

WEEK 5



EFL

ELITE FOOTBALL LEAGUE



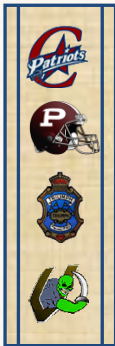
Shooting for the Stars in our 15th Season!

November 7, 2021

EAST



CENTRAL



WEST



NORTH



COASTAL



SOUTH



WATT HAPPENED?

TJ Watt
Cowtown Corn Kings

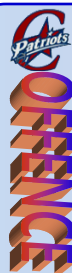


Corn King linebacker **T.J. Watt** sacks Durham's **Josh Allen** and forces a fumble on 3rd & goal in 4th quarter action in Cowtown. Linebacker **Andrew Van Ginkel** would pick up the loose ball and streak 79 yards for a game-clinching TD with just 0:40 left in the game to give Cowtown a surprise 31-20 victory over the Thunder Lizards. *(story inside)*



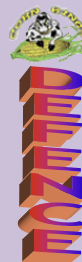
Who was slick
in Week Five?

“Brylcreem” THE
EFL'S FIRST SPONSOR



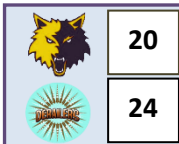
DeShaun Watson
QB
Charleswood
Patriots

17 of 24, 274 Yds, 3 TDs, 0 INTs.
Efficient in big conference win vs IC.



Andrew Van Ginkel
OLB
Cowtown Corn
Kings

6 T, 1 PD, 2 STF, 1 FR(TD-76yd). TD
on fumble recovery clinched win.


20
24

The Derailers controlled the ball for most of the early part but three straight turnovers on downs kept them off the board and the Coyotes on it, with short fields setting up 2 Coyotes TD runs, including a 35-yarder by **Matt Breida**. Buffalo got on track late in the 2nd quarter with a **Lamar Jackson** 19-yard TD run and a forced fumble by **Eddie Jackson**, that set up the equalizer, a 2-yard TD pass to **Robert Woods** before the half. Cobb County won the 3rd with a FG but the Derailers took the lead on a TD pass to **Emmanuel Sanders** and ran out the final 7 mins with a long FG drive to ice it.

11-07-2021 New Era Stadium Temp:62 Wind:20-30 None Line:CB by 2 MVP:Jackson HFA:ON

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 Cobb County (3-2)	0	14	3	3	20
2021 Buffalo (3-2)	0	14	0	10	24

Passing

 CB: Tannehill 17/8 116 Yds
 BUF: Jackson 28/21 185 Yds 2 TDs

Rushing

 CB: Harris 18/162 TD, Breida 7/54 TD, Peterson 1/4
 BUF: Booker 19/84, Jackson 8/38 TD, Davis 9/30, Gage 1/17, Woods 2/4, Dillon 1/1

Receiving

 CB: Jones 5/103, Cook 2/9, Cooks 1/4
 BUF: Woods 8/87 TD, Fant 4/33, Gage 3/22, Davis 2/12, Sanders 2/15 TD, Booker 2/16

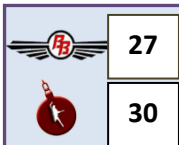
Defense

 CB: Reed 2-Sks FF 10-Tk, White 10-Tk
 BUF: Donald Sk 4-Tk, Jackson FF 5-Tk

Injuries

 CB:
 BUF: Tartt 5, Brown 4

Misc

 CB: Cook 1-F Lost
 BUF: 37:28 TOP

27
30

Chris Boswell kicked a 40-yard FG as time expired in OT to complete a 20-point comeback by the Wrecking Balls in a win over Bruxelles The Bombers led 27-10 heading into the final period on the strength of 2 TD passes from **Drew Brees** to **Chase Claypool**, the first set up by a recovered bad snap over the head of **Matthew Stafford**. But Stafford got hot in the 4th, directing 3 scoring drives including a 12-play drive in 1:29 to set up a 53-yard game-tying FG with 0:02 left. Bruxelles got the ball first in OT, but could not get out of their own end. They punted and never saw the ball again.

11-04-2021 Temp:82 Wind:5-15 None Line:BRX by 9 MVP:Stafford HFA:ON(0)

	1	2	3	4	5	Tot
2021 Bruxelles (1-4)	0	17	10	0	0	27
2021 New Jersey (3-2)	3	7	0	17	3	30

Passing

 BRX: Brees 24/19 242 Yds 2 TDs
 NJ: Stafford 52/37 414 Yds 2 TDs

Rushing

 BRX: Mitchell 15/80 TD, Williams 6/34, Fournette 10/24, Brees 1/1
 NJ: McKissic 4/31, Montgomery 12/22, Gallman Jr. 5/17 TD, Stafford 4/3

Receiving

 BRX: Claypool 7/141 2 TDs, Godwin 5/48, Williams 2/16, Mitchell 2/14, Valdes-Scantling 1/10
 NJ: Allen 10/91 TD, McKissic 8/62, McLaurin 6/83, Chark Jr. 5/100, Montgomery 3/36

Defense

 BRX: Fuller 9-Tk
 NJ: Cunningham 19-Tk

Injuries

 BRX: Wynn 5
 NJ:

Misc

 BRX: Ogbah 1-FR, Prater 2/3 FG 52 Long
 NJ: Karras 1-F (snap) Lost, Boswell 3/3 FG 53 Long



21



24

A 1st quarter fumble by Rookie QB **Trey Lance** led to Virden's first TD on a 36-yard pass from **Patrick Mahomes** to **Ja'Marr Chase**, but his 5 for 5 passing on the next drive led to the Pilots tying it on a TD run by **Cam Akers**. Mahomes and Chase struck again, from 24 yards, to go in front, but **Pharoh Cooper's** muff at the Virden 5-yard line set up a quick Seattle TD to tie it. Driving before the half, Lance was picked off at the Virden 1 to end that threat. Seattle briefly held the lead at the end of the 3rd, but **Royce Freeman's** 1-yard TD plunge early in the 4th put Virden in front for good.

11-03-2021 TERRORDOME Temp:68 Wind:Calm None Line:SEA by 9 MVP:Chase HFA:ON(4)

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 Seattle (0-5)	7	7	7	0	21
2021 Virden (2-3)	14	0	3	7	24

Passing

SEA: Lance 21/16 146 Yds TD Int

VV: Mahomes 19/11 229 Yds 2 TDs

Rushing

SEA: Lance 16/72, Akers 14/57 TD, Hunt 4/14 TD

VV: Elliott 19/66, Freeman 5/19 TD, Mahomes 2/8

Receiving

SEA: Anderson 7/57, Lamb 2/28, Renfrow 2/20, Mims 1/9, Hunt 1/5 TD, Akers 1/5

VV: Chase 5/146 2 TDs, Brown 2/43, Elliott 1/19, Hockenson 1/9, Green 1/9

Defense

SEA: Joseph-Day 2-Sks 8-Tk, Brockers Sk 7-Tk

VV: Harris Jr. 10-Tk, Peters Int 4-Tk, Okafor FF 5-Tk

Injuries

SEA:

VV: Johnson 8, Ximines 7, Barr 7, Hooker 7, Osemele 7, Thomas 5, Ford 5, Shelton 2

Misc

SEA: Lance 1-F Lost

VV: 12 MT



28



31

A chip-shot FG by **Wil Lutz** at the end of the 1st half ended up being the difference as the Pats rebounded from an early deficit to knock the Cubs to below 500. Iowa scored on the game's opening drive then drove 54 yards to a 9-yard TD pass to **Cole Beasley** to take a 14-0 lead after a Pats' turnover on downs. **Carl Lawson's** pick of **Russell Wilson** in Pats' territory staved off a potential blowout and allowed the Charleswood to regroup. **DeShaun Watson** hit **Amari Cooper** for a 47-yard TD to spark a 21-point Pats' 2nd half while the 'D' staved off a late Wilson rally to preserve the win.

11-01-2021 Patriot Place Temp:75 Wind:Calm Line:CHP by 5 MVP:Watson HFA:ON(

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 Iowa City (2-3)	14	0	0	14	28
2021 Charleswood (4-1)	0	10	14	7	31

Passing

ICC: Wilson 29/19 207 Yds 4 TDs Int

CHP: Watson 24/17 274 Yds 3 TDs

Rushing

ICC: Conner 14/86, Wilson 7/28, Mixon 3/12

CHP: Kamara 15/45, Dobbins 5/32 TD, Watson 5/23, Hill 3/9

Receiving

ICC: Brown 6/91, Lockett 6/43 TD, Mixon 4/34, Beasley 3/39 3 TDs

CHP: Smith-Schuster 5/76 TD, Kelce 5/74, Cooper 4/85 TD, Kamara 1/15, Metcalf 1/7 TD

Defense

ICC: Tomlinson Sk 4-Tk, Cox Sk 4-Tk

CHP: Richardson Sk 6-Tk, Landry III 10-Tk

Injuries

ICC:

CHP: Stanley 7, Trufant 4

Misc

ICC: 8/11 3rd Down

CHP:



The Triumph answered an opening drive Chino FG with an opening drive TD pass from **Mitch Trubisky** to **Adam Trautman** but they were unable to find any more answers after that. The Convicts pulled in front to stay mid-way through the 2nd quarter when **Teddy Bridgewater** hit **Tim Patrick** for a 20-yard TD pass then extended their lead to 17-10 near the end of the 1st half on a 23-yard strike to **Michael Gallup**. The Chino 'D' held the fort in the 3rd quarter then the offence added an insurance score early in the 4th on a 1-yard dive by **Ronald Jones II**. The Convicts stay well in the hunt at 4-1.

11-05-2021 The Big House Temp:78 Wind:0-10 None Line:TCT by 9 MVP:Bridgewater HFA:ON

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 Twin Cities (2-3)	0	7	0	0	7
2021 Chino (4-1)	3	14	0	7	24

Passing

TCT: Trubisky 23/15 129 Yds TD

CHI: Bridgewater 26/21 237 Yds 2 TDs

Rushing

TCT: Gordon III 18/89, Edwards-Helaire 3/9, White 1/5

CHI: Jackson 10/57, Jones II 10/42 TD, Bridgewater 5/19

Receiving

TCT: Brown 5/35, Trautman 3/31 TD, White 2/11, Moore 2/25, Bateman 2/19, Gordon III 1/8

CHI: Gallup 8/84 TD, Patrick 5/51 TD, Jones II 3/57, Byrd 2/18, Jones Jr. 1/12

Defense

TCT: Moseley 8-Tk, Wagner 8-Tk

CHI: Bostic 14-Tk, Anderson Sk FF Tk, Jarrett Sk 3-Tk

Injuries

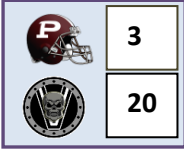
TCT: Golladay 6

CHI: Prescott 6, McCaffrey 6, Purcell 6, Bouye 4, Carter 2

Misc

TCT: Duvernay 2/68 KR

CHI:



A 4th down stand by the Crusaders' defence in their own red zone led to a 12-play drive and a 50-yard **Younghoe Koo** field goal that gave them the early lead. Las Vegas drove back but were thwarted by a **Jeremiah Owusu-Koramoah** interception of **Justin Herbert** at the 31. The Assassins finally tied it at 3 with 0:38 left in the 1st half on a 36-yard FG by **Ka'imi Fairbairn**. Las Vegas slowly broke away in the 3rd quarter. A 65-yard catch-and-run by **Jerry Jeudy** set up a FG then back-to-back TD drives, the second set up by a **Janoris Jenkins** pick of **Mac Jones**, put them in the driver's seat.

11-05-2021 Temp:74 Wind:Calm Line:LV by 20 MVP:Cook HFA:ON(0)

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 Peg City (0-5)	3	0	0	0	3
2021 Las Vegas (5-0)	0	3	17	0	20

Passing

PCC: Jones 31/16 151 Yds Int

LV: Herbert 36/25 305 Yds TD Int

Rushing

PCC: Bell 8/26, Jones 2/6

LV: Cook 21/84 TD, Herbert 1/17, Daniel 3/3

Receiving

PCC: Bell 6/50, Higbee 3/31, Shenault Jr. 2/8, Cohen 1/19, Aiyuk 1/11

LV: Graham 6/66, Pascal 5/52, Jeudy 5/107 TD, Hardman 4/49, Cook 3/14, Humphries 2/22

Defense

PCC: Muhammad Sk 7-Tk, Humphrey FF 7-Tk, Owusu-Koramoah Int 4-Tk, Okudah 8-Tk

LV: Ngakoue 2-Sks FF 4-Tk, Leonard FF 9-Tk

Injuries

PCC: Cohen 8, Jones 7, Bush 6, Thompson 6, Bullard 4, Allen 4, Rapp 1

LV:

Misc

PCC: Koo 1/1 FG Long 50

LV: Fairbairn 2/2 FG Long 36



20

31

Trailing 24-20, Durham had 3rd & goal at the Cowtown 1-yard line with 0:57 left, looking to punch it in. But a holding penalty on **Darren Waller** pushed them back 10 yards. On 3rd & goal at the 11, **TJ Watt** strip-sacked **Josh Allen** and **Andrew Van Ginkel** scooped up the loose ball, returning it 79 yards for the game-clinching score. The Corn King defence was stout all day, giving up just one offensive TD. The Thunder Lizards picked off **Ryan Fitzpatrick** 3 times, including a pick-six by **Tyrann Mathieu**, but the Cowtown QB still ran for 2 TDs and threw for another to win game MVP.

11-05-2021 Tillman Field Temp:61 Wind:10-20 None Line:DTL by 9 MVP:Fitzpatrick HFA:ON(

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 Durham (4-1)	7	3	10	0	20
2021 Cowtown (3-2)	0	10	7	14	31

Passing

DTL: Allen 35/20 156 Yds TD Int
COW: Fitzpatrick 29/20 170 Yds TD 3 Int

Rushing

DTL: Gibson 11/26, Allen 5/18, Samuel 2/14, Edmonds 2/8
COW: Gurley II 10/60, Fitzpatrick 5/41 2 TDs, Murray 9/34, Gore 5/14, Toney 1/14

Receiving

DTL: Waller 6/58, Samuel 5/25 TD, Boyd 4/45, Gibson 2/6, Kupp 2/20, Edmonds 1/2
COW: Alie-Cox 6/75 TD, Bourne 5/40, Evans 3/31, Gurley II 2/6, Murray 2/6, Lewis 1/8

Defense

DTL: Burns Sk FF 7-Tk, Mathieu Int(TD) 7-Tk, Moore II Int 5-Tk, Simmons Int 5-Tk
COW: Watt Sk FF 4-Tk, Chinn Int 6-Tk

Injuries

DTL: Penny 6
COW: Saubert 6, Garoppolo 3

Misc

DTL: Allen 1-F Lost, Santos 2/2 FG 50 Long
COW: Van Ginkel 1-FR(TD)



42

42

The heavy rain at the Eagle's Nest did nothing to slow down the offences, but it did discourage the Fish from attempting a 55-yard FG with 0:11 left. Instead, **Kirk Cousins** completed an 11-yard pass to **Jalen Reagor** on 4th down and called timeout with 0:01 left to set up a 44-yard FG by **Daniel Carlson** to tie the game at 39. The overtime period was as indecisive as the first 4 quarters of non-stop offence. Scarborough got the ball first and took the lead on a 43-yard **Mason Crosby** FG The Fish drove well but declined to gamble on 4th & 8 at the 13, settling for a 31-yard FG with 0:02 left.

11-02-2021 The Eagle's Nest Temp:56 Wind:Calm Heavy Rain Line:SS by 2 MVP:Reagor HFA:O

	1	2	3	4	5	Tot
2021 Sebastian (3-1-1)	14	8	7	10	3	42
2021 Scarborough (1-3-1)	14	7	8	10	3	42

Passing

SS: Cousins 36/25 286 Yds 4 TDs 2 Int
SBE: Burrow 36/24 312 Yds 4 TDs

Rushing

SS: Chubb 20/130, Taylor 25/115 TD, Cousins 2/16, Reagor 1/13
SBE: Carson 13/66 TD, Gaskin 4/10, Burrow 2/3

Receiving

SS: Marshall Jr. 7/60 TD, Reagor 5/110 2 TDs, Ebron 4/32 TD, Taylor 4/25, Hilton 2/23
SBE: Ward 4/31, Gaskin 4/13, Carson 4/43 TD, Uzomah 3/21, Crowder 3/68 2 TDs

Defense

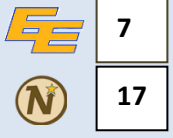
SS: Wilkins Sk 5-Tk, Lewis Sk 3-Tk, Baker 8-Tk
SBE: Dantzler Int 12-Tk, Jones Int 10-Tk, Ryan FF 5-Tk, Lawson 8-Tk

Injuries

SS: Massie 3, Clowney 3
SBE: Jackson 6, Collins 5, Bosa 5, Martin 3

Misc

SS: 37 1st Downs, 560 yds OFF, 4/4 4th Down, Carlson 2/3 FG 44 Long
SBE: Crosby 2/2 FG 48 Long



David Johnson rushed for 49 yards and 2 TDs and caught 8 balls for 73 yards to lead Budapest to a hard-fought win over the Irish. The visitors scored first on a penalty-assisted opening drive, capped by **Aaron Jones'** 4-yard TD run. That score held up longer than expected as sacks, a hold and a red zone pick of **Aaron Rodgers** by **Jalen Ramsey** kept the Stars at bay. Johnson scored on a 1-yard TD run late in the 2nd to tie it and on a 2-yard run on the North Stars' first series of the 2nd half to give them the lead. Irish gambles in a comeback bid did not pay off and the Stars held on.

11-02-2021 Ferenc-Liszt Intl Temp:71 Wind:Calm None Line:BUD by 9 MVP:Johnson HFA

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 East Elmhurst (3-2)	7	0	0	0	7
2021 Budapest (5-0)	0	7	7	3	17

Passing

EE: Mayfield 25/17 145 Yds, McCarron 3/3 24 Yds
 BUD: Rodgers 30/20 237 Yds Int

Rushing

EE: Jones 17/63 TD, Hayes 8/27, Mayfield 1/3, Hill 1/1
 BUD: Johnson 11/49 2 TDs, Rodgers 2/9, Patterson 6/8, Patterson 1/2

Receiving

EE: Thielen 6/55, Hill 6/57, Jones 3/2, Robinson 2/30, Moore 2/17, Olsen 1/8
 BUD: Johnson 8/73, Diggs 4/40, Jefferson 4/64, Thompson 1/11, Rodgers 1/16

Defense

EE: Lawrence II 2-Sks 2-FF 6-Tk, Barrett 2-Sks 5-Tk, Smith 13-Tk, Ramsey Int 7-Tk
 BUD: Suh Sk 5-Tk, Jordan Sk 4-Tk

Injuries

EE:
 BUD:

Misc

EE:
 BUD: Rodgers,Am 2/37 PR



James Robinson scored 3 TDs, the first a 52-yard run and the second a 29-yard screen pass to give the Gladiators a 14-7 first half lead. The Hawks soared back in the 3rd quarter, with **Derek Carr** hooking up with **DeAndre Hopkins** for TD passes of 26 and 16 yards to fuel a 17-point 3rd quarter and a 24-14 lead. The Glads pushed back with an 11-play, 75-yard TD drive to pull within 3, but a 54-yard catch-and-run pass to **Evan Engram** mid-way in the 4th set up a **Carlos Hyde** TD run to make it a two-score lead for Brooklin. The Glads added a FG but no more, and fell by 7.

11-03-2021 Heinz Field Temp:59 Wind:5-15 Rain Line:GEO by 20 MVP:Carr HFA:ON(1

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 Brooklin (2-3)	0	7	17	7	31
2021 Georgia (1-3-1)	7	7	0	10	24

Passing

BRH: Carr 39/21 357 Yds 2 TDs Int
 GEO: Roethlisberger 39/22 246 Yds TD 2 Int

Rushing

BRH: Hyde 15/47 2 TDs, Scott 3/23, Carr 5/14
 GEO: Robinson 21/105 2 TDs, Jacobs 2/5

Receiving

BRH: Hopkins 6/97 2 TDs, Gronkowski 5/90, Engram 3/82, Hyde 3/8, Cobb 2/65
 GEO: Robinson 7/77 TD, Johnson 5/41, Fuller V 5/86, Ertz 4/41, Davis 1/1

Defense

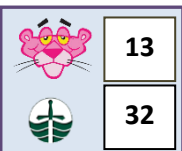
BRH: Ferrell 2-FF 4-Tk, Highsmith Int 3-Tk, Simmons 8-Tk, Harrison Jr. Int 3-Tk
 GEO: Edmunds 8-Tk, Bell FF 5-Tk

Injuries

BRH: McKinney 8, Lewan 3, Vander Esch 2, Ekeler 2
 GEO: Ingram III 5

Misc

BRH: Carr 1-FLost
 GEO: Joseph 1-FR



Tom Brady completed two bombs – a 61-yard TD to **Mike Williams** and an 84-yarder to **Corey Davis** that set up a **King Henry** TD run – and oversaw three long scoring drives to lead the Excaliburs to a convincing win over the Pink Panthers. Oshawa led briefly in the 2nd quarter after they replied to an opening drive York TD with a 79-yard, 14-play drive that ended with an 8-yard **Mike Singletary** TD run to make it 7-6. Brady's first bomb wiped out that lead and York never looked back from there as the Panthers would not find the end zone again. Brady finished with a 150.5 QB rating on the day.

11-07-2021 Temp:62 Wind:0-10 None Line:YOR by 11 MVP:Brady HFA:ON(0)

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 Oshawa (0-4-1)	0	10	3	0	13
2021 York (4-1)	6	16	0	10	32

Passing

OSH: Ryan 34/21 174 Yds
 YOR: Brady 21/18 291 Yds 2 TDs

Rushing

OSH: Drake 16/97, Ryan 4/13, Singletary 2/6 TD
 YOR: Henry 22/72 2 TDs, Williams 5/9

Receiving

OSH: Adams 7/77, Goedert 4/30, Reynolds 4/20, Schultz 2/27, Atwell 2/10, Drake 2/10
 YOR: Henry 5/42, Amendola 4/34 TD, Kmet 3/36, Williams 2/14, Davis 2/93, Williams 2/72 TD

Defense

OSH:
 YOR: Willis Sk FF 5-Tk, Buckner Sk 5-Tk, Butler 9-Tk

Injuries

OSH: Edelman 6, Williams 5, Kendricks 4
 YOR: Holcomb 2

Misc

OSH: 3/3 4th Down, Kelce 1-F Lost, Reynolds 1-F Lost
 YOR: Guy 1-FR, Butler 1-FR



Greg Zuerlein kicked 5 field goals, the last from 41 yards with 2:41 left that turned out to be the game-winner, as the Spartans held off two more attempts by the Cadillac to get into FG range before the game ended. Erieau scored first on a 13-yard scramble TD by **Kyler Murray** and took the lead with 12 mins left in the 4th on a 3-yard TD run by **Nyheim Hines**. Turnovers were the home team's undoing. A fumble recovery by **AJ Klein** set up the Spartans' 3rd FG, before the end of the 1st half and a **Denzel Ward** interception of Murray in the 4th set up the the final FG that won the game.

11-04-2021 Kelly-Burke Field Temp:67 Wind:5-15 Rain Line:PIC by 2 MVP:Rivers

	1	2	3	4	Tot
2021 Pickering (2-3)	3	6	3	3	15
2021 Erieau (1-4)	7	0	0	7	14

Passing

PIC: Rivers 35/22 235 Yds
 ERI: Murray 30/20 221 Yds Int

Rushing

PIC: Sanders 14/68, Swift 7/16, Sermon 8/7, Rivers 4/4
 ERI: Murray 7/63 TD, Harris 13/39, Hines 2/15 TD, Moss 2/7

Receiving

PIC: Ridley 7/97, Brown 5/58, Shepard 2/15, Sanders 2/24, Mooney 2/20, Swift 2/3
 ERI: Higgins 7/80, Andrews 3/64, Hines 3/14, Waddle 3/30, Moss 1/7, Conley 1/12

Defense

PIC: Ward Int 7-Tk, Schobert FF 9-Tk, Wolfe Sk 3-Tk
 ERI: Bosa Sk 6-Tk, Murray 8-Tk

Injuries

PIC: Dennard 7, Incognito 6
 ERI: Poole 3, Smith 2, Jones 2

Misc

PIC: Zuerlein 5/6 FGA 55 Long, Klein 1-FR
 ERI: Murray 1-F Lost



WEEK FIVE

STANDINGS & STATS

EFL 2021 - Week 5 Standings

East	W	L	T	Pct	Stk	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Buffalo	3	2	0	.600	W1	113	22.6	96	19.2	3.4	2 0 0	2 0 0	3 1 0
Cobb County	3	2	0	.600	L2	130	26.0	77	15.4	10.6	2 1 0	1 1 0	3 1 0
New Jersey	3	2	0	.600	W3	106	21.2	138	27.6	-6.4	1 2 0	1 1 0	2 2 0
Bruxelles	1	4	0	.200	L2	112	22.4	151	30.2	-7.8	1 2 0	0 2 0	1 3 0
Central	W	L	T	Pct	Stk	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Charleswood	4	1	0	.800	W2	117	23.4	128	25.6	-2.2	2 0 0	2 0 0	3 1 0
Viriden	2	3	0	.400	W1	129	25.8	117	23.4	2.4	1 2 0	1 1 0	2 2 0
Twin Cities	2	3	0	.400	L1	95	19.0	90	18.0	1.0	1 1 0	1 1 0	1 3 0
Peg City	0	5	0	.000	L5	73	14.6	146	29.2	-14.6	0 2 0	0 2 0	0 4 0
West	W	L	T	Pct	Stk	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Las Vegas	5	0	0	1.000	W5	139	27.8	56	11.2	16.6	3 0 0	2 0 0	4 0 0
Chino	4	1	0	.800	W1	145	29.0	100	20.0	9.0	2 1 0	2 0 0	4 0 0
Iowa City	2	3	0	.400	L1	135	27.0	133	26.6	0.4	1 1 0	0 2 0	1 3 0
Seattle	0	5	0	.000	L5	69	13.8	141	28.2	-14.4	0 2 0	0 2 0	0 4 0
North	W	L	T	Pct	Stk	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Durham	4	1	0	.800	L1	176	35.2	90	18.0	17.2	3 0 0	1 1 0	3 1 0
Sebastian	3	1	1	.700		179	35.8	172	34.4	1.4	1 1 0	1 0 1	2 1 1
Cowtown	3	2	0	.600	W1	120	24.0	103	20.6	3.4	2 0 0	1 1 0	3 1 0
Scarborough	1	3	1	.300		101	20.2	154	30.8	-10.6	1 1 1	0 1 1	1 2 1
Coastal	W	L	T	Pct	Stk	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Budapest	5	0	0	1.000	W5	158	31.6	66	13.2	18.4	3 0 0	2 0 0	4 0 0
York	4	1	0	.800	W2	129	25.8	121	24.2	1.6	3 0 0	2 0 0	3 1 0
Brooklin	2	3	0	.400	W1	114	22.8	132	26.4	-3.6	1 1 0	0 2 0	2 2 0
Pickering	2	3	0	.400	W2	77	15.4	107	21.4	-6.0	0 2 0	0 2 0	1 3 0
South	W	L	T	Pct	Stk	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
East Elmhurst	3	2	0	.600	L1	95	19.0	91	18.2	0.8	0 1 0	2 0 0	2 2 0
Georgia	1	3	1	.300	L1	131	26.2	155	31.0	-4.8	0 3 0	0 1 1	0 3 1
Erieau	1	4	0	.200	L4	73	14.6	101	20.2	-5.6	0 3 0	1 1 0	1 3 0
Oshawa	0	4	1	.100	L2	96	19.2	147	29.4	-10.2	0 2 1	0 1 1	0 3 1

EFL 2021 - Week 5 Passing Leaders

			Att	Cmp	C%	Yards	In	I%	Lg	TD	TD%	Rate
1	Rodgers,A	BUD	167	128	76.6	1632	2	1.2	71	14	8.4	129.6
2	Bridgewater	CHI	74	56	75.7	664	0	0.0	44	5	6.8	125.1
3	Cousins	SS	169	121	71.6	1572	5	3.0	59	16	9.5	119.7
4	Mahomes	VV	181	120	66.3	1710	1	0.6	72	13	7.2	118.3
5	Wilson,R	ICC	134	99	73.9	1102	4	3.0	54	13	9.7	117.8
6	Watson,D	CHP	164	110	67.1	1369	1	0.6	47	13	7.9	116.6
7	Prescott	CHI	88	65	73.9	754	0	0.0	75	4	4.5	114.5
8	Allen,J	DTL	185	126	68.1	1463	3	1.6	75	14	7.6	110.3
9	Brady	YOR	141	98	69.5	1260	5	3.5	84	11	7.8	108.5
10	Herbert	LV	164	118	72.0	1286	3	1.8	65	9	5.5	105.4
11	Trubisky	TCT	126	79	62.7	846	1	0.8	40	9	7.1	102.8
12	Jackson,L	BUF	157	106	67.5	1050	1	0.6	60	8	5.1	100.5
13	Tannehill	CB	122	76	62.3	1046	3	2.5	55	7	5.7	98.6
14	Roethlisbe	GEO	183	119	65.0	1247	3	1.6	60	11	6.0	97.9
15	Mayfield	EE	137	94	68.6	1033	3	2.2	48	6	4.4	96.2
16	Stafford	NJ	181	121	66.9	1418	4	2.2	59	8	4.4	96.0
17	Burrow	SBE	142	86	60.6	898	1	0.7	51	8	5.6	94.7
18	Brees	BRX	124	73	58.9	875	2	1.6	75	7	5.6	92.6
19	Carr,D	BRH	160	94	58.8	1139	3	1.9	54	9	5.6	91.6
20	Fitzpatric	COW	117	80	68.4	872	5	4.3	52	5	4.3	86.6
21	Ryan,M	OSH	188	121	64.4	1096	5	2.7	28	9	4.8	84.9
22	Jones,M	PCC	160	93	58.1	1065	5	3.1	48	6	3.8	77.7
23	Rivers,P	PIC	142	79	55.6	875	2	1.4	36	4	2.8	77.6
24	Murray,K	ERI	142	86	60.6	741	1	0.7	47	1	0.7	73.7
25	Minshew II	SEA	63	37	58.7	401	3	4.8	62	3	4.8	73.6

EFL 2021 - Week 5 Kick Return Leaders

			No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	Roberts,A	BRX	8	293	36.6	46	0
2	Agnew	SEA	14	454	32.4	68	0
3	Harris,D	COW	8	250	31.3	76	0
4	Johnson,D	SBE	8	233	29.1	41	0
5	Patterson	BUD	9	243	27.0	39	0
6	Rodgers,I	CHP	9	228	25.3	34	0
7	Atwell	OSH	11	269	24.5	38	0
8	Carter,D	BUF	10	240	24.0	48	0
9	Duvernay	TCT	8	192	24.0	49	0
10	Abdullah	CHI	7	137	19.6	36	0
11	Hubbard	PCC	4	131	32.8	39	0
12	Adderley	VV	3	89	29.7	33	0
13	Barner	PIC	4	118	29.5	39	0
14	Johnson,D	CB	3	78	26.0	28	0
15	Powell	EE	2	52	26.0	31	0
16	Homer	YOR	6	153	25.5	36	0
17	Scott,B	BRH	5	126	25.2	32	0
18	Hill	DTL	6	149	24.8	38	0
19	Webster,N	NJ	6	141	23.5	30	0
20	Davis,A	PCC	2	47	23.5	28	0
21	Waddle	ERI	5	109	21.8	30	0
22	Carter	ICC	3	64	21.3	30	0
23	Edmonds	DTL	1	20	20.0	20	0
24	Dulin	LV	1	19	19.0	19	0
25	Bernard,G	GEO	1	18	18.0	18	0

EFL 2021 - Week 5 Punt Return Leaders

			No	Fc	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	Peppers	ERI	7	2	83	11.9	22	0
2	Harris,D	COW	9	2	97	10.8	18	0
3	Proche	DTL	18	4	165	9.2	20	0
4	Hill,K	SBE	8	1	73	9.1	25	0
5	Taylor,T	CHP	9	2	75	8.3	16	0
6	Roberts,A	BRX	7	0	56	8.0	15	0
7	Peoples-Jo	SS	9	4	70	7.8	16	0
8	Spencer,D	NJ	8	2	59	7.4	11	0
9	Hardman	LV	7	9	40	5.7	13	0
10	Lamb	SEA	5	3	74	14.8	38	0
11	Grant,J	CHI	6	3	72	12.0	20	0
12	Cooper,P	VV	6	7	65	10.8	41	0
13	Atwell	OSH	3	0	31	10.3	17	0
14	Erickson	BUF	2	4	20	10.0	13	0
15	Rodgers,Am	BUD	6	8	60	10.0	20	0
16	Renfrow	SEA	4	4	38	9.5	20	0
17	Tate,G	BRH	3	5	28	9.3	19	0
18	Johnson,D	GEO	3	2	26	8.7	12	0
19	Moore	EE	5	4	42	8.4	16	0
20	Barner	PIC	6	5	48	8.0	14	0
21	Kirk	ICC	4	1	25	6.3	10	0
22	Carter,D	BUF	1	2	6	6.0	6	0
23	Fuller V	GEO	1	1	4	4.0	4	0
24	Raymond	CB	6	1	19	3.2	6	0
25	Powell	EE	3	2	5	1.7	4	0

EFL 2021 - Week 5 Rushing Leaders

		Att	Yds	Ave	Lg
1	Henry,D	YOR	117	555	4.7 48
2	Robinson,J	GEO	94	532	5.7 52
3	Gordon III	TCT	98	512	5.2 45
4	Cook,D	LV	104	511	4.9 49
5	Harris,D	CB	54	411	7.6 35
6	Elliott,E	VV	82	379	4.6 28
7	Sanders,M	PIC	80	369	4.6 25
8	Chubb,N	SS	71	368	5.2 47
9	Drake	OSH	70	367	5.2 40
10	Conner	ICC	55	364	6.6 47
11	Taylor,J	SS	65	363	5.6 32
12	Jones,A	EE	68	342	5.0 22
13	Murray,K	ERI	42	269	6.4 19
14	Carson	SBE	53	246	4.6 13
15	Ekeler	BRH	43	246	5.7 21
16	Harris	ERI	65	230	3.5 27
17	Wilson,R	ICC	31	220	7.1 20
18	Jackson,L	BUF	39	219	5.6 32
19	Montgomery	NJ	74	214	2.9 18
20	Jones II	CHI	54	211	3.9 17
21	Davis,M	BUF	49	202	4.1 19
22	Gurley II	COW	50	196	3.9 20
23	Scott,B	BRH	35	192	5.5 20
24	Mitchell	BRX	37	186	5.0 18
25	Peterson,A	CB	40	180	4.5 16
26	Swift	PIC	35	175	5.0 24
27	Allen,J	DTL	29	173	6.0 27
28	Williams,J	BRX	34	169	5.0 18
29	Lance	SEA	39	168	4.3 14
30	Breida	CB	27	159	5.9 35

EFL 2021 - Week 5 Receiving Leaders

			No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	Adams,D	OSH	42	395	9.4	28	5
2	Gallup	CHI	40	592	14.8	75	4
3	Allen,K	NJ	33	344	10.4	35	4
4	Waller	DTL	32	398	12.4	43	4
5	Diggs,S	BUD	32	381	11.9	46	3
6	Johnson,D	GEO	30	277	9.2	20	4
7	Chase	VV	29	613	21.1	72	5
8	Sanders,E	BUF	29	340	11.7	37	4
9	Jefferson	BUD	29	424	14.6	31	4
10	McLaurin	NJ	27	387	14.3	54	3
11	Kelce,T	CHP	26	358	13.8	31	5
12	Brown,J	VV	25	373	14.9	34	2
13	Robinson,J	GEO	25	128	5.1	29	1
14	Hill,T	EE	25	307	12.3	23	2
15	Lockett	ICC	24	231	9.6	19	4
16	Hopkins,D	BRH	24	320	13.3	28	5
17	Metcalfe	CHP	24	336	14.0	25	2
18	Hilton	SS	24	400	16.7	38	5
19	Woods,R	BUF	24	262	10.9	60	3
20	Claypool	BRX	23	426	18.5	75	6
21	Pascal	LV	23	279	12.1	22	3
22	Shenault J	PCC	23	304	13.2	42	2
23	Cooper,A	CHP	22	322	14.6	47	2
24	Kupp	DTL	22	377	17.1	75	3
25	Fuller V	GEO	22	486	22.1	60	4
26	Graham,J	LV	22	174	7.9	14	0
27	Goedert	OSH	22	203	9.2	20	2
28	Samuel,C	DTL	22	202	9.2	20	2
29	McKissic	NJ	21	163	7.8	17	0
30	Brown,A	ICC	21	361	17.2	54	3



AROUND THE



With Spats McChad

NEW YORK – Game Day feels more or less normal again now that COVID-19 is far enough behind us that EFL stadium gates are again open to fans (with various levels of restrictions in place depending on jurisdiction). The good news is that through the first five weeks football fans across both continents appear hungry for live action. The league announced that average attendance is up 12.6% over 2019, the last season that all venues were fully open. Across the league, fans are filling up 89% of total stadium capacity, an increase of 8%. The league acquired two new parks – *Hawkeye Park* in Brooklin and the *GM Megadome* in Oshawa – and leased an old one – *Heinz Field* in Pittsburgh – which all together netted 31,725 new seats for the league.

Only one venue, *The Fortress* in Bruxelles, is not operating a full capacity. This is because the Capital Region in Belgium, where the stadium is located, was hit hard by the pandemic and authorities balked at opening up all the seating for fear of jeopardizing its rebound from the virus. The home of the Bombers is currently operating at 50% capacity and a ‘Covid Safe Ticket’ is required for entry. Capacity restrictions are expected to be lifted by mid-season if infection rates remain stable. So far, Belgians have filled up all of the available seating, having “sold out” all three games on their recent home stand to catch a glimpse of the “Father of Quarterbacking,” **Drew Brees**. Stealing a page from **Darrin Jones’** *‘Father of American Football’* promotional playbook, the Bombers have cultivated a local image with the football-ignorant Belgians of Brees being some kind of innovator, if not the inventor, of the forward pass. This marketing deception is already starting to backfire, as confused Bombers fans can’t understand why their team is 1-4 and not 5-0. Expect attendance there to drop in the near future at this rate, even if they open up to full capacity.

Teams that are trending up in attendance from 2019 for the right reasons include: **Brooklin**, where the team’s new stadium is an attraction in itself for locals, and the team’s exciting 2020 campaign is still resonating with fans; **Budapest**, where Hungarian nationalists are placing the North Stars’ 2020 Gale Sayers Trophy on the same level as the Hungarian National Football Team’s Gold Medal win at the 1968 Summer Olympics, and the home slate for 2021 has already been sold out; **Buffalo**, where **Lamar Jackson** has the desperately excitable football fans of Upstate New York more desperately excited and optimistic than usual; **Chino**, where a 23% spike in average attendance compared with their previous three seasons cannot be explained except by the fact that many people are fed up with their Governor’s repeated lockdowns and just need to get out and vandalize, which is an acceptable activity (within limits) at *The Big House*; **Charleswood**, where fans of the league’s first “Banner Franchise” have removed the paper bags they wore privately in their homes in 2020 and have descended on *Patriot Place* to cheer on, in their respectful and dignified manner, a revived Pats team under a weaponized **DeShaun Watson**; **Pickering**, where promise of a contender in 2021 has gullible Spartans fans filing up five hours in advance to get into Thermopylae Stadium on Game Day; **Durham**, where fans are putting up with the omnipresent humidity and rain at Jurassic Park to watch a team they believe will finally make the Final this year; **Scarborough**, where **Joe Burrow** playing in a downtown Toronto stadium (renamed Eagle’s Nest) that does not pose a health and safety threat to attendees has almost doubled the number of bums in seats, as well as the number of bums panhandling at the Exhibition GO station; and **Virden**, where fans are making up for not being able to watch them live in 2020 and are filling up the **TERRORDOME**, having not caught on to the fact that the 2021 edition of the team is a shadow of its former self.

Teams that are always popular draws and holding steady are: **Cowtown**, where the effects of the pandemic were hardly felt at the gate in 2020 due to the town’s location inside an isolated ‘Historic Zone’ and the local government’s repudiation of most Provincial COVID-19 restrictions (attendance at Corn Kings’ games has been the most stable in the league, between 97 and 99% of capacity year after year since inception in 2007, as there is literally nothing else to do in Cowtown after harvest time); **Iowa City**, where attendance is up 5% over 2019 but in line with historic averages as Iowa fans love their Cubbies no matter how much they disappoint; **Seattle**, where apparently all you have to do is field a football team to get fan support, not actually win games; **Sebastian**, where the average crowd size holds steady ever since the Swordfish appeared in the Gale Sayers Game in 2016, at about 4,000 shy of capacity – the same old “rim” seats near the top of the *Fish Tank* being empty on all but home-opening dates; and **York**, where 39,540 of its 41,612 seats are held by season ticket holders and tailgating in the field around Camelot starts on Saturday and is known to continue through the week and into the next weekend when the Excaliburs have back-to-back home dates.

For four teams, the 2021 season is the first test of their appeal to their local fan bases and, *so far*, all four have passed the test with flying colours. In **Oshawa**, those flying colours are found on the rainbow flag of the GTA’s LGBTQ+ community, who helped boost attendance to above the *GM Megadome*’s full capacity of 52,300 for opening day and have since supplemented the otherwise blue-collar, shift-worker local fan base and heartsick Mustangs’ refugees from Aurora. They will keep the seats full for as

long as there remains hope that the Pink Panthers are not the worst change-of-management bust since Florida moved to Scarborough. Fans were in the stands in **Las Vegas** and **Cobb County** in 2020, but never at more than one-third capacity at *Assassin's Den* and, at *Coyote Field*, only for the single playoff game, where 11,900 fans – one-quarter capacity – were allowed in to watch the Coyotes win their first post-season game of the **Eron Osman** Era. Total attendance in three home dates for the Assassins this year falls just 22 seats of a complete sellout. It makes you wonder why the team didn't just purchase the remaining 22 empty seats for the Peg City game. In Cobb County, Georgians love their football, especially with no competition this year from the "other Georgia team" near Lake Oconee. *Coyote Field* has had three sellouts in three home dates. And finally, in **East Elmhurst, NY**, the official "christening" of *Monsignor McClancy Memorial Stadium* took place in front of an over-sold "Porridge Bowl" on opening day in Week Two. That has been the only home game for the Irish so far, making them, for now, the only team that is averaging over 100% attendance, at 100.3%.

Apparently, however, not every franchise is enjoying the benefits of open turnstiles as much as they did before the pandemic. **New Jersey** used to sell out almost every home date, even in losing years, thanks to free concerts at *Stone Pony Shore* before and after the game. However, the most onerous COVID-19 entry requirements in North America, coupled with a season opener to forget, caused a sharp drop in attendance in the two games following their over-capacity turnout on opening day. They have since averaged just over 31,600 fans per game – 81.5% of capacity – since their loss to the Derailers.

The downturn in attendance in New Jersey can easily be reversed with a few more victories and a modest dose of common sense introduced into the team's current despotic, preposterous COVID-19 protocols. The same cannot be said for two other franchises currently experiencing what the league fears may be permanent dry spells at the gate. Fans in the saturated Manitoba football market seemingly don't have time for a **Peg City** team that committed seppuku during the off-season, to all appearances just for the perverse experience. The team gutted itself and with it the viability of the franchise and its shiny new, state-of-the-art domed stadium, *True North Field*. Just 11,500 fans showed up for the home opener and only 8,540 for the Week Four match against East Elmhurst. The team is a tire fire stinking up the Central Division. Crusaders' owner, **Carling Thule Richardson** is said to be apoplectic with rage at his GM and coach, **Stephen Kotopodis**, as he sees his multi-billion-dollar investment sit empty and nearby *Patriot Place* filled to the rafters. It is said the only reason he has not fired his coach yet is because he doesn't want to put anyone else through the pain of coaching the team. "Let him sit for a while in his own dirty diaper," he is rumoured to have said, while half-snapped at a Thule Society cocktail party.

The league is worried most, however, about the future of the Erieau franchise. With the de-commissioning of *Optimist Park* in Brooklin, *Kelly-Burke Field* in Erieau is now the smallest stadium in the EFL, seating just 28,740. The Cadillac have not been able to fill even that since the novelty of pro football wore off for the local farmers and Mennonites. Since 2018, attendance has dropped like a stone. By the end of the 2019 season the only people attending Cadillac games were important Chatham-Kent businessmen season-ticket holders and their clients (all 67 of them), "football tourists" from around the world looking to knock Erieau off their bucket list, winners of radio and chamber of commerce "ticket-giveaways," and small pockets of diehard football fans from London, Windsor and Detroit. Ironically, the most vocal fans at Cadillac games are former Lions supporters from the United States and they haven't been able to cross the border yet this season, depriving the stadium atmosphere of what little vitality it once possessed. After scratching out a decent opening day crowd of just under 25,000, the Caddies have *averaged* just 7,878 fans per game since. That is, of course, unsustainable for owner **Jamie Rilett**, who is rumoured to be dipping into this retirement savings to keep the popular free fish giveaways going. It could all turnaround if **Kyler Murray** can get the offence going soon, but nobody is counting on that.

Georgia is a special case. As the Gladiators wait to settle their dispute with the Coyotes and the Government of Georgia, they currently occupy the old home of the Pittsburgh Steelers, *Heinz Field*. Ex-Steeler fans have reclaimed **Big Ben** and adopted the Glads as their own, averaging 65,664 fans per game, which turns out to be roughly the same 96% of capacity turnout they achieved in 2006, their last year of existence.

The current spike in EFL attendance, after a slow but steady decline in the three years leading up to the pandemic, is a good sign that the league has regained its footing and is better positioned than baseball, hockey and basketball to fully recover its losses. Now, these improved numbers are likely to dip as the season wears on and teams drop out of the race. But projections based on attendance charts in previous seasons suggest the league will net a healthy increase of between 6 and 8% gross attendance by the end of the year. If that was a stock, I'd buy it.

MUD WRESTLING

Steady rain typically slows down a football game and makes players more error prone. Heavy rain can practically bring a game to a halt or turn it into a comedy or tragedy of errors. But when maverick Swordfish coach, **Russ Lemmon** and Blue Eagles' owner and enthusiastic coach supporter, **Chris Dickinson** face each other on a slick field, heavy rain strangely becomes the grease that lubricates the engine of the offence. At least that was the effect when the Sebastian faced off against Scarborough in a heavy downpour at the Eagle's Nest this week.

The ascendancy of the Swordfish to one of the top offences in the league after 5 weeks is being attributed to their coach, the same coach who has been so maligned in recent seasons for his alleged rash aggression on fourth down and over-eagerness to stretch the field regardless of the situation or the defensive alignment. "*No risk it, no biscuit*," has been Coach Lemmon's motto, but while that may be true in certain circumstances, not all risks are worth it or even make sense. If coaches are ultimately judged by results, then the Monday Morning Jury must look at the last two under-achieving, losing seasons and return a unanimous verdict of Lemmon being 'guilty as charged' for taking unwarranted risks and ultimately placing his team in a position to lose.

Defenders of the 'Russ Lemmon School' – a school closely tied to the analytics movement – point back to as recently as the

2018 season as an example of the coach's successful implementation of his system. The Swordfish went 13-3 that campaign and entered the post-season as the no.1 seed in the Atlantic Conference. Critics, like me, point to that Swordfish team being one-and-done in the playoffs, eliminated by a wild card team thanks in large part to its 3 of 7 conversion rate on 4th down. The Swordfish of 2018 did not need to gamble on analytics data doing the mental heavy-lifting for them. They were the superior team that likely would have won a conventional field position battle. Instead, they gave the Corn Kings good field position and pumped up their defence with each stop.

Through five weeks of the 2021 season, however, the 'Russ Lemmon School' is schooling opposing defences, as the Swordfish now rank second in the league in yards-per-play and first in points scored on their way to a 3-1-1 record and sole possession of second place in the North Division. Russ's fourth down gambles have been mostly working in the team's favour but they are, oddly, not the main impetus for the team's high offensive standing. Instead, the Swordfish coach is receiving deserved accolades for his play-calling and an offensive scheme that achieves maximum versatility in play-selection out of a relatively innocuous standard 'Pro Set' formation.

"There are no tells or tendencies in the Swordfish offensive formations," explains **Severin Handfottner Jr** of the website, Coach's Call, a site dedicated to breaking down the coaching strategies of all 24 EFL coaching staffs. "They set up in 21-formation on 78% of their snaps and will run any play out of it. This keeps defences guessing on so-called 'neutral downs' and on some traditional passing downs. The two running backs they have – **Nick Chubb** and **Jonathan Taylor** – make this approach possible as either of them can make a defence pay dearly for ignoring them."

When I look at the Swordfish offensive tape, I also note the role of quarterback, **Kirk Cousins** in making all of it possible. Cousins has been deadly accurate with his passes at all distances and is benefitting from having more time in the pocket, thanks to the hesitancy of



With so many rainy days so far in the 2021 season, how well the fans weather the storm depends on how well their team is faring on the field. Durham fans (above) enjoy watching their team destroy York in the pouring rain in Week Three, while Erieau fans (below) despair in a Week Five loss to Pickering.



defensive linemen and linebackers to pin their ears back with Chubb and Taylor in the backfield. There is perhaps no more effective screen game in the league when the Swordfish choose to go that route.

I sense that there is an unpredictable beat to the Swordfish attack that has not been there in previous years. Lemmon is keeping his opposition off-balance with what can only be described as "making the right call at the right time." This is as much an art as a science and a sign that the coach is dialed into the tendencies of his opponent.

The offence has had to perform to an elite level, however, because on the defensive side the Swordfish are getting gashed for a league worst 7.1 yards per play and have given up a league high 172 points. This is the result of personnel deficiencies up front that ultimately cause breakdowns in the back end that, in a passing league, constitute the ultimate fatal flaw for a defence. Despite this roster-driven defect, Lemmon has used his meagre resources intelligently enough by gambling on his instincts to give help to areas of need. Sebastian double-covers or keys on specific opposing players on more than half of their defensive snaps – a league high. This willingness to gamble on defence can generate rewards at key moments in the game that can be enough to keep the high-octane offence on pace to out-score the enemy.

All of these Lemmon tendencies were on prominent display in his team's Week Five match-up against the Blue Eagles. *Mother Nature* provided a heavy rain storm as fanciful scenery to what is being called the craziest tie game in EFL history.

When one stops to think about it, there probably isn't a more volatile match-up than Lemmon vs Dickinson in a rainstorm. It is kind of like throwing Nick Foley and The Oddities into a mud-wrestling pit and letting them go at each other.

While method seems to be developing out of

madness in Sebastian, on the other side of the field, nobody can figure out what the Blue Eagles are going to be this year, including their owner, the perpetually meddling **Chris Dickinson** and the team's brow-beaten coach-in-name, **Kyle Shanahan**. The latter was hired last year to separate Dickinson from the play-calling, as the owner's attempts to dabble in scheme-building and mid-game adjustments have not gone well, historically. At least that was the idea....

While Shanahan's impact has been felt positively in the playbook and in the development of **Joe Burrow**, the in-game play-calling has been disrupted by the "nagging 7-year-old" behaviour of the team's owner, who insists on wearing a headset and clinging to Shanahan during games. According to my sources, Shanahan made the mistake of relenting once on a play-call during a vulnerable early time in his Blue Eagle coaching career and that opened the door to almost unfettered interference by Dickinson ever since. The result has been a "hybrid" coaching style that sometimes seems intelligent (Shanahan influence) and at other times seems amateurish (Dickinson influence). The players don't know who to turn to and, well, they are left on their own to execute as best they can.

The "offensive genius" reputation enjoyed by Shanahan prior to arriving in Scarborough has somewhat mitigated Dickinson's influence on the offence. He has made up for it by spending an inordinate amount of time with the defence, designing schemes alongside beleaguered defensive coordinator, **Jonathan Gannon**.

This week, in preparation for the Swordfish, Dickinson proposed a half dozen new blitz schemes that were, at the last minute, reluctantly crammed into the original conservative game plan Gannon had designed. The original plan had been to focus on the Swordfish run game, as it was likely to be featured more prominently than the pass in a driving rain storm. Dickinson's plan was virtually the exact opposite: Force Cousins to make quick decisions and get the ball out before his receivers could finish running their routes on a sloppy track. This might have worked better if the Swordfish had decided to follow the same pattern that they had followed in all but the Budapest game this year, which was to pass first to set up the run later. However, Lemmon decided to play his strong hand first this day by running the ball on his team's first two possessions. The strategy paid off handsomely with a pair of Sebastian touchdowns to match a red-hot **Joe Burrow**, who had led his team to two touchdowns out of the gate. The first four possessions of the game had all ended in touchdowns. The teams were deadlocked at 14 as the first quarter came to an end.

The second quarter did not play as cleanly as the first. The Eagles punted on their first series but then caught the first break of the game when the Swordfish threw caution to the rain and attempted to convert a 3rd & 20 with a long fly attempt to **Donovan Peoples-Jones**. The pass was underthrown and was tipped by **Adrian Amos** into the hands of linebacker **Deion Jones** for the interception. Scarborough took over at the Sebastian 35 and were in the end zone three plays later on a 24-yard pass to **Allen Robinson II** to take a 21-14 lead.

Sebastian responded with another run-dominant drive that set up a 19-yard TD pass to **Jalen Reagor**, his second TD catch of the game. The score put them in a position to tie. However, Coach Lemmon decided that this was as good a random time as any to start going for two points. Possibly sensing a shootout was in the works despite the weather and determining that an extra, extra point could ultimately make the difference in the outcome, (or possibly it was simply Russ's way of bellowing 'ARRRRGGGHHH!' and getting into the berserker spirit of a no-holds barred punchout), the Swordfish went for two points and converted on a run by **Nick Chubb** to take a 22-21 lead. This held up until half time as both teams sputtered offensively for the remainder of the quarter.

The second half started mundanely with both teams exchanging punts. The Swordfish were the first to get back on track and it was the run game again that did the leg work. A 13-yard reverse to Reagor was followed by runs of 12 and 18 yards by **Jonathan Taylor** to set up a 3-yard TD pass to **Terrace Marshall Jr.** who was all alone in the end zone thanks to a five-man Scarborough blitz that included the corner covering him. As you may have guessed, that last blitz was a play designed by the owner, Dickinson and one that might have worked against the run but stood no chance against a short pass, as it left 3 of the 5 eligible receivers uncovered. No blitz is going to beat a two-step drop and release in under 2 seconds, which is what **Kirk Cousins** did for an easy pitch-and-catch. **Daniel Carlson** came on for the conventional extra point to extended the Fish lead to 29-21.

The Blue Eagles got back in it when they too, caught the defence guessing. After a roughing the passer penalty on **Carlos Dunlap** allowed Scarborough to cross mid-field, the Swordfish defence suddenly hunkered down to stop the run. Burrow made them pay for it with an unpressured dime on a medium slant to **Jamison Crowder**, who jetted through the flat-footed Fish secondary for a 46-yard TD pass. Down by two, the Eagles naturally elected to go for two and were successful to a sweep by **Chris Carson** to tie it at 29.

The Swordfish responded. Cousins converted a clutch 3rd & 11 with a checkdown to Peoples-Jones, who found an opening for a 13-yard gain then found **TY Hilton** for another 13-yard gain as the 3rd quarter drew to a close. With the Blue Eagles now geared up to stop the pass, Coach Lemmon intuitively dialed back the pace and handed the ball off 4 straight times to Chubb and Taylor, grinding out 33 yards to inside the Scarborough red zone. Three plays later they faced a 4th & 1 at the 8 – a field goal situation for most teams in a tie game with plenty of time on the clock. But in keeping with his bent, or an analytics table in his pocket, the Swordfish coach kept his offence on the field. Chubb made him look good with a strong second effort against a furious Scarborough run blitz for a 2-yard gain. Two plays later, Cousins found **Eric Ebron** uncovered in the end zone for the go-ahead TD, making it 36-29.

Scarborough answered with a 48-yard **Mason Crosby** field goal to pull within 4 points then kicked the ball out of the end zone to give Sebastian possession at their 25. The chance to extend his lead to two scores was too tempting to let go of, inducing the Swordfish coach to do something he tends to do from time-to-time: Facing 4th & 3 from his own 32-yard line, Lemmon kept his offence on the field. These are the kind of 4th down gambles that often kill his team's chances, but on this occasion, Taylor saved at least a half dozen post-game questions by peeling off a 10-yard run on a pitch to the right. Having dodged his own bullet, Lemmon's QB then shot him with an unforced interception, a wobbly pass that Eagles' corner **Cameron Dantzler** picked off easily and returned 27 yards to the

Sebastian 28. Three plays later, Burrow connected with Carson for a 24-yard TD pass to give the home team a 39-36 lead.

With 2:10 left in the 4th quarter and all 3 of their timeouts remaining, the Swordfish went to work moving into position. While the Eagles' 'D' focused on the pass, the Swordfish run game carried the load until they came to a stop at the Scarborough 37-yard line, up against 4th & 5 with 0:20 left. Not willing to trust **Daniel Carlson** with a 55-yard FG attempt in the driving rain with the game on the line, the swashbuckling **Russ Lemmon** went for it and his bold move paid off with an 11-yard checkdown to Reagor. A timeout was called with 0:01 left before Carlson sent the game into OT with a 44-yard FG.

The Blue Eagles got the ball to start OT. Knowing he was facing a crazed lunatic on the other sideline, Dickinson shouldered Coach Shanahan out of the way and took over the play-calling, determined not to give the ball back to the Fish without scoring. Twice he went for it on 4th down, the first time was a near suicidal 4th & 1 from his team's own 34 and the second a 4th & 3 at the Swordfish 36 that was successful thanks to a pass interference penalty on **William Jackson III**. Scarborough's frenetic push finally came to a halt at the 25-yard line, where a 4th and not-so-easy 6 forced Dickinson to send in Crosby. The steady vet kicked it through from 43 yards and the Blue Eagles were in front 42-39 with 3:40 left in OT.

Swimming upstream against a Blue Eagles' team determined to take away the pass, the Swordfish muscled their way forward with gritty check downs, a couple of nice runs by Chubb and a last check down to **Jordan Akins** for 13 yards to penetrate the Scarborough red zone. That's when the Blue Eagles called timeout with 1:04 left, catching everyone off guard.

Coach Lemmon took out his binoculars and looked across the field at his opponent. He could see the crazed look in **Chris Dickinson**'s eyes – a look he had seen on his own face many times in photos taken of him on the sideline. His opponent had gone all-in – risking postgame condemnation by fans and ridicule in the press in order to not give the Swordfish the ball back in OT without a score to challenge them. Now he was preserving time to score if the worst happened and Sebastian scored a touchdown. Russ could respect that. He saw *himself* on the opposite sideline and the thought popped into his head: *So, this is what it's like to play me!*

And then a strange thing happened. After a checkdown attempt to Taylor from a pressured Cousins was nearly picked off by **Shaq Lawson**, **Russ Lemmon** decided *not* to double-down on audacity and tempt a Fate that seemed to have another outcome for the game in store. He handed the ball off on a sweep and then a draw to Taylor, netting 2 yards before calling timeout with 0:08 on the clock. He had decided to play for the tie!

It would have been a cruel Fate indeed that might have chosen to punish the Sebastian coach for flashing a rare conservative streak. However, Fate was in agreement on this day and allowed Carlson to kick the 31-yard game-tying field goal without a challenge from the slippery ball or a loss of footing on the wet sod.

However, there were still two seconds left to play after the field goal and Lemmon's unhinged opponent was determined to battle to the final gun. From his team's own 25, Dickinson deployed four wide receivers and sent three of them deep. Finding none of them open against a sea of defensive backs playing a deep zone, Burrow checked down as a last resort to Robinson, who was hammered by Jackson and the ball nearly picked off. Instead, it went through his hands and with that the craziest game of Week 5, and certainly the most improbable tie ever, came to an end.

In the post game presser, a philosophical **Russ Lemmon** addressed the media with a composure not often seen after such a tumultuous competition. "They took everything we dished out and gave it back to us in equal measure," he said calmly. "Of course, we want to win every game, but a tie was a fair outcome in this situation."

A much more agitated **Chris Dickinson** took the podium in the middle of a response from his coach, **Kyle Shanahan** to a question about the first 4th down gamble in overtime. He shoved him aside and grabbed the microphone.

"We're not letting them come into our house and steal a game!" he barked, hoarsely. "I'm tired of these bullies coming in here...not respecting our defence...going for fourth down in crazy situations...trying to push us around! To hell with that, I say. Here's a dose of your own medicine, now swallow that!"

It's been a tough start for Dickinson's Blue Eagles as much as it has been an auspicious start for Lemmon's Swordfish, but in Week Five at the Eagle's Nest, two teams going in opposite directions collided and may have altered the trajectory of both. Where these teams go after this no-decision is anyone's guess. For me, I see better days for the Eagles and reality catching up with the free-swimming Swordfish.

AROUND THE EFL

While Sebastian and Scarborough ignored the driving rain and played to a bizarre 42-42 tie, there were plenty of other shockers going on across the league.

At Tillman Field in Cowtown, the Corn Kings surprised the football world with a 31-20 victory over the heavily-favoured Thunder Lizards. It did not take long for Yours Truly's prediction of an undefeated Durham heading into Week 13

to be summarily relegated to status of candidate for one of the top ten Prediction Gaffes of 2021. If the Lizards had waited until Week 7 against Las Vegas to fall off the rails offensively, it would have saved me some face; after all, I *did* concede that if they fell before facing Budapest, it would be a to Pacific Conference opponent, since nobody other than Budapest had the juice to take on Durham in the Atlantic. But, no – the Corn Kings and their annoyingly Leprechaunish quarterback made me look like an idiot – which is *very* hard to do. So, how did they do it? Well, they sort of crept up on the Lizards by hanging in the game with remarkably strong defence. Nothing came easily for **Josh Allen**, while the Durham running game was strangely a non-factor. However, for a while it looked like Durham's offensive ineptitude would simply be a curious side-feature of another Durham win gifted to them by their league-leading turnover machine. The Lizards' secondary picked off **Ryan Fitzpatrick** 3 times, the first one setting up an easy TD pass to **Curtis Samuel** and the third going in directly for the score on **Tyrann Mathieu**'s late 3rd quarter pick-six. That play put Durham up 20-17 and, at the time, appeared to give them irreversible momentum. However, the Corn King defence did not fold and, eventually, Fitzpatrick stitched together an improbable drive that featured a 14-yard jet sweep by rookie **Kadarius Toney**, a season-high 20-yard run by the rickety **Todd Gurley**, and an audacious 24-yard TD pass to **Mo Alie-Cox** on 3rd and long into the teeth of Durham's elite secondary. As quasi-miraculous as the Corn King effort had been to that point, their effort appeared about to be undone by the one impressive Durham drive of the day: a 96-yard monster from their own 3-yard line to the Cowtown 1-yard line, where they faced 3rd & goal with 0:57 left. A holding penalty on **Darren Waller** on a no-gain pushed them back to the 11. That is where **TJ Watt**, for the second week in a row, made a transformative play late in the game. The Corn King star strip-sacked Allen, and **Andrew Van Ginkel** picked up the loose ball and ran it back 79 yards for a touchdown, sealing the amazing victory. I know the Lizards will rebound from this setback. But this win for the Corn Kings could carry them a long way.

At Coyote Field in Marietta, GA, the Derailers kept the home team from getting back on track by grinding them down by the score of 24-20. After playing the "analytics" game for the first quarter-and-a-half and falling behind 14-0 as a result of three missed 4th down converts, the Derailers returned to a more conventional appraisal of their 4th down risk-reward analysis and roared back to knock off the team that had, just two weeks ago, been declared the odds-on favourite to win the division. **Lamar Jackson** was again at the center of the win, with 2 TD passes and 1 rushing TD, but his sidekick in victory on this occasion was **Devontae Booker**, who rushed for 84 yards on 19 carries. The Derailers are now 3-0 when a running back has more carries than Lamar and 0-2 when Lamar has the most carries. Coincidence?

At **TERRORDOME** in Seattle, **Royce Freeman** plunged across the goal line from 1-yard out with 12 mins left in the 4th quarter and the Violators held on for a closer-than-expected 24-21 win over Seattle. The Pilots started **Trey Lance** and stuck with him throughout the game, making it the first Seattle game this year without a substitution at QB. The rookie had a respectable showing, rushing for 72 yards on 16 carries and completing 16 of 21 pass attempts for 146 yards and a TD. However, his first quarter fumble led to Virden's first points and a red zone interception at the Virden 1-yard line took easy points off the board, allowing the Violators to escape the wrath of their increasingly frustrated fans for a week.

At the Assassin's Den in Las Vegas, the confident homies stumbled early but regained their footing in the 3rd quarter and went on to subdue the pesky Crusaders, 20-3. A strong showing from the Crusaders' defence led to the teams being tied 3-3 at half time. On Vegas' first play of the 2nd half, **Justin Herbert** connected on a short slant to **Jerry Jeudy** for 65 yards, but a determined Crusader 'D' held them to a field goal. The game had all the makings of an impending upset, but the Crusaders are so exceptionally bad offensively and the Assassin so good defensively, that it was just a matter of time before the Vegas offence got into the end zone and put the game away. On the plus side, the Pegs beat the 18-point spread.

At Camelot in York, the Excaliburs executed the Pink Panthers with alarming ease, 32-13. This was a game where **Tom Brady** made the opponent pay for focusing on **Derrick Henry**, as the veteran passed for 291 yards on just 18 completions, completing bombs of 84 yards to **Corey Davis** and 61 yards and a TD to **Mike Williams** along with almost everything else he put in the air. As for The King, he still found the end zone twice, from short distances, to finish off the humiliation of the Men in Pink. Oshawa coach, **Scott Dennis** is now officially desperate.

At Patriot Place in Charleswood, the Patriots followed up their 31-28 win over Oshawa in Week Four with a 31-28 win over Conference rival, Iowa City in Week Five. This game was not as close as the score indicates, although it did require an early rebound by the home team in response to an early challenge from the visitors. The Cubs jumped out to a 14-0 lead on two 1st quarter touchdown drives, the second aided abetted by a failed 4th & 2 near midfield by the Pats. However, the miscalculation would not prove ultimately fatal. **DeShaun Watson** went on a mid-game roll, posting 24 consecutive points before the Cubs broke the streak with a 4th quarter TD pass to **Cole Beasley**. **JK Dobbins** then virtually iced the game with 1:47 left, rushing for a 13-yard TD. Russell Wilson found Beasley in the end zone again with 0:19 left but it was not enough. Watson had another strong outing, ending with 274 yards and 3 TD passes. The addition of slants and crosses into the Pats'

passing attack has worked wonders. Charleswood rises to 4-1 while the Cubs fall to 2-3. Nobody is writing off **Deron Redding**'s crew yet, but "crunch time" is fast approaching.

At Stone Pony Shore in New Jersey, **Matt Stafford** threw for 414 yards and 2 TDs and **Chris Boswell** kicked 3 field goals, including a 40-yarder as time expired in overtime, to lift the Wrecking Balls over the star-crossed Bombers, 30-27. Both teams had 20-point scoring streaks, but New Jersey's came last and ended up being the difference. This was another one of those games where it was obvious that the Wrecking Balls got away from their game plan early and decided to go all-air and damn the torpedoes. Normally, I am critical of **Sean McDermott**'s (wink-wink, **JC Cohen**'s) impatience with the run game but on this day, I would have done the same thing after watching **David Montgomery** run into his own blockers on more than one occasion when holes were open. Any no.1 running back who can't find a crease against the Bombers deserve to be sidelined in favour of one of the league's strongest arms.

At Kelly-Burke Field in Erieau the Spartans failed to score a touchdown but still escaped with a 15-14 win over the Cadillac on the strength of five **Greg Zuerlein** field goals. One has to feel for the Caddies in this one: their offence scored the game's only touchdowns – both on sustained 75-yard drives – and their defence held off a Spartans' offence that had put up 28 points on the Coyotes the week before and appeared to be finally getting into rhythm, yet they still lost. Well, I guess that's what happens when a team takes dumb penalties and turns the ball over twice without taking it away. The Cadillac remain mired in failure and it is hard to see the team surviving another year in the wasteland of rural southwestern Ontario.

At The Big House in Chino, the Convicts shrugged off a first-series touchdown by the Triumph and put-up 21 unanswered points to prevail easily, 24-7. The first quarter was consumed by two long drives, one by each team, with Twin Cities ending their opening 1st quarter possession in the 2nd quarter with a TD pass from **Mitch Trubisky** to **Adam Trautman** to take a 7-3 lead. Both teams then turned the ball over on downs near mid-field, a common theme through five weeks of EFL action. Chino took advantage of the Triumph miscue with a 5-play, 58-yard drive that ended with **Teddy Bridgewater** finding **Tim Patrick** down the seam for a 20-yard TD. There was no real game after that. Bridgewater's 23-yard TD pass to **Michael Gallup** gained separation and the Convicts locked down the Trubisky Triumph after that to rise to 4-1.

At Heinz Field in Pittsburgh, Brooklin came back from a 14-7 half time deficit to knock off the Pennsylvania Gladiators, 31-24. **Derek Carr** simply out-dueled **Big Ben**, throwing for 357 yards and 2 TDs with just 1 interception, while his counterpart in black and gold managed just 246 yards, 1 touchdown and 2 interceptions. **James Robinson** was the star for the losers, rushing for 105 yards and 2 TDs, but in a mid-grade aerial shootout, it was not enough. Not that I think it will make a difference in the playoff picture, but the Hawks' Carr is one of those unsung quarterbacks who just gets the job done, even in lousy situations like the one he finds himself in this year.

And finally, at Ferenc-Liszt International Airport Stadium in Budapest, the North Stars withstood a 'Possum Challenge' from the Irish and went on to post their fifth victory of the season, 17-7. Another COVID-19 outbreak in the East Elmhurst ranks kept them from fielding their best unit on the road against arguably the best team in the league, but for some curious reason, **Archbishop Thomas Molloy**'s acolytes kept the Faith and put up a stiff fight that, when we look back on this game later in the year, may be the opening salvo in an insolent challenge to the pecking order in the Atlantic Conference. The Irish can only dream. However, it was clear that the North Stars were not really "up" for this game offensively and that the Irish defence wanted to send a message that it can be an X-factor in a more meaningful match-up down the road. Ultimately, the Irish pretension to contention may be merely noise. But it could be an noise that draws a lot of attention.



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Jimmy's WEEK SIX PICKS

NEW JERSEY @ SEATTLE (line – WRECKING BALLS by 1)

INJURIES: New Jersey – None; Seattle – None.

The Wrecking Balls are starting to break some old bad habits that have plagued them late in games. Two weeks ago, they held off their opponent in the 4th quarter. Last week they mounted a comeback in the 4th to eventually win the game in overtime. They are now on a bit of a roll and find themselves in a three-way tie for first. The Pilots dropped their fifth straight last week but did not look overmatched by a superior Virden team. Trey Lance started and, more importantly, finished. It was a mixed bag performance by the rookie but he produced three touchdowns and the offence looked stable. Seattle was supposed to be better than their current winless record and it feels like they are “due.” It also feels as if New Jersey is finding the ‘Dr. Jekyll’ side of its identity and holding on to it. For the Pilots to get off the schneid they’ll need some magic from Khalil Mack-led defence. Not this week. **PICK: NEW JERSEY**

BUFFALO @ IOWA CITY (line – DERAILERS by 1)

INJURIES: Buffalo – Jayon Brown (OUT), Jaquiski Tartt (OUT); Iowa City – None.

Due to the scheduling formula, the Cubs have never faced the Derailers under their new management. One has to go back to 2017 when they were in Mohave to find the last match-up between these franchises. So, it will be interesting to watch one of the league’s most erratic mavericks in Buffalo compete against one of the most conservative coaches in the league history in Iowa. Even more interesting will be watching the league’s two most improvisational QBs going at each other. Despite shooting himself in the foot with turnovers on downs early in last week’s game versus the Coyotes, the Derailers got back on track and stayed above 500 with a win. Their win/lose/one pattern so far has them on schedule for a loss here against a Cubs team whose lose one/win one pattern has them due for a win. Well, I guess there is not much more to say then: Prudence shall prevail over Recklessness. **PICK: IOWA CITY**

CHINO @ COBB COUNTY (line – CONVICTS by 3)

INJURIES: Chino – AJ Bouye (OUT), Christian McCaffrey (OUT), Lorenzo Carter (OUT), Dak Prescott (OUT), Mike Purcell (OUT); Cobb County – None.

The Vegas gurus can be a fickle bunch. Three weeks ago, the Coyotes were darlings of the oddsmakers. Now, after two straight losses, they are underdogs in their own park against a back-up quarterback, backed-up by a suspicious defence. Teddy Bridgewater is no ordinary back-up, of course, but he is no Dak and, in my view, Chino needs a QB of Dak’s calibre to stand a chance against a Cobb County squad that will be supremely focused now that they feel the swish of the Wrecking Balls behind them in the standings. The Coyotes’ defence gets a pass for failing to contain Lamar last week. However, the same cannot be given to the offence. It used last year’s formula against Buffalo but Ryan Tannehill failed to hold up his end, completing less than 50% of his passes and failing to throw a TD. Fortunately for him, the Chino ‘D’ offers a “feel good” opportunity to get back on track. **PICK: COBB COUNTY**

LAS VEGAS @ BRUXELLES (line – ASSASSINS by 9)

INJURIES: Las Vegas – None; Bruxelles – Isaiah Wynn (OUT).

The Assassins failed to cover a big line against the woeful Crusaders last week and it appears as if the Sand Sages are setting them up again here, giving them near double-digits on the road against a Drew Brees-led team in Bruxelles. Are the Bombers disappointing this year? The answer is “yes.” Are they pushovers? The answer is “no,” even if their 4th quarter collapse against New Jersey last week and their overall defensive incompetence suggests otherwise. They disappointed me last week (as did almost every team I picked in my worst week in over 14 years) but a team that over the years has habitually surprised is unlikely to lay an egg two weeks in a row.

The Assassins have the no.1 ranked defence in efficiency and points allowed. This is due partly to them being good and partly to having faced some weak offences. When Brees is on, however, he can penetrate any defence. Expect him to be “on.” **PICK: BRUXELLES**

VIRDEN @ TWIN CITIES (line – TRIUMPH by 3)

INJURIES: Virden – Anthony Barr (OUT), Dee Ford (OUT), Malik Hooker (OUT), Lane Johnson (OUT), Kelechi Osemele (OUT), Danny Shelton (OUT), Solomon Thomas (OUT), Oshane Ximines (OUT); **Twin Cities** – Kenny Golladay (OUT), Avonte Maddox (OUT).

The situation might be worse in Virden than first thought and this line confirms that the wagering world agrees. Still, the Triumph are coming off a lacklustre loss to the Convicts where fans could see the needle falling in real time on the fuel gauge of the Mitch Trubisky era. Those fans are begging for the Redeemer and, with each mediocre performance by the team’s last saviour, the probability increases that “next week” will be the moment we’ve all been waiting for. The only certainty is that Guy Williams will not announce the change in advance and surrender his competitive edge – not that it exists for a rookie with no pro tape, but it’s the principle. This makes predicting the Triumph pretty tough. Better to focus on what we know, which is that Virden is in disarray and beset by injuries. They won last week but made a winless team look not bad in the process. Maybe Vegas knows what it’s talking about! **PICK: TWIN CITIES**

PEG CITY @ CHARLESWOOD (line – PATRIOTS by 10)

INJURIES: Peg City – Josh Allen (OUT), Jonathan Bullard (OUT), Devin Bush (OUT), Tarik Cohen (OUT), Chandler Jones (OUT), Taylor Rapp (OUT), Jalen Thompson (OUT). **Charleswood** – Laremy Tunsil (PROBABLE), Ronnie Stanley (OUT), Desmond Trufant (OUT).

The last two weeks have made the Pats’ Week 3 loss to the Coyotes look like an anomaly. Their win over the Cubs was a good sign that they are no longer on auto-pilot offensively and that DeShaun Watson is finally getting used to having more than two options in the passing game. This week will be a test of their ability to stay focused and resist laziness against a team that is hard to take seriously when looking at their dearth of offensive talent and the extent of injuries on defence. The Crusaders biggest weapon at the moment is their unthreatening nature, which causes teams to let up long enough for the Pegs to get on the scoreboard at least once before the other team ends the party – just ask the Assassins about that. No good reason to prolong this summary. **PICK: CHARLESWOOD**

ERIEAU @ DURHAM (line – THUNDER LIZARDS by 14)

INJURIES: Erieau – Dre’Mont Jones (OUT), Brian Poole (OUT), Tyron Smith (OUT); **Durham** – David DeCastro (OUT), Rashaad Penny (OUT);

Durham got an unexpected wake-up call from the Corn Kings in a loss last week that saw Josh Allen struggle with accuracy and ball security. The setback will only come back to haunt them, however, if they start to experience similar difficulties against other beatable teams, such as the Cadillac. Erieau dropped their fourth in a row last week in a game that saw them improve offensive output at the cost of two critical turnovers. On the plus side, their defence played well and they are pinning their hopes on that happening again this week. They have no other choice. Conventional wisdom once said that a stronger run game would kickstart the Caddies’ offence. As a team they average 4.8 yards per carry, a deceptive improvement as most of the big plays have come on Kyler Murray scrambles. As long as the parts of the Erieau offence around Kyler are out of synch, it will be Kyler or bust. I’ll take Allen in a cage match. **PICK: DURHAM**

GEORGIA @ COWTOWN (line – CORN KINGS by 7)

INJURIES: Georgia – Melvin Ingram III (OUT); **Cowtown** – Jimmy Garoppolo (OUT), Eric Saubert (OUT).

We would be talking up James Robinson as a dark horse MVP candidate if he was not toiling in obscurity on the Gladiators. The Georgia running back is single-handedly turning Big Ben’s return into a comeback player success story. Now, if only the Glads could get more wins to back it up. This game would have been marked as “winnable” on the Glads’ calendar before the Corn Kings upended the power rankings with a dramatic upset of powerhouse Durham. Cowtown can no longer be dismissed as a marginal playoff contender on the decline. How much of last week’s win was real and how much a product of division rivalry-induced adrenaline exploiting Josh Allen choking is not clear. We’ll know more after we see whether Cowtown can hold off Georgia’s usual stiff challenge. **PICK: GEORGIA**

SEBASTIAN @ OSHAWA (line – SWORDFISH by 5)

INJURIES: Sebastian – Jadeveon Clowney (OUT), Bobby Massie (OUT); **Oshawa** – Julian Edelman (OUT), Eric Kendricks (OUT), K’Waun Williams (OUT).

The Pink Panthers have sunk from being the favourite to win the South to being the favourite to finish last in the division and out of the playoffs. It is probably past the do-or-die point for their playoff hopes but because their divisional competition is equally volatile, I will give them the benefit of the doubt and declare this a must-win game. Unfortunately for Oshawa, they face a Swordfish team that pulls no punches in either direction and has so far have landed more blows on their opponents than on themselves. Last week’s wacky tie versus

the Blue Eagles is just one example of strange things happening when the Swordfish are on the field. The match-ups on paper favour the home team and with a desperate mindset, the Pink Panthers will give it all they have. Expect it to be just enough. **PICK: OSHAWA**

SCARBOROUGH @ EAST ELMHURST (line – IRISH by 7)

INJURIES: Scarborough – Nick Bosa (OUT), Landon Collins (OUT), DeSean Jackson (OUT), Zack Martin (OUT); East Elmhurst – None.

Last week COVID-19 took its toll on the Irish for the second time this year but the team still held its own on the road in a close loss to the Budapest behemoth. With the team seemingly out of the COVID woods this week, expect to see the first iteration of the new-and-improved, post-trade deadline Irish. They are defending their turf against the shambolic Blue Eagles, who are coming off a free-for-all tie against the Fish last week. Scarborough has not made it into a rhythm yet and injuries to Zack Martin, Nick Bosa and Landon Collins are bound to have as much of a psychological effect as a physical one. It will fall on Joe Burrow to carry the team but he will be working behind a line riddled with holes against an upgraded and dangerous pass rush and a secondary manned by a freelancing menace named Jalen Ramsey. On the road against a confident Irish team don't expect Burrow to rise to the occasion. **PICK: EAST ELMHURST**

BUDAPEST @ YORK (line – NORTH STARS by 4)

INJURIES: Budapest – None; York – Landon Dickerson (PROBABLE), Cole Holcomb (OUT).

Very few, if any analysts predicted that York would be playing for a piece of first place in the Coastal division when they first faced Budapest. Yet, here they are, and looking dangerous to boot after forcefully dispatching every team they have faced so far except Durham. This too could be a "Durham" type of game for York, as Budapest is in the same elite league as the Lizards. Yes, they looked sluggish against the disease-ridden Irish last week, but that was more the result of complacency than diminished capacity. York will be playing up at home, but they have a small margin of error to pull off an upset. As usual, the North Stars are healthy, having a knack for resting their players at the perfect moment. It may be tough going for a half, but the Stars will eventually pull away. **PICK: BUDAPEST**

PICKERING @ BROOKLIN (line – HAWKS by 3)

INJURIES: Pickering – Darqueze Dennard (OUT), Richie Incognito (OUT); Brooklin – Austin Ekeler (OUT), Taylor Lewan (OUT), Xavier McKinney (OUT), Leighton Vander Esch (OUT).

Just as pundits were writing them off, the Hawks bounce back with three gritty performances in a row, including a comeback against an underrated Georgia team last week. In that they are similar to the Spartans, who have won two in a row while rebounding from an 0-3 start. Last week they couldn't find the end zone against Erieau but scratched out a win anyway with a balanced, if modest attack and a defence that at one point had forced 6 punts and a fumble in 7 straight Erieau possessions. They will have to show the same grit but also find the end zone this week against a Hawks team that has rediscovered DeAndre Hopkins. While Brooklin is unlikely to back off trying to get the ball to their top threat, the presence of Xavien Howard on the opposite side will be pivotal. **PICK: PICKERING**



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FROM THE EFL ARCHIVES – In Week Five of the 2015 EFL season, the Corn Kings broke their own league record with a fourth straight overtime game, falling 26-20 to their hated rival in Durham. *Mike Davis* punched the ball in from 1-yard on Durham's first possession of overtime to win it. Davis finished the game with 2 TD runs of 1-yard each, but officially no yards gained on the stat sheet, as a 2-yard loss on a carry in the 4th quarter negated his scoring gains. What an odd line: 3 carries, 0 yards, 2 TDs.

Week Five was also the long-awaited debut of EFL Asia. The league launched to mixed reviews as broken plays

and poor officiating melded with fan confusion to create a comedic start to the EFL's first attempt to gain a foothold in the world's most densely-populated region. For the record: the Taipei Sharks (a Toronto Wolverines affiliate) led by QB, *Mitch Souza* beat the Pyongyang Sun, 21-16; while the Beijing Red Dragons (a New Jersey Wrecking Balls affiliate) out-scored the Seoul Calm (an Erieau Cadillac affiliate) by the score of 38-31. In favour of the league was the recognition from mainstream pundits that the players were giving it their all, even if they weren't very good.

In the EFL, apart from the Cowtown-Durham OT showdown, the week was not particularly competitive. For a moment, the EFL took notice of the Swordfish leading the Mustangs 20-17 at halftime, but turned the dial when the Mustangs roared back in the 2nd half to submerge Sebastian 44-27. Aurora showed vulnerability but was still the team to beat.

Ben Roethlisberger won Offensive Player of the Week for his 4-touchdown performance in an important divisional win over Scarborough, 38-17.

Defensive Player of the Week honours fell to *Jurrell Casey* of the Triumph, who bedeviled *Cam Newton* with 4 sacks, 2 pressures and 1 TFL in a 28-14 win over the Convicts.