

What a weekend for Cleveland sports fans! The Tribe took two of three heading into their HUGE series with the Tigers this week. The Buckeyes dominated the second half of their game Saturday in Seattle, rolling to a 33-14 win over the Washington Huskies. And the Browns ... the Browns! WOW! What a game! What an offensive performance! Thanks to their 51-45 win over the Bungles, the Brownies have a new lease on life here in 2007. Brian McPeck covers it all in The Weekend Wrap.



Didn't See That Coming

Damn.

That was definitely the wrong game to agree to the “Let’s do a shot every time the Browns actually score” challenge. There’s untold damage to the liver and the wallet.

On Sunday afternoon at Browns Stadium the Browns hung 51 points on the Bengals and Derek Anderson threw 5 TD passes.

Feel free to read that again.

5 TD passes and 328 yards from Anderson mixed in with 215 yards and a TD on the ground from Jamal Lewis and the Browns and Romeo Crennel get their first win of the season by a 51-45 score.

No criticism of the offense this weekend. In what may be a bit of an understatement, this looked like a completely different offense than the one on the field last weekend. Anderson led a big play attack and he did it behind an offensive line that was simply magnificent. Anderson was not touched all day long and Lewis had plenty of room to move right from the opening kick. Great protection and a solid running game is not a combination former Browns QB Charlie Frye ever enjoyed (nor help foster) but take nothing away from Anderson. He did throw an interception that led to a Cincinnati touchdown, but other than that he was decisive and relatively accurate all day long.

Anderson was helped out a few times by sensational catches from both Kellen Winslow Jr. and Braylon Edwards. But that's what those big dollar and big play players are supposed to do. Edwards' second scoring catch of the day was a beautiful diving effort and a roll into the end zone for the Browns final TD of the afternoon.

The huge offensive day was barely enough to hold off Cincinnati. The Bengals had a chance to leave Cleveland with a victory until Leigh Bodden intercepted Carson Palmer with less than 30 seconds remaining.

Last week the Browns became the first team since the AFL-NFL merger to start a QB on opening day and trade him before game #2. Yesterday at the stadium, the Browns and Bengals became the first teams since that same merger to have each team's starting QB throw at least 5 TD passes.

A great time down at the ball yard and a terrific and entertaining game to watch. Never mind that the Cleveland defense is giving up 40 points a game. If the offense can simply throw up 50 every week the defense will look just fine.

Is That Clock Running?

Why does this stretch run for the Indians feel like a football game where your squad is nursing a small lead and the other team is driving down the field as the clock winds down?

The Indians won both series they played this week and are 6-4 in their last 10 games. But the Tigers are on a 5 game heater following their sweep of the Twins and have cut the Tribe's lead in the AL Central to 4 ½ games.

To make things more gut wrenching, the Tigers come to town for three games starting Monday night in what has become the series of the season.

The Indians took the weekend series from the Royals by winning an exciting game Friday night on Casey Blake's 9th inning home run and then took game two Saturday night on the strength of some timely hitting, poor Royal defense and a gem from Fausto Carmona. Aaron Laffey pitched into the 7th

inning on Sunday but the four runs he gave up were one more than the Tribe could muster as the Royals salvaged Sunday's game.

Paul Byrd, Jake Westbrook and CC Sabathia will square off against Kenny Rogers, Justin Verlander and Nate Robertson, respectively, Monday through Wednesday at the Jake. A sweep by either team would be devastating to the other, either in terms of playoff possibilities or psychologically. The Indians magic number for clinching the division is at nine but those numbers and the pressure of this series appear to be a couple things that concern the fans more than the players. There's still a couple weeks of baseball left and anything can happen in that

time, but this series will go a long way in determining what team wins the Central title.

These kind of anxiety producing ballgames are what you get when your wishes for meaningful September games are granted. They don't get much more meaningful than this week.

Check That Off the List

The Buckeyes packed up some players and some gear and went out to Seattle to face the Washington Huskies this past weekend in their first real test of the season. The Buckeyes trailed 7-3 at the half before coming out in 3rd quarter and putting a beating on the Huskies. OSU won the game 33-14 and did so on the backs of their defense.

Washington freshman QB Jake Locker showed flashes of what looks to become a very good college career but ultimately was shut down by Ohio State and Buckeye linebacker James Laurinaitis. Locker threw 3 interceptions on the day and Laurinaitis picked off the young QB twice.

The Buckeyes rushed for 263 yards and threw for 218 more. Chris Wells carried 24 times for 135 yards and QB Todd Boeckman hooked up with both Brian Robiskie and Brian Hartline on long TD passes.

Ohio State moved to 3-0 on the season and answered some questions as to how they'd respond against a team from a power conference. They were wobbly at first, but appeared to

gain some confidence and some experience in Seattle.

Next up for OSU is the start of Big 10 play with Northwestern next Saturday in the 'Shoe. Head Coach Jim Tressel picked up career win #200 against the Huskies Saturday and his squad will be heavily favored to get him #201 next weekend.

Might Want to Prune That Tree

Much has been made of the issues Bill Belichick protégé Romeo Crennel has had in winning games since becoming the head coach of the Browns. But other Belichick (nee Parcells) disciples are finding the going difficult as well. Eric Mangini and his Jets have started this season 0-2. Nick Saban has made himself as welcome as Michael Vick at the Westchester Kennel Club in many cities where football is played and Charlie Weis may be coaching himself out of a job at Notre Dame.

Weis's excuses and losses are starting to pile up. He's been in South Bend for three seasons now and still has not shown the ability to either recruit top talent to Notre Dame or win with what talent he has recruited. And Notre Dame is not exactly a tough sell in the recruiting department, despite the more stringent academic requirements.

It got a whole lot worse for Weis when he lost the 2007 Disappointment Bowl Saturday in Ann Arbor. Weis and Notre Dame are 0-3 on the season and coaches have been fired every year for losing fewer games than Weis has already lost and stands to lose this season.

Weis was credited with being an innovative and creative offensive coordinator while in New England. And he was. But he's looking more and more overmatched in his role as a head coach and lead recruiter at the major college level. His Irish have scored a total of 13 points this season after getting whacked 38-0 by the Wolverines.

Weis reacted to yesterday's loss and the 0-3 start by saying "We are going back to our first day of installation of training camp. And everything is even steven, like it's the first day out there and everything's up for grabs."

Seems to me the time for going to training camp was during training camp. Weis needs to right that ship immediately because the bloom is quickly fading from that rose.