

Preview: Colts at Browns

Written by {ga=hermanfontenot}

Saturday, November 29 2008 7:00 PM -

The Browns find themselves thrust back into the national spotlight on Sunday as the Indianapolis Colts come to town for the nationally televised 1:00 PM game on CBS. The Colts are on a roll, winners of four straight and right back into the thick of the AFC playoff race after a poor start. The Browns, coming off their worst loss of the season, will turn back to Derek Anderson at QB after Brady Quinn was lost for the season with a finger injury. Jesse previews the game for us.



Time: 1:00 pm, Sunday, November 30, 2008

Location: Cleveland Browns Stadium

Network, Announcers: CBS - Dick Enberg and Randy Cross

Line: Colts by five. (That's it?)

Team W/L Records: Cleveland is 4-7; the Colts are 7-4

Coaches: Romeo Crennel is 24-35 in his fourth season with the Browns; Tony Dungy is 78-27 in his seventh season with the Colts, and 132-69 overall.

Last Week for the Browns: Were flat, limp, lifeless and in every way pathetic in a 16-6 home loss to the Texans.

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Last Week for the Colts: Got a clock-beating 51-yard field goal from Adam Vinatieri to win their fourth straight, 23-20 at San Diego.

All-Time Series: Colts lead 8-4 since moving to Indianapolis in 1984.

Last Meeting: [September 25, 2005](#) - With no need to showcase their record-setting offense against Cleveland's punch-less attack, the Colts buttoned it up, got 108 yards and a touchdown from Edge James, kept the Browns out of the end zone, and ground out a 13-6 victory at the RCA Dome. Displaying their usual flair for smart, mistake-free football, the Browns were hit with unsportsmanlike penalties on Antonio Bryant and Braylon Edwards and mortally wounded by a Frisman Jackson illegal-block penalty that wiped out Dennis Northcutt's 82-yard punt return for a score early in the game.

Out or Questionable for Indianapolis: Center Jeff Saturday (calf) is out; cornerback Antoine Bethea (ankle), safety Bob Sanders (knee), linebacker Gary Brackett (hamstring), cornerback Melvin Bullitt (rib), and linebacker Tyjuan Hagler (knee) are questionable.

Out or Questionable for Cleveland: Tight end Darnell Dinkins (ankle) is out; defensive tackle Shaun Smith (calf), fullback Lawrence Vickers (ankle) and tight end Kellen Winslow (shoulder) are questionable.

What to watch for the Colts: Peyton Manning's slow start is an increasingly distant memory. In his last four games, all victories, Indy's peerless field general has completed over 65 percent of his passes for nine touchdowns with one interception and a rating of 100.8. Cleveland's defense, unable to get pressure or tackle and in a state of free-fall in the secondary, figures to be an inviting target for Manning and his stable of weapons, including former St. Ignatius and Ohio State star Anthony Gonzalez.

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What to watch for the Browns: I've watched the Browns in their various guises for about a quarter-century now, and I can't recall a single Cleveland player doing more damage to his own team, with his on-field play, than Braylon Edwards has this season. It's not just that he's on pace for 53 catches, 881 yards, and four touchdowns, a quantum downward leap from his monster performance in 2007. It's the ****ing drops- demoralizing, always seeming to come at the most inopportune times, and directly contributing to at least two losses, most notably the home game against Baltimore.

Officially, Braylon has been credited with 16 drops. It's the highest total in the league by a good margin- Dwayne Bowe is in second with 11- but it's still a conservative number, because Braylon has at least a half-dozen more drops than he's credited for. 16? That's barely one-and-a-half per game. Gotta be too low.

A team, any team in any sport, is only as good as its impact players. Braylon is the biggest impact player on the Browns- and he has absolutely killed this football team, right from game one.

Good Past Win over the Colts: [September 19, 1988](#)- Guided at quarterback by former Colt Mike Pagel, the Browns overcame a Clarence Verdin punt-return touchdown and 117 Eric Dickerson rushing yards to score a workmanlike 23-17 victory in a Monday night game at the Stadium. It's still the only regular-season home win for the Browns over the Indianapolis permutation of the Colts in five tries.

Bad Past Loss to the Colts: [December 15, 2002](#) - With a golden opportunity to strengthen their playoff position, the Browns rolled to a 16-0 halftime lead and then fell apart defensively, as Peyton Manning threw for 212 second-half yards and directed four touchdown drives, the last ending in a James Mungro touchdown that gave the Colts their first lead of the game, 28-23, late in the fourth quarter. The Browns had four chances from the Indianapolis ten-yard line at the end, but couldn't get it in.

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Next Week for Both Teams: Indianapolis hosts the Bengals; the Browns go to Nashville to take on the Flaming Thumbtacks.

Trivia: The last member of the Browns to score a touchdown against Indianapolis was William Green at the beginning of the fourth quarter of the 2002 game. Since then, the Colts defense has held Cleveland out of the end zone in consecutive games, a span of eight quarters of play.