

"Moot Points" has become so popular, and is such a funny column, expanding Hiko's role here at The Cleveland Fan was really a no-brainer. And as we've learned in "Moot", Hiko is far from just a funnyman. He's a knowledgeable and lifelong Browns fan. Who now has his own weekly Monday night Browns column. In his first installment of "The Browns Outsider" ... Hiko talks about the blind loyalty Clevelanders have towards the Browns, why the team HAS to win THIS year, and the missing rookies.



A View From The Cheap Seats

The Favorite Son

Many an individual has hypothesized on why the Indians still struggle in attendance this season, despite a solid playoff-worthy record, whilst the excitement for the Browns, a 4-12 team last season, grows exponentially each day.

Here's my stupid metaphor:

Cleveland is the father. He has three sons – Indians, the eldest, Browns, the middle child, and Cavaliers, the youngster.

Now, like most fathers, Cleveland proclaims that he loves all his boys equally, but this is not the case.

Cavaliers is by far the youngest son, and, until this last year, the quietest. Cleveland often would refer to his “*two sons*” in polite conversation, only to be gently reminded that he had three boys. “

Ha ha, yes, I suppose that's true,

” Cleveland would chortle. “

I guess I forgot about Cavaliers because he's never really done anything that I've cared about.

” Parents can be cruel.

And, despite Indians being Cleveland's eldest son, Cleveland has been disappointed by him for a long time. Shortly after graduating high school, Indians got a prostitute pregnant, went on a drinking and methadone binge that lasted a LONG time, and ended up in rehab in the early 90's. Lately, he's been trying his best to win back his father's love, but it is difficult, because papa will never love him the way he loves...

Browns. Browns was successful right from his childhood. He made his father immensely proud in high school, and graduated with great honors. Certainly, his early adult life was marked with hardships, but Cleveland respected his efforts, and his love for the boy never waned. So when Browns made it back to prominence in the late 80's – when Indians was in the middle of the worst of his addictions and Cavaliers was still marveling at his new growth of pubic hair, Browns ruled Father Cleveland's affections.

To this day, Browns is still Cleveland's Favorite Son – a love that was strengthened all the more by the brief period of time when Browns disappeared

and was feared dead. Since his return, he has not been the same – injured, thin, and weak - but Father Cleveland still keeps watching and waiting – waiting for the day when his Favorite Son returns to form.

Fear And Loathing In Cleveland

Simply put, the Browns MUST achieve some success this year.

Not to save Romeo's job. No, I am completely indifferent to his fate. I think he's a good coach, but perhaps not necessarily a good *Head Coach*. For me, Mr. Crennel's presence in Cleveland is – right now – neither here nor there.

The reason the Browns MUST succeed is to save the sanity of millions of Northeast Ohioans.

Not only is the thought of yet another long painful hideous saddening forlorn miserable frustrating losing season almost unbearable, but this year, there will be no 1st round draft pick for hardened Browns fans to turn their lonely eyes toward. Season after season, somewhere around the first weekend of November, Browns fans everywhere begin the inevitable discussion of who might be available for us to draft in the Top 10, what positions are of greatest need, and how high up the draft charts can we go.

Without a 1st round pick in 2008, even that pathetic solace would be

gone.

Nothing to talk about except how much we hate the Dallas Cowboys. Nothing to hope for except for Ray Lewis' decapitation.

Notably Absent

Today is the first day of Cleveland Browns Rookie Training Camp, and there are three unsigned draft picks: First rounders Joe Thomas and Brady Quinn, and second rounder Eric Wright.

The rest of the picks have been signed. Yes, the game changing talents of CB Brandon McDonald, DE Melila Purcell, DE Chase Pittman, and WR Syndric Steptoe will all be there today, along with a horde of Warm Body Undrafted Free Agents. In other words, in all likelihood, the next 4 days of Orientation will highlight a bunch of players that will have little impact on the fortunes of the 2007 Cleveland Browns.

Should the proceedings of Rookie Camp be ignored outright? Of course not. It IS the Cleveland Browns, and it IS football, so, for the love of Pete, we shall eagerly await every morsel of information as if it were the winning lottery numbers. But let's just say that, personally, I am disappointed in the non-participation of the Big Three.

Not that this wasn't expected. The signing process for players selected in the early rounds of the NFL Draft has become nigh ridiculous. Agents hold teams (and the players they represent) hostage for percentages. Holdouts hurt both parties, but they happen on a regular basis anyway. This is not a localized issue – as of 7/23/07 at 2:57 pm, [only 3 teams have signed their First Round draft pick.](#)

Only 3. That's a problem.

Unfortunately, I am not King of the Universe, so there's little I can personally do about other than to whine, and I'm saving most of that for the Regular Season. That's not to say I wouldn't be delighted to help with the next

Collective Bargaining Agreement so we can pound out a Rookie Pay Scale that makes sense and protects both the teams and the players from agents and holdouts. I would. Have your people call my people and we'll set it up.

Since the real action doesn't start until Friday, which is the true start of Browns' Training Camp, I suppose we can hope that the 4 day interim sees the signing of these wayward picks. I fully expect to see Eric Wright in camp by then, and possibly even Joe Thomas (although I hold my breath not).

But I'd bet Ben Roethlisberger's reconstructed cheekbones that Brady Quinn will not be present in Berea this weekend.

And, if that's the case, you can pretty much pencil in "*De rek Anderson*"

” as the starter for Cleveland vs. Pittsburgh on Sunday, September 9

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To be honest, Mr. Quinn’s prolonged absence would be the least of my worries, since he may or may not have been destined for *Sit-And-Learn* detail regardless. If it’s Friday evening, and I’m sitting in the stands giving big LeChuck my throaty support, and every Browns draft pick from 2007 is there

but

Brady, I’ll be plenty satisfied.

It Is Very Bad To Drink Jobu’s Rum

I have now sacrificed three squirrels and a toad to the Injury Demons in the hopes that we can make it through the first hour of the first practice without losing 2 or 3 starters to career and life-threatening injuries.

You'd think I was trying to be funny. Sadly, I am not.

Of course, this will probably draw the ire of those nice PETA people, since they seem to be paying quite a bit of attention to the NFL these days for some reason.