

Random Thoughts: Ratbirds at Browns

Written by {ga=mitch}

Tuesday, October 02 2007 7:00 PM -

Now that was a fun football game this Sunday. And while Mitch says he should get more pleasure out of beating the Squealers, he just can't help himself. He gets a bigger kick "seeing the thugs from Baltimore sent packing back to their mosquito infested, decaying suburb of Washington, D.C. with their tails tucked between their legs and their egomaniacal head coach sputtering for excuses." You gotta love Mitch. He's back ... with "Random Thoughts".



"Revenge is a dish best served with cold beer"

- Perversion of ancient Klingon saying

Damn, that was fun.

Yes, I know that by all rights, I should get more pleasure out of beating the Squealers and shutting up their bandwagoning, orthodontically challenged fans, but I just can't help myself...I get a bigger kick seeing the thugs from Baltimore sent packing back to their mosquito infested, decaying suburb of Washington, D.C. with their tails tucked between their legs and their egomaniacal head coach sputtering for excuses.

But since the Browns haven't beaten the Appalachians since Sinead O'Connor was popular, I guess I don't really know which victory would give me more pleasure.

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As usual, Brian Billick (Offensive Super Genius), had everyone to blame except for himself. I mean, how DARE those officials fail to read his mind and know that he WANTED to throw that red challenge flag prior to the Browns getting the snap off for the PAT following Jamal's touchdown...he was just too busy trying to devise up his next fifteen brilliant moves to be bothered by it all.

Here's the one forgotten fact in this conversation about Blow-hole Billick and his red flag...

It wouldn't have overturned the call.

That's right...despite all the blather going on from the Talking Heads (and I don't mean David Byrne) about the call, it wouldn't have been overturned. The refs were standing right on the line and made the call. Was the camera exactly on the end line, or a few inches behind it? That's what it appeared to me, and therefore it was impossible for anyone to say for certain that Jamal was short of breaking the plane.

In other words, this was so close that the only call that could have come out of that new and improved High Definition Replay Booth (nice that SOMEONE could watch part of the game in High Def), would have been that there was inconclusive evidence to overturn the call.

Had Jamal ended in the exact same place, and the refs hadn't called it a TD, Romeo would have lost a challenge on the same grounds.

Then again, had they not ruled it a TD, Romeo would have lost the challenge even if Jamal had ran through the end zone all the way into the fifth row of the Dawg Pound before quaffing a beverage with an overweight man in a costume.

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But let's not underestimate the contribution to the Browns victory from MVP Brian Billick. Choosing to pass almost exclusively at the start of the game, just because he wanted to, he ignored the fact that he has a running back far superior to the ones that gashed the Browns for almost 200 yards the week before.

Instead, he preferred to place his bets on an ailing QB, causing us in the television audience to hear the word "groin" more often than during a Jenna Jamison movie.

And later in the game, he refused to admit his error (I'm shocked! shocked! That Billick can't admit an error), and go with Kyle Boller, despite the fact that McNair could put no touch or zip on the ball whatsoever due to the injury. I was convinced that at some point (like when the Browns were up 17-3), that Boller would come in and spark the Rats to a comeback.

Luckily for all of the Forces of Good, the Incredible Receding Hairline was bound and determined to live or die by his pre-determined offensive game plan.

Death by Ego.

Joe Thomas, perennial Pro-Bowler.

No, he probably won't get there this year, but it's only a matter of time. I think Joe took his first huge step towards national recognition with his thorough butt kicking of Pro-Bowl pass rusher Terrell Suggs. For the third straight game, Derek Anderson was not sacked (I'm conveniently ignoring the incorrect ruling from last week that Gerard "Little Penny" Warren was granted a sack when DA got the ball slapped away from him on that fumble. You're still standing after the ball is bouncing away? It's not a friggin' sack).

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Three straight games of not getting beat, and this time it's against one of the top pass rushers in the NFL (not to mention possibly one of the ugliest players in this, or any other league).

Don't underestimate the contributions from Eric Steinbach in Thomas' development. Nothing like have the security blanket of one of the best guards in the league to allow you to focus solely on your man, without being concerned that the guy next to you is a human turnstile (like pretty much every left guard the Browns have had since 1999).

The Return of Bend But Don't Break

As much as I gave Grantham and Romeo hell last week for their poor preparation and poorer execution, they deserve props this week.

Orpheus Roye probably did them all a favor by being unable to play, forcing the younger (and evidently faster) Shuan Smith to the LDE position. Fat Ted also saw his playing time reduced in favor of the more athletic Ethan Kelly ("more athletic than Ted Washington" is the equivalent to "more maternally inclined than Britney Spears").

With the average age of the defensive line dropping from "Methuselah", the Browns got quite a bit more push, and were actually pretty decent at coming up with the stops to the Ravens' running game once their backs got put up against the goal line.

The Browns gave up only 13 points, despite the fact that the Ravens did not punt a single time, and almost every one of their drives ended up in Cleveland territory. That was some major smoke-n-mirrors magic performed by the defense. And a lot of the credit goes to Grantham for mixing things up. Not just with the defensive line, but also with the linebacking corps. Last week, I advocated using Kamerion

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Wimbley on the left side, and guess where he lined up most plays this week? And despite a certain writer's (moi) propensity to call Willie McGinest a cap draining waste of a uniform, he performed well in his first action of 2007...which was definitely needed since Antwaan Peek wasn't 100%.

They even dusted off the old "UFO Defense" from Romeo's days as defensive coordinator of the Browns back in 2000, sometimes pulling everyone off the line other than one player, having a linebacker creep up behind the down lineman, and slip into a slot right before the snap. Other times, they went back to loading three pass rushing linebackers to one side of the ball, dropping one back into coverage and rushing the other two.

They may not have gotten any sacks, but they got lots of pressures, and Wimbley's hit on McNair in the final drive was as good as a sack, as McNair took an intentional grounding call just before going to the ground.

Eric Wright also stepped up his game after his asswuppin' at the hands of the Raiders. Say what you want about his evolving coverage skills, the kid showed some moxy, willing to stick his nose in anyone's business, and came up with some great tackles.

Now if he can just teach those techniques to NyQuill Jackson, this week's winner of the 'Of The Same Monetary Value as Mammary Glands on a Sus Scrofa' Award for his impersonation of a linebacker.

Playmakers!

Jamal Lewis definitely got the last laugh on Sunday. While 64 yards on 23 carries may not sound like much, but it was a huge blow to the ego of Jamal's former teammates who had vowed to stop him cold. The establishment of the running game (including a couple of great bursts by Jason Wright) enabled the Browns to

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control the clock and to wear down the vaunted (read: overrated) Raven defense. And that 28 yard explosion from Jamal was a thing of beauty. You could almost see him looking to the other side of the field at Brian Blowhole wanting to say "I got your 'too old and slow' RIGHT HERE!"

Kellen Winslow continues to show that he is a Football Playa, putting in another superb effort despite a "partially dislocated shoulder". How can it be "partially" dislocated? It's either located where the shoulder SHOULD be, or it's not...hence the appropriate word would be DIS-located.

Smart move from Chud in splitting K2 out more often, and using Steve Heiden exclusively as the blocking tight end, as you know it had to have hurt to go slamming into a 300 blob with a bad shoulder.

Braylon Edwards, your reservation for Honolulu is in the mail.

What's great is how much national press Braylon is receiving. Everyone is starting to find out how great of a receiver he has turned into, and opposing defenses are going to have to game plan around him even more, which will work to the benefit of Winslow, Lewis, and Jurevicius.

And you know Braylon is now officially a Fan Favorite after giving the stadium denizens some major love by spelling out the O-H-I-O while "Hang on Sloopy" was being played. They are appalled in the Land of Big Blue-Hoo...not that I care about LLLLLoyd Carr's group of whiners in the least.

No confirmation yet on the story that later on that day, Jeff Garcia was seen on the sideline in Charlotte spelling out Y-M-C-A.

Got to Find Something to Gripe About

Three points in the second half from the offense, playing a game plan that seemed way too conservative, and led to my stomach acid churning ten times the amount that it should have.

Maybe it was because Anderson looked a bit shaky in the second half, and they didn't want to risk him throwing into sextuple coverage from his own 10 yard line.

Maybe it's because they just wanted to keep pounding Jamal.

Maybe it's because they were completely unfamiliar on what the hell to do when leading by that many points in the third quarter, and didn't have a clue how to respond. Sorta like my feelings if it ever got to near the end of the month, and I actually still had money in my bank account that my children hadn't found a way to confiscate...hard to figure out how you'd act in Virgin Territory when you've never been there.

But I'm not jumping on the newly created bandwagon that's stating that Anderson should remain the QB all year, a la Jon Kitna keeping Carson Palmer on the bench for Palmer's rookie season.

10 of 18 with one ugly pick and several "where the hell is he throwing it?" passes does not make one Joe Montana.

I'm still all for Brady starting after the Bye week, and against the Dolphins if DA really blows chunks this week against the Patriots.

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And Romeo Crennel is still not a head coach worth keeping. One victory against an overconfident team with an idiot head coach outthinking himself does not make one Vince Lombardi.

Which we'll probably see all too well on Sunday. We can always hope that the Patriots will take the Brown too lightly...that they'll be down after a Monday night away game...that Tom Brady will be too tired after impregnating another supermodel...that Belichick will accidentally lock himself into his super secret vault...and that the Browns can escape from Foxboro with a W.

I'm just hoping they'll escape with some level of dignity still intact.

Blurbs From An ADHD Mind:

~ This Sunday, there might be three former Browns QBs starting around the league: Jeff Garcia in Tampa Bay, Kelly Holcomb in Minnesota, and Trent Dilfer going up against the team he still resents more than Cleveland (Baltimore) in San Francisco. And I wish two of them the best of luck.

~ LeBron James is talking about wearing a Yankees cap to the Jake this weekend? I guess it's good to find out that the kid isn't perfect. And I don't buy this crap of "I've been a Yankees fan all my life". What the hell is that? You live in Akron, 20 minutes from Cleveland, not Edison NJ, 20 minutes from New York. That's ALMOST as bad as designated dick Ben Roethlisberger being from Findlay, Ohio, and saying that he wasn't a Browns fan, but rooted for Denver because of Elway.

~ There is only one place for a Yankees cap at the Jake...at the bottom of a urinal serving as target practice.

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~ Speaking of The Evil Empire, while I was in Boston a few weeks ago, I saw the best t-shirt about turncoat Johnny Damon. "Looks like Jesus. Acts like Judas. Throws like Mary";

~ I was bouncing back and forth between the 4 PM games, and at one point of the Cardinals-Squealers game, they showed two Pittsburgh fans in that stands in Arizona. Yep...she was skanky looking enough that I was expecting to see a coin changer attached to her hip, and he had a really ugly mullet (redundant words if I ever saw them). It's got to be genetic...I'll personally be stunned if I watch the new ABC comedy "Cavemen"; and find out that they aren't fans of the Black and Urine.

~ So Marvin Lewis goes into Monday Night's game against one of the most potent offenses in the league with only four linebackers, two of which are promptly hurt, forcing Lewis to line up long snappers and punters behind the defensive line. How can a professed "Defensive Genius"; be so stupid? (see also; Crennel, Romeo). So now in the AFC North you have a self proclaimed "Offensive Genius"; with his eighth straight rotten offense, and a self proclaimed "Defensive Genius"; with a group that couldn't stop Notre Dame.

~ And finally, staying on the subject of the city that is supposedly in Ohio, but technically is a suburb of Kentucky, Bengals officials were denied in their request to deal with the excessive pigeon population at Paul Brown Stadium by having them "handled"; by "staff members trained in the use of firearms";. Nothing quite screams REDNECK like having several Cincituckians in tiger stripes walking around a football stadium shooting at birds.

Besides, bird crap is the perfect mascot for the Bengals' defense.