

THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2024

Week Nine – Zebra Conspiracy

"Too many games end this way. It's so frustrating to the fans. So frustrating." – Broadcaster Al Michaels after missed calls cost the Bengals a shot at a win, and caused Michaels to miss the cover in Vegas.

PROLOGUE

The official, non-official NFL season midpoint is a contrast in styles. Detroit and Kansas City are dominant, with Baltimore, and Crapchester close behind. The Rams, Deadbirds and Stillers are rounding into shape, while several other teams look to get hot as the weather cools. As usual, the NFL takes over the airwaves just as the holiday season appears on the horizon.

The Wild Card races are in full swing, with good storylines for the Bolts, Corn Kings, and Hornheads but the real story is *The Year of the QBs No One Wanted*. Sam Darnold, Kirk Cousins, Baker Mayfield, and Bo Nix are all looking good, positioning their teams for a nice run. Lamar (Action) Jackson is rewriting his MVP season record books, and guys who are killing it like Joe Burrow and *Rookie of the Year* Jayden Daniels may be outside looking into the race. The State of the NFL union is good, setting up a near-unanimous vote to secure hedge fund equity buy-ins in 2025.

The officiating has created a dark backstory to the season, but a number of those games have been on steaming services and not available to the mass audience. Commissioner Roger (Rabbit) Goodell is queuing up his "never been better" speech to hone it to perfection for the Tournament.

Without further ado, the Week that Was:

ZEBRA OF THE WEEK

Winged Robbery?

The Look Man received an email on Thursday night from longtime Tailpipe GB Shaw following the Bengals robbery:

*"Hey, Look Man. I'm so sick of this sh*t. It's not even Friday morning, and Clete Blakeman has already sewn up the Zebra of The Week honors."*

Blakeman missed not one, but two penalties on the Bengals two-point conversion, and this after missing two previous facemask penalties against Joe Burrow. You simply cannot allow one of the game's best hurlers to be treated this way.

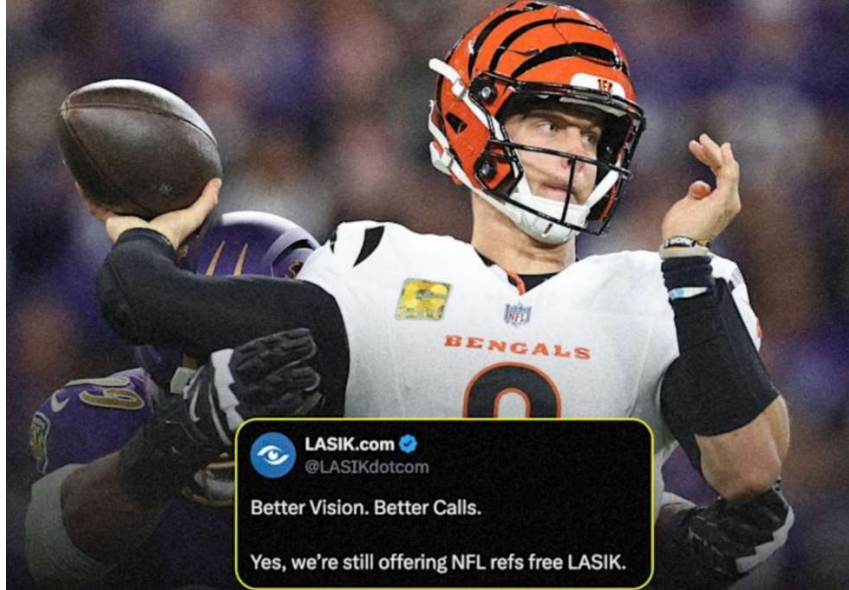
Two Bengals receivers were mugged at the goal line on the penultimate try, and they didn't even show what was happening to WR Ja'Marr Chase. Assumedly, he lost his wallet and several teeth in the skirmish, and this after posting an incredible 264-yard, three TD receiving performance.

Bengals TE Tanner Hudson was line dancing on the goal line with Tony Parkes calling the do-si-do. Baltimore treated Cincinnati receivers like grocery store ponies, inserting quarters into their backs on numerous occasions.

Burrow posted 428 passing yards and four TDs in the losing effort, and had his *mean mug* going at its conclusion. In addition to the facemask calls, he had another late hit that cracked some ribs, and was generally treated like hot garbage. That sobriquet should be reserved for his O-line, which, absent LT Orlando (Bloom) Brown, exposed him to constant harassment.

THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2024 Week Nine – Zebra Conspiracy

Officiating analyst and former NFL official Terry (Bottlegate) McAulay said both fouls were missed. "It was clearly defensive holding before the pass was in flight, that should have been called. And that does look like forceful contact to the head of the quarterback. But not as forceful as those beer bottles in Cleveland. Those fans had deadly aim, but it didn't pack much of a wallop."



Burrow's hotter than a firecracker and it may not matter...

LAGNIAPPE

Larry, Curly and Saquon?

Iggle's RB Saquon (Heath) Barkley performed an act never before seen in an NFL game last week when he hurdled a tackling defender - - - backwards. The *Play of the Year* occurred real time in the J-Ville game, with players and fans alike in awe.

But perhaps the most awe-stricken of all is his former owner Tim Mara and the NY Football Jynts. The G-Men told Barkley he wasn't worth the money, and suggested he get his stack in free agency. Philly was listening and so far, is laughing all the way to the bank, and perhaps, the NFC Championship.



"Wise guy, huh?"

THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2024

Week Nine – Zebra Conspiracy

You never want to see your former player tear up the league in a different uniform, but this is ridiculous. Barkley went *Three Stooges* in this game, including a ridiculous over-the-shoulder TD grab and several twenty yard runs. Dude is sick.

LAGNIAPPE

Doctor Carr, Paging Dr. Carr...

Religious Icons QB Derek (You Can Drive My) Carr returned to the field this week from IR, and promptly ushered a teammate back into the protocol. Carr led WR Chris Olave into a brutal helmet-to-helmet collision in a game ultimately lost to the hapless Carolina Black Cats.

Olave had just returned from the concussion protocol after a previous head injury. This is just the latest “hospital ball” by Carr, much to the ire of former Icons wideout Michael Thomas, who was unhappy about the incident:



Carr, who is not a doctor, has put several receivers in the hospital. He was a pre-med student in undergrad at Fresno State, and is still trying to go pro. Carr claimed innocence after social media blew up over the incident.

"I have love for Mike. And when he does that, I don't really care for it, obviously," Carr said. "I've had so many teammates over the years, and he's like the one dude that didn't get along with me. And I don't know what I did to him. I don't know why he feels that way.

"It's just something I would never do to a teammate. It was single high. The ball went to where we talked about it going. And Chris got hit in the head unfortunately. That happens in our game.

Thomas last played in the NFL with the Saints in 2023 and entered the offseason as a free agent. The three-time Pro Bowler is currently 31-year-old free agent nine weeks into the 2024 NFL season.

The Look Man sides with Thomas. QB1 cannot throw a pass that puts his best WR in harm's way. Carr and former Bengal QB Boomer Esiason have exhibited a penchant for nonchalant passes. Broadcaster Cris Collinsworth had a Hall of Fame career shortened by the latter.

A fistful of cell phones...

Former Iggles center Jason Kelce was reportedly involved in a kerfuffle this week when a man dropped a homosexual slur on this brother Travis. The man was filming Jason as he went to work outside the stadium.

Kelce stopped, turned, and challenged the man to back up his comments. It was alleged that the cell phone made a loud shattering sound before Kelce stormed off.

THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2024

Week Nine – Zebra Conspiracy

One social media user who shared the clip wrote, "I love this. Jason Kelce just took a stand for normal men against the 'idiots who have become way too comfortable saying ridiculous sh-t to people who can actually kick their a--' crowd. Good for him."

Kelce, who was not charged, said, "I was just being an Average Joe. It's not like I ordered coffins or anything before I trashed his phone. I may have gotten off a '*hoomph, bah, schwago*', though."



"My mule don't like people laughing...now if you just apologize..."

Rise of the Planet of the Apes

A company known as Alpha Genesis breeds monkeys for research purposes on Morgan Island, in South Carolina. Forty-three of its colony of 3,500 monkeys escaped this week.

While it is unclear if the monkeys were part of an ongoing clinical trial, the Beaufort County, South Carolina sheriff's department could not confirm which species of monkey were part of the jailbreak. They did confirm, however, that this wasn't the first time, and the local newspaper confirmed several other escapes.

In addition to this facility on "Monkey Island" there are at least three species of monkeys with breeding populations living in Florida, many thought to be the result of previous escapes since the 1930s.

Rod Serling, of *Twilight Zone* fame, wrote the screenplay for the original *Planet of the Apes* film in which apes take over the planet Earth following research trials to enhance their intellect.

No confirmation was available from local authorities as to whether the name of one the escaped apes was Caesar.

THE LOOKAHEAD

Week Ten has some likely barnburners, including division matchups and playoff previews. Here are just a few of the biggest games:

THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2024

Week Nine – Zebra Conspiracy

Blitzburgh Stillers at DC Commies (-3/48.5)

Stillers HC Mike (Epps) Tomlin has taken the blitz out of Blitzburgh, but he still has Defensive Player of the Year TJ Watts turning on the juice. Tomlin's handling of the QB switch got a lot of naysaying, including Terry Bradshaw, who has yet to apologize.

DC HC Dan (the Mighty) Quinn has taken a rag-tag roster, tactically inserted wily veterans and a rookie QB to make a tasty team. The additions of OL Nick Allegretti and OT Bob Wylie from KC, pair well with LB Bobby Wagner from Seattle, and DT Dorance Armstong from Dallas. DC also added lock down CB Marshawn Lattimore from New Orleans this week, but he will not play in Week Ten. This 7-2 team is primed for a nice run irrespective of the outcome on Sunday.

Tomlin will have his boys ready, and may get a nice bounce from an unlikely source: the DC kicking game, which consists of three Browns rejects. Any Tomlin game comes down to strategy, and the Look Man doesn't see this game as a shootout.

Of course, the Stillers can win grinding it out or shooting it out, and Tomlin acquired Jets WR Mike Williams to pair with the always dangerous and sometimes insane George (Slim) Pickens. You never know what you're going to get with Dr. Strangelove, but the Look Man likes the Stillers in a close game. Stillers.

Illadephia Iggles at Dallas Pokes (+7.5/45)

Dakota Prescott goes on IR with a hamstring that is torn from the bone, but he may yet return if surgery is not required. WR CeeDee Lamb and LB Michah (Eleven from South of the Border) Parsons are also expected to play.

The Iggles cruised to a win over the J-Squareds in Week Nine, and should be prepped for mayhem. WR AJ Brown has a knee, but DeVonta Smith, Dallas Goedert, and Saquon should be sufficient for a ground and pound attack.

There is always uncertainty with HC Nick Sirianni, who never saw a stupid gamble he wouldn't take. Of course, Old Nick is paired against Mike McCarthy, whom the Pokes are trying to get fired, so there's that.

Iggles step up at Big D, but backup Dallas QB Cooper (Baby Manning) Rush has a surprisingly good record and plays well. Iggles.



Only one man can derail the Iggles on Sunday...

THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2024

Week Nine – Zebra Conspiracy

Frisco Niners at Tampa Bay Expensive Corn Kings (+6/50)

(Cake) Baker Mayfield is the subject of injury speculation this week and may not play. Of course, this is the same guy who demanded to play in Cleveland with a shoulder hanging by a thread. Cake is insecure that he could be replaced at any moment, but he is playing excellent ball in 2024. He was the TD passing leader going into Week Ten, and could create a three-way tie with Joe Burrow and Lamar Jackson with one on Sunday.

The Niners get Christian (CMC) McCaffrey back after a trip across the Pond for a new blood supply and a Terminator leg implant. The Look Man believes QB Brock Purdy is dinged up, but the Niners secondary is up to the task against an undermanned receiving corps in the Big Sombrero. TE George Kittle vs. the Tampa Two is a matchup the Look Man is salivating over and the Niners defense is good enough to shut down this run game. Niners.

Denver Donkeys at KC Baby Backs (-8/42)

Patrick Mahomes balky ankle is a little worrisome, but he is 8-1 against rookie QBs in his career. Denver QB Bo Nix is a rookie. See how this works?

The addition of WR DeAndre (D-Hop) Hopkins has been a godsend, and resulted in Travis Kelce's first receiving C-note of the season. The acquisition of RB Kareem (Abdul) Hunt was crucial, and the Baby Backs find a way week after week. The Look Man is a little worried about the big spread, but KC stays undefeated. Baby Backs, baby.

Detroit Cadillacs at H-Town Slim Shadies (+3.5/48.5) Football Night in America

Houston' defense is quietly a top ranked against the pass, and this game will put Jared (Subway) Goff's hot streak to the test. Eat Fresh has quietly thrown for 28 TDs and 24 incompletions in the last six weeks, completing over 70% of his passes.

The Slim Shadies are banking on the return of WR Nico Collins, who is the glue that makes this offense go. While RB Joe (Richard Milhouse) Mixon is the engine, Collins stretches the field, allowing the underneath routes to work. Without Collins, H-Town has struggled mightily, and QB CJ Stroud is in the midst of a sophomore jinx.

Detroit acquired DE Za'Darius Smith from Cleveland at the trade deadline in an attempt to shore up their pass rush. That may have been the only hole in this team after losing DE Aidan Hutchinson to a broken leg. This offense can put up a fitty burger at any time if the defense provides the opportunities. They can beat you running the football, passing the football, or stuffing your offense. Detroit is the best team in the NFC and it isn't even close.

The Slim Shadies' pass rush is no joke, and the back end is solid. This matchup could be the Game of the Week. Cadillacs.

THE LOOKMAN REPORT 2024
Week Nine – Zebra Conspiracy



Mr. and Mrs. Goff plan an SI Swimsuit party in H-Town following the game...

EPILOGUE

The Look Man keeps witnessing the worst officiated game of the season, week after week. So far this season, we have Adrian Hill in Jets-Bisons with 22 penalties, Tra Blake missing a Halloween facemask takedown in Hornheads-Rams crunch time, and Clete Blakeman on Thursday Night Football this week. Every time one thinks it can't get worse, it does.

Longtime Tailpipe Smooth weighed in last week, saying:

"I think all guys that watch football on TV are envious of (Mean) Gene Steratore. "So Gene, what do you think? Was the catch made in bounds?"

"From this angle you can see that he had both feet down in bounds and had clear control of the ball, so this is going to be overturned. It was obviously a completed pass."

"Thanks Gene. Here is \$34,000 for providing that very obvious, yet completely unnecessary commentary. We'll hit you back up and give you another \$34,000 next time we need you."

"Thanks guys."

These calls are not frivolous, and have real impacts on the season. Baltimore escaped with a win and could end the weekend in first place in the AFC North if the Stillers lose to the Commies on Sunday. Perhaps worse, the loss knocks the Nati out of contention, as they face an uphill wild card battle at the Bolts.

Anyway, you slice it, this stinks on ice.

Peace,

The Look Man