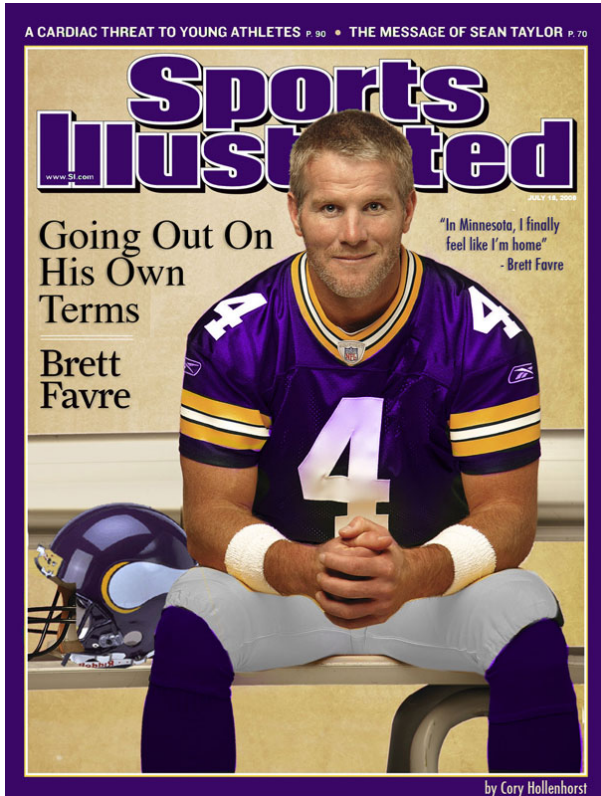


Preview: Vikings at Browns

Written by {ga=hermanfontenot}
Saturday, September 12 2009 7:00 PM -

The Eric Mangini Era gets underway at Cleveland Browns stadium on Sunday when Brett Favre, Adrian Peterson, and the Minnesota Vikings come to the north coast for the season opener. Somewhat amazingly, the Browns have opened the season at home in each of the ten years since their return to the league in 1999, losing nine of those ten openers. As he does every weekend for us, Jesse Lamovsky checks in with his preview of this week's Browns game.



Time: 1:00 pm, Sunday, September 13, 2009

Location: Cleveland Browns Stadium, Cleveland, Ohio

Network, Announcers: Fox- Thom Brennaman and Brian Billick

Line: Vikings by four.

Team W/L Records: It's the season opener for both teams

Preview: Vikings at Browns

Written by {ga=hermanfontenot}
Saturday, September 12 2009 7:00 PM -

Coaches: Eric Mangini is coaching his first game for the Browns, and is 23-25 overall; Brad Childress is 24-24 in his fourth season with the Vikings.

Last Season for the Browns: Suffered through a disastrous 2008, going 4-12, not scoring an offensive touchdown in the last six games, and getting GM Phil Savage and head coach Romeo Crennel fired in the process.

Last Season for the Vikings: Put together their best record since 2000 at 10-6, won their division for the first time since that same season, but were knocked out at home in the first round of the Playoffs by Philadelphia, 26-14.

All-Time Series: Vikings lead, 10-3

Last Meeting- November 27, 2005: The Charlie Frye Era got off to a halting start in the Metrodome when the rookie from Akron briefly replaced starter Trent Dilfer late in the second quarter, threw an interception, then was taken out and an angry and bewildered Dilfer was re-installed. Minnesota went on to win fairly easily, 24-12. Dilfer's mood didn't improve when Frye started the rest of the season.

Out or Questionable for Minnesota: LB Erin Henderson (calf) is out; WR Bernard Berrian (hamstring) is questionable.

Out or Questionable for Cleveland: G Rex Hadnot (knee) is out; RB Cedric Peerman (thigh) is doubtful; LB David Bowens (knee), RB Jerome Harrison (knee), DT Shaun Rogers (foot) and CB Eric Wright (knee) are questionable.

What to watch for the Vikings: What else? Brett Favre, after an uncomfortable season in New York, has finally reached his preferred post-Packer destination in Minnesota, and he'll be counted on to elevate to the next level a team that can run

Preview: Vikings at Browns

Written by {ga=hermanfontenot}

Saturday, September 12 2009 7:00 PM -

the ball, stop the run, and generally do everything right except win from the quarterback position. Favre is arguably surrounded by the best group of teammates he's had since the late '90s Packers, and if the Vikings are going to realize their potential, he'll have to play at a level at least somewhere near his Packer salad days. If the Favre we see in purple is the same Favre we saw in green late last season (albeit, when he was hurt) the Vikings aren't going to get where they want to go.

It's almost a given that Minnesota is going to be able to run the ball on Cleveland's defense. Adrian Peterson is by general consensus the best back in the league, and the Browns haven't stopped anyone on the ground since Bill Belichick was coaching the team (we won't talk about Pittsburgh gashing Bill's defense for 238 rushing yards in the '94 Divisional Playoffs.) A-Pete is going to get his, and Chester Taylor probably will too- but all that ground-hogging will go for naught if Old #4 is chucking easily intercepted prayers off his back foot.

What to watch for the Browns: Newly minted starter Brady Quinn will get all of the attention from the press and the fans, but the player to watch for the Browns on Sunday is Joe Thomas, who has the unenviable task of keeping pass-rushing freak Jared Allen out of Cleveland's backfield and away from its new quarterback. Facing a Vikings defense that is outstanding against the run, the Browns will need to throw well to have any chance of winning, and how effectively Big Joe controls Mr. Allen will go a long way toward deciding the outcome.

With the running game likely stalled from the outside, and with Brady Quinn, Check-Down Charlie himself running the offense, I'd imagine we'll see our fair share of dump-offs and screen passes emanating from the Cleveland playbook on Sunday. Long, sustained drives that keep Adrian Peterson on the sideline will hopefully be in the offing. It'll be interesting to see how often Brady manages to hook up with Braylon Edwards, who should be covered by the undersized but smart and very physical Antoine Winfield. It'd be great to see some big plays generated by the much-maligned Braylon, but with Winfield on the coverage, Jared Allen coming off the edge, and Brady somewhat averse to the deep ball, don't count on them.

Preview: Vikings at Browns

Written by {ga=hermanfontenot}

Saturday, September 12 2009 7:00 PM -

Good Past Win over the Vikings- December 17, 1989: Saddled with three losses and a tie in their previous four games, the 7-6-1 Browns needed a win over the talented Vikings to keep their Central Division title hopes alive. On a bitterly cold day at Municipal Stadium, the Browns fell behind 17-14 when Minnesota quarterback Tommy Kramer flipped a short touchdown pass to tight end Steve Jordan. Cleveland put together a late drive to tie the score on a Matt Bahr field goal and won it in overtime on a fake field goal, as holder Mike Pagel straightened up and hit linebacker Van Waiters in the end zone for the winning touchdown.

Bad Past Loss to the Vikings- October 31, 1965: It was a frightful Halloween down on the Lakefront as the Eastern Conference-leading Browns were surprised by the young Vikings, 27-17, in the first-ever meeting between the two teams. Minnesota broke out on top for good in the second quarter when Fran Tarkenton hit halfback Tommy Mason for a 72-yard touchdown pass and cruised to victory from there. Despite the relatively close score, Minnesota dominated statistically, out-gaining the Browns 408-167. The best "Brown" fullback on the field wasn't Jim: it was Minnesota's Bill Brown, who piled up 183 total yards and two touchdowns to his heralded counterpart's 48 total yards and one score.

Next Week for Both Teams: Minnesota is at Detroit; the Browns head to Denver to take on the Broncos.

Trivia: The Browns have opened at home every year since the Return and are 1-9 in those games, beating only the Ravens in 2004.