

## Don't Overplay Your Hand Browns Fans

Written by {ga=furls}

Monday, January 01 2007 7:00 PM -

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As the Jim Tressel to Cleveland rumors continue to swirl, Furls chimes in with his thoughts on the topic. His take? Browns fans think that the Browns job is a little better than it really is. With this fan base, so hungry, so desperate, so anxious for a winner ... anyone that comes here isn't going to get a fair shake. Furls says the out clause in Tressel's contract is nothing but a negotiating chip, and there's no way The Sweater Vest leaves coaching utopia for Cleveland.



I think it is a foregone conclusion that Romeo Crennel will be fired this off-season. If not this week, I expect it will happen once some big names become available after the Super Bowl. And he should be fired, the team has not improved in any way during the two years since he has taken over.

Lately, there has been a lot of conjecture that Jim Tressel would be a likely replacement, and at the risk of sounding like Lee Corso, I will say, "Not so fast my friend."

First, lets take a look at Randy Lerner's situation. He has inherited this team, and they are horrible. They are on their fourth rebuild in eight years and revenues are going to start reflecting that fact. He has to make a change, but it has to be a change that will excite the fan base. Who better than the hero of the Browns rebuilding years ... Jim Tressel? You see, for the last six years, while the Brown's have floundered, Jim Tressel has taken the Buckeyes to unbelievable heights, so much so, that the Buckeyes are beginning to take over Cleveland, a thought that would have been unbelievable fifteen years ago.

Will Lerner pursue him? ABSOLUTELY. Will Jim Tressel impress the Browns management? I think so. Will they give him a very lucrative offer? Maybe, but this is where I think that Browns fans are over playing their hands. I think that Browns fans think that the Cleveland job is better than it really is, similar to what is happening right now with the University of Alabama.

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The popular opinion right now is that Jim Tressel would love to come to Cleveland, riding in on a white horse (heck maybe he will even bring Troy Smith) and elevate the Cleveland Browns to their proper standing in the world, based largely on the fact that he is from the area. This is where the Browns job is similar to the Alabama job; I think that most people outside of Cleveland realize that this job is a lot worse than Browns fans think it is.

Browns fans think that since this city has a rich history, is hungry for a winner, and has a rabid fan base ... that Cleveland would be a great place to a coach, a dream job of sorts. Well that's really not the case. All the energy and passion that Browns fans have and the city's desire for a winner make this job a nightmare. This team is nowhere near winning and a coach is not going to get four or five years to build a winner. This should sound eerily like the Alabama job; they too have a very enthusiastic fan base and unrealistic expectations, and just like the Browns, they have no chance of winning any time soon.

It is rather convenient that Jim Tressel has an escape clause in his contract should he win a title, but I think that this is more a case of happenstance than of some great overarching conspiracy to get the Cleveland job. Tressel signed that contract in May of this year and at that time, Crennel seemed pretty secure in his position. Ultimately, I think that contract will just end up providing additional negotiating leverage with the Buckeyes and Tressel will get a new deal worth somewhere in the ballpark of \$3.5 million per year to stay in Columbus.

In order for Randy Lerner to lure Tressel away from the Buckeyes, he would have to offer him considerably more money and in doing so would be paying a rookie NFL coach more money than last year's Super Bowl champion coach, Bill Cowher.

I understand the plight of the Browns fan, for I am one myself. I also endured The Drive, The Fumble, the glory of the Bernie years, and the treachery of 1995, but I am also a realist. I realize that if a coach has other viable options (particularly long term, stable, and lucrative

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options) he would have to be insane to come to Cleveland. I give any coach that comes here a fifty-fifty chance of surviving two years.

This team literally has a hole or a band-aid at every position on the field. We need an entire offensive line, a quarterback, the running back appears to be mediocre (but we won't know until he gets a line to run behind), the receivers stink, Kellen Winslow has a big mouth, the defensive is a 3-4 with a gaping hole at NT and two mediocre DEs, they only have one sure thing at LB (Wimbley), and last but not least, there is no depth in the secondary. Any coach that comes here, will have 2-3 years to try to fix all that and make a serviceable team. Jim Tressel is going to want to leave Columbus for that?

I know coaches typically have big egos and think they can turn around anything, but this is not the behavior that we have seen in Jim Tressel. I will acknowledge that there is a possibility that Tressel could end up in Cleveland, but I don't find it likely. As a matter of fact, there has been no credible reporting to suggest that Tressel is seriously considering the position, nor has there been any that suggests the Browns have seriously considered him. All there is at the root is an article or two from Tony Grossi, and if you are counting him or the Plain Dealer as credible than you are definitely overplaying your hand.

Right now Jim Tressel is sitting on a "Nut Flush," and the Browns job is a lowly pair of twos.

He has one of the best jobs in college football, why would he trade that in for the worst job in pro football?