

There's quite a three-ring circus going on in Berea right now. You can catch it twice on weekdays and on the odd Saturday night downtown. Put a tent over Charlie Frye, Derek Anderson and Ken Dorsey and all you need is some elephants, a high wire act and some lady twisting into unimaginable positions while spinning plates on her toes. And according to Brian McPeck, unless something is done to either bring in a legitimate starting QB or Brady Quinn's learning curve is accelerated, this season is going to be defined by mind-numbing quarterback play.



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The 2007 Browns are threatening to run away and hide when it comes to worst quarterbacking trios ever assembled on one roster.

This has embarrassment written all over the place.

I'm one of 70,000 idiots who fork over hard earned cash (relatively speaking) year after year for the privilege of heading down to Cleveland Browns Stadium ten times each fall to watch Frye, Anderson and Dorsey do to quarterbacking what David Lee Roth did to morning drive. And, sadly, they threaten to undermine whatever progress the Browns have made in upgrading other positions over the past couple years.

The pre-season opener against the Chiefs was an abomination to anyone who values quarterback play. Frye won Head Coach Romeo Crennel's increasingly infamous coin toss and "earned" the start. His first throw was predictably late over the middle of the field, nearly intercepted and ultimately incomplete. This, of course, prompted a few well-lubricated fans in my section to start the first of many "Brady" (as in rookie QB Brady Quinn) chants that resonated through the stadium all evening. And while Frye dinked and dunked his way to a few completions and 100 yards passing in the first half he was simply all over the place. He looked ready to bolt the pocket at the first sign of a rush, threw balls wildly into the middle of the field and hit nearly no one in stride.

In fact, Frye did what the Chiefs offense was unable to do all night; He point some points on the board for Kansas City. Frye dropped back, faced some *wanted* pressure and attempted to throw a simple screen pass to his running back. That was his intention anyway. What he ended up doing was missing his back five feet high while throwing the ball 3 yards behind the line of scrimmage. The lateral was returned for a touchdown and the Chiefs found the end zone for the only time all evening.

Physical miscues are one thing. Chalk it up to a bad throw and move on. But with the Browns trailing 7-6 and threatening from the Chiefs ten-yard line with 12 seconds on the first half clock, Frye could find no one open. Instead of throwing the ball away and running another play, or, at the worst, giving his squad an attempt at an easy field goal to reclaim the lead, Frye tucked the ball under his

arm and came up only about 7 yards short of the goal line. The clock ran out and the half ended with the Browns coaching staff and fans wondering what the hell they had just witnessed.

Coming from a rookie, this would have made sense. But this is from a third-year QB who was gift wrapped a starting position last year and has done nothing to show he deserves it. Managing the game and the clock should be job one for a QB. Frye continues to butcher both assignments.

The good news for Frye is that the other candidate for the job, third year QB Derek Anderson, may be worse. Anderson is a one-pitch pitcher. He can throw hard and far but is seemingly incapable of changing speeds. Perhaps the Browns version of former Indian Jaret Wright has an issue with depth perception. Because he almost killed a tight end or two and a stray running back unfortunate enough to be on the receiving end of one his fastballs. And while Anderson throws hard, he rarely throws accurately. There were fastballs skimming off helmets, hash marks, first down markers and shoulder pads on many of his offerings.

Arm for arm, you'd put DA up against any of the big guns in the NFL. Unless you wanted someone actually catching what he throws. Anderson showed no ability to put any touch on a throw and seems incapable of delivering a catchable ball. Not exactly the qualities you're looking for if you're investing your money and hopes with an NFL quarterback or interested in keeping your backs and receivers ambulatory.

Dorsey may be the antithesis of Derek Anderson. The guy can feather any throw in nice and soft. The problem is that he has a pitching wedge for an arm. He feathers every throw because he has no choice. That comes in handy on the

screen pass and the fade. To endure that style on the deep out or the 20-yard comeback doesn't play as well. Dorsey also showed poor pocket presence when faced with a 1st and 10 from his own one. Apparently forgetting contact is allowed in pre-season games, Dorsey was pressured in his own end zone, panicked and lost the football. The Browns did recover the ball in their own end zone for a safety, but a team as offensively impotent as this Cleveland club can't afford to give away freebies at any time, regardless of the number of points awarded.

Frye and Dorsey combined to personally score 9 of the Chiefs 12 points in the first pre-season game. But for an 88 yard kickoff return by Chris Barclay and an impressive game-ending goal line stand culminating in a Chiefs fumble, you would have chalked up another defeat to the Browns quarterbacking corps.

Unless something is done to either bring in a legitimate starting QB or Brady Quinn's learning curve is accelerated, this season is going to be defined by mind-numbing quarterback play. Which is a shame because there have been tangible improvements elsewhere on the club. Jamaal Lewis looked strong, fast and hungry. Rookies Joe Thomas and Eric Wright played well and gave cause for hope. Jason Wright and Jerome Harrison ran the ball hard and effectively in limited opportunities.

The defense has some depth in the secondary and some more experience and speed in the front seven. But that's all going to be for naught if The Bumbling Brothers Three Ring Circus is in town on Sundays this fall.