

2013



EFL

ELITE FOOTBALL LEAGUE

2013

Quarter Finals

Quarter Finals

February 2, 2014



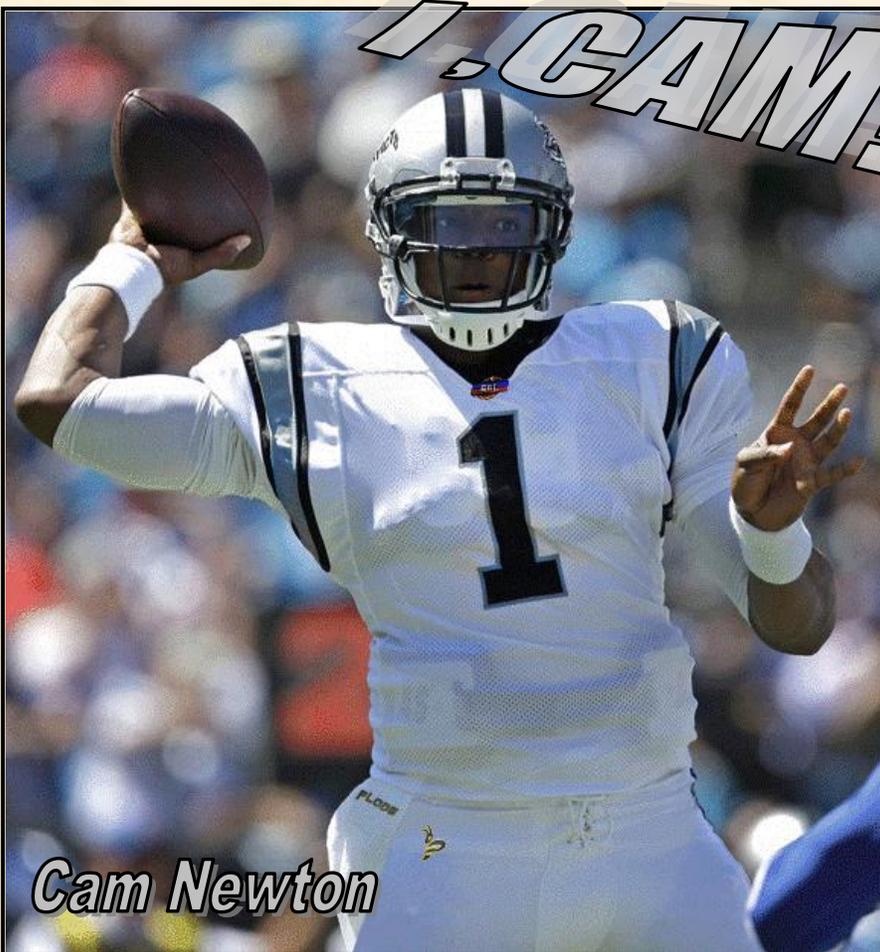
EAST

WEST

NORTH

SOUTH

	YORK	17		CHINO	24		PICKERING	13		DURHAM	18
	CHARLESWOOD	38		IOWA CITY	23		MARKHAM	38		GARLAND	38



Cam Newton

LATEST EFL NEWS INSIDE

- PATRIOTS BLOW OUT EXCALIBURS
- CUBS COLLAPSE IN THE CLUTCH
- NORTH STARS SPLATTER SPARTANS
- MUSTANGS CHARGE PAST SLOW DINOS IN 4<sup>TH</sup> QUARTER

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- THE METEOR
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- JIMMY THE GEEK PREDICTS THE CONFERENCE FINALS



Who was slick in the Quarter Finals?

"BRYLCREEM" THE EFL'S FIRST SPONSOR



Adrian Peterson  
RB  
Charleswood  
Patriots

36 Carries, 165 yards, 3 TDs. An indomitable force on offence.



Ed Reed  
S  
Markham North  
Stars

1 Tackle, 1 PD, 2 INTs, 1 TD. Ball-hawking kept Spartans at bay.



10-7-0

24

EFL

# PACIFIC-ATLANTIC

WILDCARD



11-6-0

23

## WIDE LEFT!

### MISSED FIELD GOAL SENDS CONVICTS TO THE CONFERENCE GAME!

#### CONVICT OF THE GAME

Cam Newton

22 of 31, 235 yards, 2 TDs, 1 INT

Team	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
Chino	0	7	7	10	-	24
Iowa City	13	7	0	3	-	23

#### CUB OF THE GAME

Russell Wilson

26 of 36, 281 yards

**GAME SUMMARY:** In temperatures hovering around the freezing mark, the sellout crowd at Joe Ferguson Stadium in Iowa City basked in the warmth of their first home playoff date since 2008. The enthusiastic crowd spurred the Cubs on as they came close to making this game a blowout in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter. The Cubs got the ball first and marched nearly unopposed from their 25 yard line to the Chino red zone, where they were finally checked by a sack by the Convicts' **Haloti Ngata** and had to settle for a 42-yard **Greg Zuerlein** FG. The Convicts went nowhere on their opening possession, setting up another Cubs' FG then **Chris Johnson** fumbled away the ball at the Chino 24 yard line on the first play of their next series, setting up the game's first major score on a 4-yard run by **Trent Richardson**. After one period the Convicts' offence looked overmatched and the Cubs were leading 13-0. Chino got on track in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter with the running of **Chris Ivory** and **Cam Newton** paving the way for a 16-yard TD-pass to **Roddy White** to make it 13-7; but the Cubs retaliated quickly with a 37-yard pass to **Deter McCluster** setting up a 15-yard TD run by **Darren Sproles** to regain the 13-point edge, 20-7. The Cubs missed a chance to add more when **Russell Wilson** checked down to **Mike Wallace** at the Chino 22 with 8 seconds and no timeouts remaining. **Jo-Lonn Dunbar** brought down the Cubs' WR in bounds to kill the clock and prevent the FG unit from deploying on the field. Half time was good to the Convicts as they came out hard to start the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter with a 7-play, 60-yard drive that finished with Johnson rushing it across the goal line to make the score 20-14. The momentum continued in Chino's favour with a drive all the way from their 12 to the Cubs' 9 yard line sparked by a 40-yard short slant to **Greg Olsen**. But the Cubs stole it back when **Patrick Willis** tipped a Newton pass and safety **Tyvon Branch** intercepted it in the end zone to end the scoring opportunity. The Cubs marched slowly and steadily back up the field from their 20 to the Convicts' 2, burning 10:49 off the clock, but had to settle for a FG when **Jo-Lonn Dunbar** stuffed Sproles for a 2-yard loss. It was a critical stand. Chino came back with a long drive resulting in a 41-yard FG by **Dan Bailey** then stopped the Cubs three-and-out on their next possession. With 3:37 left, the Convicts trailed by 6 with the ball at their 34. A 12-yard scramble by Newton helped bring the ball into Iowa territory but a couple of run stops by the Cubs set up a critical 4<sup>th</sup> and 2. An exhilarating 23-yard catch-and-run by the veteran White converted 4<sup>th</sup> down and brought the Convicts to the 23 yard line. Three plays later they faced a 4<sup>th</sup> and 4 at the 17. With the season on the line, Newton hooked up with **Jason Avant** on a short slant. The seldom targeted WR managed to elude the Iowa defenders and cross the goal line for a 24-23 Chino lead. With 1:01 left, a 29-yard end around by **Steve Smith** helped to set up a last ditch 45-yard FG attempt to decide the game. But Zuerlein hooked it left, giving the Convicts a stunning upset victory.

#### QUOTES OF THE GAME

"This team is going to partaayyyy tonight. Hold on! Where we at? Iowa corn field? Oh, this team is going to partayyy back at the Big House! Yeah!" – *Chino linebacker, Jo-Lonn Dunbar.*

"This is a game that we should have won. I think the good start may have hurt us. Psychologically, the players may have been resting a bit mentally at half time. This is still a young team remember. They need to the mental toughness that comes with experience." – *Iowa City advisor, Dr. Rodney Alberhasky.*

"The quarterback gets most of the attention but I couldn't have done this without my teammates and Greg." – *Chino QB, Cam Newton.*



HAPPY FAN



titter

ANGRY FAN



**Fugitive** @runfromthelaw

We stole one on the road. Great job by Cam! But don't forget the job of the defence when it mattered.



**Tommy D** @TDcubbies

Greg Z has been a doofuss all year. Give credit to Chino for putting our fate in his foot.

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2012 Chino (1-0)	0	7	7	10	24
2012 Iowa City (0-1)	13	7	0	3	23

**Scoring Summary**

1	8:39	Iowa City	FG Zuerlein 42 (10-51-6:10)	0-3
1	3:33	Iowa City	FG Zuerlein 37 (6-29-3:27)	0-6
1	1:14	Iowa City	TD Richardson 4 run (Zuerlein) (4-24-2:14)	0-13
2	6:26	Chino	TD Newton 16 pass to White (Bailey,D) (12-86-4:21)	7-13
2	2:12	Iowa City	TD Sproles 15 run (Zuerlein) (8-80-4:14)	7-20
3	12:34	Chino	TD Johnson 6 run (Bailey,D) (6-60-2:26)	14-20
4	11:33	Iowa City	FG Zuerlein 27 (18-71-10:49)	14-23
4	5:02	Chino	FG Bailey 41 (16-57-6:28)	17-23
4	1:15	Chino	TD Newton 17 pass to Avant (Bailey,D) (9-66-2:34)	24-23

**Chino Convicts**

Passing	Att	Cmp	Yds	25	In	Td	Sk	Rate
Newton	31	22	235	1	1	2	2	100.9

Rushing	Att	Yds	Avg	FD	10	Lg	TD
Johnson	17	74	4.4	5	1	16	1
Ivory	4	34	8.5	2	1	16	0
Newton	10	25	2.5	3	1	12	0

Receiving	No	Dp	Att	Yds	Avg	FD	25	Lg	TD
White	9	0	14	109	12.1	6	0	23	1
Olsen	6	0	6	65	10.8	1	1	40	0
Jones,J	5	0	6	41	8.2	2	0	11	0
Johnson	1	0	2	3	3.0	0	0	3	0
Avant	1	0	3	17	17.0	1	0	17	1

Fumbles	No	Rec	TD
Johnson	1	0	0
Newton	1	0	0
Loadholt	0	1	0

Kick Returns	No	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
Holliday	1	24	24.0	24	0

Punt Returns	No	Fc	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
Martin	1	0	19	19.0	19	0

Kicking	Fg	Lg	Xp	Pts
Bailey	1-1	41	3-3	6

Punting	No	Yds	Avg	Tb	20	Bk	Lg
Lechler	3	131	43.7	0	0	0	47

**Iowa City Cubs**

Passing	Att	Cmp	Yds	25	In	Td	Sk	Rate
Wilson	36	26	281	1	0	0	4	94.8

Rushing	Att	Yds	Avg	FD	10	Lg	TD
Richardson,	9	43	4.8	2	1	14	1
Sproles	7	43	6.1	3	2	15	1
Wilson	8	33	4.1	3	1	11	0
Smith,S	1	29	29.0	1	1	29	0
Miller	1	-1	-1.0	0	0	0	0

Receiving	No	Dp	Att	Yds	Avg	FD	25	Lg	TD
Gonzalez	7	0	8	66	9.4	4	0	13	0
Smith,S	6	0	9	78	13.0	4	0	14	0
Sproles	6	1	8	59	9.8	4	0	19	0
Wallace	3	0	4	25	8.3	2	0	11	0
McCluster	2	0	2	44	22.0	1	1	37	0
Richardson,	2	0	4	9	4.5	0	0	6	0
Miller	0	0	1	0	0.0	0	0	0	0

Fumbles	No	Rec	TD
Wilson	1	0	0
Hayward	0	1	0
Reiff	0	1	0

Kick Returns	No	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
Sproles	4	93	23.3	34	0

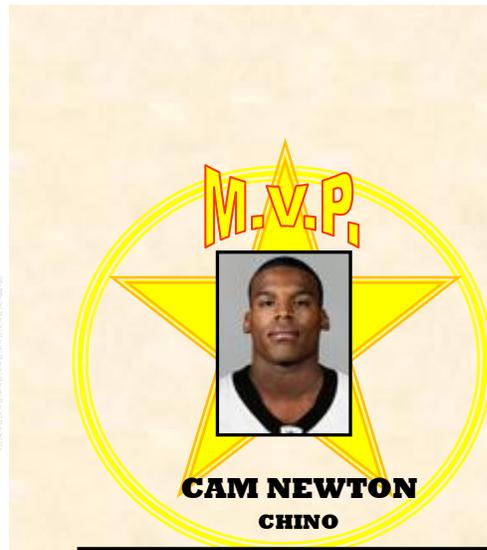
Punt Returns	No	Fc	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
Sproles	1	0	11	11.0	11	0

Kicking	Fg	Lg	Xp	Pts
Zuerlein	3-4	42	2-2	11

Punting	No	Yds	Avg	Tb	20	Bk	Lg
Anger	3	145	48.3	0	2	0	58

Defense	Tkl	Sk	Def	Stf	Hur	FF	INT
Dunbar	11	0	0	1	2	0	0-0
Bethea	7	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Mauluga	7	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Peppers	5	1	0	0	2	1	0-0
Pollard	5	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
Finnegan	4	1	2	0	0	0	0-0
Verner	4	0	0	1	0	0	0-0
Harrison	3	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
English	3	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Ngata	2	2	0	0	1	0	0-0
Coples	2	0	0	0	2	0	0-0
Cofield	2	0	0	0	1	0	0-0
Sharpton	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Norman	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Gilchrist	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Raiola	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Alonso	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0

Defense	Tkl	Sk	Def	Stf	Hur	FF	INT
Willis	9	0	2	1	0	1	0-0
Ogletree	9	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
Pierre-Paul	6	1	0	0	0	0	0-0
Hayward	6	0	3	0	0	0	0-0
Gilmore	6	0	1	1	0	0	0-0
Mingo	5	0	0	0	2	0	0-0
Wilkerson	4	1	0	0	1	1	0-0
Cox	2	0	1	1	0	0	0-0
Branch	2	0	0	1	0	0	1-0
Jones	2	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
Short	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Asomugha	1	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
Rhodes	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Moore	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Liuget	0	0	0	0	1	0	0-0



2 TD passes including game-winner with 1:15 left. Converted 3 4<sup>th</sup> downs.

	CHI	ICC
First Downs	22	26
Rushes	31-133	26-147
Passes	31-22-235	36-26-281
Sacked	2-13	4-28
Fumble	2	1
Penalties	5-40	8-50
Turnovers	2	0
Missed Tackles	6	2
Dropped Passes	0	1
Bad Passes	0	1
Passes 25+	1	1
Runs 10+	3	5
Blitzes	28	4
Time	25:44	34:16
Third Down	7-13	4-13
Fourth Down	3-3	0-0
Red Att/Td/Fg	4/3/0	4/2/1
Net Offense	355	400



9-8-0

17

EFL

PACIFIC-ATLANTIC

WILDCARD



12-5-0

38

# PATRIOTS DOMINATE! BIG GUNS A.P. AND PEYTON OUTSHOOT BLUNTED SWORDS

### EXCALIBUR OF THE GAME

Tom Brady

31 of 53, 341 yards, 2 TDs

Team	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
York	3	0	0	14	-	17
Charleswood	7	14	14	3	-	38

### PATRIOT OF THE GAME

Adrian Peterson

36 Carries, 165 yards, 3 TDs

**GAME SUMMARY:** A standing ovation greeted the introduction of the Patriots as they took the field for the 12<sup>th</sup> post-season game in the history of their storied franchise. The playoff atmosphere permeated the dome at Patriot Place, but it slowly dissipated as the Excaliburs received the ball first and proceeded to grind out a slow-moving, 74-yard drive comprised mostly of runs and short passes. **Giovani Bernard** rushed 7 times for 38 yards to lead the way, but when York finally faced 4<sup>th</sup> and 1 at the Charleswood 12, they settled for a 30-yard **Blair Walsh** FG to open the scoring. The score would be the offensive highlight for York until late in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. In between, the Pats would be dominant in all phases, beginning with the ensuing kickoff. **Jacoby Jones** elected to take the ball out from 3 yards deep in the end zone and sprinted through the converging kick coverage, covering the 103 yards in 8 seconds for the game's opening TD. The inspired Pats defence held **Tom Brady** in check, forcing back-to-back punts before the Charleswood offence kicked into gear. Mixing in short and medium passes with runs of 19 and 12 yards by rushing leader **Adrian Peterson**, **Peyton Manning** finished off an 83-yard scoring drive with a 15-yard TD pass to **Sidney Rice** to make it 14-3. The Excaliburs drove back down the field into the Charleswood red zone on the strength of 4 consecutive completions by Brady, but when they turned to Bernard on the next play the Pats were waiting for him. **Shaun Phillips** forced a fumble that **George Wilson** picked up and carried back 47 yards the other way to the York 39 yard line. From there, a personal foul penalty on York's Mike Adams was the big gain in a drive that finished with Peterson busting over the line from 4 yards out to make it 21-3 for Charleswood at half time. The Pats received the 2<sup>nd</sup> half kickoff and Manning went to work, hitting **Michael Crabtree** for a 37-yard pass play, **Brian Hartline** for 14 yards then handing off to Peterson for a 2-yard TD run to make it 28-3. Trailing by 25 points, York abandoned the pretence of a running game and went to the air to try and catch up. After a pair of 1<sup>st</sup> downs **Phil Taylor** sacked Brady to help cut the drive short then **Chris Kluwe** shanked his punt out of bounds for just 24 yards. Starting at their 32 the Pats turned to Peterson to grind out the yards and burn up clock. The regular season rushing leader carried 7 times for 53 yards on the following drive, including a 25-yard TD run to finish it off and put the Pats in front 35-3. As the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter came to a close, the Excaliburs, in desperation, went for it on 4<sup>th</sup> and 21 from their own 30 yard line, but the hook and ladder to **Victor Cruz** and **Dustin Keeler** was good for just 15 yards, setting up a short run-oriented drive that ended with a 35-yard FG by **Garrett Hartley** to make it 38 unanswered points for the home team and a prohibitive lead. On York's subsequent possession Brady went 7 of 12 for 76 yards and finally found the end zone on a 14-yard pass to Cruz. But by that point the outcome was no longer in doubt. Peterson fumbled away the ball trying to run out the clock, leading to another York TD, but the miscue did not matter in his MVP performance.

### QUOTES OF THE GAME

"I thought we had a good offensive game plan heading in but we had to get away from it too early. On defence we just didn't execute. What did we miss, like 60 tackles? Something like that, I think. I lost count of how many tackles we missed." – York Coach, **Jay Hammond**.

"I'd like to say everything went according to plan but you don't normally plan for everything to go right. We executed well and we got the breaks. I'm sure we'll find something on film we don't like, but it might be a long search." – Patriots' coach, **Jason Findlay**.

"Nobody comes into this house and walks away with a piece of us! Nobody! – Pats' WR, **Jacoby Jones**.



ANGRY FAN



titter

HAPPY FAN



The Angry Leper @peasantfilth

This game made me SOOOOOOOO  
AAANNGGRRRRYYYY!!!!



Mr. Malcolm @JCMPatFan

This is the year! I can't see any defence stopping Peyton or AP when they are on the field at the same time. Jacoby is a secret weapon no more.

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2012 York (0-1)	3	0	0	14	17
2012 Charleswood (1-0)	7	14	14	3	38

**Scoring Summary**

1 6:56 York	FG Walsh 30 (13-74-7:52)	3-0
1 6:48 Charleswood	TD Jones 103 kick return (Hartley)	3-7
2 5:53 Charleswood	TD Manning 15 pass to Rice (Hartley) (12-83-6:53)	3-14
2 1:03 Charleswood	TD Peterson 4 run (Hartley) (7-39-1:36)	3-21
3 10:49 Charleswood	TD Peterson 2 run (Hartley) (6-78-4:05)	3-28
3 1:46 Charleswood	TD Peterson 25 run (Hartley) (10-68-6:19)	3-35
4 10:28 Charleswood	FG Hartley 35 (8-28-4:27)	3-38
4 5:58 York	TD Brady 14 pass to Cruz (Walsh) (12-76-4:24)	10-38
4 1:55 York	TD Brady 18 pass to Criner (Walsh) (8-65-1:33)	17-38

**York Excaliburs**

Passing	Att	Cmp	Yds	25	In	Td	Sk	Rate
Brady	53	31	341	0	0	2	2	90.2

**Charleswood Patriots**

Passing	Att	Cmp	Yds	25	In	Td	Sk	Rate
Manning	17	13	153	1	0	1	0	122.9

**Rushing**

Att	Yds	Avg	FD	10	Lg	TD	
Bernard	13	69	5.3	3	3	14	0
Turner	1	0	0.0	0	0	0	0

**Rushing**

Att	Yds	Avg	FD	10	Lg	TD	
Peterson	36	165	4.6	10	6	25	3
Manning	2	-2	-1.0	0	0	0	0

**Receiving**

No	Dp	Att	Yds	Avg	FD	25	Lg	TD	
Cruz	8	2	16	102	12.8	7	0	16	1
Bess	8	0	13	86	10.8	5	0	16	0
Jones	4	0	6	35	8.8	3	0	16	0
Bernard	3	0	4	16	5.3	0	0	6	0
Walter	3	0	5	38	12.7	3	0	18	0
Criner	2	0	2	34	17.0	2	0	18	1
Keller	1	0	1	10	10.0	1	0	11	0
Ertz	1	1	3	11	11.0	1	0	11	0
Scheffler	1	1	2	9	9.0	0	0	9	0
Brady	0	0	1	0	0.0	0	0	0	0

**Receiving**

No	Dp	Att	Yds	Avg	FD	25	Lg	TD	
Witten	6	0	7	52	8.7	3	0	12	0
Rice	3	0	3	31	10.3	3	0	15	1
Crabtree	2	0	4	44	22.0	1	1	37	0
Hartline	2	0	2	26	13.0	1	0	14	0
Peterson	0	0	1	0	0.0	0	0	0	0

**Fumbles**

No	Rec	TD	
Bernard	2	0	0
Timmons	0	1	0
Johnson	0	1	0

**Fumbles**

No	Rec	TD	
Peterson	1	0	0
Wilson	0	1	0

**Kick Returns**

No	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	
Bolden	5	87	17.4	24	0
Bernard	1	21	21.0	21	0
Walker	1	13	13.0	13	0

**Kick Returns**

No	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	
Jones,J	2	133	66.5	103	1
Patton	1	3	3.0	3	0
Hardesty	1	0	0.0	0	0

**Punt Returns**

No	Fc	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	
Bernard	1	1	3	3.0	3	0

**Punt Returns**

No	Fc	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	
Jones,J	1	1	7	7.0	7	0

**Kicking**

Fg	Lg	Xp	Pts	
Walsh	1-1	30	2-2	5

**Kicking**

Fg	Lg	Xp	Pts	
Hartley	1-1	35	5-5	8

**Punting**

No	Yds	Avg	Tb	20	Bk	Lg	
Kluwe	3	117	39.0	0	2	0	48

**Punting**

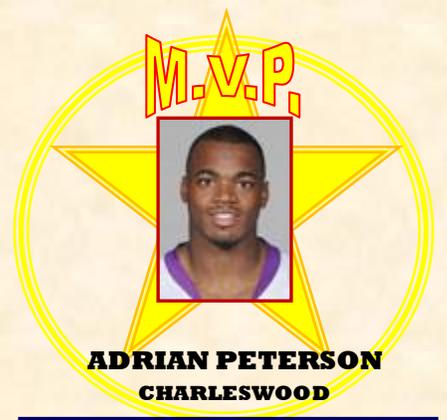
No	Yds	Avg	Tb	20	Bk	Lg	
Huber	2	106	53.0	0	2	0	53

**Defense**

Tkl	Sk	Def	Stf	Hur	FF	INT	
Seymour	8	0	0	0	1	0	0-0
Woodyard	8	0	0	1	0	0	0-0
Timmons	7	0	0	1	0	0	0-0
Atkins	4	0	0	2	0	1	0-0
Samuel	4	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
Miller	3	0	1	2	0	0	0-0
Manning	3	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Gamble	3	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Adams	2	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
Clark	2	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
Johnson	2	0	0	0	1	0	0-0
Jenkins,C	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Jenkins,B	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Bowers	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Urlacher	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Patterson	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Ellis	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0

**Defense**

Tkl	Sk	Def	Stf	Hur	FF	INT	
Werner	8	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Jackson	6	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
Johnson,L	6	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Phillips	5	0	1	0	0	1	0-0
Delmas	4	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
McFadden	4	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Trufant	4	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Wilson	3	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
Taylor	2	1	0	0	0	0	0-0
Jones,J	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Barron	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Harris	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Collins	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Redding	1	1	0	0	0	0	0-0
Pickett	1	0	0	0	1	0	0-0
Moore	1	0	0	0	0	1	0-0
Hosley	0	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
Hankins	0	0	0	0	1	0	0-0



Scored 3 TDs, gained 10 1<sup>st</sup> downs, controlled the game with 36 carries.

	YOR	CHP
First Downs	25	19
Rushes	14-69	38-163
Passes	53-31-341	17-13-153
Sacked	2-20	0-0
Fumble	2	1
Penalties	5-44	1-10
Turnovers	1	1
Missed Tackles	11	2
Dropped Passes	4	0
Bad Passes	1	0
Passes 25+	0	1
Runs 10+	3	6
Blitzes	26	24
Time	30:17	29:43
Third Down	6-12	8-11
Fourth Down	2-3	1-1
Red Att/Td/Fg	4/2/1	5/3/0
Net Offense	390	316



12-5-0

17

EFL

CAN-AM

WILDCARD



12-5-0

38

# EXPLOSION!

## MUSTANGS SPRINT TO FINISH LINE WITH 28 POINTS IN 4<sup>TH</sup> QUARTER

### LIZARD OF THE GAME

Devin McCourty

6 KR, 207 yards, 1 TD, 92 Long

### Team

Durham

Garland

1

2

3

4

OT

Total

0

3

7

7

-

17

7

3

0

28

-

38

### MUSTANG OF THE GAME

Arian Foster

19 Carries, 124 yards, 8 1<sup>ST</sup> dwns

**GAME SUMMARY:** The first playoff game in Garland franchise history was blessed with the calm winds and moderate temperatures of a January day in Texas. A boisterous sellout crowd at The Corral roared their approval as the favoured Mustangs elected to receive the ball first against their more experienced rivals from the north, the high-scoring Durham Thunder Lizards. Garland's opening drive stalled after a pair of 1<sup>st</sup> downs, but Durham did no better in reply, beginning with a three-and-out and punting it back to the Mustangs. After trading punts, the teams traded turnovers. **Richard Sherman** picked off a pass intended for **Anquan Boldin**, but two plays later linebacker, **Erin Henderson** stripped **Reggie Bush** and **Karlos Dansby** recovered at the Durham 45. **Arian Foster** found a hole for 15 yards then snared a screen pass for 25 yards to set up a 2-yard TD pass from **Matt Ryan** to **Brandon Lloyd** to put the home team out front 7-0. Durham was stopped on their next possession but a **Thomas Morstead** punt backed Garland up to their 10 yard line. Garland pounded the Lizards' line with Foster and mixed in a few passes, including a 16-yarder to Lloyd, to set up an easy 29-yard FG by **Nick Folk** to make it 10-0 Garland. Durham's early offensive struggles continued, with **Drew Brees** fumbling a snap at the line on 3<sup>rd</sup> down then being forced to punt; but an interception by **Dominique Rodgers-Cromartie** on the Mustangs' ensuing possession allowed the Lizards to kick a 47-yard **Phil Dawson** FG before half time. Durham survived a nervous moment to start the 2<sup>nd</sup> half when **Calvin Johnson** recovered teammate **Devin McCourty's** fumble on the opening kickoff return. They capitalized on the break when a 24-yard completion to **Danny Amendola** and a 15-yard facemask penalty on **DeAngelo Hall** helped set up a 5-yard TD pass from Brees to **Vernon Davis** to tie the game 10-10. The Mustangs' offence made its mark again early in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter as **Matt Forte** gained 47 all-purpose yards over an 85-yard drive and scored on a 1-yard TD run to give Garland a 17-10 lead. Backed up at their 13 after the kickoff, Brees and the Lizards went to work to try and tie the game, but an ill-advised pass into a tight window was picked off by Garland safety **Eric Weddle**, who returned it 33 yards for a TD and a sudden 24-10 lead. The points off of a turnover appeared to invigorate the whole defence. **Chris Dahl** intercepted Brees on the next series to thwart a scoring opportunity. Ryan took over and threw passes of 29 and 18 yards to **Jeremy Kerley** to set up the 2<sup>nd</sup> TD run of the game for **Matt Forte**, making it 31-10 with 5:08 remaining. McCourty gave the Lizards a temporary boost with a 92-yard kickoff return for a TD to narrow the Garland advantage to 31-17. But Durham's onside kick attempt was recovered by Mustangs' fullback **Quinn Johnson** and returned to the Durham 44. With the Lizards focusing on Forte, the Mustangs put the game away for good with a 24-yard TD pass from Ryan to Kerley for the final score, giving the Mustangs 28 points in the final period to pull away.

### QUOTES OF THE GAME

"Ricky want say thank you for see this game. He hope you come again and see play his team. Durham brave, but Garland braver. So sad Durham die." –

**Popopali**, *Man Servant of Garland coach, Ricky Main*

"Before you get around to criticizing me, remember, that was a fantastic defence we played today – literally fantastic." – *Durham QB, Drew Brees.*

"We felt those plays were there if we could catch them in the right situation. Fortunately, the ball came to me and there was room to run. I was just doing my job, but I'll sure take the car." – *Garland safety, Eric Weddle*, commenting on his Pick Six after winning MVP.



ANGRY FAN



titter

HAPPY FAN



**Big Mouth** @jarg5

Brees is getting old and he's not getting any taller.



**Horse Whisperer** @SavagePie

We bucked the hell out of them in the end.

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2012 Durham (0-1)	0	3	7	7	17
2012 Garland (1-0)	7	3	0	28	38

1	4:17	Garland	TD Ryan 2 pass to Lloyd (Folk) (5-45-3:02)	0-7
2	9:11	Garland	FG Folk 29 (14-79-7:26)	0-10
2	0:14	Durham	FG Dawson 47 (7-18-3:18)	3-10
3	10:55	Durham	TD Brees 5 pass to Davis (Dawson) (9-69-4:00)	10-10
4	12:38	Garland	TD Forte 1 run (Folk) (14-93-8:40)	10-17
4	11:45	Garland	TD Weddle 33 interception return (Folk)	10-24
4	5:08	Garland	TD Forte 1 run (Folk) (8-64-4:11)	10-31
4	5:01	Durham	TD McCourty 92 kick return (Dawson)	17-31
4	2:14	Garland	TD Ryan 24 pass to Kerley (Folk) (5-44-2:40)	17-38

Durham Thunder Lizards										Garland Mustangs									
Passing	Att	Cmp	Yds	25	In	Td	Sk	Rate		Passing	Att	Cmp	Yds	25	In	Td	Sk	Rate	
Brees	28	15	146	0	2	1	2	50.6		Ryan	30	23	238	1	2	2	0	93.5	

Durham Thunder Lizards										Garland Mustangs									
Rushing	Att	Yds	Avg	FD	10	Lg	TD			Rushing	Att	Yds	Avg	FD	10	Lg	TD		
Bush,R	16	61	3.8	3	1	14	0			Foster	19	124	6.5	8	4	15	0		
Brees	1	0	0.0	0	0	0	0			Forte	17	76	4.5	6	3	17	2		
										Ryan	1	0	0.0	0	0	0	0		

Durham Thunder Lizards										Garland Mustangs									
Receiving	No	Dp	Att	Yds	Avg	FD	25	Lg	TD	Receiving	No	Dp	Att	Yds	Avg	FD	25	Lg	TD
Johnson	4	0	5	42	10.5	1	0	19	0	Lloyd	7	0	9	63	9.0	6	0	16	1
Decker	3	0	7	33	11.0	2	0	15	0	Foster	5	0	7	50	10.0	2	0	23	0
Bohanon	2	0	2	3	1.5	0	0	3	0	Forte	4	0	4	22	5.5	0	0	8	0
Hilton	2	0	2	28	14.0	1	0	17	0	Kerley	3	0	4	71	23.7	3	1	29	1
Amendola	1	0	2	24	24.0	1	0	24	0	Boldin	2	0	3	22	11.0	1	0	13	0
Davis,V	1	0	2	5	5.0	1	0	5	1	Dreessen	1	0	1	6	6.0	1	0	6	0
Bush,R	1	0	6	1	1.0	0	0	1	0	Johnson	1	0	1	4	4.0	0	0	4	0
Bowe	1	0	2	10	10.0	1	0	10	0	Casey	0	0	1	0	0.0	0	0	0	0

Durham Thunder Lizards				Garland Mustangs			
Fumbles	No	Rec	TD	Fumbles	No	Rec	TD
McCourty	2	0	0	Dansby	0	1	0
Brees	1	1	0				
Bush,R	1	0	0				
Johnson	0	1	0				
Mangold	0	1	0				

Durham Thunder Lizards					Garland Mustangs						
Kick Returns	No	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Kick Returns	No	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
McCourty	6	207	34.5	92	1	Phillips	2	15	7.5	12	0
						Johnson	1	2	2.0	2	0

Durham Thunder Lizards						Garland Mustangs							
Punt Returns	No	Fc	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Punt Returns	No	Fc	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
Hilton	0	1	0	0.0	0	0	Kerley	0	3	0	0.0	0	0

Durham Thunder Lizards					Garland Mustangs				
Kicking	Fg	Lg	Xp	Pts	Kicking	Fg	Lg	Xp	Pts
Dawson	1-1	47	2-2	5	Folk	1-1	29	5-5	8

Durham Thunder Lizards								Garland Mustangs							
Punting	No	Yds	Avg	Tb	20	Bk	Lg	Punting	No	Yds	Avg	Tb	20	Bk	Lg
Morstead	4	203	50.8	0	3	0	58	Koch	2	91	45.5	1	0	0	46

Durham Thunder Lizards								Garland Mustangs							
Defense	Tkl	Sk	Def	Stf	Hur	FF	INT	Defense	Tkl	Sk	Def	Stf	Hur	FF	INT
Lofton	10	0	0	2	0	0	0-0	Henderson	6	1	1	1	1	1	0-0
Allen,R	10	0	0	0	0	0	0-0	Bowman	6	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Davis,T	8	0	0	1	0	0	0-0	Watt	5	1	0	2	0	0	0-0
Bailey	7	0	2	0	0	0	0-0	Thomas	4	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
McCourty	6	0	0	0	0	0	0-0	Hall	3	0	2	0	0	0	0-0
Allen,J	4	0	0	0	0	0	0-0	Avril	3	0	0	0	0	1	0-0
Joseph	3	0	1	1	0	0	0-0	Dahl	2	0	0	0	0	0	1-3
Sherman	3	0	0	0	0	0	1-0	Peterson	2	0	2	0	0	0	0-0
Davis,D	3	0	0	0	0	0	0-0	Walden	2	0	0	0	0	1	0-0
Dumervil	2	0	0	0	4	0	0-0	Dansby	2	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
Mathieu	2	0	1	0	0	0	0-0	Smith	1	0	0	0	1	1	0-0
Wilhoite	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0	Franks	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Dockett	1	0	1	0	3	0	0-0	Jackson	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Drescher	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0	Wilfork	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Houston	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0	Selvie	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Rodgers-Cro	0	0	0	0	0	0	1-3	Weddle	0	0	0	0	0	0	1-33
								Spencer	0	0	0	0	1	0	0-0



33-yard Pick Six broke the game open in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter for the Mustangs.

	DTL	GDM
First Downs	11	27
Rushes	17-61	37-200
Passes	28-15-146	30-23-238
Sacked	2-19	0-0
Fumble	4	0
Penalties	4-20	6-29
Turnovers	3	2
Missed Tackles	14	3
Dropped Passes	0	0
Bad Passes	2	1
Passes 25+	0	1
Runs 10+	1	7
Blitzes	11	17
Time	21:37	38:23
Third Down	2-9	8-12
Fourth Down	1-2	0-0
Red Att/Td/Fg	1/1/0	4/3/1
Net Offense	188	438



9-8-0

13



14-3-0

38

# STARS SHINE AT HOME! WILLIAMS BREAKS LONG TD RUN START MARCH TO VICTORY!

### SPARTAN OF THE GAME

Vincent Jackson

6 Receptions, 98 yards, 1 TD

Team	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
Pickering	7	3	3	0	-	13
Markham	14	10	0	14	-	38

### NORTH STAR OF THE GAME

DeAngelo Williams

14 Carries, 112 yards, 1 TD

**GAME SUMMARY:** The warm glow of Markham's first home playoff game heated up the fans at the Dawg Pound as below freezing temperatures cooled the field and the air around them. The top seeded team in the Can-Am Conference and #1-ranked defence was slow to warm up, however, as the wildcard Spartans opened as well as they could have hoped for in a hostile environment. **Denard Robinson** charged through a lane to return the opening kickoff 36 yards to give Pickering good starting field position. After a warm-up trap for 2 yards, **Matt Schaub** took to the air, completing his first 3 passes for 60 yards, the last a 33-yard long slant to **Vincent Jackson** for a TD to open the scoring. But it took little time to re-ignite the Markham crowd; **Percy Harvin** upstaged Robinson with a 92-yard kick return to the Pickering 12 that failed to make the end zone due to a saving tackle by **Zavier Gooden**. The stop would only delay the inevitable as **Armando Allen** followed **Joe Staley** off left tackle two plays later for the tying TD. The Spartans got another nice kick return but could make little of it, gaining a 1<sup>st</sup> down on a penalty then punting three plays later; **Dustin Colquitt** backing the North Stars to their 11 yard line. Hard running and a pair of completions brought Markham to their 41 yard line in 5 plays then, with the Spartans line playing the outside, **Michael Roos** laid a great block on **Jabaal Sheard** that sprung **DeAngelo Williams** around the corner on a pitch to the right. Once he was in the open the hard-running halfback dodged a tackle and hugged the sideline to carry it 59 yards for the go-ahead TD. A holding penalty on Staley killed the Spartans' next possession, but the defence would give their offence a lift on Markham's next series. **Ray McDonald** slammed into **Eli Manning** as he released the ball and LB **Zach Brown** picked it off to give Pickering possession in Markham territory. They would convert the turnover into a FG but that would be the end of the breaks for the Spartans. The North Stars answered with a FG then, after stopping the Spartans cold, converted three 3<sup>rd</sup> downs in a 58-yard drive that finished with **Marques Colston** hauling in a 9-yard TD pass from Manning to make it 24-10 at half time. The Spartans held Markham on the opening possession of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half then put together their longest drive of the day, 72 yards in 14 plays, including 9 consecutive rushes by **Steven Jackson**. But by the end of it they had to settle for a 29-yard FG, pulling within 11 points. After having to punt twice and coming up scoreless in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, the Stars got rolling again in the 4<sup>th</sup> with Williams kick-starting a 71-yard drive with rushes of 6 and 13 yards then finishing it off by snatching a dump-off from Manning for an 8-yard TD catch. Trailing 31-13 in the 4<sup>th</sup>, the Spartans were forced to pass the ball. Markham safety **Ed Reed** was ready for it, catching his own deflection on a pass to **Golden Tate** and running it back 43 yards for a back-breaking TD. Reed and **Justin Rogers** made two more picks in the waning minutes of the game to secure the final score.

### QUOTES OF THE GAME

"The fans got behind us today. They believed in us and we could feel that support. It's a different feeling – being at home in a game this big. We had to put up with a lot of garbage on the road last year. Now people have to beat us in our house." – *Markham coach, Darrin Jones.*

"The plan was sound, I think. This was just a case of them being a little more ready to kic our butts than we were theirs." – *Pickering defensive coordinator, General Pausanias.*

"This is the kind of crowd you go the extra mile for. Coach Jones is the same. You want wipe that worried look off his face!" – *North Star safety Ed Reed.*



ANGRY FAN



titter

HAPPY FAN



**Aristedes** @AristedesKalogiannis

There is no dishonour here! The stars were aligned with Markham on this day. Another dawn might have brought a different fate, but not today.



**Johnny K** @johnnyk734

Woohoo! We are the Top Team on way to Number One again! Let us hope for Big Win next week.

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2012 Pickering (0-1)	7	3	3	0	13
2012 Markham (1-0)	14	10	0	14	38

**Scoring Summary**

1 12:40	Pickering	TD Schaub 33 pass to Jackson (Scobee) (4-62-2:15)	7-0
1 11:44	Markham	TD Allen 3 run (Graham,S) (2-12-0:49)	7-7
1 6:22	Markham	TD Williams 59 run (Graham,S) (6-89-3:40)	7-14
2 14:56	Pickering	FG Scobee 41 (5-37-1:40)	10-14
2 8:13	Markham	FG Graham 24 (13-69-6:34)	10-17
2 1:54	Markham	TD Manning 9 pass to Colston (Graham,S) (11-58-4:09)	10-24
3 5:00	Pickering	FG Scobee 29 (14-72-5:52)	13-24
4 10:36	Markham	TD Manning 8 pass to Williams (Graham,S) (13-71-6:15)	13-31
4 8:46	Markham	TD Reed 43 interception return (Graham,S)	13-38

**Pickering Spartans**

Passing	Att	Cmp	Yds	25	In	Td	Sk	Rate
Schaub	27	13	175	1	3	1	2	42.0

Rushing	Att	Yds	Avg	FD	10	Lg	TD
Jackson,S	26	125	4.8	6	4	22	0
Choice	1	8	8.0	0	0	8	0
Schaub	3	4	1.3	0	0	3	0

Receiving	No	Dp	Att	Yds	Avg	FD	25	Lg	TD
Jackson,V	6	0	7	98	16.3	5	1	33	1
Jackson,S	3	0	4	19	6.3	0	0	9	0
Thomas,D	2	2	8	28	14.0	2	0	16	0
Austin	1	1	4	12	12.0	1	0	12	0
Tate	1	0	4	18	18.0	0	0	18	0

Fumbles	No	Rec	TD
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Kick Returns	No	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
Robinson	3	85	28.3	36	0
Sanders	2	40	20.0	24	0

Punt Returns	No	Fc	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
Jones,A	3	0	1	0.3	4	0

Kicking	Fg	Lg	Xp	Pts
Scobee	2-2	41	1-1	7

Punting	No	Yds	Avg	Tb	20	Bk	Lg
Colquitt	4	180	45.0	0	1	0	51

Defense	Tkl	Sk	Def	Stf	Hur	FF	INT
Washington	10	0	0	0	1	0	0-0
Brown,Z	8	0	1	2	0	0	1-10
Joseph	8	0	2	1	0	0	0-0
Burnett	7	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
McDonald	4	0	0	0	1	0	0-0
Hatcher	4	0	0	1	0	0	0-0
Sheard	4	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Freeney	4	0	0	1	0	0	0-0
Ward	3	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
Gooden	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Haden	1	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
Pace	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Brown,S	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Gafford	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Rambo	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0

**Markham North Stars**

Passing	Att	Cmp	Yds	25	In	Td	Sk	Rate
Manning	33	23	209	0	1	2	0	94.1

Rushing	Att	Yds	Avg	FD	10	Lg	TD
Williams,D	14	112	8.0	3	2	59	1
Jones	5	21	4.2	1	0	7	0
Allen	5	13	2.6	1	0	6	1
Michael	2	2	1.0	0	0	2	0
Manning	4	2	0.5	0	0	4	0
Harvin	2	-7	-3.5	0	0	0	0

Receiving	No	Dp	Att	Yds	Avg	FD	25	Lg	TD
Harvin	8	0	11	72	9.0	4	0	15	0
Williams,D	5	0	7	38	7.6	3	0	12	1
Miller	5	0	5	47	9.4	4	0	13	0
Leach	2	0	2	19	9.5	1	0	18	0
Colston	2	0	4	21	10.5	2	0	12	1
Nelson	1	1	3	12	12.0	1	0	12	0
Michael	0	0	1	0	0.0	0	0	0	0

Fumbles	No	Rec	TD
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Kick Returns	No	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
Harvin	2	107	53.5	92	0
Reid	1	6	6.0	6	0
McKnight	1	2	2.0	2	0

Punt Returns	No	Fc	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
Parrish	3	1	24	8.0	10	0

Kicking	Fg	Lg	Xp	Pts
Graham	1-1	24	5-5	8

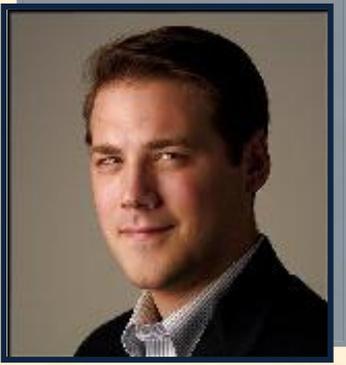
Punting	No	Yds	Avg	Tb	20	Bk	Lg
Podlesh	4	152	38.0	0	2	0	51

Defense	Tkl	Sk	Def	Stf	Hur	FF	INT
Abraham	8	1	0	1	2	0	0-0
Tillman	5	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Jackson	4	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
Ninkovich	3	1	0	1	1	0	0-0
Cromartie	3	0	2	0	0	0	0-0
Byrd	3	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
Campbell	3	0	0	0	1	0	0-0
Cole	3	0	0	0	1	0	0-0
Hayden	3	0	1	0	0	0	0-0
Williams,D	3	0	0	0	1	0	0-0
Ladouceur	3	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Woodley	3	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Cyprien	3	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Rogers	2	0	0	0	0	0	1-0
Witherspoon	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0
Reed,E	1	0	1	0	0	0	2-43
Watson	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-0



112 yards rushing, 38 yards receiving, 2 TDs. 59-yard TD run in 1<sup>st</sup> was key.

	PIC	MAR
First Downs	15	21
Rushes	30-137	32-143
Passes	27-13-175	33-23-209
Sacked	2-14	0-0
Fumble	0	0
Penalties	7-48	3-28
Turnovers	3	1
Missed Tackles	5	6
Dropped Passes	3	1
Bad Passes	2	1
Passes 25+	1	0
Runs 10+	4	2
Blitzes	3	8
Time	27:02	32:58
Third Down	1-11	8-13
Fourth Down	3-4	0-0
Red Att/Td/Fg	1/0/1	4/3/1
Net Offense	298	352



# AROUND THE



With Spats McChad

NEW YORK – For fans of the wildcard round victors, please don't take this the wrong way; but the first round *sucked*. It is a dreadful situation when I am reduced to using a common urban dictionary slang term to describe, in one syllable, 240 minutes of professional football, but it is what it is. Three home teams pulled away from their doomed opponents convincingly by 38-to-something scores while the single home loser underscored how richly they deserved that tag by missing a field goal in the final seconds that would have made them....well...*winners*. The irony is that such weak competition came in the wake of one of the most hotly contested regular seasons in the league's history.

Of course, there is some excitement to be found in some of these sad sack match-ups, if one looks carefully. But looking carefully is hard work, and when it comes to writing my column I prefer it when an abundance of good material makes the column write itself, as opposed to making me labour to make my review somewhat informative and interesting. In a week when Pickering loses badly and Gus Konstantankos *doesn't* run amok I know I have my work cut out for me. So here it is dear readers – my hapless attempt to make a hapless weekend look less hapless.....

## **THE YOUNG AND THE RESTLESS**

The second-guessers are competing for air time across the State of Iowa after their beloved Cubbies fell by a single point at home to the Chino Convicts, 24-23. The Cubs appeared to have this game well in hand early. They may not have been blowing out the Convicts, but the balance of play was decidedly in their favour. For most of the first half it looked like it would be just a matter of time before they ground out a substantive victory. But a botched two-minute drill before half time may have sent the wrong signal to their dizzy opponent – a message that said **Russell Wilson** and the Cubs' tacticians were not in as clear control of their own plan as they had appeared.

Leading 20-7 with 1:01 left in the 1st half, the Cubs set out from their 23 yard line and managed to cover 41 yards in 45 seconds. But they did it at the expense of three timeouts. At the 26 yard line, with 16 seconds left, the Cubs decided to run a play, but Wilson could not find an open man and checked down to **Mike Wallace** at the 22. It was an ill-advised pass – **Jo-Lonn Dunbar** was right on the speedy wide receiver and wrapped him up before he could get out of bounds. The Cubs scrambled to spike the ball but could not get the play off.

"Three points off the board, and for what?" complained **Zest Boltholt**, the maverick and out-spoken host of morning radio talk show, *Wake Up Iowa!* "I didn't see any Cub running deep on that play. You can't throw that ball in that situation, but where was he supposed to go with it? Somebody screwed up there. Check that, everybody screwed up there!"

Boltholt's point is echoed by many others in the sports media, albeit less flamboyantly. But I would argue that, based on the spotty track record of **Greg Zuerlein** this year, it was not a clear-cut case of taking 3 points off the board; it was merely a lost opportunity for the *opportunity* at 3 points. Nevertheless, after the way the game ended it would be an opportunity that Cubs fans would dearly wish they had had.

The slew of post-game criticism did not prevent **Deron Redding** himself from echoing, in his own fashion, the sentiments of the gallery of Monday Morning Quarterbacks:

"I also want to take the hit for this game," a contrite Redding declared in his post-game presser, piling on himself with the others. "I normally thrive in clock management situations, but I got too greedy today and it blew up in my face. Those potential points would have changed the whole game."

The hand-wringing and recriminations in the Land of Broccoli tend to ignore the role of the Convicts in the Cubs' fate. The Chino offence rebounded from a shaky start to wrest control of large portions of the second half. Trailing 20-14, their defence bent, but did not break in the wake of a potential game-deciding end zone interception by Cubs' safety **Tyvon Branch** at the mid-point of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter. That Iowa City drive, from their own 20, was long (over 10 minutes) and nearly back-breaking for the Chino defence, but the tired 'Lockdown Crew' dug deep and made the stop inside their own 5 yard. Dunbar, whose name was called often in critical moments on this day, stuffed **Darren Sproles** for a 2-yard loss on 3rd and 2 at the 2, forcing the Cubs to settle for a field goal when a touchdown would have, for all practical purposes, put away the game. Add the deflection by **Cortland Finnegan** on 3rd and short that forced a Cubs' punt late in the 4th quarter, and that would set up the eventual game-winning drive,

was another small but large moment in turning around Chino's fortunes. But, of course, the key to the upset was the performance of Chino's MIP, *Most Important Player*.

As he has been for the entire 2013 season, **Cam Newton** ended up being the focal point of the Chino offence. "Super Cam" was at the center of the good times and the bad. Fortunately for **Rob Nazar**, Newton had more good moments than bad ones on this day. His finest moment came after the big stop by his defence in the 4th quarter. Starting at his own 34 yard line, trailing 23-17 with 3:37 left, Newton got his team moving with a timely scramble for 12 yards. But then the number one rushing defence in the league came up big, sandwiching an 8-yard pass to **James Jones** with a couple of stops for no gain to set up 4th and 2 at the Iowa City 46 yard line. With the Cubs in a short zone, Newton threw a perfect pass that **Roddy White** snatched on the fly and carried 23 yards to the Cubs' 23. The Convicts went back to the run with **Chris Johnson** slogging forward for 6 yards on 2 carries, setting up a 3rd and 4. On the ensuing 3rd down conversion attempt, the Convicts went back to the short slant, but this time the Cubs had both wideouts, White and Jones, double-covered tight. **Stephon Gilmore** batted away a ball to bring up 4th and 4 at the 17. With 1:23 left



Garland safety, **Eric Weddle** is hoisted up by coach, **Ricky "Coco" Main** following the sound of the final gun on the Mustangs' historic first franchise playoff win. Weddle's interception return for a TD in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter was the tipping point in a tense battle with the Durham Thunder Lizards for the right to advance to Conference Final.

in the game there was no turning back for Chino. Out-smarting themselves by half, the Cubs dropped back in coverage, possibly expecting a change in offensive tactics after shutting down the slant on the previous play. But the Convicts went right back to what had worked for them all day when it mattered; Newton took a 3-step drop back and drilled a short pass to a slanting **Jason Avant**, who exploded through the flat-footed Cubs secondary for a 17-yard TD. With 1:15 left, Chino led 24-23 and all eyes would then refocus on **Russell Wilson**, with the outcome of the West Division wildcard game hanging in the balance.

The Cubs' starter did not star in the same manner as his opponent, but he did "manage" the drive, which is code for not totally screwing things up. The big yards came from a 29-yard end around by **Steve Smith** and three rushes by Sproles that eventually brought the Cubs to a 4th and 6 at the Chino 27 yard line with 22 seconds left. Zuerlein, who had been a perfect 3 for 3 kicking field goals to that point, reverted to his usual regular season form and hooked the potential game-winner as the home town faithful gasped in horror. The Convicts on the field and on the sideline exploded in euphoria. They had, in the words of their Warden, "escaped."

"Obviously, there was a lot to be pleased about today," said a smiling, but weary-looking **Rob Nazar** after the game. "Whenever you win on the road, especially in the playoffs, you know you did many things right. But whenever you leave the outcome in the other team's hands like that, a makeable field goal try, you also know you could have done better to avoid that situation. If we start a little better on offence, maybe it never comes down to that. We have to be ready out of the gate at Charleswood next week."

For the young and restless Cubs it was a humbling finish. They had dared to dream and a crook of the foot had dashed the dream to dust. But, as the Cubs' faithful chronicler, **Sparky McGillicuddy** put it: "They'll be back...and soon."

### **THE METEOR**

A festive air prevailed over the lingering scent of horse dung in Garland as Mustangs fans converged on The Corral to witness history. This wildcard berth between the Garland Mustangs and the Durham Thunder Lizards marked the first ever playoff game for the franchise that entered the league in 2008 as the Colorado Thundersnow. After a season of indifferent ownership by Jim Heaton's heir,

Texas oil baron **Haus Beauregard** bought the franchise and moved it to Garland where he turned it over to philosopher, book-seller and football tactician, **Doug Shirley**. While readers of this column are well familiar with the trials and troubles of Shirley, and his eventual withdrawal from pro football, the people of Garland never wavered in their commitment to the team that called their quintessential suburban landscape home. The people of Garland *love* their football team – God help them if it moves to Mexico or worse, follows **Ricky "Coco" Main** to the South Pacific.

Equally loving, but getting mighty impatient, are Thunder Lizard devotees of Durham Region. With champions popping up around them in Pickering and Markham (both original expansion teams no less), the pressure has been building. It sits squarely on the back of **George Kaldis** and his storied franchise, which has so far failed to make much of a mark in post-season play, but not for lack of opportunity. The Dinosaurs have made the post-season in every season except 2008 but have yet to make it to the Final. They specialize in knocking out rival Cowtown then inevitably get knocked out themselves once that duty is accomplished. This year, that small solace was denied them when Cowtown failed to make the post-season. Instead, a failure to solve the puzzle of Markham's running game pushed the high-powered Lizards into a difficult 1<sup>st</sup> round road assignment against arguably the league's best defence.

As so often seems to happen when the best offences meet the best defences in games that matter, the best defence prevailed. In reality, the contest was not even close. The highly-touted Durham offence failed to deliver in the face of a stingy Mustangs defence corps, generating just one offensive touchdown drive all game in a 38-17 loss. Despite this, Durham was tied 10-10 through three quarters thanks largely to early miscues by the Garland offence. But the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter brought with it an entirely new and, for the Lizards, very long and frightful finish. After **Matt Forte** dived over the low-lying Durham line for a 1-yard touchdown plunge early in the final period to make it 17-10, Pro Bowl safety **Eric Weddle** bagged a **Drew Brees** pass and returned it 33 yards for the decisive touchdown. The game carried on after that, but the momentum had been permanently turned in favour of the Mustangs. When it was all over, they had scored 28 points in the final 15 minutes to run away with their first playoff game, 38-17. It was as if a meteor had struck, knocking the Dinosaurs suddenly and completely into extinction.

#### **FRIENDSHIP CITIES**

With the abrupt ascendancy of the Markham North Stars from the football equivalent of *Baltic Avenue* to *Boardwalk* over the past two seasons, acquiring a ticket to a game at the Dawg Pound for the average Fred has become a significant challenge. Just ask York Region District School Board janitor, **Fred Plunk**:

"I used to go to every game, rain or shine. I sat in the 500 level seats. Never had problems getting a ticket," Plunk told **Lanny McDonald** in a recent *Markham Economist and Sun* article. "Now I can't get a seat in the 700s. First, more fans with money started coming when they started winnin', then the corporate wiggly wigs. Now that the Chinese are here I have trouble even finding

a scalper."

The gradual displacement of "common fans" like Fred is now a sad reality in the EFL's reigning "Title Town" – the price of success. With the North Stars now drawing from all across the GTA, points north, and points Far East, a handful of 'True Brown' faithful from the team's "hoary days" are paying that steep price – and they don't like it one bit.

"I have nothing against the Chinese," continues Plunk, "if I did have somethin' against them I'd-a left Markham a long time ago. It just irks me that most of them don't know a football from a chicken ball, but then there they are sitting in *my* seat at game time, taking pictures of everything and sending those pictures back to China. It smacks of spying to me."

Plunk is reacting to a unique phenomenon in Markham – the sudden craze in the local Asian Community for everything *North Stars* – from season tickets to every kind of team-related paraphernalia. **Darrin Jones** bobble head dolls sold out within days at local flea markets and the supply is difficult to renew because the company that manufactures them is located in Guangdong Province, China, in the City of Foshan, which happens to also be the far-east hotbed of Markham football support. Mickey Mouse-style headgear, a nod to the endorsement of the team by artist, **DJ Deadmaus**, is another popular item with the Chinese, and much of the



**Sin Tu Ko**, infant son of Foshan Prefect, **Pan Nin Ko**, poses with *North Stars* winter mouse head wear, an extremely popular item with Chinese families in Guangdong Province, China; but eminently more suitable for Chinese living through the cold Markham winters.

supply is diverted at the source long before it reaches Canada.

The prefecture-level city of Foshan, People's Republic of China, has a special relationship with the City of Markham. As official "Friendship Cities" they must, of course, *like* each other. But they also must participate in activities to foster goodwill and promote each other. It turns out that many Markhamites originated in Foshan and areas surrounding it. Stories of the "Super Champion Football Team of Markham City," that grow with the telling, have apparently enchanted Foshanites to such a degree that the Prefect (mayor) of Foshan, **Pan Nin Ko**, arrived in Markham on short notice last week, entourage in tow, and expected a seat of honour at the wildcard playoff game between the Stars and the Pickering Spartans. This left local officials scrambling to accommodate the delegation at the last minute, and threw a wrench into careful pre-game ceremony plans when Nin Ko asked to "throw out the first tackle."

Pre-game Celebrity Bingo with Canadian University Curling Champion **Mike Anderson** was cut short and a rendition of 'The Holy City' by Vaughan Williams to be performed by the Markham Rotary Club Senior Chorus was cancelled in its entirety to make room for a one-hour *Foshan Chinese Tea Ceremony* at mid-field, at which Nin Ko was seated as the guest of honour next to a clearly embarrassed **Darrin Jones**, who appeared uncomfortable sitting in a cross-legged position for such a prolonged period. With the shrill, tremulous falsetto of local classic Chinese vocalist '**Honey Bird**' **Ming** singing, '*Eating Bean by Moon*,' (the title of this poignant ballad apparently loses much in the translation) the ceremony reached its climax with Jones sipping a clear brown fluid from a white porcelain cup and choking down nougat-coated onion crackers while the Prefect of Foshan read in flawless Mandarin a "Markham victory poem" he wrote himself entitled *Mighty Bird of Wavy Water*.

So excited were the Markham fans attending the first playoff game ever played at the Dawg Pound that they could barely contain their impatience at the delay caused by the staid pre-game events. "*LLLLLEETTT's GGGOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!*" bawled an angry **Greta Clapper**, the infamous Fat Lady in Row 54, her hoarse howl clearly audible above the music pumping over the PA system. "*WE WANT SPARTAN BLLOOODDDD TO DRINK! YYYYYYEEEEAAAARRRRRRGGGGHH!*"

The Fat Lady's belt was answered by the clanging of swords on shields as 30 Spartans fans in full replica hoplite armour bellowed, "NNNNEEEVVVAAAHHHH SSUURRRRENDAAAAAA!" The full complement of 300 Spartans could not get tickets to the game due to a block purchase by the Mandarin Restaurant chain to promote its '*Dawg not Cat*' all-you-can-eat challenge, where successfully scoffing a wok full of rice noodles and 53 brown star-shaped crab cakes (one for each member of the North Stars roster) could win you a pair of playoff tickets.

With both teams scoring quickly on their first possessions the initial impression was of a playoff classic in the making. However, it did not take much longer than the 59-yard touchdown run by **DeAngelo Williams** into the teeth of the Spartans' defence to suggest that it might turn into a long day for the visitors. That it would turn so quickly into a prolonged and agonizing torture for Spartans fans was not on most people's radar, although in fairness to the whacky **Sperl Sponefritter** of Sperl's World of Sports, he did predict quite early and accurately in the week leading up to the game that: "*the Spartans may regret beating the Swordfish to make the playoffs. They have just won an opportunity to be embarrassed by the team that enjoys the blessings of whatever esoteric and perverse spirit dictates the bounce of the ball.*"

Although the debate persists over whether the North Stars are so good they appear lucky or so lucky they appear good, there was no magical hand secretly guiding the outcome of this game. The undramatic and pain truth is that the North Stars exceeded the Spartans in all phases of the game at most times within it. The cumulative effect of 60 minutes of such an uneven match-up was a lop-sided 38-13 score that truly reflected the disparity in talent and depth between the teams. Even the pugnacious **Gus Konstantakos** looked resigned to his team's fate from the moment **Matt Schaub** threw the third of 3 consecutive incompletions and had to settle for a field goal after a **Zach Brown** interception offered the Spartans a chance to answer Williams' big TD-run in kind. "We fell short today," the deflated Pickering coach told a group of GTA reporters, "or they were better than us – take your pick."

### **LEGEND BEATDOWN**

Coming off the worst season in the history of their franchise and the only year they have failed to make the post-season, the Patriots received an unusually loud welcome from their adoring fans as they took the field to take on the York Excaliburs. They filled the dome at Patriot Place with a furious barrage of fan noise, registering an ear-splitting 112.6 decibels on the ESPN *FanMeter*. For the usually reserved crowds in Charleswood, composed of fans who take competing in the post-season for granted, this was a record roar. The degree of fan appreciation just shows you what having to endure a season of **Brandon Weeden** and **Michael Vick** at quarterback can do – it can change a whole community in a hurry. The energy of the crowd appeared to infuse the Pats with steely determination. It certainly hyped up the already excitable **Jacoby Jones**; the first Patriots' player to touch the ball returned it 103 yards for a touchdown, answering a prolonged opening field goal drive by York with an 8-second solo drive for a major.

The century-plus Jones Jaunt was just the beginning of a thorough throttling of the Excaliburs at the hands of the Patriots' big guns, **Peyton Manning** and **Adrian Peterson**. The final score of 38-17 is generous to **Tom Brady** and his band of very un-merry men. Forced to play catch-up for most of the game after an opening drive had signalled their original intent to attempt ground control and keep it out of Manning's hands, the legendary Brady was steadily beaten down by the play of a Charleswood defence for which the guessing part had been taken out of the game. While Peterson bowled through a normally staunch York defence as if they big white tackle dummies on his way to 3 touchdown runs, Brady could not find his receivers in the swirl of red Pats' jerseys. It was a total wreck of a game for York while the Patriots dominance suggests we have not seen near the last of **Jason Findlay's** team.

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### PACIFIC-ATLANTIC

#### **CHINO @ CHARLESWOOD (line – PATRIOTS by 6)**

**INJURIES:** Chino – Chris Ivory (OUT); Charleswood –Santonio Holmes (PROBABLE), Jerraud Powers (OUT).

The Patriots saved one of their best performances of the season for the opening playoff round last week, trouncing York 38-17. That's saying a lot for a team that has gone 8-1 since the halfway point of the regular season. The Pats appear to be peaking at the right time and that might explain the 6-point line against a Convicts team that statistics say is not just in the same league as Charleswood, but arguably a tiny notch better. When these teams met at Patriot Place during the regular season the Pats jumped out to a quick start and held on to win 35-28. The difference in that game was a punt return TD for Jacoby Jones. Also of note in that game was Kirk Cousins making his only start at quarterback; Cam Newton saw little action that day. Many are surprised to learn that Chino is ranked in the top five in most offensive categories but, notably fall to 15<sup>th</sup> in turnovers surrendered. The Pats are acknowledged for their offensive prowess but their principal advantage over the Convicts is ball security; they have turned the ball over less than once per game, best in the league. Defensively, the Convicts have a clear edge in talent, but the Pats situational advantages throughout the season have made them effective in game situations. So, what is the bottom line? With Cam Newton playing a full 60 minutes against the Patriots' defence the outcome will rest on his ability to avoid the mistakes that have plagued him at times this year. If he can avoid turning the ball over I am confident that the Convicts will not only cover, but win outright. However, a critical mistake at a critical time will be all that all-stars Peyton Manning and Adrian Peterson will need to turn it around in the other direction. When betting on the unpredictable, like a turnover battle, it's best to go with the hot team. **PICK: CHARLESWOOD**

### CAN-AM

#### **GARLAND @ MARKHAM (line – NORTH STARS by 5)**

**INJURIES:** Garland –None; Markham – Lucas Nicks (DOUBTFUL).

If the adage "defense wins championships" holds true this week in Markham the trick in picking a winner against the spread will be deciding which of these top two defences is the best. Markham is rated #1 in yards-per-play and takeaways, while the Mustangs are ranked #1 in points allowed and yards surrendered. The merits of their relative strengths can be debated, but in my books that's a tie. If the defences are a wash, then what do the offences have to say? The North Stars lag behind in total yards gained, but are actually more efficient in yards per play and scored just 5 points less than Garland during the regular season. Markham scores many of their points off turnovers and has deceptive deep strike capability with Jordy Nelson and Marques Colston. Both teams boast effective running games but the Mustangs have shown more staying power to sustain long drives due to a pair of dual-purpose halfbacks, Arian Foster and Matt Forte, who can catch almost as well as they run. The Achilles Heel for the North Stars on the attack is the unpredictability of Eli Manning. Judicious game plans have done a lot to shield him from his flaws while maximizing his strengths, but in the Conference Final against arguably the best defence in the league all facets of his game will be exposed eventually. If Eli catches fire this game could be over early, but if these defences induce a slow-moving slugfest, the longer the Mustangs hang in the worse it will be for Markham. Expect a steadier Matt Ryan to make fewer mistakes than his opponent, while the all-star Mustangs defence exacts a steep price for Eli's miscues. **PICK: GARLAND**