

# YAKETY YAK TRASH

A big weekend of NFL football this week, with great games on Saturday, Sunday and Monday night. Soak it in!

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## THE BLACK HOLE

Time is closing on the joy that is the Black Hole in Oakland. The NFL will not be the same without it.

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## NCAA CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIP WEEKEND TRASH TALK

In the Pros and Joes discussion, this weekend features the Joes. It is the conference championship weekend, and the final action before the Final Football Four are selected. So, let's start there.

Utah was well on its way to a potential Championship final four appearance for the Pac-12. Nope. The Oregon Quackers made the Utes Duck. Bigly. Oregon undoubtedly goes to the Rose Bowl, and who knows about Utah. Their extremely good defense was shredded by the Ducks. Ouch. There are five more critical games on the schedule today, and Cincinnati and Memphis for the AAC is the lesser of them, though it may well be a fantastic game. It is in Memphis at Liberty Bowl stadium, so I will roll with the Tigers at their home.

With the Utah fail, that means Baylor versus Oklahoma (shoutout to our departed friend

Freepatriot, who loved the Sooners), may well mean a final four berth. It is a neutral site. Something smells of a Baylor upset, but the Sooners are now coached by Line Riley as opposed to Bob Stoops, so I don't think so. Sooners. The BIG Championship is played in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. Would be a fantastic story if Wisconsin could beat the Bucks, but that is a bad bet. Virginia may get Cavalier and upset Trevor Lawrence and Clemson, but it would be shocking. Clemson and Lawrence started a little slow this year, but are undefeated and are averaging 50 points a game since mid-October.

That leaves the big one, i.e. the SEC championship, played in HotLanta. Georgia, the current number 4, versus the Tigers of LSU, the current number 2. Without much question the most anticipated game of the day. Frankly, it is hard to see how Ohio State ever jumped above LSU, in fact by the record as of now, it is a joke. LSU has the likely Heisman winner, Joe Burrow, at QB, and he has been lighting people up. Georgia is really good. The defenses are both great, but the offenses, and specifically the QB's will likely determine this. Burrow just looks a lot better than Jake Fromm, I'll take the Bayou Tigers.

So that leaves the Pros. Da Bears already beat the Cowboys, which likely makes Scribe smile wildly. Dallas just does not look good, and Garrett has to be gone at the end of the season. Baltimore is at Buffalo, and the Ravens seem a good bet. But every time people write the Wagon Circlers off this year, they surprise. I'll take Jackson and the Ravens, but don't sleep on the Buffalo defense, they might contain him. Would not be surprised if the Broncos upset the Texans in Houston, but that is also not a good bet. The Steelers are here at the Cardinals. The Cards are improving, but still not that good. Duck Duck should go go against them, even in the Bird's Nest. The Rams are resurgent, and are hosting the Squawks, and that could be a great game.

There are two truly great games. The first is the Chiefs of KC visiting Foxborough to see Bill Belichick and the boys. Frankly, the Pats offense has looked old and bad lately, and are putting so much pressure on their excellent defense that the D is starting to falter. My bet is that Pat Mahomes engineers more points than Brady, and that is that. The second is Niners at Saints. Both teams are 10-2, and this game is almost certainly for home field in the NFC. Wow, this should be a game! Stars everywhere. Jimmy G is not up to Drew Brees' level yet, but he has established himself as a frontline QB in the NFL, and his tight end, George Kittle is the new Gronk. On offense, the nod has to go to Brees with Michael Thomas and Alvin Kamara. The SF defense, with rookie stud Nick Bosa and veteran Arik Armstead up front, is really good though. The Saints are hosting in the Superdome, and for that reason only, they get the call. Who dat?

Our colleague Peter has suggested this article on ESPN be discussed. It involves traumatic brain injury, more commonly known as CTE, but this time in hockey players.

A Minnesota judge on Wednesday ordered that a former member of the "Miracle on Ice" U.S. Olympic team should be committed to a secure treatment facility, saying the hockey star is mentally ill and dangerous.

Mark Pavelich, 61, of Lutsen, was charged with felony assault in August for allegedly beating a friend with a metal pole, breaking several bones.

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According to Cuzzo's order, one psychologist found Pavelich had delusions and paranoia, including a delusion that those closest to him were trying to poison him. Another psychologist found he suffered from a mild neurocognitive disorder due to traumatic brain injury, likely related to repeated head injuries.

Pavelich's family members have said they believe he suffers from CTE, or chronic traumatic encephalopathy, after repeated concussions from his time in the NHL. They said they started seeing changes in him a few years ago and he has refused help.

As sad as this is, it is really important. It is also something that is starting to be covered. One of the ones who has been on this story from the start is Sheila Dingus, who runs a great spot known as Advocacy For Fairness In Sports. Here is some of her writings on the NHL concussion litigation.

Music today by Pink Floyd. Enjoy the weekend folks.

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## **TURKEY BOWL TRASH TALK**

Think I've recounted this in some previous year, but bmaaz the younger and friends used to have a yearly Turkey Bowl football game on Thanksgiving mornings. Always at one or another local high school field. They were theoretically flag games, but the contact was full and real. And the alcohol was flowing because, well, it was necessary to cover the hangover from Thanksgiving Eve. People got hurt. If you left only a little bloodied, it was a very good day. I kind of miss those days, but not that much. The holiday is much less stressful piloting a comfy couch with a fire and big screen TeeVee.

There are three NFL games today. The stinker is, obviously, the Bears at the Lions. The Bears are just miserable and still have to think, every week, about the quarterbacks they didn't take because they took Trubisky. Every week. The Lions have Matt Stafford, who is actually a very

good QB who might well have championships if he had spent his career on a better team. But Matt Stafford ain't walking through that door today, he is out. The Kittes don't even have Jeff Driskel, and will start an undrafted scrub named David Blough. In fairness, the Lions have kept him around all year, and he had a pretty good career at Purdue. There are some pretty good former Purdue QBs over time, think Drew Brees, Bob Griese, Len Dawson etc. All Hall Of Famers, or in Brees' case, soon to be. So the Kittes have a shot if Blough catches fire, and Detroit might as well let him rip, because they really don't have anything to lose.

Second up is Buffalo at Dallas. Buffalo, at 8-3, has the far better record. Josh Allen is maturing and improving, especially as the Bills have been running their offense up tempo lately, but nobody will mistake him for Jim Kelly anytime soon. Dak Prescott has had himself a year so far, though not against the Pats. Both teams have good defense. I expect the 'Boys will win this, but it will be good to see how the Wagon Circlers play against real competition.

Speaking of Drew Brees, the last course on the menu today is Nawlins at HotLanta. The Falcons have been playing a LOT better of late, and they all need to for their jobs at this point, especially coach Dan Quinn. But I simply cannot see the Saints laying another egg against the Falcons like they did in their last meeting. The Saints, with only two losses are still in contention with the Niners for home field in the NFC. They call him the Brees, and the Saints keep rolling down that road.

Happy Thanksgiving folks. Eat some food, consume some libations, and settle in. And, from all of us here at Emptywheel, thank you. Thank you for being here, thank you for being so smart across the board, and thank you for participating. It is truly what makes us go. By the way, the banner is PuppyQ, aka the White Walker, who is firmly implanted on the bed, and not budging, as I compost this Trash. Music is Carvin' The Bird

by the incomparable Charlie Parker.

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## COWBOYS AND PATRIOTS TRASH TALK

This from the extremely good Tom Curran is right:

The Cowboys have won three of their past four after a three-game losing streak that included a humiliating defeat by the Jets (!!!!!?????). Dak Prescott last week ripped the Lions apart, going 29 of 46 for 444 yards and three touchdowns. It was the third time that Prescott has thrown for at least 400 yards in a game this season and the fifth time that he has thrown at least three touchdowns. They are 6-4. They lead the NFC East. They have gotten fat on bad teams (15 wins among the six teams they've beaten). But the 9-1 Patriots have scored just four offensive touchdowns in their past three games and – coming off a 17-10 win over a banged-up Philly team – they face the third consecutive challenging opponent after a relative walk in the park for the first two months of the season.

That is the best game of the week, outside of The Pack at Niners, which should be a great matchup. Will be a tough road trip for Mr. Rodgers, in the wrong neighborhood. Houston and Indy on Thursday night was good. The Texans pulled out a three point win even if, arguably, outplayed.

In the student athlete section, of course Penn State at Ohio State is the one that matters most. I'll give the nudge to the home team in Columbus. Michigan may not be much of a favorite

at Bloomington. A very late afternoon/early night, depending on time zone, is the Ducks of Oregon in Tempe to see the ASU Sun Devils. The late Saturday Pac-12 games are usually fun, though hard to see ASU beating the Quackers.

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## **TOO ROGER STONED TRASH TALK**

As you may have heard, Roger Stone was convicted on all counts yesterday. Marcy's post is here. A jury still deliberating on a Thursday is one thing, but they like to get the fuck out of Dodge by a Friday afternoon, and this one did. Predictable.

Not necessarily shocked they rendered verdicts of guilty on all counts, but do think Judge Amy Berman Jackson may give serious consideration to a post trial motion, at least as to the witness tampering verdict. It takes a lot for an honest trial judge, and ABJ is certainly that, to overturn a jury verdict, and I really doubt she does here. But think she will look hard at, at a minimum, the witness tampering evidence. We shall see.

Okay, what counts in the college ranks this weekend? Indiana has been on a serious roll of late, and this week plays Penn State. If the Hoosiers can beat PSU, they are for real, but not gonna bet on that. I still don't think the Michigan Harbaugs are real, but they will likely beat an uncharacteristically off Sparty. Texas may run into a Brock Purdy buzz saw at Iowa State. Purdy is from right here in the Cactus Patch, and he is really good. The Dawgs of UGA at Auburn may be the best game of the day, with a soft nod to Oklahoma at Baylor.

In the Pros, there was a bit of a kerfuffle Thursday night, while beating the Steelerts,

Cleveland's Myles Garrett stripped the Steeler's QB Mason Rudolph's helmet and beat him on the head with it. Garrett has been suspended for the rest of the year, at least, maybe longer under the "indefinitely" designation. That is proper. But, too, TV twatwaffles like CNN's Michael Smerconish are putting out public polls as to whether Garrett should also be criminally prosecuted. What the "public" thinks does not mean squat, this is a decision for professional prosecutors, not television audiences.

I am really looking forward to the matchup of Deshaun Watson and Lamar Jackson as the Texans visit Baltimore. These are transcendent talents, and it is hard to root against either one, but I'll tai the Ravens at home. Dallas at Detroit probably depends on if Matt Stafford plays over his clear back injury, but even is so the 'Boys are likely the safer pick. Jags at Colts is a pick em, but Jacoby Brissett looks to be back which favors Indianapolis. Who would have guessed we would see the Wagon Circling Bills at 7-3 after ten games, but they are likely to be so after a visit to Miami. Jets at Skins for the lulz. The best game is, obviously, New England at Philly in a replay of Super Bowl LII. Both teams come off a bye. Never bet against Bill Bel, but, damn, this could be epic. And it ought be on prime time instead of the crack ass placing of the Bears at Rams for SNF and Chiefs at Bolts for MNF.

This, for all the promise going into it, has been a boring and tepid Formula One season. Let it end, please. But Sunday is the Brazilian Grand Prix, a historically significant race, even if this year does not shape up for one. Only Abu Dhabi remains after that on the schedule, thankfully.

Music this week is from Robin Trower and one of the truly great overall rock albums of all time, Bridge of Sighs. This is the studio cut, although I can attest it was even better live. Rock on.

ADDENDUM: Yearrgh, I screwed up and did not



address Earl's (and undoubtedly Ed Walker's) game of Notre Dame and Navy. Early on, I thought the Irish were actually back with a great team. They proved that false with a loss to the Georgia Dawgs (a seriously good team by the way) and then to a sketchy Michigan team and barely eking out wins over what should have been far outmanned teams like USC and West Virginia at home in South Bend. Today the Wolverweenies play the Midshipmen of Navy. Also, again, in their South Bend home. Do the Irish ever have the balls to play a difficult opponent outside of their own stadium, unless forced to do so? Go Navy!

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## TRASH TALK

So, in a bit of frivolity, Pete T and Jim White tried to get me to feature the Mike Huckabee Band for Trash Talk. That is just not going to happen. And, yes, there may have been a bit of extra attention paid to Little Feat lately. Sorry!

I set out to publish the Trash about 4am here, but things got in the way, namely rebuilding of an outdoor BBQ and an indoor fireplace. Mrs. bmaz thought those more pressing. What can you do? So, here is a little Little Feat, and some placeholders for if I, Marcy or Jim feeds more content into this late post.

Alabama hosting LSU is basically everything in college football today, with a shout out to Penn State at Minnesota, Iowa at Wisconsin (doubt the Badgers will blow this at Camp Randall). How in the world 9-0 Clemson was not in the BCS top four is a crime, given their record in the final football four the last four years. Stop being stupid NCAA.

In the Pros, the Rayduhs already beat the Bolts in a game the Bolts should have won. Detroit at

Bears is a yawner. Bills at Brownies might be interesting. Jeebus, the Jets Jets Jets and Gents are actually going to play each other in their home stadium? Why? Rams at Steelers could be interesting. Steelers not the same without Big Ben, but they are not dead yet either. They may well beat the Rams in this one. The SNF game of Vikings and Boys could be fairly decent. And the MNF game of Squawks at Niners looks downright fantastic. I'll take the Niners at home here, but not against the Squawks at home at the end of the year.

Rock on.

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## **RUBBER BISCUIT TRASH TALK**

Eh, late start here. Been tied up on Twitter reading and discussing the FOIA doc dump obtained and published by Jason Leopold and Anthont Cormier of BuzzFeed. Check Marcy's Twitter feed and other posts here for that, it is...something. Somehow or another in the process we got off on Blues Brothers lyrics, so that is today's music.

Hate to say it, but Harbaugh and the Wolverweenies have their groove back. After flattening a good Notre Dame team last week, they are killing Maryland today. Number 8 Georgia at number 6 Florida looks to be one hell of a game. Earlier in the year, the Dawgs would have been an easy pick, but not now, and not at the Swamp (Grrr, I buggered that up, game is in Jacksonville, of course, and not the Swamp). New grandfather Jim will likely weigh in. Utah and Washington should be a good Pac-12 game, but it is in Seattle so, despite the Utes' number 9 ranking, don't sleep on the Huskies. Same goes for Oregon at USC Trojan land. In the meantime, everybody awaits LSU at Alabama next week.

In the pros, the Niners beat Arizona in a surprisingly close game Thursday night. If Pat Peterson had not had an atrocious game for the Cardinals may well have won that game. Oh well, the Niners move on undefeated. The Vikings at Chefs may be good. Cousins is on a roll and Mahomes, if he plays, is still slightly hobbled. That is a pick em. The Jets at the Fins is a laugher. The obvious best game of the week is Patriots at Ravens. The Ravens are good, and they are at home. Lamar Jackson is exactly the kind of QB that give the Pats fits, and the Baltimore defense is outstanding, still. Not going to bet against Bill Bel and Brady, but this is a real test, and in the primetime of SNF.

That's it for this week folks, hoop it up.

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## **GOREY TRASH TALK**

Halloween is upon us! So some Gore is in order. No, not that kind, you ghouls, the Frank Gore kind. With 134 more yards, Frank will move ahead of Barry Sanders and into third place on the all time NFL rushing list. That is saying something, and when he does, either this Sunday or next, he will trail only Walter Payton and Emmitt Smith. Not altogether impossible that Gore catches Payton if he remains this productive for another couple of seasons, although that seems unlikely. Emmitt Smith he will never touch. Still, pretty amazing and long career for Gore.

Alright, so Gore will start his charge at home in Buffalo against the Eagles, and as bad as the Eagles have been lately, Buffalo may be a surprisingly big test for them. The Vikes already slayed the hapless Skins behind another huge game by Kirk Cousins. The Chargers at Chicago may be interesting, the Bolts are not as bad as their record looks, but their O-Line is terrible and they are mistake prone.

Frankly, Arizona at Saints may be one of the more interesting games of the week. Cards are improbably at .500 on the year and clearly improving. But the Superdome is a rough place to play, and the Nawlins' defense is really good; take the Saints. A resurgent Carolina, behind Kyle Allen instead of the erratic Cam Newton visits the Niners. Don't sleep on the Panthers, and it may not be easy, but the Niners and Jimmy G look good to stay undefeated. The Brownies visit Foxborough, Bill Bel, Brady and the boys. Upset in the air? Likely not.

The best game, by far, on tap is the SNF matchup of the Packers at the Chefs. Pat Mahomes is ruled out for the game, but Matt Moore is a more than competent backup. Green Bay is starting to put things together on offense after a dodgy start to the season. Davante Adams is improving quickly from his bad turf toe injury, but is still likely out for the Pack. If the game was at Lambeau instead of Arrowhead, maybe a different bet, but this looks like a pick-em to me.

In the college ranks, Wisconsin put up a dud last time out, and already has a loss going into Ohio State. Make that two losses after today. Auburn at LSU may be the game of the day. Go figure, but LSU quarterback Joe Burrow is a legitimate Heisman candidate so far. Auburn is really good, but, man, I am not voting against the Tigers in Baton Rouge. Notre Dame visits Ann Arbor and that Harbaugh guy. I dunno, the Irish just seem like a better team right now. ASU, coming off of a truly ugly loss at Utah, is in Los Angeles to take on UCLA. This is the time of year ASU always goes downhill, and they probably will today against the Bruins.

The Astros, after one of the worst weeks imaginable for a World Series team, broke through with a win last night in DC. Can they make it two in a row and even the series against the Nationals tonight? Houston has Jose Urquidy going against Pat Corbin for the Nationals. Corbin was here with the DBacks the last few

years, and he is a sneaky good pitcher, so I like Washington's chances to move to 3-1 on the Series.

Music today by the incomparable Elton John. People don't usually think of him so much as a live rock act as opposed to just a huge celebrity. I first saw him in the late 70's, and can easily attest he is one of the greatest rock performers ever. Just incredible. This cut is from 2003 in Hamburg.

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## **KREWE DU BOO TRASH TALK**

Okay, another late start to Trash. Now if you have not heard, there is some bad bongos in Nawlins. The Hard Rock Hotel (not just a restaurant, this thing was to be huge), has collapsed in what will be an insanely huge liability claim for about thirty different fronts. People have died and their bodies still not recovered. An entire critical section of NOLA evacuated as a danger zone.

And, now, for insult onto injury, the Krewe du Boo Halloween parade has been cancelled. While not exactly the Krewe du Vieux and the other Krewes for Mardis Gras, this was kind of a thing, apparently, for NOLA. Keep your eye out for the litigation for this mammoth fuck up in engineering and development. It will be large, fascinating, and going on for a long time. Sad, in every way imaginable.

In the collegiate ranks, the Florida/South Carolina game is already interesting. After what SC did to Georgia, that has to worry Jim White. I'll still take the Gators, but the game is in the Gamecocks stadium. Oregon at Washington Huskies is worth the watch. Michigan at Penn State is a huge game. I don't know that it will

get better for Harbaugh in Happy Valley, but it will be interesting.

ASU at Utah could, and should, be a great game. The Sun Devils of Herm Edwards are at an improbable 5-1 heading in to Salt Lake to visit a similarly situated 5-1 Utah, except nobody predicted Utah losing to USC earlier. Rice-Eccles Stadium is not a huge venue, but it is a compact and intimidating place to play on the road. Note my time in Rice-Eccles was for a couple of days on a Rolling Stones show I was working, not a football game. It is pretty, especially at the time of day the game is scheduled. If you can get the game on your carrier, it may be worth the watch.

For the Pros, the Chiefs already clouted the Donkos, but lost Pat Mahomes for a couple of weeks. No problem, they just have the Packers and Vikings the next two weeks. But Matt Moore is not a scrub, Kansas City can still play with him at the helm. Speaking of the Vikings, they are at Detroit, and I smell an upset by the Kittens. Oakland is at the Packers, and that could be a far better game than you would think. Philly at the 'Boys could be okay. For you noisy 49ers fans, no, they are playing the Skins. They should win.

Arizona at the Gents is not a great game, but could get very interesting. Kyler Murray and the Cards offense has been better than expected, and the beleaguered AZ defense gets Patrick Peterson back, and he is still one of the best corners in football. Saints at Bears "should" be good, but Teddy Bridgewater has the Saints plugging along, I'll take them. Ravens at Squawks is a matchup of two of the three best running QB's in the league. Should be fascinating, but it is in Seattle, and man is that a tough place to play on the road. Lastly, the Pats visit the Jets on MNF. Jets are a LOT better with Sam Darnold back. Is that enough for a huge upset? I doubt it, but it may be close.

Lastly, MLB. It is the time of year where baseball counts, even here. The Nationals have

already swept St. Louis and have their place in the World Series locked up while resting their superb starting pitchers. Astros up 3-2 on the Yanks, and heading back to Houston town for games 6 and 7. They will have the ridiculously good so far in the playoffs Gerrit Cole ready to go for one of them. It was supposed that would be for game 6, but that does not seem to be a given, they may save him for a knock out game 7. How that pitching decision plays out will be fascinating. I think I'd go ahead and let him throw game 6.

That is it for this week folks. Music by the great Lowell George and Little Feat.