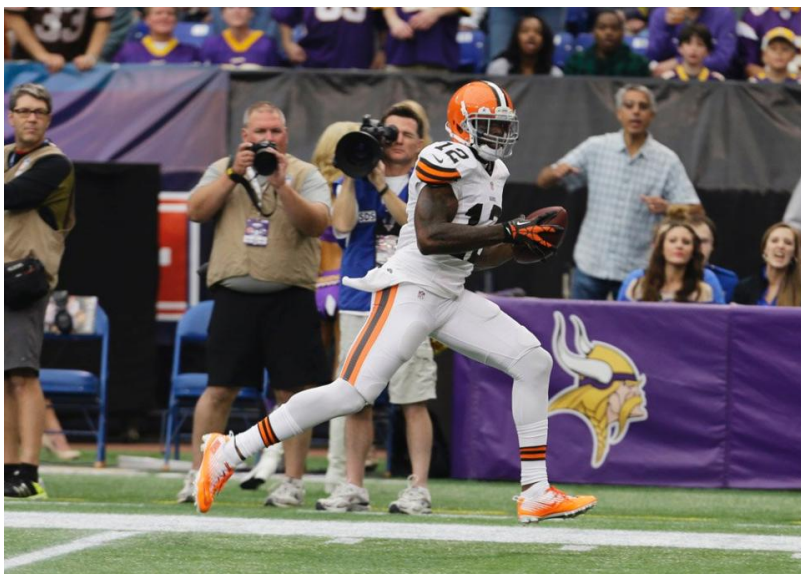


How Should the Browns Solve the Josh Gordon Equation?

Written by {ga=tommoore}

Tuesday, September 24 2013 5:00 AM - Last Updated Tuesday, September 24 2013 7:43 AM



Cleveland Browns wide receiver Josh Gordon made one heck of a debut on Sunday in his return from a two-game suspension handed down by the NFL.

Gordon pulled in 10 receptions for 146 yards and a touchdown in the Browns win over Minnesota. He was also the main reason the Browns were able to pull out the victory even though the rest of the offense was as ineffective as ever.

In the lead-up to Sunday's game, ESPN's Adam Schefter reported that the Browns would be open to trading not only Gordon but also fellow wide receiver Greg Little. ESPN contributor Adam Caplan followed that up by reporting that Gordon has been available for several weeks and that Browns CEO Joe Banner wants him gone – preferably sooner than later.

But then on Monday [Jason LaCanfora reported that it would be “shocking” if the Browns actually traded Gordon](#)

“We have no plans on any other trades,” Browns coach Rob Chudzinski said on Monday.

So what to make of all this?

How Should the Browns Solve the Josh Gordon Equation?

Written by {ga=tommoore}

Tuesday, September 24 2013 5:00 AM - Last Updated Tuesday, September 24 2013 7:43 AM

Both Little and Gordon are still on their rookie contracts – Little through 2014, Gordon through 2015 – which makes them attractive in the salary-cap NFL and could help facilitate a deal if the Browns really are interested in making another move for future assets.

But it is Gordon in particular that presents a particularly tough equation for Browns CEO Joe Banner.

Gordon is in Stage 3 of the NFL's drug treatment program, meaning if he records another positive test he is suspended for a year. (We originally thought Gordon was in Stage 2; [thanks to RyInCBus](#) for helping to clear that up.) More importantly, there is no getting out of Stage 3 – once a player enters they are there for the rest of their NFL career, meaning Gordon will carry the threat of a suspension with him for as long as he stays in the league.

If the Browns really are on the right path in the current rebuild, having a player as talented as Gordon would certainly help.

Maybe Gordon has finally figured it out and will no longer run into trouble. Sometimes players just need time to grow up. But Gordon's troubles may run deeper than just getting into trouble off the field; if it turns out he has an addiction that he can't shake it may be harder (or impossible) for him to avoid another suspension.

Should Banner decide to keep Gordon, the Browns run the risk of losing a player that plays a major role in the offense – as Browns fans so clearly saw on Sunday. And with the way things often turn out in Cleveland, it's a lock that a future suspension would come at the most inopportune time.

But if the Browns really do want to move Gordon, it seems highly unlikely that they would receive anything close to his value. Why would another team give up anything of real value to the Browns when they know that they would then be assuming all the risk with Gordon?

How Should the Browns Solve the Josh Gordon Equation?

Written by {ga=tommoore}

Tuesday, September 24 2013 5:00 AM - Last Updated Tuesday, September 24 2013 7:43 AM

For his part, Gordon says he wants to stay in Cleveland.

“I always want to stay here and be a Cleveland Brown and help this organization as much as possible,” [Gordon said after Sunday's win](#) . “I love the offense, love (offensive coordinator) Norv and coach (Rob Chudzinski). I'm learning a lot. From a wide receiver standpoint, it's the best offense to be in, and I can't complain at all.”

Maybe Gordon has finally turned things around and, knowing that he is one misstep away from a one-year suspension, will not make another mistake. That's a tall order, but it's possible he could pull it off.

We're definitely on board with the Browns holding on to Gordon. He's a game-changer and while the on-field reward may not outweigh the risk of losing him, it is at least on par.

Here's hoping that Banner comes up with the same answer to the equation.

In other Week 3 news:

It's Cleveland, so you have to laugh

One of the things we like about Cleveland sports is also one of the things that gets on our tits at times. Because only in Cleveland could a quarterback throwing three interceptions in a game and ending up with a quarterback rating that is 29th out of 33 quarterbacks in the NFL result in unbridled joy.

Yes, the Browns won on Sunday and a win is always better than a loss. But if we are being honest, the Browns won almost in spite of quarterback Brian Hoyer, not because of him.

How Should the Browns Solve the Josh Gordon Equation?

Written by {ga=tommoore}

Tuesday, September 24 2013 5:00 AM - Last Updated Tuesday, September 24 2013 7:43 AM

This isn't a call for the return of Brandon Weeden, but more of a plea for Browns fans to look past where Hoyer grew up and realize the Browns still needed a fake punt, a fake field goal for a touchdown, a blown call by the officials and a last-second touchdown pass to win the game.

The Vikings came into the game having given up 641 passing yards in the season's first two games, lost three defensive backs to injury during the game against the Browns, and Hoyer still could only put up Weeden-like numbers on the day.

Our Twitter timeline was also filled today with talk about how Hoyer gets rid of the ball faster than Weeden, which is nice, but does it really matter how quickly the quarterback gets rid of the ball if they still are making bad decisions?

Hoyer is not any worse than Weeden, and on Sunday that was enough.

But let's not pretend he is any better, either.

The Browns need to figure out a way to run the ball

A day later and it is still shocking how poorly the Browns were in the run game against Minnesota.

The running back trio of Chris Ogbonnaya, Billy Rainey and Willis McGahee combined for just 49 yards on the ground and a 3.5 yard per carry average.

We get that the NFL is a passing game now, but there is going to come a time where the Browns are going to need to run the ball and there currently is nothing there.

And not having any semblance of a running game is only going to hurt Hoyer's chances of

How Should the Browns Solve the Josh Gordon Equation?

Written by {ga=tommoore}

Tuesday, September 24 2013 5:00 AM - Last Updated Tuesday, September 24 2013 7:43 AM

titillating the mob, as with no running threat currently on the roster opposing defenses can just sit back and wait for Hoyer to make a mistake.

Joe Thomas re-asserts his dominance

It's been a rough start to the season for the Browns offensive line, but left tackle Joe Thomas deserves praise for the job he did on Vikings defensive end Jared Allen.

[According to Pro Football Focus](#) , Thomas held Allen to a -4.9 rating and limited him to just one quarterback hurry in 52 pass rushing opportunities.

Until next time

The Browns return home to take on the 2-1 Cincinnati Bengals.

(Photo courtesy of ClevelandBrowns.com)