

Unkind Cuts

Written by {ga=davekolonich}
Sunday, September 06 2009 7:00 PM -

The first real casualties of the Eric Mangini reign were announced this weekend. And, in keeping with the new czar of Berea's established tone of surprise free, limited drama football operations, there was nothing shocking revealed...unless you already purchased a 4x Adam Hoppel jersey...or are indeed a newly shirtless Adam Hoppel. Dave Kolonich checks in to give us his thoughts on the team's final cuts to get down to 53 players. The first real casualties of the Eric Mangini reign were announced this weekend. And, in keeping with the new czar of Berea's established tone of surprise free, limited drama football operations, there was nothing shocking revealed...unless you already purchased a 4x Adam Hoppel jersey...or are indeed a newly shirtless Adam Hoppel.

[Few Surprises Among Browns Roster Cuts](#)

Waived were fullback Charles Ali, cornerback Brandon Anderson from the University of Akron, quarterback Richard Bartel, cornerback Tra Battle, linebacker Brannon Braxton from Youngstown Ursuline High School, linebacker Titus Brown, center Dustin Fry, defensive tackle Adam Hoppel from Lisbon Beaver High School, wide receiver Paul Hubbard, running back Chris Jennings, wide receiver Lance Leggett, offensive lineman Pat Murray, wide receiver Jordan Norwood, tackle/guard Kurt Quarterman, defensive lineman Brian Schaefering, offensive lineman Isaac Sowell and defensive lineman Santonio Thomas.

The contracts of safety Hamza Abdullah, running back Noah Herron, cornerback Cotrey Ivy, wide receiver David Patten and tight end Aaron Walker were terminated.

Also, the Browns reached an injury settlement with defensive lineman Melila Purcell, who had been on the Injured Reserve List.

So, based on the release of the above players, have the Browns significantly altered their 2009 hopes? Will there be a wrinkle in time caused by the cutting of Brian Schaefering?

Perhaps the most surprising cuts come in the form of Charles Ali and Brandon Anderson. Ali brings some much needed power to the fullback position, but probably was considered a luxury, thanks to Mangini's penchant for using twin tight end sets. As for Anderson, perhaps had he been in Berea for the entirety of camp and preseason, he could have challenged for a roster spot among a thin defensive backfield.

As of last week, Dustin Fry appeared able to secure a roster spot, thanks to his

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versatility along the offensive line. However, the likely return of Rex Hadnot from injury has clouded the hopes of Fry, Quarterman and Isaac Sowell.



First, Shaun Smith and now Isaac Sowell - this is truly the summer of my discontent.

The most disappointing of roster cuts has to be found with Lance Leggett and Paul Hubbard. For a team that has an alarmingly thin depth at wide receiver, the failure of these two athletic and talented wideouts to again produce at an NFL level is extraordinarily frustrating. The good teams around the league are the ones who hit on late round draft picks and under the radar free agents. Although

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Hubbard and Leggett have been given multiple opportunities, neither appears ready to contribute at an NFL level.

And speaking of opportunities, since the NFL's mandate to cut rosters usually doesn't represent any sense of finality, let's take a look at some players who could actually help the Browns improve in 2009.

Among the more notable names set free yesterday...

[NFL.com - Roster Cutdown](#)

Jeff Garcia
Alex Smith
Tony Pashos
Bernard Pollard
Ryan Fowler
David Patten
Justin Harper
Carey Davis
John David Booty
Brian Williams
Brian Russell
Dominic Rhodes
Aaron Francisco
Antonio Chatman
Daryl Blackstock
Melvin Fowler
Matt Wilhelm

Obviously, some of these players could never fit in Berea, but the most striking names, a few who were simply caught in a numbers game, primarily involving dollars, include Pashos, Pollard, Fowler and Fowler, Wilhelm and Booty.

I would assume that a team in worse shape along the offensive line would jump at Pashos, who has started for Jacksonville in the past. He could fit in nicely with the Browns, giving the team more depth along the right side of the line. Pollard could be a nice fit at safety, which currently serves as the scariest depth prospect among the roster. The same could be said for ex-Brown Russell and Aaron Francisco. Although neither of the three names are exactly inspiring, the team

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desperately needs to find another body before entering the season.

At linebacker, Wilhelm seems like a natural fit, but his history of attitude problems could likely eliminate him. And yes, easily offended readers, a white guy is not instantly a "good chemistry guy." Deal with it.

If Mangini decides to upgrade the receiver spot, there are some options. Although banged up, Chatman is a nice player and Harper was a surprise cut in Baltimore. However, if the team suffers an early injury, or if the Josh Cribbs experiment doesn't pan out, look for Mangini to rely on his veteran safety net of Patten. He's only one call away.

As are all of the following players...

[Jets Announce Roster Cuts](#)

Who am I kidding? Look for about half of these players in Browns uniforms within the next 48 hours. Any improvements Mangini seeks should reflect the Boss of Berea's pledge to further "green" Cleveland.

At quarterback, John David Booty and Brian Brohm could serve as eventual #3 starters if the team gets blown away by a trade offer for Derek Anderson. But then again, considering Mangini's secretive nature, it is very possible that DA has already been traded three times since last night. Actually, it's almost amazing that the team even released their roster cuts.

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And finally, in news of the not so amazing...

[Shaun Smith Among Lions's Cuts](#)

What's the old Sinatra line about making it big? I can't remember, but it doesn't apply to Reboot's wayward son. I guess it's been a rough couple of months for Shaun. First, Bryan Cox gave Smith the kiss of death, before Mangini sent George Kokonis to firmly kick him in his size 67 pants and now this final humiliation. Along with the jettisoning of Isaac Sowell, this is truly a sad day for

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sports comedy.

Perhaps somewhere in Midland, Texas, Romeo Crennel sheds a greasy tear...or is dreaming up a plan to open up the first ever Academy for Wayward Youth, which is so going to be a glorified fat camp.