

Random Thoughts: Browns at Rams

Written by {ga=mitch}

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It's Random Thoughts time again here at TCF, and Mitch is in rare form this week after yet another offensive explosion by the emerging Browns offense. Mitch has got all kinds of love this week for Chud and Braylon and hits specifically on the play of Derek Anderson and also his looming contract situation. Like most Browns fans, Mitch was also pleased to see a little fire from Romeo after the team went down 14-0, and also has some choice words for Bill Cowher, who guaranteed a Rams win in the pregame show.



And the Celler Dweller Tour continues on its merry way. All we need now is back to back games against Youngstown State and Kent State, and there will be no stopping us.

Oh, wait. Here is the difference between the Buckeyes' schedule, and the Browns...you didn't have every friggin' talking head in the country yapping about how the Buckeyes were going to lose to Kent State, did we? Yes, I'm talking to you, Coach Chin, for your smug and certain prediction of a Rams victory...a prediction that none of your spineless compatriots bothered to contradict. Keep it up, and you'll be almost as unwatchable as fat-assed Jerome Bettis on NBC's "Football Night in America". Bettis is so obnoxious on his continued fawning love of all things Black and Piss that he makes Baghdad Bob look positively objective in comparison.

Playing in the First Quarter is soooo 1990s.

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I really hate it when my throat is already sore from screaming at the television half-way through the first quarter. Now I was a little concerned when I saw that Steven Jackson was coming back. Given the Browns tendency to give up 100 yard rushing games to anyone with a pulse, the prospect of facing one of the league's premier backs was a bit disconcerting.

However, I had no idea that Jackson was so good that he'd not only rush through the Browns at will, he'd also single handedly block every pass rusher, dazzle every defensive back to the point that they couldn't find a receiver to stick with, and then come in on defense and stop the Browns in a 3 and out in between Rams TD drives.

All this came from an offensive line for the Rams that just might be as bad as Verba-O'Hara-Wohlabaugh-Lindsay-Zahursky. A line that quickly became even worse when their best remaining lineman Richie Incognito went down.

And what a great name for an offensive lineman...Incognito. The only more appropriate name I could come up with would be a wide receiver named Chadterrel Egotisticalasshole.

In any case, it was just peachy sitting there watching the results of two weeks of "work"; getting the defenses' problems fixed...sliding right down the toilet.

Then something totally amazing happens.

Romeo goes berserker!!!!

There he is on the sideline, screaming at the defensive players, screaming at the defensive coaches, screaming at the stupid kid that put low fat cream cheese on his bagel. The Man just Went! Off! I really wish I could have seen Romeo's face while he was doing that, but from the angle they had on television, you could only see him from behind, crouched down like a sumo wrestler, head bouncing up and down as he was going off on them. But looking at the "oh, shit...what have we unleashed?" looks on the defensive players faces as they were being read the Riot Act, I could tell he wasn't asking for perogi recipes.

Our Offense Is So Good, We'll Spot You 14 & Still Kick Your Butt

The problem with St. Louis has been on offense, not defense. But you couldn't tell that with the precision of the attack designed by Chud, and orchestrated by Derek Anderson this week. "Bwha-ha! We laugh at your measly 14 point lead, and guffaw at your smurf defensive backs trying to stop the Mighty Braylon, Kellen, and Joe J!"

Have you ever seen so many highlight reel catches in one game? Edward's toe tap on the left side, and his stop, turn, and reach back 10 feet grab on the right side were totally eye-popping. Joe's high wire acts...and I have no idea how Winslow managed to pull in that fastball DA threw for a

touchdown.

Lost in the SportsCenter land of quick highlights was the fact that this was a completely balanced attack. Down 14, Chud didn't hit the panic button, and still used the run to keep the Rams off balance. Results? 112 yards rushing from Lewis, Harrison, and Wright...along with another 18 from a completely new reverse Chud drew up for Josh Cribbs. 25 passes, 28 rushes. That would be your basic balanced attack.

As has been mentioned before, the last time we saw this, Bernie had Mack and Byner behind him, and had Reggie, Webster, and Ozzie to throw to. Now if the Imposter called Grantham can find a couple of Clay Matthews, Hanford Dixons, and Michael Dean Perrys to add in there, they might have something.

14 Penalties? When Did Chris Palmer Return?

I guess they really did think things would be too easy, with 14 being the Number De Jour...it's not just points spotted, it's penalties received. And then to REALLY make it challenging, they committed penalties at Oakland Raider levels, getting flagged FOUR times on one drive alone...setting the table for Joe Jurevicius to be the hero

with all his third and long snags to keep the drive going.

OK...I do have to admit that watching that TD drive was a lot of fun in retrospect ("F#@& your 'fun'!", sez my ulcer). It was like a line dance out there...go back, go forward, pick up laundry, go back, go deep, loop-de-loo...TD!

NOTE: I have just used the phrase "loop-de-loo" in a sports article. The I-Have-No-Shame-O'Meter has just redlined.

Helmet-Gate!!!

Get over yourself, all of you Braylon Haters. Yes, it was stupid and juvenile...but it is not a harbinger of the return of Selfish Braylon. I read it as a combination of too much exuberance over a great play on a great day when he had some other things on his mind as well...along with a brain fart in thinking that the quarter was over.

This was an emotional game for Braylon. He had dedicated his performance to a 15 year old terminally ill boy he had befriended, who had passed away two days earlier. The story was detailed in several outlets, including this [Canton Repository article](#)

. It is a touching story, and gives more insight into Braylon's growth as a human being. Then you look at Braylon's commitment of a million dollars of his own money to establish scholarships for those less fortunate than himself, and you see a someone who is not just a budding star, but a great person as well.

There is no way that this could really be compared with Dwayne Rudd's FUBAR helmet toss on opening day. I felt Romeo handled it well, and it was great to see the head coach laughing with Braylon on the sidelines and giving him a hug, along with receivers coach Wes Chandler, another fantastic hire from the Browns this year.

On the other hand, how in the HELL could Braylon drop that simple pass on third down that would have iced the game. Visions of Dennis North-drop in the playoff game to the Squealers flew through my head...along with another can of beer with a Mylanta chaser.

Do We Need Jamal?

The immediate answer to that question is "YES!" (or more to the point, "Yes, you ignorant fool!"), but my point is more of looking towards next year. Jamal has only signed for one year, hoping to prove his worth with big number this year and parlay that into a huge payoff next year.

And he's doing quite well. When he's in there.

But things aren't going too badly with Jason Wright, and especially with Jerome Harrison.

It's a new NFL...running backs are not that important any more, unless they are named LaDainian. With Chud's offense, the power receivers on the team, and that Premier Offensive Line the Browns now have (is that a phrase that just boggles the mind, or what? I still have to stop and shake my head every time I write about them)...will it really be cost effective to fork over mega-bucks to Jamal (or any free agent RB) next year? Given the glaring needs on the defensive line, I'm not so sure. New England and Indianapolis seem to be doing just fine without a top tier back. The Packers are 6-1 with a bunch of nobodies back there, and the Cowboys are riding the RB-By-Committee approach towards a division championship.

No, I don't think Wright should be looked at as the answer...but I think that the Browns have more options than committing a huge chunk of the salary cap to what will be a 29 year old running back next season (see also; Alexander, Shaun).

The Derek Situation

DA is definitely THE big surprise so far this season, not just for the Browns, but for the entire NFL...deservedly so, and Anderson has done an incredible job leading the Browns to their totally unexpected 4-3 record. Those calling for the Brady Quinn Era to begin have been put in their place, and all of Browns Nation is hanging on every pass, unbelievably looking at the prospect of Anderson shattering team records set a generation ago by the

demi-god Brian Sipe (as opposed to Bernie Kosar, who has full god status).

We keep hearing the comparisons: Drew Bledsoe/Tom Brady, Drew Brees/Phillip Rivers, Jon Kitna/Carson Palmer, Bill Nelsen/Mike Phipps (OK...maybe not that one).

But it ain't gonna work out that way, kiddies...nor are the Browns going to keep Anderson long term. Here's why:

Derek Anderson is 24 years old and will be a restricted free agent once the season ends. Therefore the Browns' options are to

(a) re-do his contract before he files for free agency, (b) let him file, matching any offer he would get, which means that after the 2008 season, he would be an unrestricted free agent (unless they franchised him), (c) let him file, and take the first and third round draft pick from the team that signs him, or (d) trade him to a team that agrees to sign him long term.

(a) is not going to happen. Too many other needs, and too much money tied up in Brady Quinn's contract to afford two highly paid quarterbacks.

(b) is possible, but, doing so would put them right back into the same situation...needing

to do something with him by the end of the year or risk losing him with nothing in return.

(c) or (d) are the likeliest situations. This year, the horrible play from the QB position is a near epidemic. Quinn Gray? Sage Rosenfels? Tim Rattay? Vinny Testeverde? There are so many teams in dire need of help in that position, and that puts the Browns in the catbird seat.

Chicago, Atlanta, and Minnesota are the obvious top three candidates for a trade. All are in the NFC, and have no current viable option at QB. Kansas City, Jacksonville, Tampa Bay, and Carolina are other

potential suitors, and maybe even Philadelphia or Miami if their lower round rookies don't pan out.

Brady Quinn cannot and will not be traded. His rookie contract makes that possibility a complete salary cap killer, so wipe that thought out of your head.

Anderson is playing too well to want to take a back seat to anyone, especially given how young he is, so don't expect him to gracefully step aside and accept the Clipboard.

So Phil will have to do something...or else

risk the worst possible scenario...Anderson signing as a free agent in 2009 with the Baltimore Ratbirds. In the meantime, enjoy the ride.

Blurbs From an ADHD Mind:

~ Thank you, Scott Linehan, for taking multiple pages out of the Brian Billick Offensive Sooper Genius for Dummies playbook (available at Amazon.com, with the new edition including a forward by Maurice Carthon). In the first drive of the day, a play action pass was called on 2 nd

and goal from the one...resulting in a touchdown as the Browns safeties couldn't run with Jabba the Hut. So what does Linehan do the next three times he's got one yard to go in crucial situations? He goes against the one strange strength the Browns defense has; stopping the short yardage run up the middle. Brilliant!

~ Gotta give props to Robaire Smith...he had a great game...something that you'd hear this year about one of our defensive linemen as often as you'd hear someone say "do anything you want to the girl, but just leave me

alone!" (shamelessly stolen joke from George Carlin). Now if they can just find a defensive end on the left side, allowing Shaun Smith to move inside to take over NT from the overmatched Ethan Kelly...things might look a little better.

~ Andra Davis also had a good game. And the defense gave up 14 points while NyQuill Jackson was playing, and only 6 once he went out. Coincidence?

~ Is it too early to be trotting out the

dreaded phrase "Sophomore Slump" in talking about Kamerion Wimbley? Got burned on the first TD pass trying to cover Tory Holt (whose bright idea what THAT?), totally whiffed on trying to tackle Randy "I Guarantee A Win" McMichael (karmic payback for Kevin Johnson's stupid "guarantee" back in '99), and jumping offsides on a 3rd & 8 incomplete pass...which was then picked up the next play on a drive ending with a FG.

~ Just think how much better Chud

will be as an offensive coordinator once he hits puberty.

(Seriously...isn't there a minimum age requirement for coaches?)

~ I keep hearing about some secondary game that will be going on during the same time that the Browns are laying the wood to the Seahawks. I've been trying to catch some information on ESPN about this game in the state just west of Ohio, but no one seems to be talking about it much.

~ Football in England. Let's send them the Dolphins and Tom Coughlin! That's appropriate payback for them sending us Beckham and Posh.

~ The Ratbirds play the Squealers in Pittspuke on Monday Night Football. Is it truly evil of me to wish that all seven Biblical Plagues hit the stadium? Do I truly care if that's an evil thought or not?