

Remember when hating the Broncos was as much of a way of life as breathing and paying taxes? The rivalry has never been rekindled since the Browns returned to the league in 1999, but the two teams do face off tonight in a pre-season affair in the Mile High city. And anyone can analyze a game after it ends. But Brian McPeck is here today to tell us what's going to happen before the game even starts.



Anyone can summarize a game after they watch it. But after a couple of seasons of watching this team closely, it's just as easy for a noted Browns expert like me to summarize the upcoming match-up *before* it starts.

Face it. We're running out of summer Saturday nights. So read the following pre-cap and enjoy what's left of the nice weather and outdoor activities in lieu of actually watching this one.

Pre-Game- Head Coach Romeo Crennel, sticking with his cutting-edge practice of determining his starting QB by flipping a coin, decides to give it another go. Unfortunately Crennel can't find the quarter in his pocket due to his pockets being stuffed with King-Dons, a couple Snickers bars and a chicken leg from the pre-game meal.

Derek Anderson and Charlie Frye bail the coach out by playing the "Who Can Hit Softer" game to see who gets the nod. Frye taps Anderson ever so lightly and

then Anderson winds up and lands a violent roundhouse right to Frye's chin.

Frye earns the start.

1<sup>st</sup> Quarter- Browns receive the kick and start play from their own 28 yd-line. Frye is immediately forced to call a time-out when 14 offensive players are running around the field as the play clock winds down.

Bernie Kosar, doing TV color commentary, falls out of his chair and throws his Jim Beam & Coke against a wall. Kosar catches himself quickly though. Without batting an eye or missing a play he orders a double Jim Beam & Coke to replace the one he just threw.

1<sup>st</sup> Quarter- After a delay of game penalty and a sack force the Browns into a 3<sup>rd</sup> and 32, Frye takes off out of the pocket, throws across his body back toward the middle of the field and watches Kellen Winslow make a leaping, acrobatic, nearly impossible catch. The 3 yd gain leaves the Browns 29 yards short of a first down.

The Browns wisely punt.

The Broncos pick up a first down but nothing more. The Browns get the ball back after the Denver punt.

Frye returns to cheers from the hometown Denver crowd. A healthy dose of Jamaal Lewis and a couple Frye passes that carom off Denver defenders and into the hands of Browns receiver Braylon Edwards allow the Browns to reach the red-zone. As the first quarter runs out Frye, vowing not to repeat his clock management miscues of weeks past, spikes the ball after his 2nd down run on 2nd and 16 comes up 12 yards short of the first down marker. The 3<sup>rd</sup> down spike makes it 4<sup>th</sup> and 12.

Kosar is alternately heard muttering to himself and loudly cursing in the broadcast booth as Phil Dawson hits the field goal and the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter ends.

2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter- Broncos QB Jay Cutler, tired of being harassed and beaten by Kamerion Wimbley and Antwan Peek, opts to take a different route. He

continually hands the ball off to RB Mike Bell for 5-7 yard gains. At some point Ted Washington checks himself out of the game and makes himself a mixed meat sandwich from items taken out of Crennel's still bulging pockets.

The Broncos get in the end zone on a 12 play, 78-yard drive consisting only of Mike Bell runs off tackle.

2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter- Derek Anderson takes the reins. Anderson's first pass attempt, a 6 yard sideline route, sails 46 yards over the head of tight end Steve Heiden and lands 8 rows deep in the stands.

Kosar, still wobbly from his fall, sarcastically says, “Anderson’s velocity is even better at altitude.” Then he earnestly says, “And my \$%#@ing glass is empty.”

Anderson continues to struggle but the running game remains strong. The Browns pick up a first down when Jerome Harrison recovers Anderson’s fumble and runs up the sideline for a 13-yard gain. Anderson’s next two throws are incomplete. One injures a sideline reporter and the other snaps a yard marker in half. His 3<sup>rd</sup> down attempt is his best throw of the night and reminds the Browns of the promise he holds. Anderson calmly reads the blitz and moves out of the pocket to his right. He spots his receiver breaking open 20 yards

downfield and delivers a perfect throw, on time and on target. Unfortunately, Travis Wilson drops it and the Browns punt.

Denver drives down the field on 13 straight carries by free agent running back Cedric Cobbs. Cobbs punches it in from 3 yd line and the Broncos lead 14-3.

Anderson gets his chance to run the two-minute offense as the first half winds down. A mix of short receptions and a draw play to Jason Wright get the ball to

the Denver 22 yd line. Anderson then throws a sideline route to Braylon Edwards that is ruled incomplete. Replays seem to indicate the Edwards made the catch but Romeo Crennel is unable to locate the red challenge flag. After frantically emptying his pockets Crennel finally throws a red bag of Skittles onto the field to protest the call. Ted Washington looks on in amusement as he wipes mustard off his moustache with the red napkin he took from Crennel's back pocket. The challenge is nullified and the Skittles are returned.

Anderson then makes a bad throw into coverage and one of the 7 Broncos in

the vicinity returns the errant toss for a TD as the half ends. The extra-point makes it 21-3 Denver.

In the booth, Jim Donovan, the play-by-play man, asks Kosar to break down the quarterback play in the first half. The two men have to be separated by booth security when Kosar begins to choke Donovan.

2<sup>nd</sup> Half

The second half sees a much livelier Browns squad. Brady Quinn is given extended playing time against the Broncos and leads the team to 4 second half TDs and a 31-24 victory. Quinn is 29-32 for 289 yards and 4 TD passes. Quinn's three incompletions all come on Travis Wilson drops.

Crennel is seemingly unimpressed with Quinn's effort. "Look, we still don't know if he can even hand the ball off." Crennel tells reporters in the post-game interview. "Sure, he made

a couple nice throws but the Denver starters got rusty after spending most of the first half on the sidelines while watching their offense dominate the game.”

“I thought Frye and Anderson did some good things out there. Frye won another coin toss that got us the football first and DA nearly saved a touchdown with that tackle attempt on the interception.”

The Browns return to Cleveland was delayed while they waited for Kosar to be treated at a local Denver hospital. Kosar apparently bit through his tongue after Donovan asked whether Frye or Anderson had shown enough to earn the starting nod against the Steelers in week 1.

Donovan should be released later this week.