

Browns at the Bye: Thumbs Up or Thumbs Down?

Written by {ga=tommoore}

Sunday, November 10 2013 3:29 PM - Last Updated Sunday, November 10 2013 6:10 PM



While the rest of the AFC North spends the weekend getting beat up, the Cleveland Browns are enjoying their bye week while gearing up for what have unexpectedly turned into an important final seven games of the season.

The Browns find themselves at 4-5 and just on the outside of the final playoff position in the AFC. While a 4-5 record is generally not something that should get fans overly excited, it's different with this year's Browns team.

While the record may not currently reflect it, the Browns seem better than a 4-5 team, especially when you consider how bad their offensive numbers are. Heading into this weekend's games, the Browns are:

- 26th overall on offense;
- 26th in points per game;
- 30th in yards per play; and,
- 29th in third-down conversions.

Oh, and each of the three quarterbacks on the roster have started at least two games this season. And that fact goes a long way toward explaining a large part of the offensive struggles.

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“This bye week gives us a chance to look at our personnel, take a good look,” [Browns coach Rob Chudzinski said earlier in the week](#)

. “Are we doing the right things with them? Are there some things that we can do better and put them in better position? Because as coach, I believe that we always want to put our guys and try to put our guys in the best position for them to succeed, which will give us the best chance of succeeding.”

Chudzinski is on to something with using the bye week to evaluate where the Browns currently stand how they got here, so let's do the same with a Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down take.

Thumbs Up: The quarterback play of Jason Campbell and Brian Hoyer.

Campbell and Hoyer have made a combined four starts where they also finished the game, going 3-1 in the process. While the offense has been pedestrian no matter who is playing quarterback, Hoyer and Campbell have been able to avoid making the type of drive-choking mistakes that have become a staple of Weeden's game.

In a combined 171 pass attempts, Hoyer and Weeden have been sacked just nine times and have thrown just three interceptions – all in Hoyer's first start against Minnesota. But starting with the fourth quarter of that game against the Vikings, Hoyer and Campbell have gone a combined 13 quarters without turning the ball over.

Not taking sacks and not handing the ball over has helped the Browns get the most out of an offense that is still a work in progress.

Thumbs Down: The play of quarterback Brandon Weeden.

Coming into the season it seemed that if Weeden was ever going to put it together and be a viable NFL starting quarterback, it would be under the tutelage of Chudzinski and offensive coordinator Norv Turner. And while Weeden may have looked good in the controlled environment of a practice, once the games started it was a different story.

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Weeden wasn't helped by the absence of wide receiver Josh Gordon for the first two games of the season, but he also didn't help himself. Twenty-one sacks, six interceptions and more bad will from the fans than we've seen directed at a quarterback in a while, and it's clear that Weeden's time in Cleveland is rapidly coming to a close. (Although there is still a part of us that believes we haven't seen the last of Weeden on the field this season.)

It's too bad, really, that Weeden's legacy in Cleveland can't be the Thursday night game against Buffalo when he replaced an injured Hoyer and led the Browns to a primetime win. Instead, Browns fans will be left with the underhanded interception against Detroit that short-circuited a Cleveland comeback attempt.

And Weeden will be left holding a clipboard on the sidelines, somewhere far away from Cleveland.

Thumbs Up: The play of Josh Gordon and Jordan Cameron.

It didn't take long for Gordon and Cameron to make an impact on the Browns offense. Cameron opened the season with nine receptions and a touchdown vs. Miami, and then added three touchdown receptions in Week 3 against the Vikings. And while his production has slowed down a bit – he has just 20 receptions for 240 yards in the past five games after pulling in 30 receptions for 360 yards in the season's first four games – he is still in the Top 20 in both categories.

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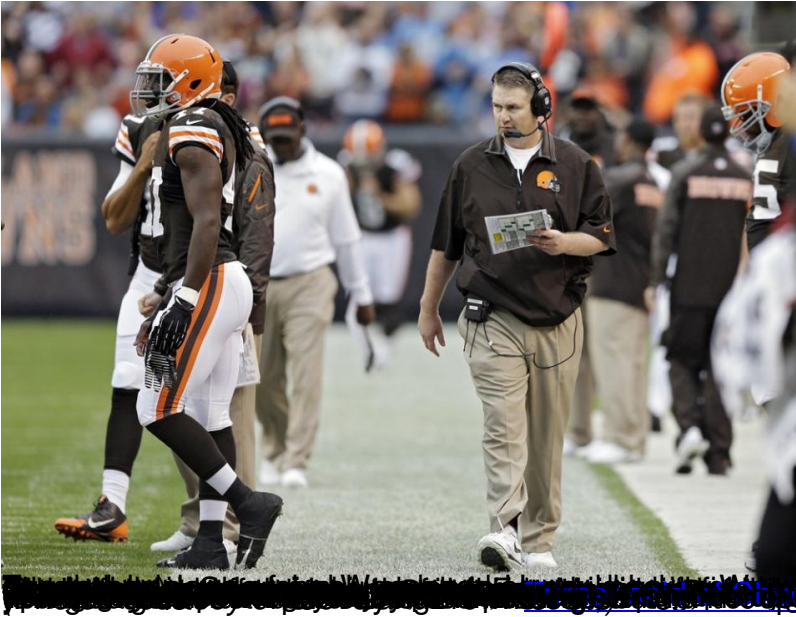
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