

There's few games in all of sports more insignificant than the final NFL Preseason game, which Hiko notes in this week's "Browns Outsider" ... but as he also notes, it is football. It is the Browns. And there were about 20 people on the team who this game was VERY significant for. In this week's column, Hiko delivers his usual excellent game recap, which leaves no stone unturned.



### **A View From The Cheap Seats** **Preseason – Week 4 – Cleveland vs. Chicago**

Welcome to the 4<sup>th</sup> game of the preseason – the most useless game of the year. Some of you would argue that the most useless Browns games are in December – ye of little faith – but even those games have dire importance regarding our possible Top 5 draft slot.

However, for me, at this time of year, there is no Browns game – nay, no *football* – that I am not excited to see. I will watch the 4<sup>th</sup> preseason game. I will watch the blowout between USC and North Central Idaho State A&M. I will watch 6 kids on crutches playing in a parking lot using a roll of toilet paper for a ball.

Besides, there were about 20 guys on either team to whom this game was VERY important.

## Expectations

I expect this game to suck and to mean almost nothing. *(The 2<sup>nd</sup> half was a painful, excruciating, agonizing exercise of insignificance. However, I refuse to negate what happened in the 1<sup>st</sup>*

*half, when the 1<sup>st</sup>*

*and 2<sup>nd</sup>*

*teams played. I refuse to acknowledge it, but I also refuse to negate it.)*

I expect Charlie Frye to have a down game. (*He didn't.*)

I expect the Browns' running D to look better. (*Oh, it did.*)

I expect the Punt Return unit to yet again lack inspiration. (*Sometimes I amaze myself with my own inaccuracy.*)

## Pregame

Curses upon the Thursday night game! I have my girls every Tuesday, Thursday, and every other weekend. 8 o'clock games on Thursday nights sadly coincide with my daughters' bedtime procedure. So there were chunks of the 1<sup>st</sup> half that I had to watch via the magic of video tape, as I was away supervising various toothbrushing and story reading activities.

## **First Quarter**

We got the kickoff, and Charlie Frye began as QB at his own 30. Right off the bat, he nailed Braylon Edwards for a gain of 16. Was the Charlie Frye offense starting where it left off in Denver? Nyet. The drive quickly stalled at midfield, as Charlie threw high for Winslow on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5. He was under a killer blitz, and he barely had time to throw it away.

Dave Zastudil started his big night by punting to the Bears 10. Living Legend Rex Grossman took over from there. He tossed a screen to Greg Olsen that was shut the hell down by Antwan Peek – gain of nada. Cedric Benson ran for a hard 2, then Adrian Peterson ran for another 2, and the Browns got a 3 and out.

Cribbs waited to field the punt, and Jim Donovan mentioned that he has only had the chance to return 1 punt all preseason. *That's it? One goddam return?* Well,

he got an opportunity to return this one, fielding it at the Browns 29, cutting to his right, and slicing through the Bears' defenders for a 24 yard gain. That was easily the most exciting/interesting punt return of the season to date, and suddenly Syndric Steptoe's tenuous hold on the PR position had become quite precarious.

On 1<sup>st</sup> down from the Bears 46, Frye dropped back, heaved a beautiful ball up, right into Braylon Edwards arms at the 3. Much to our chagrin, Edwards channeled his inner Steely

McHands, and dropped it. It would've been a tough catch, but if you want to be considered an elite receiver, that's the kind of catch you have to make. It might not have been a TD (then again, it might), but it certainly would've been 1<sup>st</sup> and Goal from the (small number) yard line.

The drop effectively killed the drive, as Jamal Lewis ran for 6, and Frye (wisely) overthrew Joe Jurevicius on 3<sup>rd</sup> down. The Great Zastudil coffin-cornered the punt at the Bears 4, and they took over

from there.

Brian Griese was already in, meaning that Rex Grossman finished 1 for 1 for 0 yards.

Bears fans were elated – at least he didn't fumble the snap or throw an interception. Griese led Chicago to a quick 3 and out, and they got the honor of punting again.

Cribbs fielded the boot, but only got 9 on this return, taking the ball to the Cleveland 48. Using the term “only” in that previous sentence indicates the kind of night Cribbs had returning the ball.

Frye’s night was already over, so in came Derek “Dead Man Walking” Anderson, taking most likely his last snaps as a Cleveland Brown. In typical DA

fashion, he started the drive:  
good pass to Winslow, bad pass  
to Edwards, good pass to  
Edwards, confusion on the  
offensive formation, time out.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4 from the Bears 35,  
Anderson drilled a pass to  
Braylon. And... he dropped it.  
Again. Rumors abound that he  
switched gloves with Travis  
Wilson prior to the game.  
Authorities are looking into it. It

would've been a tough catch, but if you want to be considered an elite receiver... well, you get the picture.

The Great Zastudil concocted another punt inside the Bears 10, and back out came the Browns D. The game was reminding me of pitcher's duel. The Bears pitcher was giving up hits, struggling with control,

but managing to keep the Browns from scoring. The Browns pitcher, on the other hand, was tossing a no hitter. Regardless, the score was still 0-0.

Up came the Bears, and one... two... three strikes you're out. Included in this sequence was an excellent sack of Griese by Chaun Thompson, who has

solidified his place on this team. The Bears punted, and Cribbs got another 9 yard return. Nothing but positives from Mr. Cribbs on this night.

Dead Man Walking was back in, and he directed the Browns down the field, thanks in part to his nice throw to Ryan Krause for 14 on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2, and a great rollout toss to Cribbs that went

for 21 down to the Bears 11. Sadly, the end zone is like Kryptonite to Derek Anderson, and the drive stalled there. Stalling was probably merciful, since Anderson's throw on 3rd

down was tipped by three Chicago defenders, but fortunately fell harmlessly incomplete. On came Phil Dawson, and the Browns finally got a run home on a sacrifice fly.

*Browns 3, Bears 0.*

That was probably the last pass attempt you will ever see Derek Anderson make in a Browns uniform. It's a little sad... but that's life in the big city.

The following kickoff was a comedy of errors. Danieal Manning of the Bears bobbled the ball at the 1, dropped it,

picked it back up, ran forward, fumbled the ball backwards into the end zone, and desperately batted it out of bounds to prevent the Cleveland TD. But, by definition, that was a Safety, so the Browns got another run on a Chicago error, and it was suddenly: *Browns 5, Bears 0.*

Look for this play on a  
YouTube near you.

The Bears kicked off, Steptoe  
returned it to the 40, and the  
quarter was done.

*End of 1<sup>st</sup>: Browns 5, Bears  
0.*

# Second Quarter

Brady Quinn was in, and his first drive started with a great run by Jason Wright for 10. Things appeared to be clicking, but Jerome Harrison dropped a wide open screen pass, then couldn't reel in a 3<sup>rd</sup> down throw that was slightly

behind him. Strange...  
anytime Quinn comes in and  
doesn't score a TD, I find it  
disappointing. I must make  
a conscious effort not to let  
my expectations run amok.

Kyle Orton was in for the  
Bears, and he fared no  
better than his

predecessors, as he went 3 and out in the face of a strong Browns Defensive attack. Kris Griffin came on a blitz on 3<sup>rd</sup> down, leaped into the air, and almost snagged the throw right out of Orton's hands. Too bad – if he'd been able to hold onto it, it would've been 6 in the opposite direction.

However, the Bears only delayed the inevitable Cleveland TD. Cribbs fielded the punt at the Browns 30, darted forward, broke a tackle, and just tore into the open. The punter had the angle on him... oh wait... no. Cribbs toasted the poor fool, outrunning the “coverage”, and

sprinting into the end zone for a 70 yard TD. *Browns 12, Bears 0.*

Let's review: Josh Cribbs – 4 punt returns, 112 yards, 1 TD. That's 28 yards per return. I think that perhaps the problem

of Punt Returner has  
been solved.

The Bears got the ball  
back, and, tragically,  
managed to get their first  
1<sup>st</sup> down. Yes, Garret  
Wolfe, a very sneaky  
back, got 5 on 3<sup>rd</sup> and

1. The Chicago crowd roared their approval. It only took the Bears 19 minutes and 9 seconds to accomplish that arduous feat. Nothing but blue skies ahead.

What's this? The Bears

got yet another 1<sup>st</sup> down  
up to their 41 yard line!  
They were making it rain  
now. Orton dumped the  
ball down to Wolfe, who  
joked Clifton Smith right  
out of his jock, flying  
ahead for 14 and yet  
another 1  
st

down. Ye Gods!  
Nothing can stop them!

Oh wait... no. On the next play, Orton thoughtfully threw the ball right at Griffin, who tipped it to Smith, who caught the ball for an INT. He ran the ball back to midfield, and the Browns were on Offense again.

Jerome Harrison started off the drive with nice run for 7. In fact, that whole drive was the Harrison Show. Bam! He runs again for 5. Smash! He gets a screen, stiff-arms a would-be tackler, and takes it for 8. Pow! He takes the

ball for 5 and a 1<sup>st</sup>  
down.

On 1<sup>st</sup> and 10 at the  
Bears 24, Quinn threw  
a perfect slant to  
Travis “Steely  
McHands” Wilson,

who caught the ball  
and was immediately  
sandwiched, yet he  
hung on to complete  
the excellent catch.

Let's realize the word  
association from that:

*Travis Wilson...*

*excellent catch* .

It seems odd to use  
those words together.

On the next play, I got déjà vu as Quinn threw another slant to Wilson, and he made *another excellent catch*

. Obviously, Steely took Quinn aside before the game and slipped him a \$100

bill, whispering “Help me look good. I need to make this team.” And from the book of *If They Ain’t Stoppin’ It, Don’t Stop Doing It* – a third straight slant to Wilson for 9 to the 4 yard line.

The Browns pounded the ball with Harrison on 2 runs, and – viola! – we had a TD. Brady Quinn directed his 5<sup>th</sup> TD drive of the preseason (counting the Jurevicius TD from the Broncos game). *Browns*

*19, Bears 0.*

This is fun.

Harrison secured his roster spot with that drive. What that means for Chris Barclay is yet to be seen.

But after the Browns kicked off, the Bears took over with 2:15 left in the half. You know what that means, don't you? Yes, of course you do. Yep – it means it's time to give up a quick easy scoring

drive. Our 2 minute  
Defense is offensive.

The Bears drove the  
ball right down the  
field, thanks in great  
part to that slippery

Wolfe dude. He seems harder to grab than a greased eel. And the Defensive Pass Interference call at their own 3 yard line didn't help Cleveland either. However, the Browns D finally

“stiffened” there as Clifton Smith batted the hell out of the pass with 4 seconds left in the half, and Chicago was forced to settle for a FG. *Browns 19, Bears 3.*

*Halftime: Browns  
19, Bears 3.*

**Third Quarter**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> half of this game was about as interesting as

*M. Night*

*Shyamalan&rsquo;s*

*The Village*

(and if you've ever been unfortunate enough to have to

sit through that  
dog, you know  
what I'm talking  
about). I will not  
bother with being  
overly thorough  
with the 3  
rd

and 4

th

quarter. In fact, there were a bunch of drives, the Bears scored one TD, the Browns won.

# The End.

Alex Rodriguez... I mean, Chris Leak took over at QB for the Bears in the 2<sup>n</sup>

d

half. Yes, he who recently won the National Championship and will be looking for Sales jobs next week.

The Browns  
stopped his first  
drive, and Quinn  
came back in for  
Cleveland.  
Unfortunately,  
seeing Leak on  
the field, he felt

that he was back  
at Notre Dame,  
playing against  
Florida, and  
reverted back to *B*  
*radly-Quinn-In-Big*  
*-Collegiate-Game*  
*s*

form and threw  
his first pro INT. I  
think we'll be fine  
with Brady at QB  
as long as he's  
not playing a  
college opponent.  
We should

definitely bench  
him for the  
Arizona game.  
Matt Leinart's  
presence might  
cause him to  
implode.

It wasn't that it  
was such a bad  
throw. A  
Defensive  
Lineman batted  
the ball into the  
air, and it was an  
easy pick. It just

proved that, yes,  
contrary to  
national opinion,  
Brady Quinn is a  
human being.

After the turnover,  
Leak managed to  
drive the Bears  
down the field.  
Babatunde  
Oshinowo (I  
spelled that right  
without even

checking) made  
some nice  
defensive plays,  
but the Bears still  
were able to move  
down to 1<sup>st</sup> and  
Goal at the 5.  
The Browns

forced them to 3  
rd

down, but Leak  
made a nice toss  
to Mike Hass for a  
TD.

The Bears went for 2, Leak dropped back, threw the ball to the corner, but Brandon McDonald easily intercepted the

awful pass. It was so bad that Bernie Kosar let a “*Jesus!*” slip, which is probably not considered kosher for network

broadcasting.

Rock on, Bernie.

*Browns 19, Bears  
9.*

Special mention  
to Bears WR  
David Ball, who  
made a  
spectacular  
one-handed  
catch on 2<sup>nd</sup> and  
Goal of the

previous Chicago  
drive. However,  
it was out of  
bounds. Tsk tsk.

When the Browns got the ball back, Quinn quickly got a 1<sup>st</sup> down on a nice throw to Travis Wilson (notice I've laid off the

derogatory  
nickname). But  
a False Start  
and a  
miscommunication  
on on a 3  
rd  
down throw

thwarted their  
advance, and a  
punt ensued.  
That was it –  
Brady's last  
drive of the night.  
When will we  
see him next?

No one knows.  
It was fun while it  
lasted.

The Great

Zastudil and the  
punt team  
pinned the  
Bears back at  
their own 1, but  
Chicago  
managed to get  
a 1<sup>st</sup> down, and

the quarter  
ended with them  
at their own 16.

*End of 3<sup>rd</sup>:*

*Browns 19,  
Bears 9.*

**Fourth Quarter**

This quarter  
was even more  
enthralling  
than the last.  
The Bears  
continued their  
drive, moving

the ball all the way to the Cleveland 36, where Leak threw the ball high to his receiver, who

tipped it,  
allowing  
Brandon  
McDonald to  
intercept it. It  
wasn't that  
great of

coverage, but B  
Mac will take  
the gift.

The Browns  
took over at  
their own 22,  
and Ken  
Dorsey came  
in. No offense  
to Ken, but

yawn. Barclay  
was the RB,  
and had a nice  
run on 1<sup>st</sup> down  
(he had a  
couple of nice  
runs on this

night).

Obviously, the coaches'

mission at this

point was to get

the game the

hell over with,

so the Browns  
ran and ran and  
ran until they  
got a 3  
rd

and 7, where  
Dorsey

dropped back  
and promptly  
got sacked.

The Bears  
started the  
next drive at  
their own 5.  
Chicago had  
terrible, just  
atrocious field

position all  
night. They  
managed to  
move the ball  
again, but got  
only as far as  
their 40 when

they were  
finally stymied  
and forced to  
punt with 1:36  
left in the  
game.

Cleveland took  
over at their  
own 28, and  
Dorsey just  
handed the ball  
off. Barclay  
had a 14 yard

run to get a 1<sup>st</sup>  
down, and  
then, with 46  
seconds left,  
Dorsey  
assumed the  
Victory

Formation, and  
the clock ticked  
down to 0:00.

*Final: Browns  
19, Bears 9.*

**Conclusion**

~The key to  
this game was  
that the  
Browns  
emerged  
relatively  
unwounded.

That is where  
the real win is  
found.

~ I know I didn't  
mention rookie  
DE Melila  
Purcell above.  
I am now. He  
had 9 tackles  
and generally

was in on  
every play. I  
like what I saw  
out of him.

*~ When Stats  
Lie: Anderson  
vs. Frye . I  
know, it  
sounds like  
some bad Fox  
News special,*

such as

*When House  
Pets Go Bad*

. But stats do  
lie – they are  
chronic liars.

People will

take stats and  
use them to  
further their  
agendas and  
then say  
stupid things  
like “The stats

don't lie.”

Those people  
are lying about  
the stats not  
lying.

For instance,  
Charlie Frye  
was 2 of 5 for  
19 yards in 2  
series. Derek  
Anderson was  
6 of 9 for 53

yards in 2  
series. The  
stats say that  
Derek  
Anderson had  
a better  
game. The

stats are lying.

If Braylon  
Edwards

makes the  
catch on the  
long throw by  
Frye, the stats  
would be  
much different.  
In the end,

the eye, not  
stats, should  
tell you who  
had the better  
game, and the  
answer is  
Chaz Frye.

Derek didn't  
do that badly,  
but he was  
maddeningly  
blah, which is  
what will  
cause him to

be wearing  
different colors  
by Monday.

~ You know  
you're  
obsessive  
when you're  
fuming in the 4  
th  
quarter of a

meaningless  
game about  
the potentiality  
of our 4  
th

stringers  
giving up the

lead to their 4  
th

stringers. It's  
the uniform,  
people. It's  
still Browns  
players

fighting  
against  
players from  
some other  
team.

~ Last week I  
stated that  
Syndric  
Steptoe had  
probably won  
the Punt  
Returner job.

That was by  
default, since  
we really  
hadn't seen  
Josh Cribbs  
get many  
opportunities.

Well, due to  
the defense's  
pride, and the  
generally  
horrible field  
position for  
Chicago

throughout the  
1<sup>st</sup> half, Cribbs  
finally got his  
chances, and,  
well, you saw  
what  
happened.

We now have  
our Punt  
Returner.

Couple that  
fact and the  
impressive  
effort given

by the  
Receiver  
Formerly  
Known As  
Steely  
McHands, and  
Steptoe is on

a serious  
bubble.

When you're

on a bubble,  
you make  
certain of your  
every move.  
You don't  
want to burst

that bubble.  
If said bubble  
were to pop,  
no saying  
how far that  
drop to earth

is.

~ And now my  
flawed

prediction for  
the final 53:

**QB: Charlie**

Frye, Brady  
Quinn, Ken  
Dorsey

**RB: Jamal**

Lewis, Jason  
Wright,  
Jerome  
Harrison

**FB: Lawrence  
Vickers,  
Charles Ali**

**WR: Braylon**

Edwards, Joe  
Jurevicius,  
Josh Cribbs,  
Travis Wilson,  
Tim Carter

**TE: Kellen  
Winslow,  
Steve  
Heiden,  
Darnell  
Dinkins**

**OL: Joe  
Thomas, Eric  
Steinbach,  
Hank Fraley,  
Seth  
McKinney,**

Kevin Shaffer,  
Nat Dorsey,  
Lennie  
Friedman,  
Rob Smith,  
Fred Matua,

# Isaac Sowell's

**DL: Ted  
Washington,**

Robaire

Smith, Shaun

Smith,

Orpheus

Roye, Melila

Purcell, Baba

Oshinowo,  
Simon Fraser

LB: Kamerion  
Wimbley,

Andra Davis,

D'Qwell

Jackson,

Leon

Williams,

Antwan Peek,

Willie

McGinest,

David

McMillan,

Chaun

Thompson

**CB: Leigh  
Bodden, Eric  
Wright, Daven  
Holly,  
Brandon  
McDonald,**

# Kenny Wright

**S:** Sean

Jones,

Brodney

Pool, Justin  
Hamilton,  
Mike Adams

**P: Dave  
Zastudil**

**K: Phil  
Dawson**

**LS: Ryan  
Pontbriand**

**IR: Gary**

**Baxter**

**PUP:**

**LeCharles**

**Bentley**

# Suspension: Ryan Tucker

# Possible Practice

# Squad

# Fodder:

Clifton Smith,

Chris Barclay,

Syndric

Steptoe,

Steve  
Sanders,  
Chase  
Pittman,  
DeMario  
Minter

The  
unfortunate  
cuts are guys  
like Clifton  
Smith and  
Kris Griffin,

victims of the  
depth at LB.  
Part of me  
says the  
Browns  
should be

bold and cut  
Willie  
McGinest,  
who is hurt  
and may be  
hampered all

season, and  
is holding a  
roster spot  
that could go  
to a Clifton  
Smith, who

played very  
well at times.

But I highly

doubt that

Romeo is

gonna axe his

boy Willie, so  
there you go.

Chris Barclay

is also an  
unfortunate  
cut, but I don't  
see how we  
can possibly  
carry 4 RB

and 2 FB, and  
we probably  
*will*  
carry 2 FB  
since Vickers  
has the power

running skills  
and Ali is the  
blocker.

Part of me  
would like to  
see the  
Browns keep  
Gary Baxter  
as the #4

Safety instead  
of Mike  
Adams.

Adams hasn't  
done anything  
to impress

me, and, if  
healthy,  
Baxter would  
surely be an  
improvement.  
The “if” part is

what scares  
me.

I'm also

scared of  
Baxter's  
reaction if  
they try to IR  
him. I  
wouldn't be at

all shocked  
to see him  
demand a  
release  
instead.

That's it.  
That's the  
last of the  
practice  
games. Next  
time the

Browns take  
the field, we  
get to see the  
real team. In  
the recent  
past, that has

been an  
unpleasant  
surprise. No  
one –  
absolutely no  
one – truly

knows what to  
expect at this  
point.

Cross your

fingers, say a  
prayer to  
your god of  
choice, and  
get ready for  
the ride.