

## Browns vs. Chiefs - Week 8

Written by {ga=tommoore}

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The Cleveland Browns are back on the road again this Sunday, taking on the undefeated Kansas City Chiefs.

The Browns have decided to end the Brandon Weeden experiment at quarterback (at least for the time being) and have turned to journey man Jason Campbell to run the offense.

Yep, we've reached that stage of the season – after just seven games!

### The Opposition

Kansas City's record: 7-0

Offensive rank: 19th overall/26th passing/12th rushing

Defensive rank: 5th overall/3rd passing/20th rushing

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All-time record: Browns lead, 11-10-2

Last meeting: Cleveland won, 30-7, last season

### [Injury report](#)

The Line: Browns +8

### What to Watch For

The Kansas City Chiefs come into the game as the NFL's lone unbeaten team, a result that is an equal mixture of luck, opportunity and a front office that realized Brian Daboll is not an NFL-caliber offensive coordinator.

The Chiefs have given up a league-low 81 points behind a defense that is tough against the pass – they lead the league in sacks with 35, and are third in both yards allowed at 194.7 per game and yards per attempt at 6.4.

The Chiefs have also been lucky as they have beaten teams this season that were quarterbacked by Blaine Gabbert, Ryan Fitzpatrick, Terrelle Pryor and Case Keenum (a bit of foreshadowing for Sunday's contest.) Of course, the Chiefs also beat Tony Romo, Michael Vick and Eli Manning over a three-week stretch as coach Andy Reid made a triumphant return to the NFC East, so maybe the defense really is as good as the numbers indicate.

In a lot of ways, really, Kansas City's defense is what the Browns are aspiring to be.

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The Chiefs front seven is led by outside linebackers Justin Houston and Tamba Hali, who have combined for 19 sacks and ranked first and fourth, respectively, among 3-4 outside linebackers by [Pro Football Focus](#). Mike DeVito and Tyson Jackson are both top five among 3-4 defensive ends, Derrick Johnson and Akeem Jordan are top five among 3-4 inside linebackers, and Dontari Poe is 10th among defensive tackles.

The Browns are trying to build a front seven like that, but so far they are coming up short, especially at outside linebacker. Paul Kruger – who each week is looking more and more like the Browns version of Nick Swisher – and Barkevious Mingo both have negative pass rush grades for the season, which is not what the coaches and front office had in mind coming into the year.

The defense is also struggling as the season goes along, giving up 24, 31 and 31 points the past three weeks and continuing to struggle to get off the field on third down – they are 29th in the league as opposing offenses are converting on third down at a 45 percent rate.

Browns defensive coordinator Ray Horton knows that things are going to have to change if the Browns stand a chance – not only on Sunday, but through the rest of the season.

“I think this next four-week period for us, you’ll see a different Cleveland Browns defense and you’ll start seeing the names that everybody thought,” [Horton said this week](#). “We’ve been evolving as a defense, and I like where we’re headed. I think there’s very, very good defensive football ahead of us.”

One tip for the defense: keep an eye on Kansas City running back Jamaal Charles, especially on the opening play of the game.

While teams have a rough time passing on the Chiefs, they can run on them as Kansas City is giving up 4.8 yards per carry (third-worst in the NFL) and 109 yards per game. But just because other teams can run the ball against Kansas City’s defense doesn’t mean the Browns can run it (more on that in a moment).

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The Chiefs have been opportunistic in leading the league in turnover margin at +11, a number that brings with it a fair amount of luck on defense, but is also attributed to an offense that protects the ball.

While Kansas City can run the ball effectively, the offense overall has been very pedestrian, especially in the passing game. Consider the following stats for two quarterbacks:

- Quarterback A has completed 53 percent of his passes, has averaged 5.92 yards attempt, averages 202 passing yards a game and has taken 21 sacks.
- Quarterback B has completed 58 percent of his passes, has averaged 6.3 yards per attempt, averages 210 yards per game and has been sacked 18 times.

The first quarterback is deposed Browns starter Brandon Weeden, while the second one is Alex Smith, quarterback of the undefeated Chiefs.

It's surprising to see just how close the numbers are between the two players, but Smith can get away with being an average quarterback (at best) because the Chiefs have such a strong defense and Smith has the luxury of operating in an offense that averages 4.1 yards per carry in the running game and 116 yards per game. (We would also be remiss if we didn't point out that Smith has rushed for 218 yards, which if he were on the Browns would make him the team's leading rusher.)

Which brings us to the Browns and quarterback Jason Campbell.

The Browns are a franchise that has seen more than its share of talented quarterback-running back duos. Consider that over the years, the Browns have had:

- Otto Graham handing off to Marion Motley
- Frank Ryan handing off to Jim Brown
- Bill Nelsen handing off to Leroy Kelly,

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- Brian Sipe handing off to Greg Pruitt, and
- Bernie Kosar handing off to Kevin Mack.

To that list the team now brings us Campbell handing the ball off to Fozzy Whittaker.

Can you feel the excitement?

Browns coach Rob Chudzinski turns to Campbell this week for no other reason, really, other than he is not Weeden. The team wasn't going to win much with Weeden running the offense, but there is little reason to think Campbell can turn things around for an offense that has only scored more than 20 points twice in seven games this season.

Campbell still faces the same problems that Weeden did, namely that the Browns can't run the ball and, other than Josh Gordon and Jordan Cameron, there is no one on the offensive side of the ball that opposing defenses have to worry about.

"This game, it's not just all about Jason," [Chudzinski said, because he knows](#) . "He just needs to go and be himself and do the things that he can do. He's had success and he's been able to lead teams and do a good job of being productive. We're looking for that lift from him."

Campbell can take a page from Smith's playbook and try to be a good game manager, but how effective that will be against a Kansas City defense that lives to get after the passer and has absolutely no reason to worry about run defense remains to be seen.

"It's not about one person, I know everyone wanted to say it is about Brandon, but it was not about one person," [Campbell said this week, also showing that he gets it](#) . "We as a collective group have to do a better job play in and play out of doing our own job and I think the only thing that I should do is be a leader and, at the same time, try to do my job to the best of my ability

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and not try and do anything to the extreme and try to stay within the game.”

### The Prediction

There is very little to like about the Browns' chances this weekend against the Chiefs.

The Browns are a mess on offense while Kansas City's defense is among the league's best.

The one thing that Browns have going for them is the fact that it is almost a certainty that the Chiefs are not going to finish the season undefeated.

It's not hard to imagine a scenario where the Chiefs have a bad day and the Browns pull out the win, giving the hoopla heads on talk radio plenty of material next week to talk about how the season would have been saved if Chudzinski had only turned to Campbell sooner.

Campbell is still in the honeymoon period with fans as, for at least another 24 hours, not being Brandon Weeden is enough. He can extend that for another week if he can lead the Browns to a win.

So how can that happen?

We only have to go back to the Browns last visit to Arrowhead, in 2009, to see how the Browns could win Sunday's game.

Cleveland beat the Chiefs that day, 41-34, in an entertaining game that saw Jerome Harrison rush for a team-record 286 yards and Josh Cribbs return two kickoffs for touchdowns. (It needs to be noted, however, that despite record-setting days from Harrison and Cribbs, the Chiefs were on the Browns' 26-yard-line and throwing into the end zone on the game's final play in an

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attempt to tie the game.)

So all the Browns have to do is repeat that fluke performance from late in the 2009 season and they will walk out of the stadium on Sunday with their fourth win in their past five games against the Chiefs.

No problem, yes?

Take the Chiefs and give the points. It's going to be another long day in what has turned into another long season of Browns football.

*(Photo courtesy of ClevelandBrowns.com)*