

## Preview: Dolphins at Browns

Written by {ga=hermanfontenot}  
Friday, October 12 2007 7:00 PM -

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This is a big game for the Browns today. No other way to put it. They're 2-3, heading into their bye week, and are at home against the 0-5 Miami Dolphins. A win? We've got two weeks to talk about the .500 Browns. A loss? Two weeks of people calling for Romeo's head on a platter. Jesse Lamovsky previews the contest for us.



**Time:** Sunday, October 14, 1:00 PM

**Location:** Cleveland Browns Stadium

**Network, Announcers:** CBS- Ian Eagle and Solomon Wilcotts make their long-awaited first trip to Cleveland in 2007.

**Line:** Browns by 4.5.

**Team W/L Records:** Cleveland is 2-3; Miami is 0-5

**Coaches:** Romeo Crennel is 12-25 in his third season with the Browns. Cam Cameron is 0-5 in his first season with the Dolphins.

**Last Week for the Browns:** Provided New England with its closest game of the year (so far) in a 34-17 loss to the Patriots.

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**Last Week for the Dolphins:** Lost 22-19 in Houston thanks to the NFL kicker's version of Mark Whiten's four-homer, twelve-RBI game.

**All-Time Series:** Miami leads 9-5, including playoff victories over the Browns in 1972 and 1985.

**Last Meeting:** November 20, 2005- In one of the more impressive showings by a Browns team since the return, Cleveland dominated on both sides of the ball and powered to a 22-0 calcimining of Nick Saban's Dolphins. Ruben Droughns got things started on Cleveland's first offensive play with a twisting, meandering 75-yard touchdown dash that took eighteen seconds from snap to score.

**Out or Questionable for Miami:** QB Trent Green (concussion), DT Vonnie Holliday (ankle), and S Tavares Tillman (ankle) are out; WR Derek Hagen (hamstring) and DT Rodrique Wright (ankle) are questionable.

**Out or Questionable for Cleveland:** TE Darnell Dinkins (hand) is doubtful; S Gary Baxter (knees), WR Joe Jurevicius (knee), RB Jamal Lewis (foot), and S Brodney Pool (thigh) are questionable

**What to watch for the Dolphins:** Ronnie Brown. If the hapless Dolphins are reminiscent of the mid-80s Buccaneers, Ronnie Brown is currently doing his best impersonation of James Wilder. The third-year man from Auburn- the true Tailback U- has accounted for 48.5% of his team's total yards from scrimmage, is tied with Chris Chambers for the team lead in receptions, has scored five of Miami's nine offensive touchdowns- including all four rushing touchdowns- and is doing everything for his team short of laying the sod over the baseball diamond at

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Pro Player Stadium, or whatever it's called these days. What's more, he's averaging a very un-Wilder-like 5.1 yards per carry.

In short, he's Miami's only real offensive threat, and with "Letters to Cleo" Lemon now under center for the Dolphins, he'll carry even more of the burden. As usual, the Browns are terrible against the run- 30<sup>th</sup> overall, and 29<sup>th</sup> in yards-per-carry allowed. Unless Marino, the Magic Markers, Bruce Hardy, and Tony Nathan drop magically out of the slate-colored Cleveland sky at approximately 12:58 tomorrow afternoon, Mr. Brown will have to win this game practically single-handedly. Sadly, he's going against the right defense to do it.

***What to watch for the Browns:*** Derek Anderson. At the risk of sounding presumptuous, the preseason desire among most was that either Charlie Frye or DA would hold down the fort until Brady Quinn was ready to run the offense and the offense was ready to be run by him; an eventuality that was generally pinpointed at or around the team's bye week. By then the Browns would be through the brutal part of the schedule and safely out of playoff consideration- a good time to break in the rookie.

But a funny thing happened on the way to irrelevance; the Browns competed better than just about anyone had hoped in the first five weeks. More to the point, they've done so with the most explosive offense seen around here in a long time. The Browns haven't finished in the top ten in the NFL in total offense since 1983, but they're currently eighth, and they're pace to score 403 points, which would tie the franchise season-scoring record set in 1966. Joe Thomas and Eric Steinbach have made the left side one of the best in the league.

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Braylon Edwards has come into his own as a legitimate go-to receiver. Kellen Winslow is averaging 17.3 yards per catch, three yards more than any other tight end. And Rob Chudzinski has come along and installed an offense that- get this- actually takes advantage of the talent on the field. No kidding!

In his four starts since taking over for that one guy we traded to Seattle, Derek Anderson has led the Browns to a 2-2 record; not reminiscent of the Paul Brown days, but better than most outside observers thought this team was capable of to this point, for sure. Both wins have come against division opponents too. And there's no question, DA's powerful right arm has been a nice weapon in Chud's arsenal. Then again, no one has ever doubted Derek Anderson's arm strength. It's his consistency and ball security which have come under question, and DA, who threw a whopping 41 interceptions in his last two seasons at Oregon State, has been a major factor in his team's wins and losses alike. One play, he's firing an absolutely gorgeous frozen rope to a streaking Braylon or K2 down the middle; the next, he's drilling a fastball that's so right to a linebacker you'd swear he was the intended receiver. He's Jay Schroeder and Scott Mitchell- you'll get 4,000 yards, but you'll get 25 interceptions too.

Despite his mercurial nature, DA has done just about as much to this point as can be asked. He's gotten wins in a couple of games in which the Browns were underdogs, and he's lost a couple of tough roadies against good defenses. Sunday's game will be the first in his tenure as the starter in which the Browns are *expected* to win- at home, against possibly the worst team in the NFL. If Derek leads the team to victory, the starting job will presumably remain his going into the back end of

the season, and rightfully so. If the Browns lose, and DA looks bad, the team will be 2-4 going into the bye, and the Brady Quinn Era could begin as soon as two weeks hence in St. Louis. It isn't an exaggeration to say that this is *the* pivotal game of Derek Anderson's career so far. He absolutely has to win it.

***Good Past Win over the Dolphins:*** November 10, 1986- In front of 77,949 roaring fans at the Stadium, Bernie Kosar threw for 401 yards and the Dawgs stifled Dan Marino as the Browns avenged their 1985 playoff defeat with a 26-16 Monday Night thrashing of Miami. Bernie became the first-ever quarterback to top the 400-yard mark without a touchdown pass; Cleveland's two touchdowns were scored on a 13-yard Curtis Dickey scamper and a 16-yard end-around by Harry Holt.

***Bad Past Loss to the Dolphins:*** December 24, 1972- Midway through the fourth quarter of the AFC Divisional Playoff at the Orange Bowl, Cleveland led the undefeated Dolphins 14-13 and was in position to pull off one of the greatest postseason upsets in NFL history. But Miami drove eighty yards, a march aided by two big catches by ex-Brown Paul Warfield and a pass interference penalty on Billy Andrews that gave the Dolphins a first-and-goal on the Cleveland 8. On the next play, Jim Kiick barreled in for the score, and Don Shula's men hung on to win, 20-14. It would be Cleveland's last playoff appearance until the Kardiak Kids run in 1980. Mike Phipps's line was appalling- 9-of-23 for 131 yards and five interceptions- but he also accounted for both Cleveland touchdowns, on a five-yard keeper and a 27-yard strike to Fair Hooker that gave his team the lead in the fourth.

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***Next Week for Both Teams:*** Miami hosts New England; Cleveland is on a bye

***Trivia:*** With four match-ups all-time (1973, '86, '88, and '92), the Browns have played the Dolphins more on *Monday Night Football* than any other opponent. Cleveland is 1-3 in those games.