

Lingering Items - Ravens Edition

Written by {ga=gdbenz}

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Gary B has just been knocking em out of the park all year for us with his commentary on the Browns, and this week's edition of Lingering is no exception. Gary hits on Braylon Edwards dodging the media after another game filled with crucial drops, he talks about the quarterback change this week, and Donte "the worst free agent signing ever" Stallworth and his nagging injuries.



It's always hard to know what to make of Cleveland Browns' wide receiver Braylon Edwards. He's either the most immature player on the entire team or the most mature. It's possible, I suppose, he could be both. After his critical drop in last Sunday's game against the Baltimore Ravens, followed by another drop a few minutes later, Edwards scurried out of the locker room without facing the media.

On the one hand, it's pretty immature to ditch the media just because you had a really tough day, especially when you're the first person in front of a microphone when you've had a good day. But on the other hand, it may be that Edwards was upset and simply didn't want to put himself in a position of saying something he'd regret later. In that case, that's a pretty mature view. With Edwards, though, you just never know.

Personally, whether or not a player wants to talk to the media is of no particular consequence to me. Rare is the player that says anything interesting anyway and we've all read enough "we played well" quotes to choke a herd of elephants. Even when a player does say something provocative, the media then punishes him for it anyway. Thus the tense relationship between the two parties is more than understandable.

But watching how Edwards' absence after Sunday's game played out, there is some real insight to be gained and when fully considered, you realize that for Edwards and players like him it wasn't a case of immaturity but more a case of selfishness.

With Edwards' absence on Sunday, Jamal Lewis for example, was forced into the rather uncomfortable position of trying to explain what happened on that play. Lewis also went the extra mile for Edwards in generally defending him as a person and as a player. Head coach Romeo Crennel likewise had to spend some time explaining that Edwards really is a good guy and a good player and that he's just going through a rough patch.

Of course neither would have to spend their time on questions better directed at Edwards if Edwards in fact had simply stuck around long enough to express rote disappointment coupled with a vow to keep working and get better. That's where the selfishness comes in. Let the co-workers do the dirty work, I need to get home.

Contrast that with quarterback Derek Anderson. Despite a tough game and particular a tough fourth quarter, he at least was available to the media afterward. In fact, even after being benched by general manager Phil Savage Crennel, Anderson was there to answer questions.

Edwards did make himself available yesterday to, in part, talk about the unfortunate drop, but it was too little too late. He also weighed in on the quarterback change. It would have been justified if every reporter had simply turned off their recorders or put away their notebooks the minute Edwards started talking.

Edwards didn't necessarily have an obligation to the media to make himself available after the game, but he owed it to his teammates, especially since he was such a key contributor to the loss in the first place. The guess is that there must

not be any incentive clauses in his contract for being voted a team captain.

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Speaking of Anderson, kudos to him for being a professional about the whole situation this week. Anderson addressed his demotion and instead of throwing the gaggle full of other responsible suspects under the bus with him, he let the tires run over just him instead.

Anyone following this team knows that Anderson's demotion was in part an inside job orchestrated by a variety of factors outside of his control. It's not his fault Edwards decided this season that it was better to look good than be good. Anderson can't control the injuries on the offensive line or the ever present staph that seems to have taken residence in the Browns' locker room. Heck, it's not his fault that Edwards decided to run barefoot in practice.

But Anderson could have spent more time trying to develop touch. He's a typical strong-armed quarterback in that he's spent more time developing length at the expense of touch. He's like those long-drive champions in golf. The reason they can't play professionally is because they can't chip and putt. If Anderson really wants to get to the next level, he needs to take the time this demotion affords him and spend a little time at the short range, so to speak.

He may never get good at throwing a two-yard pass, but he can get better.

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It was hard to believe that receiver Donte Stallworth was again inactive last Sunday with that lingering quadriceps injury. It's hard to know the exact nature of

the injury other than it's sore and that Stallworth supposedly injured it in warm-ups before the team's first game.

It's easy to understand why a quadriceps injury would slow down a receiver, mainly because of the role that group of muscles plays in the ability to do the things a receiver must do, like run, jump and squat. It's much harder to understand why it hasn't fully healed 8 or so weeks later.

I'd say that Stallworth was the worst free agent signing ever, but then I remember that the Cleveland Indians once signed Keith Hernandez.

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Despite all his shortcomings as a head coach, the one thing you can't take away from Crennel is that he's a good soldier. Having to reverse course on Anderson in favor of Quinn, Crennel nonetheless stood up and said it was his decision. It isn't the first time Crennel has taken a bullet for Savage. It truly is an admirable trait and is probably why he's so well liked personally.

If Crennel really believes it was his decision to bench Anderson, then that's a tribute to Savage's ability to manipulate Crennel without him ever realizing it. For me, I'll take it at the word of the one player on the team that know Crennel better than anyone in the organization, linebacker Willie McGinest. Speaking to reporters yesterday, including the Plain Dealer's Mary Kay Cabot, McGinest basically said that this kind of move was out of character for Crennel. It's helpful, too, that the sequence of events favors that view.

But that doesn't obscure the fact that Crennel is taking it on the chin for his chinless general manager. Hopefully when Crennel finally gets fired owner Randy Lerner will at least pay him off like he did Butch Davis.

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With the Denver game upon us already, it's a short work week for everyone. In that spirit, we'll wind this up early and offer this week's question to ponder: What's likely to effect Brady Quinn more: John McCain's loss on Tuesday or the announcement that Donte Stallworth is again inactive this week?