



Josh Gordon is an amazing football player.

That's not news to any fans who watch the Cleveland Browns on a weekly basis, but it bears repeating after his latest performance.

In the Browns loss to Pittsburgh on Sunday, Gordon set a franchise record for receiving yards in a game with 237, tied Ozzie Newsome for the franchise record for most receptions in a game with 14, and scored the Browns lone touchdown on the day.

The game marked the fifth time this season that Gordon has gained more than 100 receiving yards, breaking Braylon Edwards' franchise record, and was the third time in the past four games that Gordon broke the century mark.

Despite missing the first two games of the season due to a suspension, Gordon is still fifth in the NFL in receiving yards with 988, third in average per reception with 18.3 and tied for third with 16 receptions of more than 20 yards.

“Josh is a good talent, a good route-runner,” [quarterback Brandon Weeden said](#) . “He’s got a great feel for running routes, reading defenses and stuff like that. (Offensive coordinator) Norv (Turner) does a great job of drawing up plays to try to get him the ball because he’s a big asset for this offense. He’s a big-time playmaker, and as the quarterback, you know where those guys are at all times.

If you were to project Gordon’s production over a 16-game season, he would end up with 96 receptions for 1,756 yards – both franchise records.

And he is doing all of it with two major obstacles in his way.

Gordon is, without question, the only skill player on offense that opposing defenses have to worry about for even a moment during the game. The running game is non-existent, Jordan Cameron has returned to being an average tight end, and Davone Bess and Greg Little combined barely have more receptions (68 to 54 for Gordon) and don’t come close in receiving yards (676).

Each week Gordon shows why the front office was reluctant to trade him despite the fact that he is firmly entrenched in the league’s substance abuse system.

And, for what it is worth, Gordon didn’t spend the aftermath of Sunday’s loss talking about how good he is, but rather focused on the team’s goals.

“It’s all well and good for myself, but it means nothing to me if we can’t win the game,” he said. “If we can’t win the game, I could care less about it, honestly. It’s a great thing for me as a young player, but what we came out here to do is win games, especially in the conference. The fact that we couldn’t get it done, to me, it’s all for nothing.”

And to think that Gordon is doing all of this playing with the worst group of quarterbacks in the NFL.

Style Points Don't Count in the NFL

When quarterback Jason Campbell left Sunday's game with a concussion, the believe among many Browns fans was that there was no way the team was coming back with Brandon Weeden at quarterback.

As Weeden entered the game following Campbell's injury, the bigger realization was lost as boos rained down from all corners of First Energy Stadium.

The Browns were not coming back to win this game with Campbell at quarterback.

Campbell captivated far too many fans with a "moral victory" in his first start against the Chiefs, but reality has set in with Campbell at quarterback, even if there are people who still don't want to see it. Namely, he's not any better than Weeden.

Since hitting tight end Gary Barnidge with a touchdown pass in the third quarter of the Baltimore game, Campbell has led the Browns on 28 offensive drives with disastrous results, as 79 percent of his drive has resulted in a negative result:

- Thirteen drives have ended in punts
- Six drives have ended in turnovers – three fumbles and three interceptions
- Three drives have ended with the Browns turning the ball over on downs
- Campbell has led one touchdown drive and four drives that resulted in field goals

Yep, sounds like the Browns have found their answer at quarterback all right.

With Campbell most likely out for at least next Sunday's game against Jacksonville, Weeden is

the only healthy quarterback on the roster, meaning the Browns are going to have to sign someone who is not currently employed by an NFL team (most likely for a very good reason).

The list of available candidates includes, among others, Charlie Batch, David Carr, Matt Leinart, JaMarcus Russell, John Parker Wilson, Tim Tebow and Caleb Hanie – [who the Browns will reportedly bring in for a workout](#)

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Oh, and because we live in Ohio, there is the [annual call of stupidity for the Browns to sign former Ohio State quarterback Troy Smith](#), who hasn't played in the NFL since 2010 and was horrible when he did play.

Wonderful.

We've reached the point where we're ready to sign off on the Browns using every one of their 10 draft picks in the 2014 NFL Draft on a quarterback.

It doesn't matter that they have holes to fill at running back, offensive line, wide receiver, inside linebacker and in the secondary. They can use some of the boatload of hoarded cap space to fill those holes, just get a friggin' quarterback for once.

The Defense Can't Rest

Lost in the rubble of the two-game losing streak is the fact that the Browns defense hasn't played that poorly the past two weeks – at least in a few areas – despite being put in some tough situations by the bumbling offense.

The Browns held the Bengals to just 224 yards of offense and only allowed Cincinnati to cover one third down in 14 attempts. Sunday against Pittsburgh, the Steelers gained 302 yards of offense and were just four-of-14 on third down.

The biggest thing the defense hasn't been able to do, however, is make the kind of play that can turn a game around. It seemed like Joe Haden's interception return for a touchdown against the Bengals would be that kind of play, but that was washed out by the abomination that was the second quarter.

The Browns also have not been able to get to the quarterback in recent weeks. While sacks are not the sole measure of a defense, the fact that the Browns could not get anywhere near Ben Roethlisberger on Sunday didn't help the cause.

They also can't seem to get to halftime without giving up points.

Sunday was the fifth consecutive game that the Browns allowed points in the final three minutes of the first half:

- Against Green Bay, it was a Mason Crosby field goal with three seconds left
- Against Kansas City, it was a Dexter McCluster 28-yard touchdown reception with 1:11 left
- Against Baltimore, it was a Marlon Brown 19-yard touchdown reception with nine seconds left
- Against Cincinnati, it was 10 points in the final 2:45
- Against Pittsburgh, it was 10 points in the final 2:30

Hmm, are we sure we should not be worried about the defense?

So What's Next?

The Browns are now facing the very real possibility of finishing the season at 4-12 unless the

defense can start pitching some shutouts.

And while another season of double-digit losses would be painful, maybe it's not the worst thing in the world.

The Browns need all the help they can get and the higher they can pick in the first round of next year's draft, the better off they (presumably) will be.

As it stands right now, there are nine teams (depending on tie breakers) that stand between the Browns and the No. 1 pick in the 2014 NFL Draft – the Giants, Oakland, Buffalo, Washington (St. Louis actually holds this pick thanks to the RG3 trade), Tampa Bay, Minnesota, Jacksonville, Houston and Atlanta.

Not all of those teams need a quarterback, but it seems pretty clear that the Raiders, Buccaneers, Vikings, Jaguars and Texans could be joining the Browns in line for a quarterback in the draft. The Rams would probably be on that list as well if they were not tied to Sam Bradford's rookie contract. If there is any saving grace in Weeden, it's the fact that the Browns avoided having to invest a ton of money into him as a first-round pick.

With a little bit of luck, the Browns may be able to move past a few of those teams and get themselves into a better position in the draft.

More likely is a scenario where the Falcons get the No. 1 overall pick and trade it to the Browns for Cleveland's two No. 1 selections.

Then we'll get another decade's worth of stories about how the Browns blew a trade with the Falcons.

Sounds like fun.

The drive resumes Sunday at home against Jacksonville.

(Photo courtesy of The Akron Beacon Journal)