 pass to Johnson (no good) (5-60-0:53)	27-19
4	9:45	Durham	FG Crosby 48 (8-50-2:16)	27-22
4	3:19	Durham	TD Schaub 9 pass to Bowe (2 - failed) (8-63-2:13)	27-28
4	2:11	Durham	FG Crosby 29 (6-40-0:26)	27-31
4	1:24	Durham	TD Sherman 46 interception return (Crosby)	27-38

Cowtown										Durham									
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Passing	Att	Cmp	Yds	25	In	Td	Sk	Rate	Passing	Att	Cmp	Yds	25	In	Td	Sk	Rate
Flacco	41	20	236	1	2	2	0	62.7	Schaub	43	25	360	3	0	3	1	108.7

Rushing	Att	Yds	Ave	FD	10	Lg	TD	Rushing	Att	Yds	Ave	FD	10	Lg	TD
Jones-Drew	35	99	2.8	4	0	5	1	Bush,R	10	38	3.8	2	0	7	0
Ogbonnaya	4	16	4.0	1	0	8	0	Gerhart	2	5	2.5	0	0	4	0
Flacco	3	11	3.7	1	0	6	0	Bush,M	3	5	1.7	2	0	2	0
								Schaub	2	0	0.0	0	0	0	0

Receiving	No	Dp	Att	Yds	Ave	FD	25	Lg	TD	Receiving	No	Dp	Att	Yds	Ave	FD	25	Lg	TD
Fitzgerald	5	0	9	71	14.2	4	1	29	1	Bowe	7	0	11	106	15.1	4	1	47	2
Moss	4	0	9	32	8.0	3	0	19	1	Johnson	5	1	11	99	19.8	3	2	37	1
Floyd	4	0	8	71	17.8	2	0	24	0	Bush,R	4	0	6	39	9.8	1	0	17	0
Jones-Drew	2	1	5	25	12.5	2	0	14	0	Gates	4	1	7	56	14.0	2	0	19	0
Heap	2	0	4	16	8.0	2	0	10	0	Davis,V	2	0	4	25	12.5	1	0	16	0
Lorig	1	0	1	9	9.0	0	0	9	0	Bess	2	0	2	23	11.5	1	0	18	0
Jenkins	1	1	2	5	5.0	0	0	5	0	Decker	1	0	2	12	12.0	1	0	12	0
Walter	1	1	3	7	7.0	0	0	7	0										

Fumbles	No	Rec	TD	Fumbles	No	Rec	TD
Tulloch	0	1	0	Schaub	1	0	0

Kick Returns	No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD	Kick Returns	No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
Weems	5	110	22.0	31	0	Hester	4	107	26.8	57	0

Punt Returns	No	Fc	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD	Punt Returns	No	Fc	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
Weems	3	1	25	8.3	13	0	Decker	5	1	87	17.4	20	0

Kicking	Fg	Lg	Xp	Pts	Kicking	Fg	Lg	Xp	Pts
Kasay	2-2	38	3-3	9	Crosby	4-4	48	2-3	14

Punting	No	Yds	Ave	Tb	20	Bk	Lg	Punting	No	Yds	Ave	Tb	20	Bk	Lg
Maynard	7	323	46.1	0	2	0	50	Ryan	4	184	46.0	0	0	0	47

Defense	Tkl	Sk	Def	Stf	Hur	FF	INT	Defense	Tkl	Sk	Def	Stf	Hur	FF	INT
Williams,D	9	1	0	0	0	1	0-0	Lofton	9	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Jones	5	0	4	0	0	0	0-0	Dumervil	9	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Webster	5	0	0	0	0	0	0-0	Chancellor	7	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Tulloch	4	0	1	0	0	0	0-0	Rogers	6	0	0	0	0	0	1-6
Kerrigan	4	0	1	0	0	0	0-0	McCourty	5	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
Starks	3	0	0	0	1	0	0-0	Allen,J	5	0	0	0	1	0	0-0
Flowers	3	0	1	0	0	0	0-0	Kelly	4	0	1	0	1	0	0-0
Johnson,D	3	0	1	0	0	0	0-0	Soliai	4	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
McManis	3	0	0	0	0	0	0-0	Sherman	3	0	1	0	0	0	1-46
Smith,J	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0	Allen,R	3	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Phillips	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0	Davis,D	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Hangartner	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0	Jones	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Patrick	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0	Massaquoi	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Maynard	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0	Manning	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Novak	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0	Haggans	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Williams,M	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0	Wilson	1	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
LaBoy	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0	Landry	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Dareus	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0	Joseph	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Ross	0	0	3	0	0	0	0-0								
Anderson	0	0	0	0	1	0	0-0								



25 of 43, 360 yards, 3 TDs. Hot hand rallies Lizards to Conference Final.

	COW	DTL
First Downs	23	20
Rushes	42-126	17-48
Passes	41-20-236	43-25-360
Sacked	0-0	1-7
Fumble	0	1
Penalties	7-62	9-69
Turnovers	2	1
Missed Tackles	5	7
Dropped Passes	3	2
Bad Passes	4	4
Passes 25+	1	3
Runs 10+	0	0
Blitzes	10	3
Time	37:44	22:16
Third Down	9-21	1-10
Fourth Down	2-2	1-1
Red Att/Td/Fg	5/3/2	5/1/2
Net Offense	362	401



12-4-1

30

EFL

CAN-AM

WILDCARD



14-3-0

19

GOOD MCKNIGHT!

102-YARD KICK-OFF RETURN, 3 TURNOVERS,
SPARK MARKHAM UPSET!

NORTH STAR OF THE GAME

Jordy Nelson

5 Receptions, 88 yards, 2 TDs

Team	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
Markham	10	7	7	6	-	30
Scarborough	0	6	3	10	-	19

BLUE EAGLE OF THE GAME

Aaron Rodgers

284 yds pass, 88 yds rush, 1 TD

GAME SUMMARY: The Blue Eagles controlled the ball for over 18 minutes in the first half but trailed 17-6 after 30 minutes due to a pair of turnovers and a big special teams play by the North Stars. A trick play on the game's opening series backfired when **Aaron Rodgers** took a pitch back from **Ray Rice** on the flea-flicker but faced pressure and hurried a throw intended for **Jermaine Gresham**. Stars' linebacker **Rob Ninkovich** tipped the pass and ended up snaring it before it touched the ground. Ruled an incomplete pass on the field, Markham coach **Darrin Jones** challenged the play and the ruling on the field was overturned and ruled an interception at the 31 yard line. The Eagles' defence held but **David Akers** made them pay a 3-point fine for the turnover with a 45-yard field goal to open the scoring. The Scarborough offence went three-and-out on their next possession, handing the ball back to Markham. Starting from their 38, the North Stars shot up the field thanks to a 31-yard completion to **Wes Welker** into double coverage that the elusive receiver almost gave away when **Darrelle Revis** popped the ball out; but an alert **Jordy Nelson** fell on it to maintain possession. **Jonathan Stewart** burst through for an 11-yard run into the Scarborough red zone then Nelson made a nice over-the-shoulder catch from 12 yards out for the first of his 2 TD catches of the day to make it 10-0 Markham. The Blue Eagles responded with a methodical 11-play, 72-yard drive that ended badly when **CJ Spiller** was stripped of the ball by **Jairus Byrd** and the fumble was recovered by Markham at their own 4 yard line. Scarborough finally got on the board when **Sebastian Janikowski** kicked a 34-yard field goal at the end of a 70-yard drive, but the Stars responded immediately with an explosive 102-yard kick return for a TD by **Joe McKnight** to give Markham a 17-3 lead. Scarborough added a field goal before the half, but after out-gaining Markham in yardage, 269-117, frustration was evident as they headed to the locker room. The pattern of the 1st half continued in the 2nd with Scarborough moving the ball all the way to the Markham 9 yard line only to have linebacker **Pat Angerer** break through on the blitz and dump Rodgers for an 8-yard loss, forcing another Janikowski field goal. The North Stars continued to reply to the Eagles' field goals with TDs, shooting up the field on the strength of 3 **Eli Manning** completions for 58 yards, including a 29-yard scoring strike to Nelson to grab a 24-9 lead. Scarborough desperately needed a major to get back in the game, but **Charles Tillman** drove a stake into their hearts on their next possession by knocking the ball loose from **Brandon Marshall** for their third turnover of the game, leading to another Akers field goal. Scarborough did not find the Markham end zone until it was too late, Rodgers scrambling for a TD from 7 yards out with 1:13 left. The North Stars celebrated their first playoff win and advance to the Conference Final.

QUOTES OF THE GAME

"We were fortunate to beat a very good team today. We were excited and felt we could win if we executed, which we did. That kick return by Joe was a huge lift and I think we all felt after it that we had a good chance. They showed why they were so dominant in the regular season by moving the ball but those fumbles cost them." – *Markham coach, Darrin Jones.*

"This is very disappointing. I must admit, but their defence gave up nothing without trying to make you pay a price. Markham made the plays when they needed them and we didn't. Doesn't matter how good you think you are, if your opponent punches you in the mouth like that you better answer right away." – *Scarborough coach, Bill Belichick.*

"Wow, that was a bummer! The guys tried, though, and we're still going to have our year-end party at my boat house!" – *Scarborough owner, Chris Dickinson.*

FAN RATING



titter

FANS' THUMB UP

Joe McKnight's big return

FANS' THUMB DOWN

Scarborough miscues

GRETA @fatladyrow54

Munch, munch, munch, we ate Rodgers for lunch! #Markham

Lanny McDonald @economistsunlm

The difference was that we scored on the power play and they didn't. #Markham

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2011 Markham (1-0)	10	7	7	6	30
2011 Scarborough (0-1)	0	6	3	10	19

1	13:04	Markham	FG Akers 45 (4-4-0:58)	3-0
1	7:50	Markham	TD Manning 12 pass to Nelson (Akers) (7-62-3:40)	10-0
2	5:37	Scarborough	FG Janikowski 34 (12-70-6:44)	10-3
2	5:29	Markham	TD McKnight 92 kick return (Akers)	17-3
2	1:46	Scarborough	FG Janikowski 46 (13-51-3:32)	17-6
3	7:23	Scarborough	FG Janikowski 35 (12-72-5:48)	17-9
3	4:56	Markham	TD Manning 29 pass to Nelson (Akers) (6-63-2:20)	24-9
4	12:06	Markham	FG Akers 25 (8-44-4:53)	27-9
4	6:00	Scarborough	FG Janikowski 40 (20-61-5:51)	27-12
4	2:42	Markham	FG Akers 46 (7-25-3:06)	30-12
4	1:13	Scarborough	TD Rodgers 7 run (Janikowski) (6-71-1:24)	30-19

Markham									Scarborough																
Passing	Att	Cmp	Yds	25	In	Td	Sk	Rate	Passing	Att	Cmp	Yds	25	In	Td	Sk	Rate								
Manning	13	9	171	2	0	2	0	151.4	Rodgers	51	28	284	1	1	0	2	62.9								
Rushing	Att	Yds	Ave	FD	10	Lg	TD		Rushing	Att	Yds	Ave	FD	10	Lg	TD									
Stewart	9	43	4.8	3	2	11	0		Rodgers	11	88	8.0	8	5	23	1									
Williams,D	12	40	3.3	2	2	16	0		Spiller	10	59	5.9	3	2	27	0									
Starks	4	14	3.5	0	0	6	0		Rice	10	33	3.3	0	1	10	0									
Leach	1	2	2.0	0	0	2	0																		
Manning	2	-2	-1.0	0	0	0	0																		
Welker	1	-8	-8.0	0	0	0	0																		
Receiving	No	Dp	Att	Yds	Ave	FD	25	Lg	TD	Receiving	No	Dp	Att	Yds	Ave	FD	25	Lg	TD						
Nelson	5	0	5	88	17.6	5	1	29	2	Jackson	7	0	11	101	14.4	6	1	30	0						
Breaston	2	0	3	37	18.5	2	0	23	0	Spiller	6	1	12	40	6.7	2	0	11	0						
Cook	1	0	2	15	15.0	0	0	15	0	Gresham	5	0	8	49	9.8	3	0	16	0						
Welker	1	0	2	31	31.0	1	1	31	0	Rice	4	0	4	34	8.5	2	0	22	0						
Stewart	0	0	1	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	Little	4	1	8	42	10.5	2	0	18	0						
										Marshall,B	1	1	5	10	10.0	0	0	10	0						
										Miller	1	0	3	8	8.0	0	0	8	0						
Fumbles	No	Rec	TD															Fumbles	No	Rec	TD				
McKnight	1	0	0															Spiller	1	0	0				
Welker	1	0	0															Marshall,B	1	0	0				
Lang	0	1	0															Rodgers	1	0	0				
Nelson	0	1	0															Little	0	1	0				
Babineaux	0	1	0																						
Brown	0	1	0																						

Kick Returns	No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD							Kick Returns	No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
McKnight	3	140	46.7	92	1							Scott,D	6	118	19.7	25	0
Bergstrom	1	15	15.0	15	0												
Breaston	1	1	1.0	1	0												
Young	1	0	0.0	0	0												

Punt Returns	No	Fc	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD							Punt Returns	No	Fc	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
Welker	1	0	6	6.0	6	0							Jackson	1	1	0	0.0	0	0

Kicking	Fg	Lg	Xp	Pts							Kicking	Fg	Lg	Xp	Pts
Akers	3-3	46	3-3	12							Janikowski	4-4	46	1-1	13

Punting	No	Yds	Ave	Tb	20	Bk	Lg							Punting	No	Yds	Ave	Tb	20	Bk	Lg
Podlesh	3	132	44.0	0	3	0	48							Colquitt	1	53	53.0	0	0	0	53

Defense	Tkl	Sk	Def	Stf	Hur	FF	INT													Defense	Tkl	Sk	Def	Stf	Hur	FF	INT
Byrd	10	0	2	0	0	2	0-0													Weatherspoo	9	0	0	1	0	0	0-0
Ninkovich	8	0	2	0	0	0	1-0													Campbell	5	0	0	1	0	0	0-0
Clements	8	0	1	0	0	0	0-0													Suggs	4	0	0	1	0	0	0-0
Lee	8	0	0	0	0	0	0-0													Rubin	3	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Angerer	6	1	0	0	0	0	0-0													Suh	3	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Cole	6	0	0	1	1	0	0-0													Rolle	3	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Reed	5	0	2	0	0	0	0-0													Griffin	3	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Canty	3	1	0	0	3	0	0-0													Cromartie	3	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Tillman	3	0	3	0	0	1	0-0													Scott,B	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Abraham	2	0	0	0	3	0	0-0													Woodley	1	0	2	1	0	0	0-0
Babineaux	2	0	0	0	2	0	0-0													Revis	1	0	0	0	0	1	0-0
Brown	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0													Spievey	1	0	0	0	0	1	0-0
King	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0													Moore	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Williams,D	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0													Marshall,R	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Fujita	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0													Martin	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Watson	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0																				
Biermann	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0																				



5 Catches, 88 yards, 2 TDs. Eli's go-to receiver made limited action count.

	MAR	SBE
First Downs	13	27
Rushes	29-89	31-180
Passes	13-9-171	51-28-284
Sacked	0-0	2-17
Fumble	2	3
Penalties	3-20	6-38
Turnovers	0	3
Missed Tackles	5	3
Dropped Passes	0	3
Bad Passes	1	7
Passes 25+	2	1
Runs 10+	4	8
Blitzes	17	12
Time	24:41	35:19
Third Down	1-7	9-18
Fourth Down	0-0	3-3
Red Att/Td/Fg	2/1/1	5/1/3
Net Offense	260	447



AROUND THE



With Spats McChad

NEW YORK – As a recently acquitted, wrongfully accused protestor I feel that justice was served. I also get to keep my job. You may recall, my dear readers, how I was innocently caught up in the madness at Zuccotti Park two Novembers ago and was arrested for assault on a NYPD officer who had woken me up in the middle of the night without proper warning. Although I may have reacted in an extremely irritable manner to the abrupt intrusion into my peaceful rest, the cop proceeded to administer corporal punishment on me that made my Great Grandfather Jebediah's hickory switch feel like a feather duster in comparison. It was that overreaction that I intended to focus on when presenting my defence to the judge in court; that and my Media credentials entitling me to be there as a simple journalist doing a freelance piece on the Occupy Movement for *'The New American'* magazine. Rather than a criminal, I was, in fact, a modern American Hero for entering the lion's den of anarchist dissent to communicate the truth to Free America from the inside. But just in case I had difficulty getting those points across, I was prepared, as a last resort, to invoke the name of my Great Uncle, Judge Mortimer McChad, the famous "hanging judge" of Litchfield County, Connecticut, in a last ditch appeal for leniency. I still remember 'Uncle Mort' at Thanksgiving family gatherings, boasting about the number "*perfidious felons*" he had sent to the gallows while complaining that the law was becoming weak. "*It's getting harder to hang 'em these days. They pretty much have to murder somebody!*" he would grumble in disgust after his ninth scotch.

I never got the chance to make my case. As I launched furiously into my well-rehearsed opening statement, the Judge cut me off and barked, "Mr. McChad, you are free to go. The charges are dismissed." I was taken aback. So intent was I on railing against the injustice of my plight that I had not heard the Prosecutor acknowledge that the State was not in a position to prove its case against me because the officer who had beaten me without mercy (my words, not hers) was "unavailable to testify" (her words, not mine) and the matter had been postponed on three previous occasions, amounting to unreasonable delay. It was not the outcome I was prepared for, but it suited me fine. After taking a moment to absorb the message, I thanked the Court and the Prosecutor with a heartfelt "God Bless America!" or ten (maybe more), before delivering multiple fist pumps of roughly the same number and energy as **Tom Brady** did this weekend after repeatedly "violating" the Virden secondary; but more on that later.

DEATH TO THE CHAMPS

Things, good or bad, come in threes, the saying goes. Depending on where you sit, the season-long dominance of last year's Champion Knights by the Undertakers this year could be a *good* thing, or it could be a *bad* thing. As a neutral observer (sorry, Gabrielle, but my journalistic professionalism prevents me from inappropriately mixing my personal affection for you with my professional opinion of your beloved Knights) I look at it simply as "one of those things." Death Valley had LA's number this year; and the coldest game in EFL history was not enough to cool off the hot hand of **Drew Brees** as he led the Undertakers to a 45-24 victory over the 'Blue Shield' this weekend at the Graveyard.

Last year's 'No Passing Zone' in the Knights' secondary was turned into a 'No Stopping Zone' by Brees this year. In three games versus LA, all wins for the Black, Red & Shroud (the shade of white preferred by Death Valley uniform-makers), Brees completed 90 of 119 passes for 1,366 yards, 15 touchdowns and 0 interceptions. That is a 75.6% completion percentage, an average of 455 yards and 5 TDs per game, and an astounding 152.5 QB rating! In this playoff game the Knights employed a blitz strategy out of a standard 4-3 defence. Designed to bring pressure to bear on the quarterback, it only opened up bigger throwing windows for the elusive Brees, who was sacked just once in the game, on its first series, and was pressured only a handful of times. With a wide open field and no shortage of targets, it was no wonder that the EFL's most deadly sniper passed for 386 yards and 4 touchdowns against the helpless Knights. On the other side, Alex Smith tried to answer the Death Valley onslaught but could not keep up despite a respectable effort. The offensive game plan was predicated on the defence, with help from the brutally cold and windy weather, slowing down Brees just a little bit; but relief never materialized.

On the sideline, the widely vilified Undertakers' coach, **Chris Worthley**, dressed in an all-black winter snowsuit outfitted with a black cowl and cape, looked intensely grim throughout most of the game, cracking a brief smile as **Rob Gronkowski** finished an absurdly slow gallop of 57 yards into the end zone, (with outweighed Knights' defenders making inept attempts to arm tackle him all the way), to score with 2:51 remaining and put the game virtually out of reach. As the final gun sounded he sprinted to mid-field to shake **Jeff Dohrn's** hand. A camera caught the two in mid clasp – Dohrn sporting a pained but resigned expression,

Worthley an oddly commiserative look – with the scoreboard overhead beaming the score to the world: **Death Valley 45, Los Angeles 24.**

At the podium after the game, Worthley's characteristic exuberance after administering a good thrashing to an opponent was not in evidence. He praised his team, delivering the usual platitudes about hard work paying off, discipline in executing the game plan, and team spirit (BORRIINGG!) before turning to the subject of the Knights.

"Some of you are going to write that we handled them (Knights) easily but you need to know the truth – that is a *great* team we beat today! It was not easy at all," Worthley declared, with much emphasis on the word 'great.' "A lot of work went into the game plan – a *lot* of work. We built our game plan, and built this team to beat the Champs. Because of that we finished 15-1 this year. When you prime your team to beat the best, you can beat anybody. It's not easy winning a Championship – it's even harder to repeat. I tip my cowl to Jeff!"

Worthley's post-game presser provided no bulletin board material for any other team and, even worse, nothing for the Press to whip up a controversy about. It was as standard as press conferences go, with a genuine touch of humility to add an unusual sense of dignity to the affair. Just last week, Worthley was calling out the coach of a 1-15 team after beating them in a meaningless game with two hands tied their backs. This week, after handing the reigning Champs their third of three humiliating losses, he was gracious in victory. The only unusual thing about any of it was the ghostly red apparition with the goatee and tiny horns hovering over his left shoulder making rude faces. It was one of those things that everyone sees but nobody acknowledges because it is just so bizarre that nobody wants to deal with it and would rather just pretend it wasn't there. And so,



York QB, **Tom Brady** gives a crazed fist pump after dropping a 38-yard bomb on the Violators to take a 31-7 lead in the 3rd quarter. Brady was in his finest playoff form with 5 TD passes against the team that drove him crazy during the regular season.

with what appeared to be Satan behind him, **Chris Worthley** threw a curve ball to the Press and silenced them for a day. It must have been almost as satisfying for him as advancing to the Conference Final.

LET IT SNOW

They say that **Jay Hammond** spends 16 hours a day at the Excaliburs' practice facility in Avalon, pouring over game film and drinking carbonated beverages. He expects the same dedication from his coaching staff and his quarterback, but doesn't enforce the rules because he is too busy to keep track of their comings and goings. Hammond is a workaholic, and his passion for his job has made him a bit of a "holic" in other areas as well....but that is a subject for another day.

Facing mounting criticism about his team's performances in the regular season against Virden, Hammond tackled the problem of stopping the Violators' quarterback prodigy, **Matt Stafford** head-on, with a round-the-clock film study that started the very night of his team's Week 16 win over Commonwealth. It is not known how much sleep he got during the week leading up to his team's first playoff game in franchise history, but judging from the bags under his eyes (big enough to stuff a couple of silver dollars comfortably inside each one) and the colour of those eyes (red as a Hellfire helmet), not to mention the swirly walking pattern and unsteady gait he displayed while moving around the sidelines during the game, it couldn't have been sufficient to sustain life for much more than a week. But the dangerously unhealthy work habits looked to have paid off in the end.

Virden was the clear favourite heading into the contest, having dispatched York twice in the regular season; but Violators' coach **Lance Barrate** appeared uncommonly edgy in the week prior to the game. "It is really difficult to beat any team three times in a single season, let alone a team as good as York is," he kept saying to reporters throughout the week. To his players, he kept reminding them that it would be tough for them to beat the Excaliburs a third time: "They're going to be gunning for you, so you are going to have

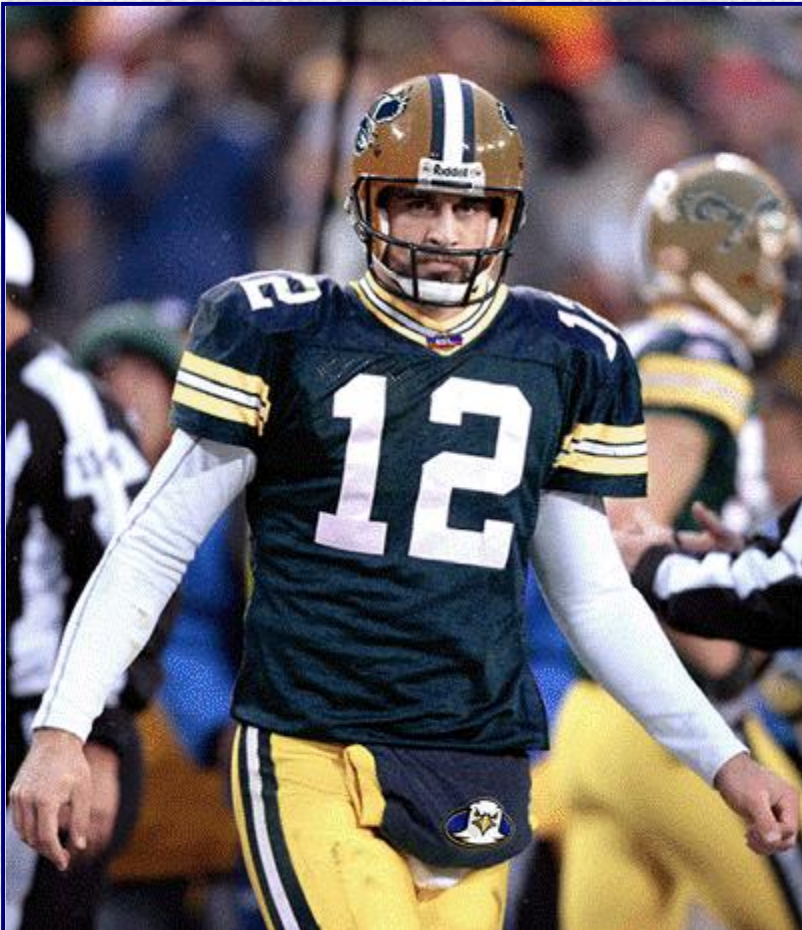
to dig deep, you understand? You're going to have a tougher time, you hear me?" And on and on it went. He even took an ill-tempered shot at ESPN's **Russ Flont** for confidently predicting an easy victory for Virden. "What does Flont know about football, anyway?" he snapped when asked for a comment. Good question, but an odd time to ask it.

By game time, Barrate was a nervous wreck and Hammond was just a wreck, but as the players took to the field, both coaches assumed their customary postures on the sidelines. Changes in the York defensive game plan were not immediately apparent as all attention focused on the exploits of the forgotten master, **Tom Brady**, who threw two touchdown passes in York's first two series to give the Swords an early 14-0 lead. Across the continent drunks in sports bars were tripping over their tongues trying to be the first to caution all the other drunks "not to forget Brady" because "he's been there before." True, but few were saying that before the game and many had been talking up the changing of the guard with "Whiz Kid" Stafford leading the way.

A botched 4th down conversion and a lost fumble by **Fred Davis** had kept the Violators' offence at bay, but on their third series, 7 consecutive carries by running back **Ben Tate** softened up the York defence and led to a 13-yard touchdown pass from Stafford to Davis to put Virden on the scoreboard. Across the continent drunks in sports bars were tripping over their tongues trying to be the first to caution all the other drunks to remember that "no lead is safe from the kid Stafford." True, sometimes, but the vet wasn't finished yet. Brady responded with a 62-yard touchdown pass to **Victor Cruz**. The throw travelled just 15 yards but was as sharp as a razor and right on the money, allowing Cruz to cruise through the Violators' secondary the rest of the way to the end zone.

The pass to Cruz was a game-changer. Brady's poise, unseen in the playoffs since 2008, may have rattled young Matt. With the Excaliburs deployed in a nickel, Stafford was picked off by **Asante Samuel** on the ensuing drive. On the second possession of the 3rd quarter, against a dime package, he was picked off again, this time by **Ryan Clark**. In the final quarter, facing 7 York defensive backs on almost every play, Stafford was picked off twice more, by **Rashean Mathis** and **Mike Adams**. The Virden offence withered while their defence crumbled and the Excaliburs made it look easy. The 41-21 final was not as close as the score indicated – it had been thorough domination virtually from start to finish.

After the game, Hammond was deliriously happy or just delirious – it was hard to tell. After jumping the gun and pouring



Scarborough quarterback **Aaron Rodgers** looks grim as he strides back to the sideline after a fumble by **Brandon Marshall** turns the ball over a third time. Almost nothing went right for the Blue Eagles in a 30-19 loss, but Rodgers is the latest whipping boy for frustrated fans.

green Gatorade on his players with over 3 minutes still left to play; after the game he stayed on the field long after his players had fled into the visitors' locker room trying to kiss the Virden Vixens cheerleaders. Eventually he made his way to the Press Gallery where he rambled on about dreams and visions.

"I know you're going to ask me what I did to stop that annoying kid at quarterback," he said with a smile. "Well it started with a vision I had in a dream. It was snowing inside the Torture Chamber here (**TERRORDOME**) and it was falling pretty heavily on everybody, but it was falling even more on Dez Bryant. Everyone was laughing because he couldn't run his routes properly and he got mad and yelled, 'I'm covered in this sh%\$ man, can't you see I'm covered?' and then a girl I knew in High School came up to me on the sideline asked me if I wanted a b\$#% j%\$ and I said, 'I sure do,' and then I woke up."

This candid commentary provoked a few pockets of laughter even as the network tried to disengage as quickly as possible, but Hammond didn't seem to notice.

"So, I thought about this weird dream and what it meant. I knew it meant that I thought Amanda had been a tease in school and that if I met her today, she would probably still be a tease, the stupid b&^*h. And then it dawned on me that if we covered Stafford's receivers better, maybe he wouldn't throw so many touchdown passes against us!"

As the gallery dissolved in hoots and laughter, Hammond picked up the speed.

“And so I designed these new defensive formations for like 5, 6 and even 7 defensive backs on the field at the same time and showed them to my players. We used those in the game, especially at the end when we knew they couldn’t run anymore and it worked really well! I wish I’d thought of that earlier because if I had maybe we’d be at Camelot right now and not in this s^%t hole of a stadium!”

RODGERS....OVER AND OUT

In Scarborough and Florida it is being called *The Curse of Jim Heaton* and it has owner **Chris Dickinson** seriously considering importing a Haitian ‘vodouist’ to cleanse his evil spirit from the Blue Eagles’ locker room. Around the rest of North America it is being called *Aaron Rodgers* and nobody is quite sure what the Blue Eagles can do about it. Whether you believe the Eagles are subject to a curse or simply a bad quarterback, there is no question that they are not performing to standard expected of them since leaving the Florida everglades.

In a game they were expected to win – should have won – the Blue Eagles handed the Markham North Stars their first playoff win in Markham’s first playoff game, dropping a 30-19 decision and abruptly ending a hoped-for run at the Championship. With all due respect to Markham’s team improvements this season and the efficient performance of **Eli Manning** in limited opportunities, this game will be known more for how the Blue Eagles choked than for anything Markham did to help strangle them.

It was an ill-fated afternoon from the very beginning, when Scarborough attempted a rare flea-flicker on their second play from scrimmage. Misguided in conception and poorly executed, it resulted in a **Rob Ninkovich** interception and an easy 3 points to get the North Stars rolling. Later in the first quarter, trailing 10-0 after a Manning TD pass to **Jordy Nelson**, the Blue Eagles drove into the Markham red zone only to lose the ball when **CJ Spiller** fumbled at the 4. When they finally scored a modest field goal to pull within a score, **Joe McKnight** answered immediately with a 102-yard kickoff return for a touchdown.

The sense that something wasn’t right with the Blue Eagles hung like a bad smell over Bluff’s Stadium. When Markham or Scarborough fumbled, Markham recovered. When the Eagles got close, they seemed willing to settle for a field goal. When the Stars got close, nothing less than a touchdown would do. Despite moving the ball with general efficiency, the Blue Eagles couldn’t find the Markham end zone until it was too late to change the outcome. For all of their talent, they lacked killer instinct and direction – two things the North Stars did not lack on this particular day.

Markham coach **Darrin Jones** was all smiles after the game and apparently all night as well and possibly is still smiling as he sleeps. He is just so happy to be in the post-season that the details of how he and his team got past Scarborough are unimportant. Scarborough coach **Bill Belichick** was surly, rude and refused to speak with media after the game, deferring to a gregarious Dickinson who acted like he had won. “It’s a great day for the City of Markham for sure, and that’s got to make you happy even if you weren’t cheering for them. My guys lost, but they can’t win them all. At least hockey is back!”

LIZARDS ‘KLAW’ BACK

Finally, the Thunder Lizards and Corn Kings set the bar for playoff entertainment this weekend with an intensely competitive contest that finished with a thrilling 4th-quarter rally by the home team to overcome a 14-point deficit and run away with the game in the final minutes, 38-27. The 4th quarter was a 25-0 blowout for Durham; but the first three quarters were trench warfare, with the Corn Kings gradually gaining the upper hand and appearing to be in control with a 27-13 lead as the teams traded switched sides of the field after 45 minutes. But **Matt Schaub** simply took over the game in the final frame, repeatedly finding open receivers when at first all appeared to be covered. And when those receivers got open, they made the Corn King defenders look like they were standing still. All this took place in deep puddles on a rain-soaked Jurassic Park field with the prehistoric grass visibly growing around the players’ feet. The Thunder Lizards seemed to thrive in this alien environment while the Corn Kings’ slowed down and eventually shut down. The bizarre and sudden turnaround in favour of Durham apparently involved more than just superior athleticism.

According to reports out of Skowhegan, Maine, elated workers in a shoe factory owned by sports apparel manufacturer **Goat** are spending \$1,000 bonus checks handed out for their successful initial run of the company’s new ‘Klaw 66’ sports cleat. The workers received the bonuses in addition to overtime pay for reportedly meeting a Saturday night deadline, set when a prototype shoe arrived via courier from Goat Headquarters in Budapest on Friday afternoon. The workers had to retool machines set up for Goat’s popular ‘Turf Guy’ cleat and complete a run of 100 pairs of shoes for pick-up Sunday morning. The unprecedented request, and unusual weekend activity at the factory, caught the attention of the local news and they ran an investigative story that eventually led to the shipping and receiving dock at Jurassic Park in Durham, about 30 minutes before the start of the 4th quarter.

If you have this game taped, go back and check the footwear of **Calvin Johnson** as he breaks up an interception attempt by **Brandon Flowers** on a long slant late in the 3rd quarter. On that play he is wearing white cleats. Fast forward to his 37-yard TD reception early in the 4th quarter and you can see his cleats are now brown. That isn’t Fido’s lunch on those shoes – those are the brand new ‘Klaw 66’ super-cleats by ‘Goat’ – specially built to shred the thick replica Cretaceous-period grasses, known to grow as thick as a quarter-inch and as tall as 12 feet, on the field at Jurassic Park. You can even see the extra long scimitar-shaped spikes in a few of the video frames. The ‘Zephyr 2’ cleat by **Plode** worn by the Corn Kings’ players, while a nice cleat (especially on grass), is not as stable on wet grass surfaces, especially prehistoric grass that used to feed dinosaurs 66 million years ago.

Afterwards, Durham coach **George Kaldis** downplayed the cleat controversy, claiming that the shoes had been on back order for a while and just happened to arrive in time for the 4th quarter. What was the cost? Kaldis wouldn’t say, but a proud shoe factory manager from Skowhegan spilled the beans without pause: **\$1,450,425.00**, or \$58,017.00 a point!



BODY COUNT



POST-SEASON INJURY REPORT



DEATH VALLEY	Jake Long, T - PROBABLE
DURHAM	None
MARKHAM	None
YORK	Deon Butler, WR – OUT (4 games)

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JIMMY'S CONFERENCE FINALS PICKS

MARKHAM @ DURHAM (line – THUNDER LIZARDS by 3)

BACKGROUND: These teams are 1-1 in the season series with both winning at home. The story of Durham's opening day victory was 4 turnovers by the North Stars – 3 of those coming on interceptions of Eli Manning. In that game Markham ran a balanced attack, but in the Week 15 match-up they did not make the same mistake again and ran the ball 53 times for 277 yards while attempting only 19 passes in a 33-14 win. Both teams are fully healthy for this game.

WHEN MARKHAM HAS THE BALL: The North Stars will not refrain from attempting to move the ball through the air, but against the league's top pass defence they will look to establish the run before putting the game in the hands of their erratic quarterback. Eli Manning's 19 interceptions during the regular season haunt the film room and spook the coaching staff and it is probably safe to say that the deep crossing pattern won't come into play until DeAngelo Williams and Jonathan Stewart have thoroughly softened up the Durham line and brought a safety into the box.

WHEN DURHAM HAS THE BALL: The Lizards are essentially a passing team and they will continue to pass despite their opponent's propensity to steal the ball and play the pass. The Markham defence led the league in takeaways during the regular season and reinforced that trait with 3 more in their upset of Scarborough last week. They were also second only to Durham in defending the pass this year. Durham runs to change the pace, not to control the ball, and they won't likely change that approach against a defence that has shown it can also contain the run, especially if it is raining at Jurassic Park.

HOW I SEE IT: The weather could play a significant role in the outcome. Durham fans will be praying for rain to slow down Markham's twin running threats. If it comes, look for a more freestyle game in which turnovers, particularly Markham ones, come into play and change the outcome. If there is no rain, expect a slower pace and an advantage for the visitors as they control the ball, and the clock, against a defence that has yet to show it can stop them. So, what will the weather be? I think it will be overcast, but dry, and the Markham running game will gain traction all the way to the final. **PICK: MARKHAM**

YORK @ DEATH VALLEY (line – UNDERTAKERS by 4)

BACKGROUND: York handed Death Valley their only loss of the regular season in a 38-31 Week 11 win at home. In that game the Excaliburs made a number of big plays against an aggressive defence willing to gamble on shutting down specific plays, while they also put pressure on Drew Brees, sacking him 5 times. Undertakers' tackle Jake Long is listed as 'PROBABLE' for this contest.

WHEN YORK HAS THE BALL: The Excaliburs like to operate a balanced attack and have the players to be successful using that approach. Tom Brady can make all the throws and he has receivers who can make all the catches. Michael Turner finished third in rushing yards and Brandon Jacobs is a capable partner running behind the best offensive line in the league. York's approach will be modified by what the Undertakers' defence gives them, but expect all plays to be "in-play" at the start of the game.

WHEN DEATH VALLEY HAS THE BALL: It is easy to say that the Undertakers will pass a lot against an average pair of starting corners and equally average safeties, but those who say so maybe haven't looked closely at the York pass rush, which finished at the top of the league in sacks with 52. You can expect that Ryan Mathews and Willis McGahee will get some action trying to slow down the murderous intent of pass-rushers Jason Babin and Geno Atkins, who come at the QB from the outside and the inside. While York may not have a shutdown corner, they are deep at the position, which could pose problems for the Death Valley passing game when facing Dime and Quarter packages. Of course Brees will air it out anyway, because that is the Death Valley way, but perhaps not as deeply nor as often as is his usual practice – at least initially.

HOW I SEE IT: The Excaliburs are the only team with a winning memory against the Undertakers and this is very important to forming the true belief that they can win the game. With both quarterbacks coming into the game red hot after sizzling performances in the Quarter Finals, it is anyone's guess which one will cool off first. When two great offences collide, it is usually the team with the better defence that tips the balance, not the quarterback. But Drew Brees is no ordinary quarterback and he is having an extraordinary year. Despite the York advantage on the defensive side of the ball, expect Brees to overcome it and put the pressure squarely on Tom Brady in a game that, weather permitting, will see lots of scoring. But don't be overly surprised if the Swords stay within striking distance until near the end when the pressure of their pass rush finally causes a crack in Brees' armour and creates a most unexpected and strange result. **PICK: YORK**

