

A quarterback controversy? We know how to do that. And it's about the only thing this season has been missing. In "The Morning After", Papa Cass looks back on yesterdays shocking home overtime win over the Chiefs , and comments on what appears to be yet another blossoming QB controversy. Things get started back up quickly for the Browns this week, as they travel to Pittsburgh for a Thursday night game.



Browns 31, Chiefs 28, OT
Record: 4-8

As we were riding in for Sunday's game -- the first Browns regular season game I've been to in three years -- I told my friend Justin something that should probably have been filed under "Captain Obvious observations";

"You know, if the Browns win this one, it's probably going to be a nail-biter";

Well, duh. When's the last time a Browns win has involved you kicking back in the fourth quarter and scanning the TV menu to see who is playing in the 4:00 games?

Every Browns win in recent years has likely involved you biting your lip, hoping against all hope that the Browns wouldn't make that one dumb mistake that costs them the game.

Well, guess what? The Browns made that dumb mistake, and still won. Chalk it up to incremental progress after last week's 30-0 debacle against Cincinnati.

Derek Anderson, subbing for Charlie Frye after he injured his wrist, had a chance to drive into winning field goal position with less than a minute to play in regulation. The Browns had the ball thanks to a strip of Trent Green and recovery by Willie McGinest.

Then Anderson wound up and fired a fastball that was promptly picked off and returned to near

midfield. The Browns dodged a bullet when Kansas City couldn't get into field goal range before time expired.

Unlike the fate that has befallen Frye so many times this year, Anderson actually had a chance to redeem himself, and he cashed in.

Cleveland forced Kansas City to punt off the initial overtime possession. With the Browns' ensuing drive about to stall around the Chiefs 40, Anderson pulled down the ball on a broken play and ran for the sideline. He spun out of tackle, cut back and sprinted 33 yards up the sideline, down to the Chiefs 12. Two running plays set up a Phil Dawson kick, and everyone in brown and orange left the lakefront happy for just the second time this year.

Anderson was the story of the game, and, like it or not, an instant quarterback controversy has just erupted.

Anderson didn't outplay Frye by much. Anderson racked up 171 yards rushing to Frye's 122, but Anderson's completing percentage was far lower, 12-of-21 to Frye's 11-of-13.

But it was Anderson's poise under pressure that really grabbed the attention of those at Cleveland Browns Stadium Sunday. At least the ones that stuck around.

With the Browns trailing 28-14 and fans streaming out of the stadium on a bitter cold afternoon, resigned to another loss, Anderson rallied the Browns to a pair of fourth quarter touchdown drives.

What was most surprising was his apparent feel for the game. He let the game come to him, and then reacted. On several occasions, with the play breaking down around him, he'd find his checkdown receiver crossing in front of him, shovel him the ball, and turn a would-be implosion into a 10-yard gain.

It's the type of read-and-react skills we have seldom seen from Frye this year. After watching Anderson come out of the background to lead a come-from-behind win, I'm beginning to wonder if Frye has been overcoached.

After weeks and weeks of "don't do this/remember to do that" ad nauseum, it's no wonder that Frye appears to be walking on eggshells sometimes, like a golfer who's been given too many tips on improving his swing.

Anderson simply let his natural abilities take over, and it worked. He never seemed rattled out there, even after the critical interception he threw. Of course, it's not going to be that simple every week, particularly if opposing teams start to build a scouting report on Anderson, but I think there does come a point where you simply have to turn your quarterback loose.

Regardless of whether Frye is ready to play in time for Thursday's rematch with the Steelers, it's apparent that, in yet another that has devolved into open tryouts for next season, Anderson deserves another look under center.

At this point, no option should be turned down. The quarterback of the future is the one who can lead this team to wins. It might be Frye. It might be Anderson. It might be neither. The point of the final four games should be to find out.

Up next: At Pittsburgh, Thursday, 8 p.m.