

Brian McPeck brings in the new week for us this morning with a weekend wrap of the events in the world of Cleveland sports. Brian eats a little crow on Charlie Frye, comments on the continued progression of Brady Quinn, the hard luck the Indians starting pitchers have experienced, and the Buckeyes taking on Youngstown State this Saturday.



Credit Where It's Due- There have been times when I've been a bit rough on Browns QB Charlie Frye. Actually, pretty much every article I've written in regard to Frye has been critical. And it's also been well deserved given his inability to lead his team to points and his penchant for making stupid mistakes. Had this not been the case there would be no hue and cry for Brady Quinn, a rookie *and* a holdout, to start the season against Pittsburgh on September 9th.

But Saturday night's effort from Frye salted away the QB derby and ended any speculation as to who would get that start in the opener. Frye led the Browns on an impressive opening drive against the Broncos, taking the club 80 yards on 3 of 4 passing (49yds) and scrambling for 13 yards to further aid the cause. That drive came without Kellen Winslow on the field due to a disciplinary issue. But Frye utilized Braylon Edwards and Steve Heiden and looked good getting the

team to the Denver 1-yard line where Jamal Lewis dove in for the score.

Frye was more than just effective. He made plays and did not suffer the big mistake that has come to define his tenure here. Smartly, Head Coach Romeo Crennel removed Frye after a couple successful series. By minimizing Frye's chances to make a mistake Crennel optimized the 3rd year pro's confidence and gave the entire offense a shot in the arm.

We've Seen The Future- Frye should not get all that comfortable with his starting position. Barring the team being in playoff contention late in the year, Brady Quinn is coming hard and will likely assume the reins of the offense this season. Again showing calm and poise beyond his years, Quinn threw the ball impressively against the Broncos.

He missed making a couple huge plays or his numbers would have been staggering. One throw missed a streaking Edwards by an inch or two at the most and another missed RB Jerome Harrison by the same distance. Edwards broke stride for a step or two or else Quinn's ball would have hit him perfectly for a long TD.

Quinn did hit Josh Cribbs on a pretty throw for the Browns second (and final) TD of the night. Quinn continues to impress not just with the strength of his arms but in the fact he delivers the right ball to the right spot at the right pace. That pace and accuracy allow his receivers to run after the catch rather than make acrobatic plays just to secure possession.

Quinn likely took over the #2 spot on the depth chart Saturday night while Derek Anderson probably played himself off the roster.

Almost as much as the arm strength and the ability to make all the throws, you have to love the fact that Quinn plays with so much confidence. During his time with the first team Saturday night he still controlled the huddle and made the right reads. He's also not going to hurt himself in the locker room throwing in Winslow and Edwards' direction, which he also smartly made sure to do Saturday night. Quinn hasn't wobbled or struggled yet. He will, but he shows all the signs of being able to handle it. And if Frye can do a competent job of holding down the fort for the first half of the season, that will only further help Quinn's development by removing the pressure for him to come in immediately and be a savior.

Working Without A Net- Tribe pitchers continue to throw up impressive performances but all too often are walking away at the end of their outing with nothing to show for their efforts. The club's offensive struggles threaten to short-circuit what has been a banner year for the Indians pitching staff. This past week saw the Big 3 of C.C Sabathia, Fausto Carmona and Jake Westbrook all pitch ridiculously well without earning a victory. The Indians still maintain a lead over the Tigers in the AL Central race and that has salved some of the hurt. But the time is fast approaching when the pressure of having to be nearly perfect each time out is going to cause an eruption in the clubhouse.

Indians manager Eric Wedge, despite suffering the slings and arrows of criticism that he doesn't always deserve in regard to the offensive woes, has done a very good job of keeping peace in the clubhouse. There have been few public outbursts from the pitchers in regard to the anemic support they have received. But with each and every game that the offense continues to struggle, that job will get more difficult to do.

Sabathia and Carmona each had the audacity to allow a couple runs against the Royals this weekend. Sabathia took a 2-1 loss while Carmona ended up with a no-decision on Sunday when he completely fell apart and allowed a grand total of three runs.

In fact, Sabathia has allowed two earned runs in each of his last five starts. For his efforts he is 1-4 over those five starts. It may be just a matter of time before Mt. Sabathia erupts and takes out a couple of hitters in the process.

Rite of Fall- The Ohio State Buckeyes start play with a match-up against Youngstown State in the Horseshoe this coming Saturday. This is an intriguing season for the Buckeyes. They have what amounts to an extended summer practice in home games with Youngstown State and Akron before traveling to Washington to face the Huskies.

If junior QB Todd Boeckman can develop into an efficient passer this 2007 version of the Buckeyes can do some damage and climb into a Top 5 poll position for their difficult stretch run in late October and November. If the offensive line can be dominant and Chris Wells can stay healthy and run effectively, the Buckeyes could conceivably be 8-0 as they head to Happy Valley to take on Penn State.

Look for Jim Tressel to revert back to the style of football he employed in 2002, using Chris Wells, Maurice Wells and

potentially freshman Brandon Saine to pound and control the football while Boeckman gains experience and confidence and develops a rapport with receivers like Brian Hartline, Brian Robiskie and Ray Small.

As the saying goes, “In Tressel We Trust”. The Buckeyes head coach always seems to employ a system that best utilizes his talent and minimizes his team’s inexperience. This season that may mean living with a lot of close games and seeing a much more buttoned down approach to offensive football. But if the Buckeyes are successful in that approach, no one is going to care come November.