

16 Truths About the Browns Schedule in 2013

Written by {ga=tommoore}

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In less than three weeks, the Cleveland Browns will take the field for the 2013 NFL season facing one of the easier schedules, at least on paper, in the league.

The Browns will play the [21st easiest schedule](#) , based on the 2012 record of their opponents, this fall. Their home schedule is the 25th easiest, but their road schedule is the 11th toughest.

While past performance does not indicate future success, except in the Browns case as they have somehow managed to win five or fewer games eight times in the past 10 years, it's interesting to think about what the Browns will be facing this year.

So let's run through the schedule, week by week, with 16 truths – one for each opponent – to help Browns fans sleep better at night. Many of the truths are offense related, which makes the anticipation of Ray Horton unleashing his new defense that much more tantalizing.

Week 1 vs. Miami: Through the Dolphins first three preseason games, linebacker Dion Jordan has played just 10 snaps on defense, in large part because his surgically repaired shoulder is still bothering him. Miami defensive coordinator Kevin Coyle has gone on record as saying that it not realistic to think that Jordan can compete for a starting spot. And, by the way, the Dolphins

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traded up to No. 3 in the draft to select Jordan.

On offense, starting [left tackle Jonathan Martin has been getting abused daily in practice](#) , with *The Miami Herald* that a good day in practice for Martin is one where he is not photographed lying on his back after getting beat on a play.

Week 2 at Baltimore: The NFL did the Browns no favors in sending them to Baltimore for the Ravens home opener – the game where they will receive their Super Bowl rings.

But outside linebackers Paul Kruger (in his return to Baltimore), Jabaal Sheard and Barkevious Mingo (if he is healthy) can make it a long day for Baltimore quarterback Joe Flacco by working over offensive tackles Bryant McKinnie, who reported to training camp out of shape, and [Michael Oher, who allowed Flacco to be sacked or knocked down 20 times last season](#)

Week 3 at Minnesota: Vikings quarterback Christian Ponder averaged just six yards per attempt in 2012, even lower than the much-maligned Brandon Weeden.

[Ponder's 1,298 Yards in the Air \(which is passing yards minus yards after the catch\) ranked dead last](#)

out of 27 qualifying quarterbacks. He passed for just 269 yards on deep throws (nine quarterbacks passed for more than 1,000 yards on such throws last year) and the quarterback who is closest to Ponder on deep throws in his backup, Matt Cassel.

Week 4 vs. Cincinnati: Is Cincinnati quarterback Andy Dalton a good quarterback, or just an average one who looks better because he gets to throw to A.J. Green on a regular basis?

[Dalton scored a grade of -5.0 as a passer last year](#) , was below average in accuracy on deep passes (completing 32.8 percent, ranking 20th out of 23 qualified quarterbacks), and took the third-most sacks in the NFL.

Week 5 vs. Buffalo: The Bills let guard Andy Levitre, the best player on their offensive line,

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leave in free agency. Buffalo is looking to replace him either with Colin Brown, who has played just 155 snaps in four NFL seasons, or [Doug Legursky, who has a cumulative grade of -36.4](#) from Pro Football Focus over the past three seasons.

It's not hard to imagine that Desmond Bryant, Ahtya Rubin and Phil Taylor have this game circled on their calendars.

Week 6 vs. Detroit: Sometime this season, Detroit quarterback Matthew Stafford will likely pass Bobby Layne as the Lions career leader in passing yards and touchdowns. Layne last threw a pass in Honolulu Blue and Silver in 1958, which says more about the quarterbacks that Detroit has employed in the past 55 years than it does about Stafford. In July, Detroit gave Stafford a contract extension worth a guaranteed \$41.5 million. In four years as the Lions quarterback, Stafford is 1-23 against teams with a winning record.

Week 7 at Green Bay: Quarterback Aaron Rodgers was sacked 51 times last season and has gone down an average of 40 times a year since becoming the Packers starter in 2008. Evan Dietrich-Smith will be the full-time starter at center for the first time this season and Bryan Bulaga, possibly Green Bay's best offensive lineman, is out for the season after tearing his ACL during a team scrimmage.

□ **Week 8 at Kansas City:** If corner back Joe Haden can contain Kansas City wide receiver Dwayne Bowe, it could be a long day for Chiefs quarterback Alex Smith.

Jonathan Baldwin graded out at -2.4 last season, [Donnie Avery was at -10.4 with one of the league's highest drop rates \(18.42 percent\)](#) and even though he could be considered a deep threat because of his speed, Smith doesn't have the arm strength to actually get the ball deep to anyone.

Week 9 vs. Baltimore: The Ravens may go into the season with as many as [10 different starters from last year's team](#) ; six on defense and four on offense. In the Super Bowl era, no previous winner of that game has lost more than five starters the following season.

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Oh, and Art Modell is still not in the Hall of Fame.

▣ **Week 11 at Cincinnati:** The Bengals have somehow made the playoffs in consecutive years but have only scored one offensive touchdown in eight quarters of postseason play.

The Browns also have as many playoff wins since 1990 as the Bengals, even with Cleveland not having a team for three years.

Week 12 vs. Pittsburgh: Despite having an offensive line that features two first-round draft picks (Maurkice Pouncey and David DeCastro) and two second-round draft picks (Mike Adams and Marcus Gilbert), the Steelers have one of the worst offensive lines in the NFL, [finishing last season ranked No. 25 by Pro Football Focus](#)

Week 13 vs. Jacksonville: Jaguar quarterbacks Blaine Gabbert and Chad Henne played almost the same number of offensive snaps in 2012, with [posting a grade of -4.3 and Henne grading out at -7.3](#) [Gabbert](#) (according to Pro Football Focus).

Jacksonville may be the only team that would improve at quarterback if they signed Tim Tebow.

Week 14 at New England: In 2012, New England quarterback Tom Brady completed 75 percent of his passes, threw for 73 percent of his yards and 76 percent of his touchdown passes to the receiving quartet of Wes Welker, Brandon Lloyd, Rob Gronkowski and Aaron Hernandez.

In 2013, Welker is in Denver, Lloyd is still a free agent, Gronkowski has yet to play in the preseason following off-season surgeries on his back and forearm, and Hernandez is currently in a 7-by-10-foot jail cell at the Bristol County House of Corrections.

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In their place on the [Patriots depth chart](#) are Danny Amendola, who has only played a full season once in four years and has played just 12 games total over the past two years; Julian Edelman, who played quarterback in college (although you should never underestimate the importance of having a Kent State man on your roster); and rookies Aaron Dobson and John Boyce.

Week 15 vs. Chicago: The [Bears may field the oldest starting lineup in the NFL](#) this season, good news for teams that will face them later in the season. (By comparison, the Browns are projected to field the youngest starting lineup.) Age could be a big issue on defense, as Julius Peppers is 33, Lance Briggs and Charles Tillman are 32, and D.J. Williams is 31.

Trent Richardson, Greg Little and Josh Gordon could have fun running those old guys into the turf.

Week 16 at New York Jets: Mark Sanchez has been in the NFL for four years and [earned a cumulative grade of -80.1](#) from Pro Football Focus. That pretty much says everything you need to know.

Even if Sanchez has been replaced at quarterback by rookie Geno Smith by the time the Browns arrive in town, who are Sanchez or Smith going to throw the ball to? Santonio Holmes is recovering from an injury that forced him to miss 12 games in 2012, Stephen Hill had two touchdown receptions in the season opener then had just one the rest of the season, and old friend Braylon Edwards is back with Gang Green.

Week 17 at Pittsburgh: [Eric Metcalf returning punts](#) . [51-0](#) . [Bernie Kosar to Webster Slaughter](#)

When you look at the Browns schedule this way, 16-0 may be a bit of a reach, but 14-2 sure seems like a lock, doesn't it?