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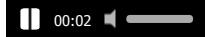
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THURSDAY, MAY 30, 2013

## I'D MAKE A GREAT BOND VILLAIN: THE MOST IMPORTANT 2013 GAMES FOR THE BEARS AND PACKERS

Countdowns suck.



No, I don't mean countdowns like the Billboard Top 20 or the Maxim 100 (of which Manti Te'o's invisible girlfriend, Lennay Kekua, made number No. 69 this year – I kid you not, his invisible girlfriend was found to be more desirable than 31 actual real women...pretty big slap in the face for women all over the world if you ask me - <http://www.maxim.com/girls-of-maxim/the-invisible-girl-profile>). I'm talking about those silly countdowns to events. Like counting down to New Year's Eve or how every bad guy in older James Bond films felt the need to countdown every missile launch, attack, or attempted execution of Bond himself. I mean come on, why slowly lower Bond into a tank full of sharks over 30 minutes? You know how short the Bond movie series would have been if some bad guy just once said to himself "wait a second, can't we just push Bond into the tank now?" Heck, even Austin Powers spoofed this and we still see countdowns from villains. Instead of counting down before launching a terrifying missile attack that will propel the entire world into the dark ages, how about just hitting the button now? I mean, what could you possible want with another 10 minutes anyway? And if you needed 10 more minutes, say to do the dishes or vacuum the floors, why not just go about your business first and push the button when you're done? I think I'd make a great bond villain. Instead of "Mr. Bond, I'd like to explain my plans to you over the next 5 minutes as that giant saw gets ever so slightly closer to you" I'd say "Mr. Bond, I just wanted to say that... whoops, guess I hit the deadly saw button without counting down. My bad." But I digress.

## MOST DISCUSSED

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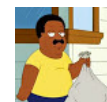
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Off-season

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RTP Richard Thigpen Photography



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The point is that countdowns are pointless. Yet, we all feel compelled to do it. And here I am counting down the days to the start of the new NFL season (98 days to go to be exact). As we countdown the days to the start of the new season (yes, I know you're doing it too), let's take a look at the game the Bears and the Packers need to focus on (not including the two in which they play each other) as potentially the most critical in their upcoming regular seasons.

**Chicago Bears**



**September 8, 2013 – Cincinnati Bengals at Home**

So, this is interesting. Normally, I don't care much for AFC teams, since the Bears are an NFC team, so I'm usually most concerned with who is doing well in the NFC, and in particular, who is doing well in the Bears' division. But there are some teams in the AFC that I've had my eye on for some time now. And while everyone is most concerned about how amazing the Broncos will be and how the Patriots will be without Wes Welker, I'm looking at the Cincinnati Bengals.

Why? Well, because the Bengals have been on the rise for quite a few years now with the addition of a stable quarterback (Andy Dalton) and potentially one of the best wide receivers in all the NFL (A.J. Green). The Bengals have made the playoffs three of the last four years, and they just keep getting better. They haven't lost any key components from last year, and they've added an amazing tight end (Tyler Eifert) and a terrific complement to the Ben Jarvis Green-Ellis ground game (Giovani Bernard). Dalton hasn't had many options in the short game over the last two years, having to wait for plays to develop for A.J. Green to do something amazing, but now, with a tall pass catching tight end and dynamic pass catching running back, the Bengals offense is starting to look scarier than the Patriots offense in 2007. OK, well, no one is quite as scary as Bill Belichick and his creepy hoodie, but the Bengals are getting close. Either way, the Bengals are definitely on their way up and are odds on favorites to return to the post season and potentially go deep. And believe it or not, the Bears have only played the Bengals 9 times, having lost 6 of them, including the two most recent meetings in 2009 (away) and 2005 (at home). The last time the Bears beat the Bengals was 2001, and before that, you have to go back to 1989.

So why do I think this is a critical regular season game? Well, maybe I'm a pessimist, but I think the Bears need to start strong out of the gate. And they have a lot to prove with a revamped Urlacher-less defense and revamped Trestman offense. There are a lot of moving pieces on both sides of the ball, and the Bengals are a good team. They'll test the Bears defense both through the air and on the ground. And if you look at the Bears schedule after that opening game to the bye (Vikings, Steelers, Lions, Saints, Giants and Redskins, presumably with RGIII back at

an Elite 2013 Fantasy Quarterback?

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100%), it's not going to be easy. So losing the first game could potentially result in going 1-6 or 2-5, before the Bears even face the dangerous Packers twice after the bye.

### **Green Bay Packers**



### ***December 8, 2013 – Atlanta Falcons at Home***

For the Packers, who already have a stellar offense, which is only going to get better with the addition of Eddie Lacy and Johnathan Franklin on the ground (both of whom I think were great additions made by the Packers in the draft – See LINK - <http://www.footballextrapoints.com/2013/04/your-worst-nightmare-packers-2013-draft.html>), there might not be a defense that can hope to contain them. They can be slowed, but there's no way the Packers are kept off the board. So the biggest challenge for the Packers will be facing an equally dangerous offense. In the case of the Packers regular season schedule, I think that offense will be the Atlanta Falcons.

The Falcons were already on the verge of greatness (having made the post season four of the last five years) with a smart game managing quarterback in Matt Ryan and one of the best receiving trios in the NFL, Roddy White, Julio Jones and Tony Gonzalez. The only thing holding the Falcons back was being anchored on the ground by lead footed Michael Turner. Well, problem solved. Steven Jackson may not be a spring chicken, but he's an elusively fast and smart runner that will add a dimension to the Falcons' offense missing since, well, Turner's first year there. Also, the Falcons defense was not the best last year, but the addition of Osi Umenyiora in free agency, Desmond Trufant and Robert Alford at corner and Malliciah Goodman at defensive end through the draft (and of course, being an ND fan, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention adding Zeke Motta at safety who was an integral part of ND's NCAA leading defense last year) will make them a defense that cannot be taken for granted.

So why do I think this is an important game for the Pack? The Packers are 15 and 13 against the Falcons throughout time, having met numerous times in the past, including three times in the post season, so this is not a novel match up. But this meeting will occur near the end of the season, one in which I believe the Packers can be somewhere around 8-4 or 9-3. A convincing performance against the Falcon's high powered offense can be the difference between finishing the season 4-0 or 0-4. Should be a good test for the Packers and their post season aspirations.

### **Those are Sharks with Frickin Lasers!**

Both the Bears and the Packers have their work cut out for them this year, and both have different challenges. The Bears have a new offensive scheme and a revamped defensive composition. The Packers have more toys on offense with an improved ground game and some patchwork moves on defense. How they fare in 2013 will certainly make for some interesting games. And I can hardly wait for it all to start. 98... 97...96...come on, those sharks with laser won't wait forever!



By Ha Kung Wong (Twitter: [@Rhihan](#))

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## 2 comments:



**Anonymous** June 1, 2013 at 1:10 PM

What do you think about the match ups between the Bears and Packers?

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**Hakung Wong** June 3, 2013 at 6:36 PM

I think it'll be a good match up. Hopefully, by that point of the season, the Bears will have sorted out their new offense and the Packers will have learned to integrate their ground game and sorted out their coverage issues. If you're asking how the games are going to turn out, as a Bears fan, of course I'm rootin for the Bears, but as we all know, both teams give a little extra for these match ups. Either way, football fans win as it will be fun to watch!

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