

## As It May Stand - 2010 Preview

Written by {ga=davekolonich}  
Thursday, July 16 2009 7:00 PM -

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In an attempt to illuminate the prospects of the 2009 Browns, Dave Kolonich sought to entertain and occasionally inform fans through his *As It Stands Again* series. The team has already undergone a serious makeover under Mangini, as the Browns have added a consortium of untested youngsters and veteran roster filler. Today, in recognizing this change, we take the series into the further reaches of prophesy, by speculating on how the future of our great organization may look this time next year, in 2010.



In an attempt to illuminate the prospects of the 2009 Browns, I sought to entertain and occasionally inform fans through my [As It Stands Again](#) series. The series profiled the essential positions on the Browns' roster that could ultimately determine success for the team during the 2009 season. Beginning with

[Linebackers](#)

and finishing with

[Defensive Backs](#)

, the series offered conflicting perspectives, predictions and puzzles related to a team that finds itself once again in transition.

Realizing this increasingly familiar scenario, it is likely that the 2009 Browns will struggle to find their footing under new coach Eric Mangini. While I remain hopeful that the new regime will grow into a more consistent club as the season progresses, the one constant that will mark the Browns this season is change. The team has already undergone a serious makeover under Mangini, as the Browns have added a consortium of untested youngsters and veteran roster filler.

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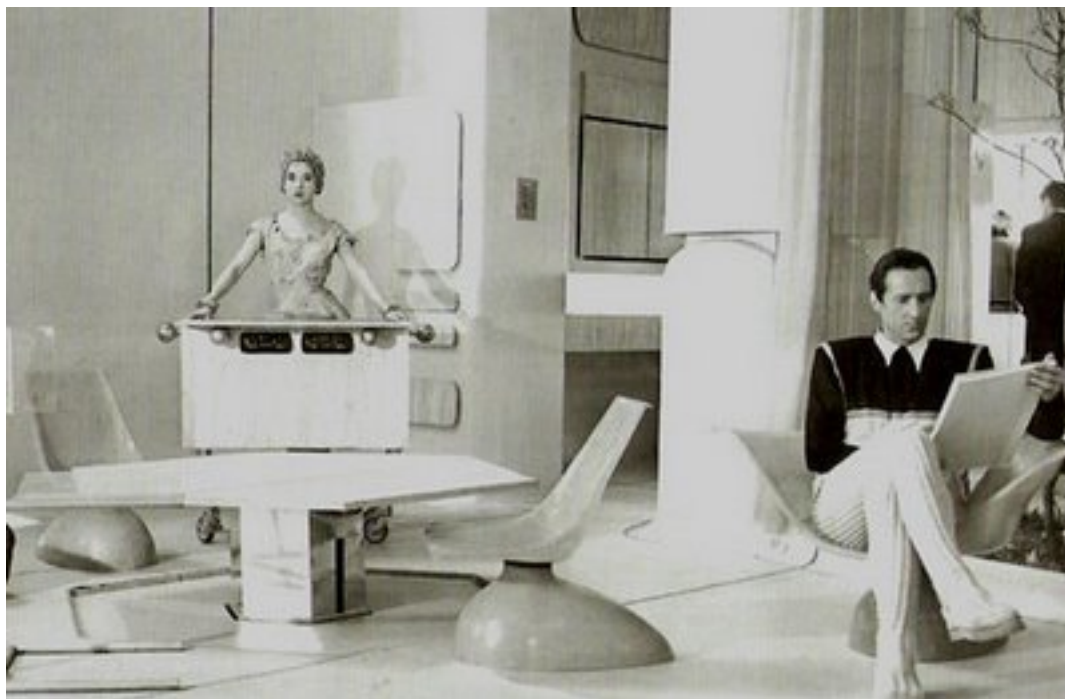
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Most informed Browns fans have begun to understand the rationale behind Randy Lerner's surprise hiring of Eric Mangini as head coach/defacto Team President. Lerner's hands-off leadership style and tentative approach to management has created an almost decade-long leadership void in Berea. The recent past of Browns management has been littered with the likes of Butch Davis, Phil Savage and John Collins, all who have assumed power within the franchise, but have not served as functioning leaders of an organization which has floundered near the bottom of the league.

The arrival of Eric Mangini signals Lerner's desire to essentially hand over the &quot;keys to the kingdom&quot; to someone he feels is an innovative, young, somewhat experienced Bill Belichick clone, who happens to crave the power associated with running an NFL franchise. Or, in case you haven't been paying attention, the Browns have quickly become the sole property of Eric Mangini. Already, Mangini has stamped the team with his own likeness, and after 2009, the makeover will become even more pronounced.

With these ideas in mind, let's take a look at what the roster depth could look like this time next year.



## **QUARTERBACK**

*Brett Ratliff*

*Veteran Free Agent*

*Rookie/2nd Veteran Free Agent*

I know that some readers will be shocked by the absence of Richard Bartel...or possibly the omissions of current starting QB candidates Brady Quinn and Derek

Anderson. The rationale here is simple. Derek Anderson is not the long-term answer at QB, based on his average intelligence, weak leadership skills and penchant for making mistakes. If DA is not traded before the 2010 season, he will likely be an offseason cap casualty.

As for Quinn, as [I have suggested before](#) , the 2009 season is basically a year-long audition for him to show Mangini that he is the quarterback of the future. Assuming the 2009 offense struggles to gel as a unit, the failure to become consistent reflects solely on Quinn. In 2010, Mangini moves onto option #3, Brett Ratliff, and/or adds another quarterback in free agency or via the draft.

## **RUNNING BACK**

*James Davis*  
*Jamal Lewis*  
*Rookie/Free Agent*

As for surprises, I think I stunned myself with the inclusion of Jamal Lewis. Considering Lewis' age and the uncapped 2010 season, which will include a generous amount of salary dumping moves, Jamal should not be on this list. However, Lewis should receive plenty of carries in 2009 and the emergence of another back allows the veteran to lighten his load heading into 2010. Although I've been skeptical of James Davis' NFL prospects, a combination of Lewis and Davis could be intriguing for Mangini heading into 2010.

As for the rest of the position, am I forgetting anyone? I don't think so.

## **WIDE RECEIVER**

*Brian Robiskie*  
*Mohammed Massaquoi*  
*David Patten*  
*Various Rookies/Free Agents not named Syndric*

Now for the drama...Recent reports have indicated the Browns have had some contract talks with Braylon Edwards, but it is unlikely that Mangini makes a long-term commitment, after the mercurial wideout is constantly double-teamed in 2009, which negates his big-play ability. Adding to this, the late season emergence of the 2009 rookie wideouts makes Edwards a bit more expendable. It

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is also very likely that a team with deeper pockets makes a restricted offer to Braylon, which the Browns refuse to match.

As for David Patten, I assume he's going to play forever.



## **TIGHT END**

*Steve Heiden*  
*Robert Royal*  
*Undrafted Free Agent*

If Heiden stays healthy, he could serve under Mangini in the role he has always played, which is as a solid all-around tight end. Heiden's professionalism and work ethic should instantly win over Mangini and cement his roster status in 2010. The addition of Royal signals Mangini's desire to remake the team in an AFC East mold. Royal should be surprisingly effective, but certainly not spectacular for the Browns in another offensively challenged campaign in 2009. The omission of Martin Rucker suggests that the young tight end struggles to adjust in 2009, thanks to another injury-scarred season.

## **OFFENSIVE LINE**

*Joe Thomas*  
*Alex Mack*  
*Floyd Womack*  
*Rex Hadnot*  
*Hopefully, a top flight rookie right tackle*  
*New set of roster filler*

The 2009 version of the Browns offensive line reflects the short-term strategy of roster-building that Mangini has brought to Berea. The common sense approach of adding one year veteran help, before building through the draft signals the departure of veterans Eric Steinbach, Hank Fraley and Ryan Tucker. Using Mangini's draft strategy with the Jets as an example, he is likely to add more help up front in the early part of the 2010 draft.

## **DEFENSIVE LINE**

*Kenyon Coleman*  
*C.J. Mosley*  
*Shaun Rogers*  
*One of the following: Santonio Thomas, Atyah Rubin, Louis Leonard*  
*More ex-Jets*

Back in the early months of 2009, it looked like Mangini and Shaun Rogers were going to get along like Palestinians and Israelis at a Bible study. However, heading into 2009, it looks like these two outsized personalities are on the same page. The 2009 season should further reflect the immense value Rogers brings to the Browns defense. Coleman and Mosley should receive a ton of playing time in 2009, as both are Mangini guys and bring added versatility across the line.

Look for the eventual releases of Robaire and Shaun Smith, along with the greatest cap dump in recent memory in the form of Corey Williams' bloated contract. Mangini is also likely to reach back to his Jet and Patriot roots by adding more veteran lineman to round out the above core.

### **LINEBACKERS**

*D'Qwell Jackson*

*Kameron Wimbley*

*Kaluka Maivia*

*David Veikune*

*Rookie Inside Linebacker*

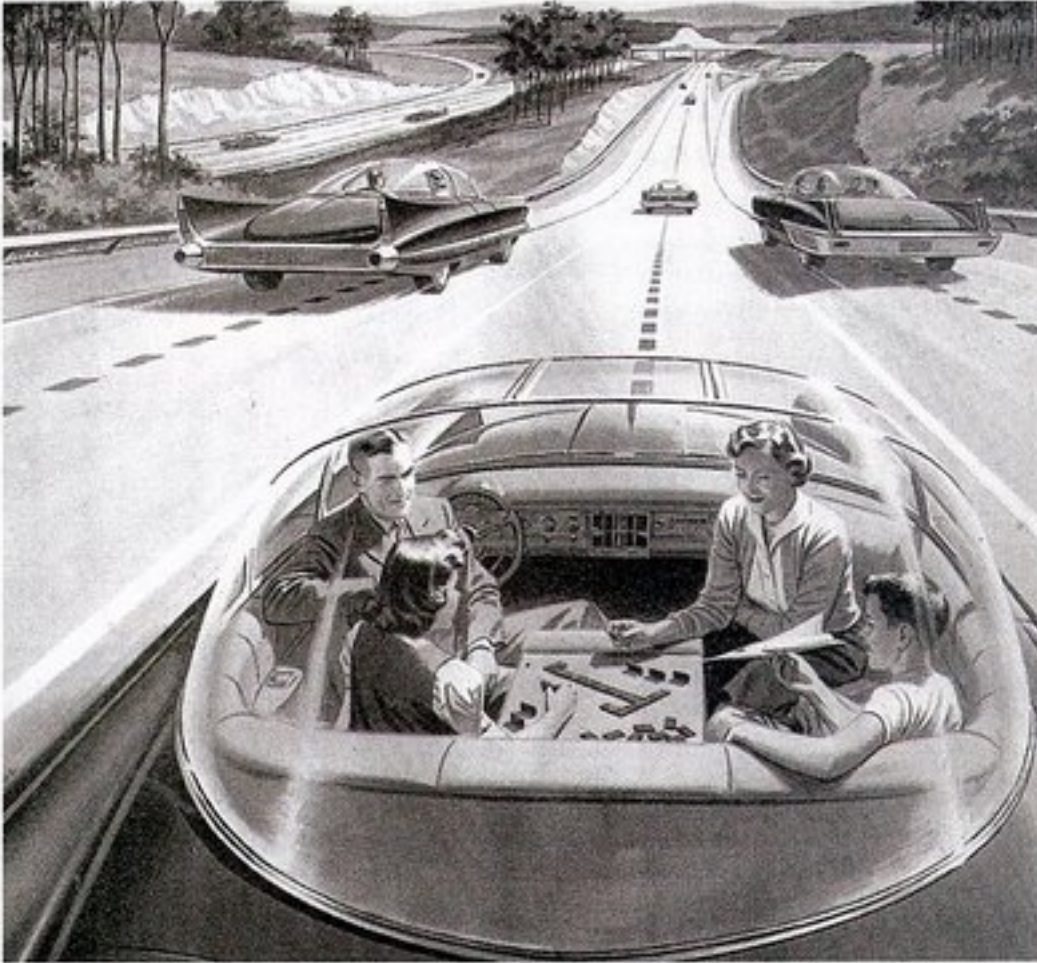
*Various Rookies/Free Agents*

The linebacking situation in 2009 is a perfect representation of the traditional American social class structure...except that the upper class has been taxed out of their respective fortunes. However, standing in the middle of this group are the likes of Jackson and Wimbley, while the 2009 rookies are feeding at the bottom. Jackson should progress under Mangini and Rob Ryan's watch in 2009, and could excel with the arrival of a top-flight rookie linebacker in the mold of the Jets' David Harris.

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Although much has been written about Wimbley's struggles over the past seasons, a shift in defensive alignments could help him progress as a pass rusher. Also, Wimbley is likely to finish his rookie contract in Cleveland. Check back next year to see if Kamerion makes the 2011 roster....which of course, makes total sense if you follow my logic.

The rest of the roster should...or perhaps, hopefully...be filled out by 2009 rookies Maivia and Veikune. Maivia could be the surprise of the Browns 2009 draft and Veikune strikes me as the kind of project that Mangini will spend a few seasons developing. Gone are the one year gap fillers Eric Barton and David Bowens.

## **DEFENSIVE BACKS**

*Rookie Cornerback*

*Eric Wright*

*Brandon McDonald*

*Abe Elam*

*Don Carey*

*Veteran free agent safety*

*Various Roster Filler*

As I've suggested before, the play of Wright and McDonald will improve with the addition of a top cornerback. If Mangini reaches back and finds a Darrele Revis type corner in the 2010 draft, Wright could blossom as an ideal #2 corner, while McDonald becomes more valuable as a nickel player. The 2009 emergence of Don Carey could signal that this unit becomes a strength in 2010. At safety, the only 2009 player to survive is Abe Elam, who is flanked by another veteran arrival.

## **SPECIAL TEAMS**

*Ryan Pontbriand*

*Dave Zastudil*

*Parker Douglass/Veteran Free Agent*

The omission of Josh Cribbs from this unit greatly saddens me. Cribbs has been among my favorite Browns players over the past few seasons, but his contract demands in 2009 and short shelf life as a special teams demon likely sours his relationship with Mangini. The departure of Phil Dawson is natural, as he retains no leverage in his 2009 contract demands and is quickly forgotten by the Mangini

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regime. And of course, Ryan Pontbriand remains the gem of Butch Davis' Browns drafts, as he cements his hold as the best long-snapper in the AFC.

Perhaps my prognosticating skills are novice at best, but one conclusion that can be drawn from the 2009 season, regardless of whether it has actually begun or not, is that the Browns under Eric Mangini are undergoing a serious makeover. Whether or not this current transformation will result in the team's eventual success is another story all together.

Or another post...perhaps next week I'll explore the Browns' 2015 prospects. I can only imagine the quarterback drama, especially after the tumultuous 2014 season.