

## Defense Can't Overcome Offensive Woes As Browns Lose Again

Written by {ga=tommoore}

Monday, December 16 2013 6:00 AM - Last Updated Monday, December 16 2013 7:25 AM

---



The Cleveland Browns ended the home portion of the 2013 NFL season the same way they began it – with a loss.

Many are going to point to the 21 fourth-quarter points that the Bears scored as the reason the Browns loss, and there is some merit in that. But if you take the easy way out, that lets the offense off the hook for yet another weak performance with Jason Campbell at quarterback.

The Browns had two defensive touchdowns in the game – one on a Tashaun Gipson 44-yard interception return, the other on a T.J. Ward 51-yard fumble return – and normally if the defense hands the team 14 points that should be enough to secure the win.

But this being the Browns it's probably not surprising that they found a way to lose.

"It kind of defines our season," [quarterback Jason Campbell said](#) . "There were some good things and some bad things. It's frustrating."

The offense was only able to put 10 points on the board against a Chicago defense that is the worst in the league against the run and 28th overall. A garbage-time 43-yard touchdown pass to Josh Gordon with 59 seconds left in the game made the score closer that it appeared, but

## Defense Can't Overcome Offensive Woes As Browns Lose Again

Written by {ga=tommoore}

Monday, December 16 2013 6:00 AM - Last Updated Monday, December 16 2013 7:25 AM

---

Sunday's result only cemented the fact that the Browns are not going anywhere until they fix the quarterback problem.

In losing for the fifth time in his six starts this year, Campbell reaffirmed that he is just good enough to not land on the weekly blooper reel like Brandon Weeden, but is still not good enough to actually be a winning quarterback.

We know it has been written that Campbell is an elite quarterback (he's not) and that he "can win" (except that he doesn't) but the weekly results tell another story. We're OK with the Browns bringing Campbell back next year as the second- or third-string quarterback, but any talk of him being a viable starting quarterback for the team needs to be quelled quickly.

Yes, Campbell is not Weeden. But we need to move beyond that.

After opening up the scoring with a Billy Cundiff 35-yard field goal on their opening drive of the game, the Browns offense reverted to a familiar script of punts, interceptions and general ineptitude. Over their next eight full possessions after the field goal, the Browns punted five times and Campbell was intercepted twice.

The Browns were also not able to move the ball on the ground against a Bears defense that came into the game ranked last (or almost last) in every significant statistic against the run. Chicago had given up a 100-yard rushing day to six consecutive running backs coming into Sunday's game against the Browns, and were giving up 157 rushing yards per game overall this season. But Cleveland couldn't even gain 100 yards total and Edwin Baker "lead" the Browns in rushing with 38 yards.

And because the offense could not once gain hold onto the ball at the end of the first half, the Bears were able to go 66 yards in four plays to score a touchdown right before halftime to tie the game at 10.

This isn't to place all of the blame on the offense. Just because the Browns could not move the ball doesn't mean the defense needs to give up three fourth-quarter touchdowns – especially a

## Defense Can't Overcome Offensive Woes As Browns Lose Again

Written by {ga=tommoore}

Monday, December 16 2013 6:00 AM - Last Updated Monday, December 16 2013 7:25 AM

---

six-play, 95-yard drive – or allow the Bears to be nine-of-14 on third down.

But if the defense had received any support from the offense the game may have turned out differently.

But then again, these are the Browns, so it probably wouldn't have mattered.

Sunday's loss means the Browns finish the season with a home record of 3-5. The Browns have yet to have consecutive seasons with at least four home wins since returning to the NFL in 1999.

The loss, the team's fifth consecutive and eighth in their past nine games, drops the Browns to 4-10 on the season, making this the 12th time they have hit double-figure losses in a season since 1999.

So now the Browns are down to just two games remaining in the season. The high draft pick in next spring's NFL Draft is secured for another year and the team is left with two road games before another year comes to a close like so many seasons before it.

What a fun time of the year to be a Browns fan.

*(Photo courtesy of The Associated Press)*