

Eye on Sports

Eye on the Ball: What are the Eagles Thinking?

By Justin Park - Lion's Eye Editor in Chief - jrp5321@psu.edu

I find it amazing that just two weeks in, the Philadelphia Eagles have forgotten about what this season was supposed to be about: transition and experience. After trading the man that you've watched play quarterback for the past ten years and immediately handing the job over to the promising Kevin Kolb, who you drafted for this very reason, the Philadelphia Eagles were not and should not have been expecting to win a championship this season. However, with the decision to name Michael Vick the team's starting quarterback from this point forward; one must think that the Eagles believe they have a Super Bowl contending team.

Or at least that's the only logic I can find behind it, assuming they still plan to keep Kevin Kolb on the team. I can only imagine that watching the Dallas Cowboys, the preseason favorite to win the NFC East, and the New York giants struggle early in the opening weeks has made the Eagles second guess their own expectations this season and believe that they could take the division crown. But with the team's defense struggling and giving up the most points in the NFC entering week three (the Detroit Lions put up 32 points) and the Eagles second half of the season matchups, I really do not see how the Eagles consider themselves contenders.

I understand that other factors probably influenced the change as well. Losing center Jamaal Jackson and fullback Leonard Weaver for the season would potentially leave Kevin Kolb unprotected in the pocket and vulnerable to injury. Kolb, himself also suffered a concussion in week one, but is supposed to have made a complete recovery and could have played in week three. Even with him and his teammates being a bit banged up, Kolb should be in the game learning how to overcome these issues. What doesn't kill you only makes you stronger, right?

Also, Kolb didn't have an overly impressive preseason and week one start against the Green Bay Packers. Yeah, people knocked him for not looking good against the Packers, a game where he had just seven pass attempts before suffering a concussion. Not to mention, it must be hard for Kolb to find a groove when he's watching #7 attempt a failing wildcat play on what seemed like every other down. I'm not trying to make excuses for him, but I do believe he deserves a fair chance and what he got against Green Bay was far from an opportunity.

If Kolb remains on the sidelines through the rest of this season, something I believe is very unlikely, he would be at the same point as he was a year before. He can't learn any more by standing on the sidelines and the Eagles are starting to dip into the prime athletic years of his career. Kolb should be starting this season to prove what he can do and that he is the future of this team. Kevin Kolb could be the worst quarterback in the history of the game for all we know, but at least if we saw him play we would have an idea. Until then, we still do not know what to expect from him. So, not only will he be at the same point a year from now, the Eagles will be too.

I also understand that I am in the minority here (local poll provided that 70% of Eagles fans were in favor of the quarterback switch), but I was truly looking forward to a struggling season in which the team gained, if nothing else, experience. Sure, it sounds weird, but since I have been watching the Eagles they have not had an authentic rebuilding season. Now just about six years removed from the team that lost in the Super Bowl, the Eagles have a completely new roster and they did a great job of staying competitive throughout the process. I was more than willing to give the team a year to adjust to Kevin Kolb and all of the other additions, even if it meant that we had a 7-9 record. As long as it looked like we

were getting better along the way, I would have been fine with just letting the team play and mature as one.

Let it be known that I have nothing against Michael Vick for the problems he's had in his past and that it does not affect my feelings toward the situation. I would be equally disappointed in the Eagles if they replaced Kolb with any veteran quarterback (especially one in the last year of his contract). The way they handled the situation was also embarrassing for Kolb and the organization. Letting Kolb, the team, and the fans believe that Vick was the backup as long as Kolb was healthy turned out to be a complete lie, as they said throughout the week and even Sunday (a day before Andy Reid announced the switch) following the game against the Lions. Losing your job due to injury is never alright and the way the Eagles handled "the switch" was completely unethical, in my opinion.

But with the changing of the quarterbacks, the Philadelphia Eagles have shown that they are completely comfortable to put the experience for Kolb on hold and let Vick prove his worth. This should make for an interesting situation at the end of the season when the team has to decide on whether to resign Vick, a scheduled free agent, or stick with Kevin Kolb, in the final year of his contract (an extension he signed after he was named the starting QB). As mentioned, I do believe that the Eagles will go back to Kevin Kolb later in the season, roughly around week 14 when the team is 5-8, to get a gauge of how good the quarterback truly is in game situations. However, if the Eagles do not go back to #4 at all during the regular season, and I'm Kevin Kolb, I'm respectfully asking to be traded to a team that will take me seriously and give me the shot I deserve.

Union Demolish Chivas USA in Shutout

By Andrew Shaner - Lion's Eye Staff Writer - ads5249@psu.edu

Saturday's match at PPL Park in Chester left 16,000 fans happy and frenzied as the Philadelphia Union shutout Chivas USA 3-0. This victory is the team's second shutout in three games. Goals were scored by 31-year-olds Alejandro Moreno and Helbert Frederico Carreiro da Silva (commonly known as Fred) in the first half. Putting the cherry on top was Sebastien Le Toux, who scored the Union's third goal in the second half. That goal marks his twelfth for the season and ties him with San Jose's Chris Wondolowski and Toronto's Dwayne De Rosario for third place with most goals scored.



Alejandro Moreno and Fred Carreiro celebrate after a goal during the Union's 3-0 shutout. (Photo Courtesy of Comcast Sports Net)

The game's pace was consistently interrupted by Chivas USA's constant yellow cards. Chivas USA actually seemed to be making more fouls than professional soccer plays. This made the game rather

difficult for the Union who nonetheless managed to hold a tight defense and an even tighter offense.

Despite the incredible victory, the Union did suffer misfortune in the 45th minute when Danny Mwanga re-injured his separated shoulder. Mwanga had entered the game at less than 100 percent, having injured his shoulder initially against the Chicago Fire back on September 7th. The Union (now 7-6-12) sit in fifth place of the Eastern conference with 27 points leaving Chivas USA (7-14-4) at 8th place in the Western Conference with 24 points.

Philadelphia's next game will be on Wednesday September 29th against the Colorado Rapids followed by a home game on Saturday October 2nd against the Houston Dynamo.

Eagles Switch It Up: Vick Named Starting QB

By Caitlin Hazinsky - Lion's Eye Entertainment/Generation Editor - ceh5240@psu.edu

In the opening game, Kevin Kolb played as our starting quarterback but did not last long before suffering a concussion. This allowed Michael Vick to fill in for the injured Kolb and he turned some heads as he almost led the Eagles to a come from behind win against the Green Bay Packers.

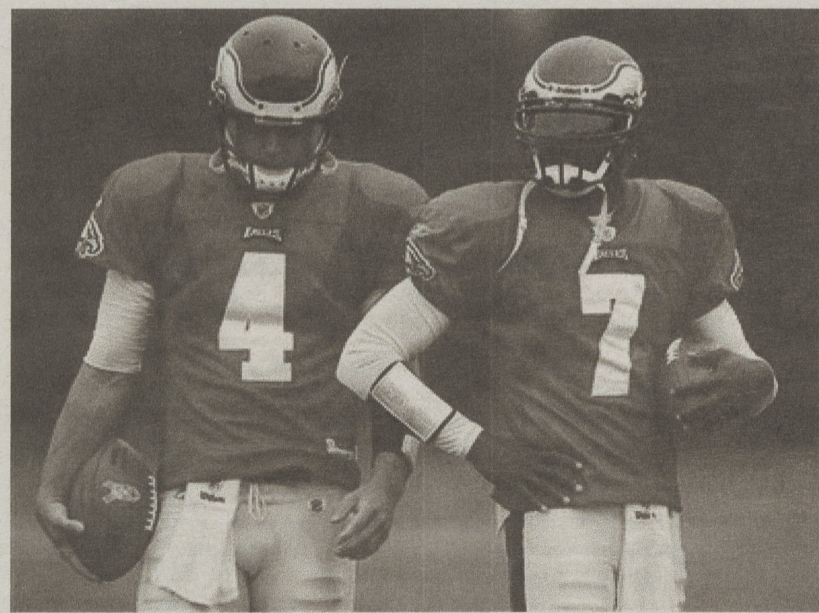
The following week, Vick, still filling in for the injured Kevin Kolb, came out on the field as our starting quarterback on the road against the Lions. Against Detroit, he was a whole "new" player and quarterback—running the ball, taking hits, and making accurate passes, sometimes on the run—or, in other words, just back to the Mike Vick of 2006. He completed over 60% of his passes and finished with 284 yards and two touchdowns.

Aside from Michael Vick's impressive performance, LeSean McCoy also had a remarkable game. McCoy rushed for 120 yards and completed the game with three touchdowns of his own. DeSean Jackson, who is no stranger to the spotlight on the Eagles team, had one touchdown along with

135 yards receiving. Even though the defensive line needs some work, they were able to pull it together and hold the lead. The Eagles were able to keep the Lions' rookie, Jahvid Best from pulling his team ahead for the win.

With Vick as the quarterback, and some help from the offensive line, the Eagles won their week 2 matchup against the Lions with a final score of 35-32. Apparently, that was enough for the Eagles to decide to rearrange the depth chart and name Vick the starting quarterback over Kevin Kolb.

Kevin Kolb, even prior to the game against the Lions, was scheduled to start last Sunday against the Jaguars. However, the performance Vick gave against the Lions put a lot of pressure on head coach, Andy Reid, to strip Kolb of the starting job. Although Michael Vick may have some issues, regarding his indiscretions back in 2006, he has come a long way since and worked extremely hard to get to where he is today.



Kevin Kolb will be playing back-up to Mike Vick until further notice. (Photo Courtesy of sports.yahoo.com)