

THE GOONZETTE

Digital Culture • Commentary • Analysis

Daily Edition - Saturday, January 31, 2026

Week 17 NFL Recap: Some Teams Built Different, Others Just Built Wrong

Kia ora, whakataukī warriors and football fanatics!

Just wrapped another wild week in the NFL, and bruv, some of these teams are straight up embarrassing their ancestors right now. Week 17 had everything - playoff hopes getting bodied harder than a rookie running crossing routes, some absolute cinema from unexpected places, and enough drama to make reality TV producers weep with joy.

The Good, The Bad, and The Absolutely Cooked

Let me start with the real ones who showed up this week. You know what they say - "He tangata, he tangata, he tangata" - it is people, it is people, it is people. And some of these squads proved they got the right people in the right spots when it matters most.

Watching teams fight for playoff positioning had me feeling all nostalgic for those December games where everything's on the line. Your body's held together by tape and prayers, but you still gotta perform because that's what separates the wheat from the chaff, or as we say, the kumara from the rotten ones.

The teams that stepped up? Absolutely sending it. Clean execution, leaders taking charge, no cap - that's how you honor the game. But then you got these other squads out here playing like they learned football from TikTok tutorials. Just straight mid energy when the lights get brightest.

Playoff Picture Looking Spicy

Bro, this playoff race is tighter than my old shoulder pads after retirement weight hit different. Teams that looked cooked three weeks ago are suddenly looking like they might sneak in through the back door. Meanwhile, some "contenders" are folding faster than origami in a hurricane.

The beauty of this league is "Kia kaha" - be strong - because you literally cannot show weakness for even one quarter or you'll get exposed harder than someone's browser history. These December games separate the pretenders from the real ones, and some of these "championship" rosters are showing they built different... differently bad.

****Coaching Decisions That Had Me Shook****

Can we talk about some of these coaching decisions though? I've seen some galaxy brain plays that made perfect sense, and others that had me wondering if these dudes were calling plays with a magic 8-ball.

There's this whakatauki: "He aha te mea nui o te ao? He tangata, he tangata, he tangata" - What is the most important thing in the world? It is people. But sometimes I swear these coaches forget they got actual human beings who need to execute these wild schemes they're drawing up.

Fourth down calls that made zero sense, timeouts burned like they're going out of style, and some defensive coordinators calling plays like they're still coaching in 1995. The game's evolved, my guys - adapt or get left behind looking absolutely cooked.

****Injury Report: Bodies Dropping****

This time of year, everyone's banged up. Your injury report looks like a phone book, and dudes are playing through stuff that would have normal humans calling in sick to their desk jobs. Mad respect to all the players grinding through pain right now - that's that Māori warrior spirit, pushing through when your people need you most.

But also, some of these teams need to be smarter about player management. Can't have your stars looking like they went ten rounds with a cement mixer just to maybe make the playoffs. "Manakitanga" - looking after people - applies to your roster too, coaches.

****Looking Ahead: Week 18 About to Be Cinema****

Week 18's gonna be straight fire, no question. Teams fighting for their playoff lives, others trying to play spoiler, and some squads already thinking about their vacation plans.

The teams that embrace that "kia kaha" mentality and don't fold under pressure? They're gonna feast. But the ones showing up with that soft energy, playing not to lose instead of playing to win? They're about to get humbled real quick.

Props to all the ballers still grinding in December - whether you're fighting for a ring or just trying to finish strong, respect the game and it'll respect you back.

Stay strong, stay hungry, and remember - in the NFL, just like in life, you're only as good as your last play.

****M**auri ora!**

***T**ommy out* 

Beyond Treaties: Why Indigenous Rights Require More Than Legal Recognition

The conversation around Indigenous rights in America remains trapped in a colonial framework that views our sovereignty as something granted rather than something inherent. As we navigate the complex terrain of federal Indian law in 2024, it's time to shift from defensive positions to strategic offense—not just protecting what remains, but reclaiming what was never legitimately taken.

The Limitation of Legal Victories

Recent Supreme Court decisions have delivered mixed results for Indian Country. While we've seen important victories in cases like **McGirt v. Oklahoma**, affirming tribal jurisdiction over much of eastern Oklahoma, we've also witnessed concerning erosions of tribal authority in cases like **Castro-Huerta**. These legal ping-pong matches reveal a fundamental problem: we're playing by rules written by those who sought to eliminate us.

The federal recognition process exemplifies this backward logic. Tribes that have existed for millennia must prove their continuity to a government that has spent centuries trying to destroy that very continuity. It's like asking survivors of arson to prove their house existed while the arsonist holds the matches and the insurance papers.

Economic Sovereignty as Cultural Survival

True Indigenous rights must encompass economic self-determination. Gaming revenues have provided crucial resources for many tribes, but we cannot mistake one revenue stream for genuine economic sovereignty. The Ho-Chunk Nation's diversified approach—combining gaming with renewable energy projects, traditional agriculture, and technology ventures—offers a more sustainable model.

Consider what real economic sovereignty looks like: control over natural resources on our lands, the right to regulate commerce within our territories, and the authority to determine our own taxation systems

without federal interference. These aren't radical concepts—they're the basic attributes of sovereignty that other nations take for granted.

The Biden Administration's commitment to renewable energy presents unprecedented opportunities. Tribes control significant portions of America's renewable energy potential, particularly wind and solar resources. Strategic partnerships that respect tribal sovereignty while addressing climate change could reshape the economic landscape of Indian Country—if we negotiate from positions of strength rather than dependency.

Cultural Rights in the Digital Age

Indigenous rights extend far beyond gaming compacts and federal funding formulas. Our cultural and intellectual property faces new threats in the digital era. Sacred sites appear on Instagram without context or consent. Traditional knowledge gets packaged into wellness trends without attribution or compensation. Our stories become content for streaming platforms that never consulted with the communities they're depicting.

We need robust legal frameworks protecting Indigenous cultural rights, but we also need proactive strategies. Some tribes are developing their own media companies, creating digital archives under tribal control, and establishing protocols for researchers and artists seeking to engage with traditional knowledge.

The Sovereignty Spectrum

Federal Indian law often treats sovereignty as binary—you either have it or you don't. Reality is more complex. Sovereignty exists on a spectrum, and different tribes exercise it differently based on their unique circumstances, resources, and strategic priorities.

Some tribes focus on jurisdictional authority, building robust court systems and law enforcement capabilities. Others prioritize economic development or cultural preservation. The most successful approaches integrate all these elements while remaining adaptable to changing circumstances.

Beyond Government-to-Government Relations

The "government-to-government" relationship framework, while important, can inadvertently limit how we think about Indigenous rights. It positions tribal governments as junior partners in a federal system rather than as the original sovereigns of this continent.

International law offers alternative frameworks. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which the U.S. finally endorsed in 2010, recognizes Indigenous peoples' right to self-determination and control over traditional territories. While not legally binding, it provides moral and political leverage in domestic debates.

Strategic Imperatives

Moving forward, Indigenous rights advocacy must be simultaneously local and global, rooted in specific tribal priorities yet connected to broader movements for Indigenous self-determination worldwide.

We must also build strategic alliances beyond Indian Country. Climate justice advocates, criminal justice reformers, and economic equality movements often share our interests, even when they don't recognize the connections.

Most importantly, we must continue the fundamental work of nation-building—strengthening our governments, economies, and cultural institutions so that our rights claims rest not just on historical treaties or federal recognition, but on the demonstrated capacity to exercise sovereignty effectively.

The next chapter of Indigenous rights will be written by those who understand that survival isn't enough. We're here not just to endure, but to flourish as distinct peoples with inherent rights that predate and transcend the American legal system.

Hoocak Haci Njjc