

Random Thoughts: Seahawks at Browns

Written by {ga=mitch}

Tuesday, November 06 2007 7:00 PM -

Three in a row! And off to Pittsburgh for a showdown with The Appalachians for first place in the AFC North. It's been a great run and a great season ... and you can just tell Mitch is having fun with his "Random Thoughts" column this year. Mitch went back and looked at the 33-30 win over Seattle on tape, and found a lot he liked in the win ... most notably the dominant offensive line play and the heart of Kellen Winslow. Don't forget to check back tomorrow for Mitch's review of "American Gangster"; as well.



In an interesting aspect of this year's Browns, I feel confident in saying 90% of you were **sure** of these things at certain points of the game:

~~ That the Browns would succeed when they needed a TD drive late in the game. (7:49 left in the fourth quarter, ball starting on the Browns' 11).

~~ That all of us breathed a HUGE sigh of relief when Jurevicius snagged that 2 point conversion, because we all knew that there was no way the Browns defense could keep the Seahawks from getting the tying FG given that they had 2:17 to do so.

~~ That the Browns would lose the game in OT if they lost the coin flip. (Didn't happen, but don't lie to me by saying you didn't think that exact thought after the flip).

~~ That despite the last statement of pending doom, we were sure that once the

Seahawks lined up to go for it on 4th and 1/2 yard, they would be stopped.

~~ That once the Browns got the ball back, victory was at hand.

And the wonderfully bizzaro season continues.

Once Again...We Laugh at Your Puny Lead

Having proven that a 14 point deficit to an NFC West team was no obstacle, the Browns decided to up the risk factor by going down 15 points in this one.

That deficit was achieved when Nate Burleson was surrounded by eight Browns on his own five yard line while receiving a punt. The Browns then decided to use the same defensive tactic used by Millsaps' "special" teams against Trinity: stand around and hope the runner bumps into someone and falls down.

And then we had Phil Dawson missing the first extra point. Always a good thing for the nerves when you know he'll be counted on for a key FG later on.

Still too easy? Then let's just have our two biggest receiving weapons drop passes...including TWO in the end zone. Looks like I picked the wrong week to give up sniffing glue.

Finally, add in a pass play on a fourth-and-one-when-you-should-take-the-FG, and a "convert or else" 2 point PAT, and I've got Vesuvius going on in my stomach.

Got to give major kudos to Jamal Lewis. I know it has been argued elsewhere that his yards per carry were crappy...but in reviewing the tape of it yesterday, I was impressed on how hard he was running, turning several no-gains or losses into two or three yard gains just due to his refusal to give up. On one TD in particular, he was totally stoned at the 2, but kept his legs pumping, and ended up pushing himself into the end zone.

And his screen pass in the OT was the play that won the game. Props also to Braylon for a great block on the play.

Abusing an Expired Four Legged Kentucky Derby Participant

That defense really sucks, especially in the first half of games.

In other startling news flashes: water is wet.

I'm not sure where Grantham came up with this genius strategy, but on the first Seahags' touchdown, Shuan Smith was actually trying to cover WR Bobby Engram. It was like a G-string trying to cover Roseanne Barr. (my apologies to all of you who just lost your appetite, or just hurled).

This group was dissected by Matt Hasselbeck like they were a frog in a 9th grade biology class. It is really hard to evaluate the Browns' defensive backs, who might actually have some talent, due to the large chunks being blown by the front seven when attempting to put pressure on the QB. Ronald Reagan had more to fear from Walter Mondale than Hasselbeck did from the Browns pass rush, as he had enough time to order a case of Rogaine, apply it liberally, and let it grow to Troy Polamalu lengths before making a pass to a wide open receiver.

Early in the overtime, a stat was shown that three of the leading four tacklers for the Browns that day were defensive backs. A quick mental picture review on where most DBs stand at the start of each play gives you an idea of how bad this is.

On the other hand, the run defense looked a lot better, due in no small part to the play of Willie McGinest. And that's to say nothing of the brick wall the Browns turn into every time a team tries to run against them on fourth down. But let's also be realistic and consider the fact that in the past two weeks, the Browns have went up against an injured Steven Jackson, and an injured (and washed up) Shaun Alexander. Willie Parker will be an entirely different story.

A second "on the other hand": I don't think this defense matches up well to a West Coast Offense...luckily, they won't see that many of them, given their schedule. A legitimate point could also

be made that they don't match up well to an East Coast Offense, a North Coast Offense, or a Jamaican Coast Offense, but that's neither here nor there.

I'll also give credit once again to Eric Wright, who had two deflections of passes that would have been sure touchdowns had he not got his hand on it (unless the receiver would have decided to do a Braylon Edwards impression and drop it).

I also don't think that the Browns missed NyQuill Jackson in the slightest. I know that I didn't.

The NFL Has a Poster-boy for Heart, and His Name Is Kellen Winslow

I've been racking my brain trying to think of the last time I saw such a gutty performance from

an NFL player, and the only thing that comes to mind is Bret Favre's performance on MNF after the death of his father.

But that's not a valid comparison, as Favre was dealing with emotional stress, while Winslow was dealing with unbelievable pain on almost every snap.

I was cringing every time I'd see his facial expressions after making a catch and then landing hard on his bad left knee or bad left shoulder, thinking each time "this is it, he's out of the game", only to see him back on the field a play later.

The Seahawks were throwing pressure at Anderson that he hadn't seen since the Patriots'

game. He didn't have the time to go downfield to Braylon, so he needed someone to take the team on his back, and come through in the clutch. Winslow responded.

His actions in the locker room after the game, where he broke down when trying to discuss what the win meant to the team, further put away those early images of K2 as the arrogant "soldier". The E:60 piece that aired on Tuesday shed a lot of light on this young man as well...and I think it does the Browns' proud to have him as the face of the team. Let's just hope he can stay healthy.

Trench Warfare!!

Once again conveniently ignoring the debacle in week one, this game was the

stiffest challenge yet for the new and 1000% improved offensive line, and they came through with flying colors. Seattle is a very good defensive team that is still only two years removed from playing in the Super Bowl. They brought the heat on every play.

Results? ZERO sacks.

That was near unbelievable to me, as Anderson was under fire all day, but the line almost without fail gave him time to unload...even if it may have often been necessary to do it a lot sooner than he would have liked. And in the few instances when the line didn't give him time, DA was

able to move about just enough to buy him the extra time he needed...or to take off running with all the grace and style of Bernie Kosar.

Honorary hog status needs to be given to Steve Heiden, Jason Wright, and Lawrence Vickers. Heiden has actually turned himself into an extra tackle, playing a majority of the downs in two TE sets, with Winslow usually in a slot, and Heiden just there to block...and he's doing a great job of it. You can tell he's bulked up from last year, and it's paying dividends.

From the backfield, Vickers has turned into an excellent fullback, but the surprise in

reviewing the DVR was just how good Wright was in picking up the blitz. I counted at least four times when Anderson probably would have been sacked had Jason not picked up his man.

And then there is Joe Thomas. Screw all of this "future Pro-Bowler" talk...he might be the best left tackle in the AFC right now, and it wouldn't surprise me one bit if he's playing in Honolulu. He has shut out every DE or OLB he's went up against this year, and he is now getting national recognition for his achievements.

I think any of us that might have had a few doubts when Thomas' name was called as

the #3 pick now no longer worry about such names as "Tony Mandarich" or "Robert Gallery". This is a welcome addition to an exclusive club containing members Tony Jones, Doug Dieken, and Dick Schafrath. Joe says his hero is Walter Jones. If he keeps this up, he might soon be compared to him.

Blurbs from an ADHD Mind

~~~ TWO national TV commercials featuring Browns players? Granted, they are self promos for the NFL, and not Peyton Manning type shills for every electronics manufacturer, credit card company, or vinegar based douche in the country, but it's still a start.

~~~ Sorry to see the news that LeCharles Bentley will not be playing this year. It was a valiant effort, but just too much to hope for to see either LeChuck or Baxter back on the field in 2007. On the positive side, there is a good chance that both will be able to be solid contributors in 2008.

~~~ Why was it that Lenny Friedman was put in at RG when Seth McKinney went down? I thought that was the hole plan with Ryan Tucker, getting him work at guard for depth (and in case McKinney was a bust...which he isn't). I saw MuthaTucker in at RG later in the game, which hopefully means that someone came to their senses.

~~~ Kellen Winslow is 24 years old. So is Braylon Edwards. So is Derek Anderson. So is Kamerion Wimbley. Brady Quinn is 23. Joe Thomas and Eric Wright are 22. Oh, yeah...and Leigh Bodden is 26, while Eric Steinbach and Kevin Shaffer are 27 and LeCharles Bentley is just 28. There is something here that could be very good for a very long time.

~~~ Nice performance on national television, Baltimore. As much as I hate "pulling" for Pittspuke, it was fun watching Blowhole Billick's cadre of criminals and cretins getting humiliated like that. And now, it's The Good Guys vs. the Appalachians for first place in the

AFC North on Sunday. Balance returns to the planet.

~~~ Move over, Tim Couch, you have company. David Carr and Alex Smith are hot on your heels as the biggest busts for QBs selected #1 overall in a generation. And then there is Michael Vick (#1 in 2001).

~~~ The worst thing about watching a game on FOX is listening to the announcers having to shill televisions shows that they wouldn't be caught dead watching. The worst was listening to 93 year old Sam Rosen trying to pimp the

Simpsons' Halloween special by parrotting the line "Halloween isn't over until Homer screams 'D.O.' !" "D.O.?" (which rhymed with TO). That was just sad. Almost as bad as when Madden would try to pimp "Married with Children";.