



Clearly, three weeks does not a season make. And clearly, not every time you smell smoke is there a fire that requires you to run screaming from your house. But when I watch Brandon Weeden play quarterback for the Cleveland Browns, I see and smell smoke. A lot of smoke. And if I was keeping a safe distance from the Weeden glee that spread around town after the Browns took him with the 22nd pick in last April's NFL, well, I'm putting my head down and running for the hills now.

Brandon Weeden is a forest fire. He'll leave only charred earth before he's replaced (and in all likelihood that'll happen during next year's NFL draft).

And this is yet another Cleveland Indians-free Weekend Wrap.

Where's the 'Elite'?

Can someone tell me what Brandon Weeden does at an elite level? I'm honestly and truly looking and I'm coming up as empty as the promise of better days ahead. I guess I'm looking so hard because I have to assume in taking Weeden 22nd in the first round six months the Browns saw something that resembled promise and something that foretold of the 28-year old turning around the position (at least) and maybe the franchise.

But I don't see what they must have seen.

I see a guy with a better arm than the guy who held down the position for the past couple years, no doubt about that. But I can look in on most college games and see that. I can surely watch mediocre QBs on Sunday who possess strong arms. That doesn't make them 'elite' NFL quarterback material in and of itself.

Brandon Weeden has a lot more RPMs on the ball than the other guys on the roster but that can't be the only determination that went into drafting him.

I also don't see a guy who processes the game in an elite manner. Weeden isn't running the no-huddle offense and clinically dissecting and reading NFL defenses, calling audibles at the line of scrimmage and surgically removing the heart and the will of opponents. I keep hearing, "He's bright enough" but that's not elite either.

We've seen that Weeden is not mobile and we've seen, through the small sample of three games, that's he's not all that accurate when he puts that big arm into use and goes down the field. Sunday, in another dispiriting loss, this one a 24-14 loss to the Bills at CBS, Weeden threw two more interceptions and averaged less than six yards per attempt. He under-threw open receivers (again and again) and took four more sacks that crushed the Browns.

So we know or have learned that Weeden's not mobile, he's not some physically gifted offensive wizard and he can't escape pressure or keep plays alive with his legs. Oh, and he also needs help around him so he doesn't have to shoulder the load alone.

So tell me again, how did expending the 22nd pick on that guy, a guy we already had who was fully capable of under-throwing open receivers down field, help this franchise at all?

And before any of you consider the above and believe it's an endorsement of the guy who was here before, it's not. It's simply a case of first round picks being extremely valuable and this regime screwing the pooch with a selection that didn't make sense then and doesn't make sense today.

On Sunday I watched a few 3rd and 15's result in six yard throws. I watched the Buffalo defense

put eight defenders in the box and dare the Browns to throw the football and I watched, again, a QB who's not elite make bad throws to bad 2nd round receivers and I watched yet another Browns loss.

Weeden is a huge reason this team has very little upside, but he's not the only reason. We're going to get our umpteenth reboot from a coaching and front office standpoint and we're probably going to get it sooner (before October ends) rather than later (the end of the season). After all, it was this front office that decided to select Weeden and that provides him with his 'weapons' and 'battle plan'.

'Talent' aside, this Browns team couldn't be easier to game plan for if they sent opposing teams their play sheet FedEx every Tuesday. Any defensive coordinator who isn't asleep would be wise to double the Browns TEs on first stand and stack the box for the inevitable 2nd and long run that's called to keep 3

rd

downs manageable as opposed to scaring teams. Because apparently 3

rd

and 8 is much more manageable for Weeden than 3

rd

and 10. And on 3

rd

down you outside pressure on Weeden, collapse the pocket and then get giddy knowing the play will result in either a 10 yard sack or a throw into coverage.

Lather, rinse, and repeat every single possession.

The good news is I firmly believe that in 3-5 years new owner Jimmy Haslam will fix this suck and put an organization in place that actually appears to have a clue. The bad news is that by then your 1st round QB will be 32-35 and probably out of the league and you still have to watch another 45-77 games of this crap every Sunday.

But there's a gleam, men. Sure, that gleam may be playing middle school or freshman football right now, but there's a gleam.

Muy Bien (It is National Spanish Heritage Month, After All)

~ I asked for Jordan Cameron last week and I got him this week. Five catches for 45 yards isn't typically anything to rave about but Cameron was active from a game day roster perspective and active in the offense. I want to see Cameron become a staple of the passing offense and sooner rather than later.

That's pretty much it for that category and that was a reach.

Muy Mal

~ Have I mentioned how underwhelmed I am by starting QB Brandon Weeden? I have? Okay then...

~ Pat Shurmur is the coaching equivalent of Brandon Weeden. He probably belongs in the league in a capacity that doesn't involve him being seen too often but I sure don't want him leading my team on the field. From his unimaginative game calling to his inexplicable decisions to follow up using a precious timeout with a draw to the middle of the field, nothing Shurmur does works.

It's that simple really. Shurmur and Weeden are both probably good guys, decent human beings and entitled to make a living in the NFL. I just hope both end up doing it in Kansas City or Carolina or somewhere far away from where I am.

~ Why the hell has Brandon Jackson been inactive the last two weeks? By all accounts he's healthy and isn't nursing some mysterious ailment. And he was a guy you targeted and acquired two years ago because of his ability as a 3rd down back to run the ball, catch the ball and do a really nice job on pass protection out of the backfield. So why the hell is Chris Ogbonnaya getting 3rd down reps while Jackson isn't even dressing?

Special teams? Is that the reason? Is Ogbonnaya, who was on the street a year ago at this time, suddenly so indispensable on special teams that a guy you're paying \$2million to this season suddenly has no role in your shitty and pathetic offense that, at least to my eyes, could use someone who can run, catch and block?

These things don't go unnoticed. Not by me, many other fans or Jimmy Haslam, I'd have to imagine. It's just another straw on the camel's back that will help explain why Mike Holmgren has a lot more time on his hands in a few months (well, maybe not a LOT more given the time he actually building this organization here now is minimal anyway).

~ Paging Jabaal Sheard. Jabaal Sheard, please report to the Browns defensive line at any time to potentially show up and make a play.

~ I could literally write another 2,000 words on more of the 'Muy Mal' from Sunday's game. The decisions of Josh Cribbs to bring certain kicks out from eight or nine yards deep, Buster Skrine getting pushed all over the field, D'Qwell Jackson's borderline but dumb late hit penalty, and on and on.

But the worst of the worst is the Browns travel to Baltimore with a short work week behind them to face the Ravens on Thursday night. In front of a national television audience. And Brandon Weeden will call and 'execute' the plays Pat Shurmur calls against the Ravens defense while the Browns defense chases Ray Rice all over the field and Buster Skrine will likely be lined up at some point against Anquan Boldin. Ugliness will ensue.

Where there's smoke, there's fire. Run away.

Not Ready for Prime Time

No...not the Browns, although that's clearly the case.

I'm talking about the Buckeyes as they get set to open Big Ten play next Saturday against the Michigan State Spartans. The Buckeyes played their final 'tune up' this past Saturday against UAB and looked less than stellar.

But unlike the Browns I actually expect to see some improvement each week from Ohio State as they get further away from the Jim Tressel era and adopt and embrace the style and philosophies of Urban Meyer.

Even more so than getting more accustomed to Meyer's process and philosophies, the biggest factor in being high on the Buckeyes is 'In Braxton I Trust'. What a ridiculously talented QB the Buckeyes have in Miller.

Saturday wasn't a banner day for Miller or the Buckeyes but Miller again scored a couple of big TDs running the football and continues to exhibit an athleticism and elusiveness that can carry OSU past many teams in the country. His passing is still coming around but he took care of the football Saturday and didn't turn it over. Compare and contrast that to the display put on by Denard Robinson for Michigan against Notre Dame Saturday night when Robinson's interceptions actually outnumbered the number of points Michigan scored.

The difference is that Robinson is a KR or flanker playing QB while Miller still has the chance to develop into a very good passer.

Much like Troy Smith morphed from a run-only threat to a deadly passer, you can also see Miller learning when and where to pick his spots each week. A big test of how far he's come and how far he has to go comes Saturday at 330pm in East Lansing.

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