
A Passing Fantasy Issue 142

NFLBP Player Newsletter 2005 Week Seven

ed Robert Crowther

Thanks to Darren and Chris for their contributions this time, apologies for Apple who's contribution last time I completely forgot – it is included this issue. The address for contributions is:

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<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/gameplan>

WEEK SIX REVIEW

Darren Birtchnell

In the first round of inter-conference games the bragging rights were shared, with each conference winning 6 games. There were some interesting results though.....

New England were again solid if not spectacular on offense as they won their 5th straight game. Detroit didn't get anything going until the 4th quarter and by then it was too little too late. The Jets stayed hot on the Pats heels with an easy looking win at home to Chicago. They look to have had the advantage in every area so the Bears can have no complaints. Turnovers appear to have been the difference in the Florida derby, as Tampa forced 5 in beating the Dolphins. Green Bay struggled past Buffalo, only coming out on top thanks to 11 points in the 4th quarter. The Pack haven't hit their stride yet, but it's surely only a matter of time. The Browns bad start to the season continued as St Louis gave them a right tonking. And they face another tough game this week vs. the in-form Chiefs. This is starting to sound like a broken record, isn't it?! Both QB's had good games in the 49ers - Ravens matchup, but Baltimore also got it done on the ground and forced a couple of turnovers into the bargain. Carolina continued their good start with a hard-fought win over Cincinnati. The key play for Carolina was an

interception at their own 1yd line, if the Bengals score a TD instead it might have been very different. New Orleans made short work of Tennessee, scoring 28 points in the 1st quarter. The Titans only TD came on a kick return and they have now lost 24 straight games. 0-16 anyone? Oakland were far too good for Washington, after a tight 1st quarter they were able to pull away and win comfortably. Kansas City kept pace with Oakland with another good win, although it took them until the 2nd half to get going. The Giants defense had a good game against Seattle, holding them under 50% completions and also returning an interception for 6. Denver joined the Saints, Eagles and Giants in returning an interception all the way, but even without that score they would have been too strong for Dallas.

PERFORMANCES OF THE WEEK

Offensive performance of the week goes to Baltimore for an excellent all round showing. Defensive performance of the week goes to Carolina for keeping the dangerous Bengals out of the endzone. There were a number of challengers for the special teams award, with three kick return touchdowns, but I'm giving it to Washington since they also managed a respectable punt return average.

TAMPA BAY BULLSHIT

Apple

At week 5 Troy & myself would have taken 4-1 easily but I must say we have been a little fortunate with some results. Obviously the start of the season was going to be crucial as we had so much to do and very little time to do it all, week 4 was unbelievable as we played the Giants and won the game with a last gasp 47 yarder as time expired, yep you guessed it DL vs WC!!! Now if that had happened to me I might have just thrown in the towel. I really felt for the Giants as they deserved to at least have gone to OT.

We have had some luck recently, which seems to be on the increase with all my teams in

gameplan and is extremely frustrating, only last week I had 5 games and in 3 of them my opponents had 3 punt recoveries! How long was it before I last saw one???

In week 5 we played Goz and Troy's defence was superb, he has gelled this unit together with a few extra players to boost squad strength's in areas where we were weakish and it has paid dividends. We have now spent all our LP's but still have a couple of players surplus to requirements when the form reaches a level at which can ditch them to increase our strength's in other areas.

This week sees me dump the RB and next week I will be able to train an O player to try to keep the O up to the standards that the D are currently posting.

I know Troy said that he would accept a 5-3 record by week 8 but we have rode our luck a little and i would like a 6-2 minimum now and as every week passes we are getting our squad in the right place, training in the right areas & the overall look of the team is starting to take on a much more sinister feel, cue a defeat week 6 :)

CAROLINA THOUGHTS

Chris Stones

The season is progressing quite nicely for my Panthers, up to 5-1 and if I'm being honest I really didn't think we'd have a start as good as that. But I'll certainly take it, although there have been a couple of close ones recently. Having squeezed past the rejuvenated Saints, who I expect to start having a big impact on events in the AFC West in the near future, we then played Dazza B's unbeaten Bengals last week. Well we took that unbeaten tag off Cincy with a great, if tightly fought win.

A big play near the end of the second quarter saw the Bengals threatening my endzone, only for us to intercept a pass and set-up a drive resulting in a field goal. That was a lucky break and a 10 point swing which would have obviously have had a big affect on the game. However, we did a good job in controlling the clock well and kept the ball for over 10 minutes more than Cincy, which I think was the key to the win.

Elsewhere the Bucs are looking ominous in the

NFC Central as they continue to sort their roster out, and the Rams keep marching on with a very impressive win. There's already a big points difference gap between us which is worth almost an extra win for them. In the AFC 4 teams have 5 wins, so it's a wide open looking conference at the moment.

ORATION FROM OAKLAND

Very glad to get back on track this week following our defeat in Kansas City. I was a bit worried in the first quarter but our defense got a grip in the second quarter and it wasn't long before the offense got it together – we scored on three consecutive drives to open the second half, including one where the Redskins had the ball. Last week's loss was a disappointment, I felt we missed a lot of opportunities – our first three times inside the KC 35 resulted in a punt, a fumble and a missed field goal. Add to that two drives which started in good field position and ended almost immediately in turnovers and it seems, with a bit more luck, we could have quite easily managed the four touchdowns we'd have needed for victory.

Looking forward I'm still expecting the defense to tail off a bit towards the end of the year because of all the reductions – we could actually do with losing another game or two before week eleven to help sort that out, though the offense could be doing better than twelfth in the league I think (and my suspicions could be confirmed this week by the new version of the software!).

GAMEPLAN – NEW VERSION

We should all be playing under a new version of Gameplan this week. Most of the revisions affect the offseason turns but there is a rather nice addition to the roster sheet – you now get details of how your roster compares with the league average and also how your strengths compare with the 'opposing' skill average (so how OPS compares to DPS for example). It won't help you prepare for any specific opponent but might help you understand the difference in balance between leagues.

I've played in a couple of experimental leagues run by Pete to get a feel for these new developments and I think you'll all really like

the offseason changes. The conditional waiver action is very useful, and the step bonus rules result in some interesting players – I had a 4* TE (extra OQB) and a 5* LB (double DRO) in one league. It's now perhaps a bit more worthwhile to keep rookies on your roster rather than concentrate on the veteran talent.

PREDICTIONS COMPETITION

Darren Birtchnell

We have a new player in the competition, as Apple has joined the fray. But his predictions weren't in the last newsie, which makes me think he waited until after the games to make his predictions, especially when you see his score.... :o)

If anyone else wants to join in, now is the time, as you need to predict 8 weeks to be in with a chance of winning some turn credits. And in case you missed it last week, we have now decided how to award the turn credits at the end of the season. The winner will get 6 credits, second place will get 3 and third place will get 1.

Here are last week's scores then:

Apple 43
Peter Kneil 40
Martyn Williams 32
Dave Pinder 29
Darren Birtchnell 28

So the standings now look like this:

Apple 43 avg (1 wk)
Chris Stones 37.3 (3)
Dave Pinder 31.7 (3)
Darren Birtchnell 30.5 (6)
Martyn Williams 30 (4)
Peter Kneil 26.3 (6)
Rob Crowther 24.8 (4)

WEEK SEVEN PREVIEW

Patriots at Broncos – Denver have been surprisingly effective so far this season, but I think it might all start to go sour for them from here on. Patriots to win rather comfortably, despite their recent inconsistency. PATRIOTS BY 17

Jets at Seahawks – Can't see Seattle getting in the way of New York's push for the

playoffs. JETS BY 21

Dolphins at Titans – So far Tennessee have been the worst team in the league, Miami have performed respectably throughout a difficult schedule and should run out easy victors. DOLPHINS BY 21

Bills at Bengals – Cincinnati lost out last week for the first time, but Buffalo, despite a competent defense, are not even close to the level of the Panthers. BENGALS BY 14

Browns at Chiefs – Cleveland are enduring a rough season and it seems unlikely to get any better here. The Browns will struggle to score on a stingy KC defense. CHIEFS BY 10

Ravens at Raiders – Baltimore looked very good on offense last week, Oakland will be hoping they can force a few turnovers.

Redskins at Saints – The Washington offense is below average and, knowing the importance Coach Briggs places on defense, I can see this being a shutout. SAINTS BY 14

Eagles at Panthers – Carolina are looking like a major contender in the NFC this season, Philly's trips to the championship game are looking like a distant memory right now. PANTHERS BY 10

Giants at Packers – Both teams are 3-3, but Green Bay have improved over recent weeks and I think they'll have the edge at home. PACKERS BY 7

Cowboys at Bucs – With the way Tampa have been playing recently they should have no trouble with Dallas. BUCS BY 20

Lions at 49ers – The San Francisco defense has struggled somewhat this year but I think they're a better team than their 1-5 record suggests. Detroit are always capable of a surprise but I don't expect them to win here. 49ERS BY 7

Bears at Rams – Chicago are on a two game

losing streak, it would be a major shock if that didn't get extended to three games here. St Louis have scored more points and conceded less than any team in the NFC. RAMS BY 17

PREDICTIONS

Peter Kneil: Patriots by 17, Jets by 24, Dolphins by 25, Bengals by 24, Chiefs by 21, Ravens by 3 (No, I haven't forgotten that Playoff defeat!), Saints by 10, Panthers by 21, Giants by 3, Buccs by 24, 49ers by 7, Rams by 24

Darren Birtchnell: Patriots by 16, Jets by 13, Dolphins by 14, Bengals by 14, Chiefs by 10, Raiders by 6, Saints by 6, Panthers by 13, Packers by 3, Buccs by 21, 49ers by 5, Rams by 24

Martyn Williams: Patriots by 21, Jets by 13, Dolphins by 7, Bengals by 17, Chiefs by 20, Raiders by 10, Saints by 7, Panthers by 13, Packers by 3, Buccs by 28, 49ers by 3, Rams by 17

Chris Stones: Patriots by 14, Jets by 10, Dolphins by 4, Bengals by 20, Chiefs by 17, Raiders by 13, Saints by 10, Panthers by 6, Packers by 7, Buccs by 20, 49ers by 3, Rams by 17

LEAGUE HISTORY

With all the new coaches in the league I thought I might enlighten you all with some league history. This week previous winners of the NFLBP superbowl (which I've done from memory, so apologies in advance if I remembered wrong!):

1996 – 49ers (defeated Raiders)
1997 – Packers (defeated Raiders)
1998 – Packers (defeated Bengals)
1999 – Bengals (defeated Packers)
2000 – Panthers (defeated Bengals)
2001 – Raiders (defeated Rams)
2002 – Rams (defeated Patriots)
2003 – Rams (defeated Patriots)
2004 – Rams (defeated Raiders)