Safe!

Eric Berlin

Each picture clues a six-letter word. Each combination is a simple numeric cryptogram for one of these words, using the alphabetic positions of the letters. For example, in BANANA, A is the first letter alphabetically, B is the second, and N is the third, so its combination would be 21-31-31.

But in each combination, one of the numbers has been replaced by a zero. This letter is the one you need to take to arrive at the nine-letter answer to this puzzle.

The nine pictures and their combinations are:

- BANANA (01-31-31) (B)
- NEEDLE (42-21-01) (L)
- RECORD (53-10-52) (O)
- COWBOY (23-01-35) (W)
- STEREO (40-13-12) (T)
- GRILLE (20-34-41) (R)
- PONCHO (54-30-24) (C)
- CHEESE (10-22-42) (H)

The answer to this puzzle is BLOWTORCH.

A Word from Our Sponsor

Eric Berlin

Each company whose logo is shown can be paired with one of the wordplay instructions to make the name of a city. In order of the wordplay instructions, these are:

- MITSUBISHI: Delete last four letters; reverse what remains; change the first and last letters to get AUSTIN
- DOVE: Add an R at the end to get DOVER
- MOBIL: Add an E at the end to get MOBILE
- ATARI: Drop the R; add C and H; transpose to get ITHACA
- SUBARU: The first syllable sounds like the first word of SIOUX FALLS
- SOBE: Divide into a pair of bigrams; each bigram begins a word of SOUTH BEND
- SPALDING: Change the last letter to O to get a letter bank of INDIANAPOLIS
- YAMAHA: Change the first two letters to a single, different letter to get OMAHA
- DEL MONTE: Delete the third letter and read NOME backwards in what remains
- MASTERCARD: Change the last two letters to NO; transpose to get SACRAMENTO

The first letters of the cities, in this order, spell out ADMISSIONS.
**Mascots**
*Mark Halpin*

As shown in Tallow’s example, each line of text contains a clue for a word to be entered into the dashes below the image: in some order the first word, second word, and “bookends” word; the word fragments not used in the bookends form a guy’s name. That name and the name of the character shown have exactly one letter in common. The animals all represent figures from the Chinese zodiac (note Tallow’s “Wait ’til next year!” remark). Arranging the common letters in calendar order spells POLK, TAFT, ET AL. for the answer **PRESIDENTS**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>P</th>
<th>Splats (rat)</th>
<th>LEA(PED/RO)GUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>Stroppy (ox)</td>
<td>STAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>McFluff (tiger)</td>
<td>CHAN[NELS/ON]CE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>Pranks (rabbit)</td>
<td>CO[MIC/KEY]ED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Tallow (dragon)</td>
<td>TEA[CHES/TER]SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Fangboy (snake)</td>
<td>MAN[T/RA/VI]AGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Fandango (horse)</td>
<td>LEA[FLET/CHER]RY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Butch (sheep)</td>
<td>SA[TYR/ONE]LINE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Tinkles (monkey)</td>
<td>SPI[ED/GAR]NET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Stumpy (rooster)</td>
<td>CHIC[KEN/NETH]ER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Waggington (dog)</td>
<td>GRAM[MAR/CUS]PS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Mr. Piddly (pig)</td>
<td>PA[L/ANCE]STORS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Benchwarmers**
*Foggy Brume*

Each game actually describes a landmark Supreme Court case.

- Ducks vs. Lambs: Marbury (R) v. Madison (N), notable for being the first time that the Supreme Court declared a law unconstitutional.
- Bulldogs vs. Pitbulls: Dred Scott (O) v. Sandford (S), notable for the Supreme Court establishing that slaves were property.
- Cheetahs vs. Kittens: Plessy (L) v. Ferguson (U). This case upheld the notion of “separate but equal”.
- Grouses vs. Macaws: Korematsu (O) v. United States (T). The Supreme Court sided with the government that, if national security were at stake, Japanese Americans could be interned without cause.
- Helpers vs. Interns: Brown (N) v. Board of Education (C). Overturned Plessy vs. Ferguson, and helped pave the way for integration.
- Frogs vs. Jumpers: Miranda (I) v. Arizona (O). The case that established the Miranda Rights.
- Apples vs. Oranges: Bush (S) v. Gore (R). The 2000 election, in which the Supreme Court decided the outcome.
- Exterminators vs. Nukes: Citizens United (T) v. Federal Election Commission (E). The Supreme Court decided that corporations had free speech rights and should be treated like individuals. Mitt Romney tried to support the decision saying “Corporations are people.”

The first teams listed begin with the letters A through H, and the second teams I through P. Using the score to index into the plaintiff or defendant gets SOLUTION **COUNTERS**.

**Regular Season Metapuzzle**
*MLB Crew*

Each solution is synonymous with one of the team names. In addition, the name of the city of each team, including the spaces, is the same length as the answer word. In the order the teams were presented on the Roster:

- blowtorch
- NEW HAVEN Jets
- presidents
- BOCA RATON Chiefs
- admissions
- NOTRE DAME Confessors
- repreEsentAtion
- SALT LAKE CITY Icons
- attaches
- CAPE COD Clippers
- approPriate
- LITTLE ROCK Fitness
- countErs
- SANTE FE Blocks
- drumSticks
- LONG BEACH Rhythm

To find a space to play, take the letters corresponding with spaces in the city names (2 for Salt Lake City), and you’ll get **WISEACRES**.
Playoffs

Shagging Flies
Foggy Brume

Each of the clue answers is a phrase that contains an insect. However, in the grid, the insect shown in the grid is the one in parenthesis:

- ab(hor net) scape (roach)
- actin(g nat)ural (tick)
- c(l ear wig) gum (weevil)
- cryp(tic) kittens (red ant)
- cu(sp id er) osion (locust)
- exp(lore D a nt) e (midge)
- ha( lf le a) gu(e) termite
- lo( wa sp) oon erism (hornet)
- Je(l eo cust) amer (wasp)
- Je (ter mite) r(e ar wig)
- NA(SCAR ab) use (flea)
- Pee(wee vil) lain (spider)
- Pyra(mid ge)ms (mantis)
- see(m antis)ocial (scarab)
- Ze(ro a ch) ievements (gnat)

It is possible, starting where the wasp should be, to trace out a path from insect to insect. This forms the letters MAM, which along with the otherwise unused MOTH form the answer MAMMOTH.

Athletic Cups
Mark Halpin

The grid can be filled as shown (clue explanations below):

```
1 EIGHTSPO 
2 CAROLERELIC 
3 ONEDGOMBETS 
4 UNCANNEYAGLE 
5 NIIHILISTNAPE 
6 ITOSINCREASEST 
7 LIBERIAHEMAN 
8 BOGOTABOVINE 
9 EGADELDRITCH 
10 PAGEFRIOLE 
11 ENDORES sewer 
12 KARATETIPPLE 
```

Filling the blanks below the grid with the appropriate cup contents yields the message IRON INTEGRATED INTO THICK SHIELD, a final cryptic clue giving the answer DEFENSE (de FE nse).

Clue explanations (* indicates an anagram; " " indicates a homophone):

Across
1A. eight...six initials 1B. PO(MAD)E 2A. CA(ROLE)R 2B. scoundREL I Caught 3A. DONNE* 3B. GOB(LET)S 4A. U+N(C)ANNY 4B. double def. 5A. NI+HI+LIST 5B. (-o)N A PE(-t) 6A. (-v)ITO 6B. SINCE+REST 7A. BIL(-lion)AIRE* 7B. H+NAME reversed 8A. BO(GOT)A 8B. BEN* around (-m)OVI(-e) 9A. rEd GuArD 9B. EL+D(R)ITCH 10A. GRAPE* 10B. "free + holy" 11A. ENDOR+S.E. 11B. double def. 12A. (-p)ARTAKE* 12B. TI(PP+L)E

Cups (in clue order)

Charging the Mound
Nathan Fung

For each price list, the prices follow a certain rule. Using this rule, it is possible to match it to one of the values for the Mounds bar. Each list also has an item whose value is to be identified using that rule.

From left to right, top to bottom:
- $1 per enclosed area in letters matches with Week 4
- The sum of the value of the letters that are Roman numerals (taken in cents) matches Week 1
- $.03 per letter in the first half of the alphabet and $3 per letter in the second half of the alphabet matches with Week 9
- $1 per syllable matches with week 8
- The sum of the letters taken alphabetically (in cents) matches Week 5
- $.03 per letter with ascender and $3 per letter with descender matches Week 7
- Alphanumeric value of the last letter alphabetically (in dollars) matches Week 3
- Atomic number (taken in dollars) of the chemical symbol that matches the first two letters matches Week 6
- $.02 per consonant and $3 per vowel matches Week 2

When ordered by the week list at top, the values to be identified are $16, $15.14, $26, $9, $1.14, $4, $3.15, $12, $15.18. Taken alphabetically this spells out PONZI AND COLOR cluing the answer SCHEMES.

Game Day Tickets
Nathan Fung

When assembled, the pieces will form a cube with standard numbered faces (1 and 6 on opposite sides, 2 and 5 etc). Following the math for the symbols, one will get the numbers 3-12-21-20-3-8. This translates to CLUTCH.
Farm Teams
Mark Halpin
Completed puzzles appear below. Reading spaces with farms column by column in each grid yields three sets of clues:

**TOWERS / ABBR. FOR HOLY MEN** (AAA / STS.)
**PRYNNE’S MARK / OPENLY GAY** (A / OUT)
**SOBER GROUP / A TELETUBBY** (AA / PO)

The first answer in each pair indicates a Minor League division; placing the other answers in division order spells the answer **OUTPOSTS**.

Superstitions
Mark Halpin & Nathan Fung
Each line of text is a clue transformed following a rule. This rule can then be applied to the clued word or phrase to transform it into a string that is two words each with its own associated phobia name (cross grids disambiguate where more than one plausible phobia name exists).

A. Loose irregular poetry with name possibly derived from an animal: DOGGEREL. Insert S between double letters, change last two letters of each word to MS. DOGS GERMS. CYNOPHOBIA / MY(S)OPHOBIA.

B. Playwright who wrote The Tempest: SHAKE-SPEARE. Change H to N and P to F and delete the last letter. SNAKES FEAR. OPH[I]DIOPHOBIA / (P)HOBOPHOBIA.

C. Sanguinary word for somebody who likes violence: BLOODTHIRSTY. Delete L and S, add an N to the end of every word, change Y to EE and D to KS. BOOKS THIRTEEN. B(I)BLIOPHOBIA / T[RI]SKIAIDEKAPHOBIA

D. Word meaning company, rigid too: FIRM. Replace first three letters of each word with a word that sounds phonetically equivalent and add a phonetic letter to the end of each word that is one after the last letter. FUR MEN. (D)ORAPHOBIA / AN[D]ROPHOBIA

E. Dolenz, Nesmith, Tork, and Jones were members of: MONKEES. Take the third letter of any word and add it after the fourth letter (if it exists) and repeat the second letter immediately after itself. MOON KNEES. S[ELENOPHOBIA / G(E)NUPHOBIA

F. In America, the chips in fish and chips: FRENCH FRIES. Change the letter before each I to an L. FRENCH FLIES. F[RAN]COPHOBIA / PTERONA(R) COPHOBIA

G. The Lost Dutchman supposedly had one in Superstition Mountains: GOLD MINE. Delete any L and move the last letter of every other word (starting with the second word) back one letter in the alphabet. GOD MIND. THEOPHOB[I]A / P(S)CHOPHOBIA

H. Biological term for the thinnest fiber type in cytoskeleton made of actin: MICROFILAMENT. Change L to N, A to E, R to EC and add an N before any sixth letter. MICE CONFINEMENT. MU[S]OPHOBIA / C(L)AUSTROPHOBIA

I. The place that is rocked in the song by The Clash: CASBAH. Change both H and T to TS. CATS BATS. A[L]UROPHOBIA / C[H]IROPTOPHOBIA

J. Colloquial name for Australia or Men At Work hit song: DOWN UNDER. Change the first letter of every other word starting with the first word to CL and add STH before every U. CLOWS THUNDER. C(O)ULROPHOBIA / BRON[T]OPHOBIA

K. Chris Sarandon and Colin Ferrell play the same vampire in movies with this name: FRIGHT NIGHT. Add an S to the end of each word; change the first two letters of every other word starting with the first word to HE and change the first letter of every other word starting with the second word to E. HEIGHTS EIGHTS. AC[R]OPHOBIA / OC[T]OPHOBIA

L. Things that are desired: WANTS. Insert an SI prefix (in increasing size) after the second letter of each word. WATER ANTS. (H)[YD]ROPHOBIA / MYRM[E]COPHOBIA


N. Internet tools, for example Google, utilized to find information online. SEARCH ENGINES. For every other word starting with the second word, delete the second and third letters and move the first letter to the end. Then, delete any R. SEA CHINESE. THALA(S)OPHOBIA / [S]INOPHOBIA

The phobia names of each pair can be entered into the corresponding lettered cross so that the first word’s phobia is entered horizontally (and goes over the first number in the clue) and the second is entered vertically (and goes over the second number in the clue).

The 1s in clue order spell out SPIRIDERS CLOTHES and the 2s in clue order spell out BIRDS FISH TREES. These words clue the fears arachnophobia, vestiphobia, ornithophobia, ichthyophobia, dendrophobia whose initial letters spell out the answer **AVOID**.
Team Management
Nathan Fung

The matchboxes can be filled with three entries in each of the ten team categories. The flowchart shows which category the first and last entry are in and also shows arrows to indicate which categories are able to follow each other in the chain. Each arrow is used once.

The entries are as follows:
• Christopher Columbus
• Pabst
• Discus
• Captain Hook
• Luke Skywalker
• Cuban
• Four Thousand
• Goliath
• Delaware
• Leif Erikson
• Marathon
• Crimson
• Seventy
• Molson Coors
• Nepalese
• Castor
• Chippewa
• Jack Sparrow
• Paul Bunyan
• Romulus
• Long Jump
• Sioux
• Yuengling
• Stay Puft Marshmallow Man
• Scarlet
• Long John Silver
• Thirteen
• Henry Hudson
• Libyan
• Burgundy

The letters in the shaded boxes can be placed in the three blanks (in order as they are in the chain) to spell out WORD AND EXCEL ARE IN MICROSOFT THIS cluing the answer OFFICE.

Adjustments to the Lineup
Eric Berlin

The two halves of each grid can be pushed together (“lined up”) in two different ways, to make different sets of words. In each half of the grid, however, is a letter that won’t “go the distance”—it is not used in the longer word. These letters, read in order, spell the word DIVIDING.

Best of Five
MLB Crew

Each answer in the playoffs has five distinct letters. These letters will be used for the sample poker grids.

Game 1
AL East: Full House (Qs over 3s) in the SW-NE diagonal
AL West: Three of a kind (4s, J and 7 kicker) in middle column.
AL East wins 1542-930

Game 2
AL Central: Straight (A-5), middle row
AL Wild: Two pair (Q/Js, 10 kicker), second column
AL Central wins 1115-356

Game 3
NL East: Three of a kind (Aces, J/K kicker), second row
NL West: Straight (5-9), top row
NL West wins, 1135-925

Game 4
NL Central: Full House (5s over As), fourth column
NL Wild: Straight Flush (8-QS), left column
NL Wild wins, 3050-1517

In each case, two cards are not used:
• AL East (9S-A, 8H-O)
• AL West (3D-D, 4D-S)
• AL Central (7H-E, QD-M)
• AL Wild (2H-C, 3S-H)
• NL East (2S-T, 10C-S)
• NL West (8D-A, AC-O)
• NL Central (10H-F, 7S-E)
• NL Wild (6C-D, 5D-I)

If the leftover cards are arranged in suit order, lowest to highest, one gets THE/A/CE0F/ DIAM/ONDS. THE ACE OF DIAMONDS is the answer.
Hardball
Eric Berlin
In this ball-shaped grid, answers conflict in seven places—one direction provides the rebus BALL, and the other direction provides a letter. If you write both of these into the seven spaces, you will have seven circled letters at the end, which spell GRANITE.

Seventh Inning Stretch
Foggy Brume
Each set of clues gives six answers that overlap to form a string. The ends of the string provide the 7th item in a series. In each set, there is one instance of (not seven) given in a clue. A specific number can be substituted to make it work.

Road Trip
Foggy Brume
Each cryptogram can be solved using standard solving techniques:

- Kind of box that stereotypically provides refuge for the urban homeless (Cardboard)
- The name of this European capital literally means “Rivermouth of the sandbars” (Belfast)
- Major party currently controlling the House of Representatives but not the Senate (Republican)
- Along with the King and Joker, it’s often the only other male character in a deck of card (Jack)
- Greek symbol that represents standard deviation in probability statistic (Sigma)
- Military personnel are sometimes awoken at sunrise to this bugle call (Reveille)
- The magazines Soldier of Fortune, Gung Ho!, and Eagle are ostensibly written for this type of professional (Mercenary)

Resolving each answer in the code for that cryptogram gives what appears to be a series of placenames with a letter added:

These are the seven destinations Hope and Crosby went to in the Road to... movies. In film order, the extra letters spell CHARTER.

Tools of the Trade
Eric Berlin
Normal clues, normal answers:

Taking the first letters of the items corresponding with the correct numbers give CALORIE.
Best of Seven

MLB Crew

Each seven-letter answer word can be played as a bingo on the Scrabble board as shown below:

The scores for each word are given, and determine the outcome of their respective games. Additionally, the letters from each play that fall into circles on the board spell out, in diminishing score order, the identity of the Least Valuable Player in this case: THE ORGANIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Player</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHARTER</td>
<td>96 pts</td>
<td>TH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TERPSICHOREAN / HASPS</td>
<td>96 pts</td>
<td>TH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALORIE</td>
<td>95 pts</td>
<td>EOR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALLEGORICAL</td>
<td>95 pts</td>
<td>EOR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRANITE</td>
<td>90 pts</td>
<td>GAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTENSIL</td>
<td>87 pts</td>
<td>IST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIOLUMINESCENT / LEDGE / LIEU</td>
<td>87 pts</td>
<td>IST</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It’s the Wind Up...
Mark Halpin

The grid may be filled as shown to the right. In seven cases, Inward and Outward letters conflict. All of the Inward entries in which this occurs are proper names, and each of the conflicting Outward letters are unique, A-G. Thus, a proper name can be assigned to each of the letters spokes going into the grid; in order: Emmy, Wilma, Fred, Camille, Gilbert, Opal, Babe (the sex symbols with the letters confirm this). Each of these is the name of a hurricane (as hinted by various references in the intro, “wind up” instead of “wind-up”, and the grid itself). Counting into the grid by the 1-5 category of each hurricane spells the answer COURSES.

...and the Pitch
Eric Berlin

Each “pitch” describes two television shows. If you take the start of the first show and the end of the other, you will get a common word, which is clued by one of the Executive Responses. Taking the proper letter of this word and reading down, you get the message ANSWER IS PROGRAM.

- ED/JERICHO = ECHO
- CHARMED/ALICE = CHALICE
- FAME/ELLEN = FALLEN
- CRASH/TREME = CREME
- COACH/ENTOURAGE = COURAGE
- CHEERS/SCRUBS = CHERUBS
- GLEE/ZOOM = GLOOM
- ROME/FRASIER = ROSIER
- GREED/LINGO = GRINGO
- HUNG/CASITLE = HUSTLE
- PROVIDENCE/LOST = PROVOST
- EXTRAS/FRIENDS = EXTENDS
- MONK/HOTEL = MONTEL
- SOAP/HOUSE = SOUSE

Executive Responses
- fallen (a)
- gringo (n)
- souse (s)
- weeper (w)
- extends (e)
- cherubs (r)
- rossier (i)
- hustle (s)
- provost (p)
- courage (r)
- echo (o)
- gloom (g)
- creme (r)
- chalice (a)
- Montel (m)

World Series Meta
MLB Crew

Entering the two answers, PROGRAM and COURSES in the top and bottom respectively is part of the puzzle. One must enter a series of worlds (the planets in our solar system) to complete the puzzle. It is then possible to derive eight 5-letter words reading in the directions of the arrows.

The words are formed (in order of the large circles they pass through) UTTER, CRISP, GEESE, GUSTO, RECTO, AMOUR, SERUM, and RHEAS. The result? A TIE SCORE. Entering this gave solvers the Extra Innings puzzle.
This puzzle is an acrostic where most of the important words in various clues are replaced with numbers. The answers for each puzzle for a particular team can be used to create the first eight clues:

- Blocks: Courses Calorie Counters Avoid
- Confessors: Charter School Admission Schemes
- Rhythm: Utensil for Dividing Drumsticks
- Chiefs: Mammoth Granite Presidents
- Icons: A member of the Representation for the Defense.
- Clippers: Outposts for Attaches
- Fitness: Appropriate from the Office
- Jets: Team for Blowtorch and Clutch

The answers to these clues are (in order), Desserts, Lotteries, Carving Knife, Rushmore, Attorney, Embassies, Embezzle, G.I. Joe

These letters should be enough to ascertain several words of the acrostic text. Notably, each contributes one letter to MUDVILLE, suggesting that the text is either "Casey at the Bat" or a pastiche of it. Working from just these letters, and starting to fill in the remaining words, one gets the pastiche text:

"Oh, somewhere in this favored land the sun is shining bright;
Your team is solving something, and the answers fit just right,
And somewhere men are riddling, and somewhere puzzlers shout;
But there's no a-ha in Mudville — Casey's answer was struck out"

Working backwards, it’s possible to determine what the words in the other 22 clues are supposed to be. (The clues are conveniently ordered alphabetically by missing word.) In addition, each word that has been replaced with a 1 can be matched up with one of the 22 teams that did not make the playoffs. In order:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early</th>
<th>Advance</th>
<th>Leapfrogs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humans</td>
<td>Anthropologists</td>
<td>Primates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Down Under</td>
<td>Australians</td>
<td>Wallabies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The White Shadow</td>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>Nets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twenty One</td>
<td>Blackjacks</td>
<td>Saps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aguilera</td>
<td>Burlesque</td>
<td>Strips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russe</td>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>Spiders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draughts</td>
<td>Checkerboard</td>
<td>Squares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlights</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Spawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housewives</td>
<td>Desperate</td>
<td>Rash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice</td>
<td>Frankfurter</td>
<td>Dogs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heat</td>
<td>Incandescence</td>
<td>Glow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the Move</td>
<td>Mannequin</td>
<td>Dummies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samsa</td>
<td>Metamorphosis</td>
<td>Commuters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rene Descartes</td>
<td>Philosopher</td>
<td>Deep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallace</td>
<td>Prevaricate</td>
<td>Fibbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payton Manning</td>
<td>Quarterback</td>
<td>Eagles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chambord</td>
<td>Raspberries</td>
<td>Cheers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>Shakedown</td>
<td>Squeeze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorktown</td>
<td>Surrender</td>
<td>Uncles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Ruffin</td>
<td>Temptations</td>
<td>Sirens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harold Hutchins</td>
<td>Underpants</td>
<td>Boxers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We now have synonyms for each team, not just the eight that made the play-offs. Using the same technique we used in Round 1, we can get 1 to 2 letters per team by lining up the synonym and city. (eg. Hilton Head/Temptations)

- temptaTions
- Hilton Head Sirens
- metastorphosis
- Atlantic City Commuters
- checkErboard
- Mount Vernon Squares
- blowtorch
- New Haven Jets
- presIdents
- Boca Raton Chiefs
- mannequin
- La Crosse Dummies
- surrender
- Moose Jaw Uncles
- underpants
- Des Moines Boxers
- quarterBack
- Kansas City Eagles
- admIssions
- Notre Dame Confessors
- australIans
- Walla Walla Wallabies
- despeRate
- Santa Ana Rash
- repreSentAtion
- Salt Lake City Icons
- austraLians
- Walla Walla Wallabies
- desperAte
- Salt Lake City Icons
- countErs
- Santa Fe Blocks
- burlesque
- Las Vegas Strips
- drumsticks
- children
- San Jose Spawn
- San Diego Spiders

Reading the letters from all 30 teams this way gives you the answer: THE WINNERS ARE ALL CRACKERJACK SOLVERS.