

# GRIDIRON

## ILLUSTRATED



# HE'S BACK

## VINCE PREDICTS WEEK 5





Ashton Jeanty scores on a 9-yard touchdown catch for Travelers.

## Travelers End the Mud Dogs' Perfect Run in Nail-Biter

The Appalachian Mud Dogs entered Week 4 as the league's lone unbeaten team, while the Travelers were desperate to climb out of the cellar after three straight losses. Fate had them squaring off for the second consecutive week and this time, the result flipped.

The Travelers pulled off a razor-thin 111.58 to 110.18 victory, handing the Mud Dogs their first blemish of the season while finally notching their first win. Both teams will walk away lamenting lineup decisions: the Mud Dogs left **Travis Etienne's** 22.50 points on the bench, while the Travelers inexplicably sat **Patrick Mahomes'** 27.30 outburst.

For the Mud Dogs, **Puka Nacua** did everything he could with a monster 39-point showing, but key pieces fell short, including **Derrick Henry**, who mustered just 7.80 in a game where he expected to dominate.

"Credit to the Travelers," said **Joe Riddle**, Media Relations Director for the Mud Dogs. "They fought hard and made the most of their opportunities. That was a great game, no doubt."

Henry himself was more blunt and deflated. "Close losses like this hurt," he admitted. "I've got to give more. Seven points? That's not me. I didn't do enough to get us over the top."

On the other side, the Travelers finally exhaled. **Ashton Jeanty** carried the load with a massive 36.50 points, while **Rome Odunze's** 16.90 provided a much-needed boost.

**Delilah Sandoval**, Media Relations Director for the Travelers, summed up the feeling with a smirk. "We're relieved. Getting that first win is always the hardest. Props to the Mud Dogs, they've been the class of the league so far. But honestly? We're just glad we don't have to see them again in the regular season."

Jeanty, still buzzing after his breakout performance, added, "This is huge. We're building off this. No more winless talk. We've got our win, and now it's time to stack more."

The Mud Dogs remain atop the Lombardi Division at 3-1, but the Travelers finally shake free of the winless label, improving to 1-3. If nothing else, this rematch proved one thing: in this league, no team is safe.



## Bandits Blast Wrecking Crew

For the second straight week, The Wrecking Crew were on the wrong side of an offensive avalanche—and this time it came courtesy of the 1024 Bandits, who rolled to a 158.72–105.98 victory. The Crew dropped to 2-2 on the season and remain winless against the Bandits in regular season play, now 0-3 since 2023.

The Bandits' starting lineup exceeded projections across nearly every slot, with **Josh Jacobs** (31.70) and **Bucky Irving** (28.50) hammering away at The Crew's chances. **Amon-Ra St. Brown** (20.60) and **Deebo Samuel** (20.10) piled on as well, leaving only **Justin Herbert** and tight end **Harold Fannin Jr.** short of expectations.

The Wrecking Crew had a few bright spots, most notably **Drake London** (28.00), but they were undone by underperformances at quarterback (**Sam Darnold** 14.52) and tight end (**Tucker Kraft** 4.50). Making matters worse, explosive performances from **George Pickens** (36.4) and **Quinshon Judkins** (21.50) went to waste on the bench.

**Deb Levi**, Media Relations Director for The Wrecking Crew, was blunt: "It's just bad luck facing a team that's exploded two weeks in a row, but leaving Pickens and Judkins on the bench was painful, and the timing couldn't have been worse."

GM **Tony McGriff** echoed the sentiment but accepted responsibility: "That's on me. I didn't pull the trigger on Pickens or Judkins, and it hurt us, but even with the missed points, we don't keep pace with the Bandits. But this is the regular season. you can't ride the highs too much or sink with the lows. We'll reset and get ready for the Travelers."

On the Bandits' sideline, the mood was equal parts confident and incredulous. **DeAndre Bell**, Media Relations Director, couldn't help but smirk: "I mean, what can you say? This team is firing on all cylinders. I'm in awe of what they just did. To be honest though, I was shocked and relieved to see Pickens and Judkins sitting on the bench for the Crew."

The win moves the Bandits to 3-1, cementing their spot at the top of the Gibbs Division and setting up a marquee Week 5 clash against Shula Division leader Dragon Lady. The Wrecking Crew, now 2-2, will try to stop the skid against a surging Travelers squad fresh off their upset of the previously unbeaten Appalachian Mud Dogs.



## DBarber Stuns the League's Top Scorer

For three weeks, DBarber had been the league's easy target, a winless squad that couldn't quite find its rhythm. But in Week 4, they flipped the script. Facing off against Fins In Low Places, the highest-scoring team in Gridiron Gold through three weeks, DBarber delivered a shocker, pulling off their first win of the season in decisive fashion.

The 99.28–94.42 final doesn't fully capture the energy of the upset. DBarber rode the arm of **Jordan Love**, who exploded for 29.28 points, and the timely play of **Romeo Doubs**, whose 20.60-point outing gave the team a crucial cushion. Love's deep strikes and Doubs' reliability combined to form the backbone of DBarber's first taste of victory in 2025.

For Fins In Low Places, the loss was a baffling stumble. Their roster, known for its firepower, simply failed to ignite. **Jonathan Taylor** did his best with 14.60 points, and **Marvin Harrison Jr.** delivered strong production, but the rest of the lineup lagged behind expectations.

DBarber's Media Relations Director **Jose Vargas** pulled no punches afterward.

*"Nobody gave us a chance in this one. Not the analysts, not the projections, not even the whispers around the league. But this is why you play the games. We showed up, we executed, and we walked away with the win. It's that simple."*

On the other sideline, Fins In Low Places looked to brush off the rare letdown. **Jasmine Nesmith**, their Media Relations Director, kept things measured:

*"Honestly, I'm not sure what happened. This roster has been high-flying from Week 1, and tonight... it just wasn't there. Credit to DBarber, they earned it. For us, it's about moving on and being ready for Week 5."*

The victory moves DBarber into the win column and injects new life into their season. With a date against Dem Wallz up next, they'll be looking to prove this wasn't a one-week anomaly. Meanwhile, Fins In Low Places will try to reassert their dominance against Pud's Playmakers, hoping this stumble doesn't derail their early-season momentum.

For now, though, the story belongs to DBarber, a team that turned doubters into believers with one statement win.





## Dragon Lady Extends Streak, Dem Wallz Crippled by Injuries

For the third straight year, injuries are haunting Dem Wallz—and in Week 4, the curse struck again. Facing off against Dragon Lady, a familiar nemesis who had already beaten them twice since joining the league in 2023, the result was no different this time around. Dragon Lady stayed perfect in the rivalry, rolling to a 137.14–111.88 victory.

The loss wasn't just on the scoreboard. Dem Wallz saw two of their cornerstone players go down in brutal fashion. RB **Trey Benson** is expected to miss at least four weeks with a knee injury, while star QB **Lamar Jackson** suffered a hamstring injury that forced him out of the game and clouds his status for Weeks 5 and beyond. **Brian Wacker** of The Baltimore Sun has already hinted Jackson could be sidelined two-to-three weeks, a devastating blow for a team desperate for stability.

"It's beyond frustrating," said **Greg Cantrell**, Media Relations Director for Dem Wallz. "We've been hit by the injury bug three years in a row, and now it's Lamar and Benson. You can't build momentum when your best players keep getting taken off the field."

Meanwhile, Dragon Lady continues to solidify herself as a true power in the Shula Division, sitting at 3–1 after another convincing win. And while the margin could have been even bigger had **Kenneth Gainwell** been in the starting lineup, the victory still gave Dragon Lady valuable separation over rivals Wrecking Crew and Avengers, who both fell in Week 4.

"We're trying to put some much needed distance between ourselves and the rest of this division," said **Sterling Jones**, Media Relations Director for Dragon Lady. "The Shula is the toughest division in this league, no doubt. Wins like this matter now, but they matter even more come playoff time."

Week 5 storylines loom large for both clubs. Dem Wallz now turns their battered roster toward a matchup with DBarber, who just notched their first win of the season by shocking Fins In Low Places, the league's highest-scoring team coming in. A desperate Dem Wallz squad against a newly confident DBarber could get chippy fast.

Dragon Lady, meanwhile, faces a marquee clash with the 1024 Bandits, who obliterated The Wrecking Crew in Week 4 behind an across-the-board explosion. With both squads riding high, it's shaping up to be one of the most anticipated games of the season.

Dragon Lady may have gotten the better of Dem Wallz yet again, but Week 5 will test whether they can keep pace with a Bandits team that steamrolled through Week 4.



## BAD GUYS EDGE AVENGERS IN SCORING EXPLOSION

If fans wanted fireworks, Week 4 delivered in the form of the highest-scoring matchup of the season. The Bad Guys and Avengers Team combined for an eye-popping 322 points, pushing each other to the brink in a thriller that wasn't decided until the final stat corrections.

The Bad Guys ultimately emerged with a 166.70 to 155.36 victory, powered by the unstoppable backfield tandem of **Bijan Robinson** (31.10 points) and **Omarion Hampton** (30.50 points). Together, they carried The Bad Guys to their second win of the season and left their GM breathing heavy from the rollercoaster.

Avengers Team fought tooth and nail, refusing to go quietly. **Dak Prescott's** monster day (33.96 points) and **Christian McCaffrey's** workhorse performance (26.10 points) kept them within striking distance all weekend, but ultimately they fell just short.

**Arthur Robinson**, Media Relations Director for The Bad Guys, admitted his team was running on fumes after the battle.

"Honestly? I'm just glad the game is over," Robinson said with a weary chuckle. "Both sides were trading blows all weekend. I don't think anybody had anything left by the end."

On the Avengers side, **Lauren Beltran**, Media Relations Director, tried to frame the heartbreaking loss in the right light.

"Yeah, it stings," Beltran admitted, flustered but finding the silver lining. "But if you're putting up 155 points and still losing, it means the roster's doing something right. We'll take the positives, regroup, and move on to the Mud Dogs."

That next matchup won't be easy. The Avengers now face the Appalachian Mud Dogs, who despite stumbling last week against the Travelers, remain the Lombardi Division leader.

Meanwhile, The Bad Guys have circled Week 5's showdown with Hobbton as a grudge match. Hobbton embarrassed them in their last meeting and boasted loudly afterward. With The Bad Guys fresh off this season-high scoring explosion, expect plenty of bad blood when the two clash again.



## PLAYMAKERS HUMBLE HOBBTON IN SURPRISE UPSET

Week 4 brought another shocker as the heavily favored Hobbton squad fell flat against Pud's Playmakers, who delivered one of their most complete efforts of the season in a 99.70 to 94.42 upset victory.

Hobbton, an on-again off-again scoring machine, underperformed almost across the board. **Josh Allen** (25.86 points) once again carried the offense, slinging touchdowns and adding rushing yards to keep his team alive, while **Garrett Wilson** (20.20 points) did his best to keep the scoreboard moving. But the rest of the roster couldn't follow suit, leaving Hobbton searching for answers.

Meanwhile, Pud's Playmakers rose to the occasion. **Courtland Sutton** (19.10 points) dominated on the outside with a clutch touchdown, while **Quentin Johnston** (19.10 points) turned in his best performance of the year, giving Pud's the offensive spark needed to topple their arrogant rivals.

**Sam King**, Media Relations Director for Hobbton, didn't hold back in his postgame comments:

"Look, Allen and Wilson did their jobs. The rest of the roster? Not so much. This loss is on the guys who couldn't show up. You can't win games with two players pulling the whole wagon."

On the other side, Pud's Playmakers were thrilled to deliver a statement victory. **Will Powers**, Media Relations Director, was all smiles after silencing Hobbton's weekly boasts.

"That's what we've been waiting for," Powers said, elated. "We heard all the arrogance, all the bragging, and we shut it down. Sutton and Johnston were phenomenal, and this whole roster proved we belong."

Looking ahead, Hobbton's next game is a fiery rematch with The Bad Guys, who have been itching for payback after Hobbton gloated loudly in their last meeting. That game is shaping up to be one of the most anticipated clashes of the season.

For Pud's, the challenge doesn't get easier. They'll face Fins In Low Places in a Lombardi Division showdown, with both teams looking to climb the standings after uneven starts.

# VINCE'S WEEK FIVE PREDICTIONS

Yahoo puts out bars and decimals. Fine. I walk the field. Home field matters. Favored backs matter. Benches matter. Let's talk football.

## Wrecking Crew vs Travelers

Patrick Mahomes is the last torch keeping the Travelers warm. The room around him is cold. Ashton Jeanty and Woody Marks look like wishful thinking, and every drive feels like a tightrope. The Crew bring steadier heat. Ja'Marr Chase can tilt a game by himself (if Browning figures out how to get him the ball), Kyren Williams runs angry, and Jayden Daniels only needs to steer. This one feels like a body shot that lands in the third quarter and never stops hurting.

**WINNER:** Wrecking Crew

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## 1024 Bandits vs Dragon Lady

Dragon Lady is on fire. Justin Fields can vault you into the sky or drop you through the trap door. This week he's on the road, and that door has a habit of creaking in hostile buildings. The Bandits don't sprint, they grind. Justin Herbert at home is a metronome, Amon-Ra St. Brown is the drumbeat, and the depth lets them change songs mid-drive. Dragon Lady will flash. The Bandits will finish.

**WINNER:** 1024 Bandits

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## Appalachian Mud Dogs vs Avengers Team

The Avengers bring stars and a suitcase. They live out of airports. Dak Prescott on the road is a different person—more checklists than fireworks. The Mud Dogs play like a January team in October: Derrick Henry leans on you, Travis Etienne cuts you, Mark Andrews cleans the plate, and Puka Nacua keeps the lights on. Bo Nix doesn't have to be a hero; he just has to keep the car in the lane.



**WINNER:** Appalachian Mud Dogs.

## **DBarber vs DEM WALLZ**

Dem Wallz own the poster boy in Justin Jefferson and a stellar quarterback in Lamar Jackson who can look like a laser show. Then you peek behind the curtain and see that Lamar is out, RB Trey Benson is out, and Kareem Hunt is trying to hold up a modern backfield with duct tape. DBarber isn't pretty, but AJ Brown, Rhamondre Stevenson, and Sam LaPorta form a working spine. This one feels like a bar fight in the rain. The cleaner right hand belongs to DBarber.

**WINNER:** DBarber.

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## **HOBBTON vs The Bad Guys**

Here's your soapbox, Charles. Use it now, because the field won't give you one Sunday. Josh Allen is a force of nature; I've never said otherwise. But Hobbton is a tent in a windstorm — flapping, noisy, one pole away from flying off the ridge. On the flip side, The Bad Guys are built like a brick building: Kyler Murray moves chains, Davante Adams bullies corners, Cooper Kupp finds daylight, and Omarion Hampton hits the crease like he owns it. Hobbton can bark about "disrespect" all week. The scoreboard doesn't read Facebook posts..

**WINNER:** The Bad Guys.

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## **Fins In Low Places vs Puds' Playmakers**

This is trench football. Fins carry a grown-man plan: Jared Goff to keep time, Marvin Harrison Jr. for the strike, and Jonathan Taylor in a home-favorite smash spot to shove the line of scrimmage where he wants it. Puds have star power — Jalen Hurts, Saquon Barkley, Alvin Kamara, Travis Kelce — but the edges fray at wideout. When this one tightens, I trust the team that can hand it to a closer and tell the defense what's coming.

**WINNER:** Fins In Low Places.

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I looked at the projections. I noted the colors. Then I threw them in the back seat and drove. Home fields tilt the earth, favored backs cash checks, and depth decides Octobers. If that sounds harsh, play harder.