You know what time it is! It’s time for Week 2 of What we Learned. This past week we watched our boys in blue (though technically it was all-white this go around,) travel to Green Bay for some seriously intense MNF. The last time Detroit travelled to Green Bay, we got a taste… maybe more like a full platter of the NFL’s famous *Rigged Casserole.* It was hands down the most poorly officiated game that I’ve ever watched, and as a Lions fan that’s saying something. Were the officials to blame for this loss too? Let’s find out.

**Linebacker may be more important to fill this offseason than Wide Receiver**

What was the worst group of players the Lions had entering the season? I’m sure a lot of you would say wide receiver, and I wouldn’t fault you for that. However, after watching Aaron Rodgers carve up the Lions linebacker core like a thanksgiving turkey, it’s becoming painfully obvious how dreadful the linebackers are for this team.

I’m specifically pointing fingers at the now available-by-trade Jamie Collins and Alex Anzalone. I think a statement for them that fits perfectly is this: “I know our expectations for you were low, but *holy crud*.” Granted, Collins was thrown into the fire and Anzalone wasn’t expected to be an elite starter when he was brought in. Nonetheless, they were both lackluster at best.

The problems the Lions have go beyond the linebacker core, and filling all of them combined with Goff’s contract situation is just one of the issues the team has.

**TJ Hockenson is still a Unit**

Not much of news here, but I’d like to say that I was one of those who heavily supported the pick when it was made in 2019. Every week he makes more plays that just amaze me, and the fact that he can block as well as he can receive. The pass from Jared Goff was perfect and the catch from Hockenson was just as good. Notice how I didn’t even have to say what or when the catch was, you probably believed it. Good thing, because it was true. It was legitimately one of the best catches I’ve seen in the past few seasons.

I’ll be frank; if Hockenson goes down, I’m fairly certain the Lions will win one game, at most, the rest of the season. It’s not just the fact that he’s so good, but also the Lions receiving core is depleted, injured and mostly deprived of talent. The run game hasn’t looked that bad, but because the defense has been so flimsy the first two weeks, the Lions have had to stick with passing the ball. Hockenson is a big reason the games they’ve played have been competitive. I can’t wait to see this guy only get better.   
  
Let’s go Hockeye.

**Quintez Cephus is starting to bloom**

Somewhat contradicting what I said in the last point, I think we’re watching Cephus begin a rise in the lineup. In training camp, he admittedly wasn’t talked about a lot, which is concerning since the Lions have a bottom-three receiving core in the league. You’d think the only returning receiver for the team would be the most talked about, but here we are.

Thus far into the season, it’s clear with Williams hurt and the lack of options for Goff outside of one man named TJ, Cephus has become a firm number two option for QB1. He nearly made one of the greatest catches in Lions history on Monday and was only one Kevin King arm shy of making it. I like what I’m seeing thus far from him, especially when it’s anyone’s game to step up and make a big-time impact.

**Goff shows flashes, lacks consistency, and it’s not enough**

I’ll be honest, I wasn’t expecting a lot of great play from Goff when he showed up. When Taylor Decker went down and with Williams injured it’s not anything out of the ordinary to expect Goff to struggle. However, I’ll admit he’s looked good from time to time. The problem is that he lacks consistently solid play, and that’s his biggest downfall.

Look no further than the Green Bay game for an example. Sure, the defense did him no favors, but an elite quarterback shouldn’t be relying on his defense to win games. In the first half, the Lions competed with one of the best teams in the NFC and held the lead at halftime. What happened when Goff stalled outand turned back into the turnover machine himself? The Lions scored zero points in the entire half and ultimately lost by three scores after controlling a halftime lead.   
  
Goff clearly has something left in the tank. The problem lies in his consistency. If he can remain in *‘Elite Goff’* form, he may be able to stay as the starter. This is the Goff from the first half of the Packers game and late into the 49ers game. But, if he keeps reverting back to *‘Turnover machine Goff’,* it won’t be long until it’s his time to leave Detroit.

**The officials bent Detroit, but their own mistakes broke them**

It was bittersweet for the Lions because on one hand I did notice a few confusing calls against the Lions but in reality, it didn’t truly end their chances to upset the Packers. The biggest call I didn’t understand was the intentional grounding penalty on Jared Goff where not only was he out of the pocket when he threw the ball, but his arm was hit as he was throwing it. First the officials ruled the ball as a fumble, which was quite hilarious.

Then they seemingly got the call right when they immediately made it 4th down instead. Lions fans felt a wave of relief by the call, the game was still barely in reach. Then came a wave of confusion when the officials announced intentional grounding. Sorry, what? The replay clearly showed Goff out of the pocket and getting hit as he threw the ball, so what gives? There were some other moments I didn’t agree with, but in the end, turning the ball over so many times in the second half of play was enough for Detroit to bury themselves.   
  
At least, in my opinion, this one didn’t come down to the officials screwing us over. Bittersweet…. Bittersweet indeed.

**What do you think about these takes? Let me know!**