

Three (Non-Quarterback) Things To Watch In Week 2

Written by {ga=papabearjere}

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All eyes will be on Brandon Weeden when the Browns travel to Baltimore to take on the Ravens. Here are three other things to watch for:

1. The Offensive Line

To be honest, this column could have just as easily been called Three Non-Offensive Line Things To Watch For, because after last week's debacle, everyone's eyes will be focused on the trenches when the Browns have the ball. Obviously the Browns' line, particularly Oniel Cousins, struggled with the Dolphins interior rush, and the job doesn't get any easier this week as the Browns will see perennial All-Pro nose tackle Haloti Ngata and the rest of the Baltimore front seven.

The play of the offensive line will be critical if the Browns are going to have any shot at winning on Sunday. Brandon Weeden is simply not a good enough quarterback to make up for deficiencies in the rest of the team. The Browns need to play well around their quarterback, and nowhere is that more true than on the offensive line. Brandon Weeden struggles mightily when it comes to dealing with the pass rush. It's not just that Weeden is slow; he doesn't have the pocket presence to make the slight movements within the pocket to buy extra time and create throwing lanes to his targets, making a clean pocket paramount to Weeden's chances for success.

On Sunday, the best thing the Browns can do to support Brandon Weeden is to control the line

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of scrimmage on offense. This will allow them to establish Trent Richardson, and the threat of Trent Richardson will be the thing that opens up the passing game for Weeden. If the Browns are unable to establish the run and the Ravens are constantly in Weeden's grill, it's going to be another long day for the Browns' offense.

2. A Stiffer Challenge For The Front Seven

The Browns' front seven played pretty well last week, especially against the run. The thing is, it's not exact clear if the Dolphins are, you know, actually any good. The Dolphins had no shot of running the ball last week, but that may have been a byproduct of the Dolphins having pedestrian running backs and an offensive line that cannot get any push off the ball rather than anything the Browns were doing.

This week will be a much better litmus test of the Browns' defensive front. The Ravens have an elite running back in Ray Rice, and they typically do a good job of giving him room to run. Along with that, Joe Flacco is a much better quarterback than Ryan Tannehill, particularly when it comes to handling the pass rush. There were several instances last week of Ryan Tannehill running himself into sacks that quarterbacks with better pocket presence would have avoided. That won't be the case this week.

The pressure will be on the Browns' front seven to slow down Ray Rice and keep the heat on Joe Flacco for all four quarters. Anything short of a stellar performance from this unit will likely result in another drubbing, as it's unlikely the offense can outscore the Ravens if the game devolves into a shootout.

3. A Mistake-Free Game

The Ravens are a more talented team than the Browns. There's no way around it. If the Browns are going to win on Sunday, they need to eliminate the mental errors and simple mistakes that plagued them during Week 1. If the Browns continue to commit silly penalties, miss blocking assignments, drop passes, and blow coverages, they have no chance at beating the Ravens. The Browns don't have the talent level at this point to make up for these kinds of mistakes, and the Ravens are the kind of team that will take advantage of any opportunities their opponent gives them.

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If the Browns play a mistake-riddled first half like they did last week, they can be sure that Baltimore will put up more than the six points Miami managed in the first half last week. The Browns had no business being ahead at halftime last week, and if they come out flat and give away yards and turnovers due to penalties and unforced errors, the Ravens will capitalize on those mistakes. The Browns are one of the youngest teams in the league, and it showed last week in all the correctable mistakes they made. The Browns are going to have to do some quick maturing this week if they are going to take down the defending Super Bowl champs.

Jeremy Klein is an unabashed Cleveland Sports fan who has been vibing to [this song](#) recently. You can follow him on Twitter

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