

Relax, there is no need to panic. Especially about Brady Quinn. And the "same 'ole Browns" talk from a lot of fans this week? Unjustified. That is the message from Chris Hutchison in this week's Browns Outsider. As he does each week, Chris recaps last week's game, hands out his gameballs, identifies his goats, gives us his uncensored thoughts on what we saw last Sunday, answers some reader mail, and looks ahead to the Browns next game ... a trip to Denver to take on the Broncos in Invesco Field.



A View From The Cheap Seats

Week 1 - Cleveland vs. Minnesota

Ladies and Gentlemen - your attention please.

Remain calm. There is No... Need... To... Panic.

The season is not over. The end is not near. This is simply what happens when

a really good team plays a team that is somewhere between mediocre and bad.

Honestly, folks, you didn't actually expect the Browns to win that game, did you? The Vikings are one of the Top 5 teams in the league, a legitimate Super Bowl contender.

They have the Best Run Defense in the league.

They have the Best Running Back in the league.

They are better than the Browns at almost every position (with the sole exception of Special Teams).

The talent gulf between the two franchises is vaster than the Sea of Tranquility.

I know you don't want to hear it, but, for the Browns, this is a *Transition Year*.

Yes, the dreaded T word. Sorry, it's true. This is Mankinis' first year at the helm.

You can't get all your players and install your system and horde the talent and change the culture all in one offseason, especially with the rash of inexperience the Browns have.

OK, fine, sure, it happens, but expecting it is like expecting \$50 bills to start growing out of your gallbladder. For every team with an 8 game turnaround, there are 12 teams that repeat their previous horror.

The teams that have made the gargantuan jumps in the past had extenuating circumstances:

easy schedule, getting healthy after an injury-marred season, big-contribution Rookies and Free Agents, or NOT sucking for the last 10 years.

So what we need to look for is not dominance, but improvement. And just because we didn't really see a lot of that in the first game doesn't mean it's not coming. This team has few players in their prime - they're either young and raw or old and over-experienced.

They've seen too many seasons, or they've seen too few.

Plus, this was the first game. The first time the starters played longer than a Quarter and a Half. The first time the first team Offense really got to play together.

The first time the Defense got to play with Shaun Rogers and David Bowens.

There were bound to be mistakes, growing pains, inconsistency, and miscommunication.

Best to get the shanks out against an opponent that probably would've beaten you no matter what stage of the season you were in.

Please don't read this as I'm making excuses for Mangini & Company. I'm not. But I'm not gonna start crucifying people and whining about "same ol' Browns" after one measly game either.

1st Quarter

The Vikes tried to get tricky and sneak in an opening Onside Kick, but Abe Elam was alert and the Browns started with great field position. Br

ady Quinn and the Offense had a decent drive, but stalled at the MIN 20, so Phil had to boot a FG.

Browns 3, Vikings 0.

MIN did nothing on their first drive, going 3 and Out, but the Browns returned the favor and punted, and what a terrible punt it was. The Vikes took over at the 50, and methodically drove the ball down towards the End Zone.

But Kamerion Wimbley took down Adrian Peterson for a 2 yard loss on 2
nd

and Goal at the 1, and the Goal Line stand held up.

Browns 3, Vikings 3.

End 1st: Browns 3, Vikings 3.

2nd Quarter

The Browns went 3 and Out again, thanks in large part by one of the Williams toasting Floyd Womack on 3rd Down and plowing Quinn into the turf for a sack. The ensuing punt was returned 36 yards to the CLE 23, and a few plays later Peterson bowled in for his first TD. *Vikings 10, Browns 3.*

Cleveland responded with really their best drive of the day, which had some nice Jamal Lewis runs and a 34 yard TD pass to Braylon Edwards... which was nullified because of the ol' ticky-tack Corner-commits-Pass-Interference-pushes-Edwards-out-of-bounds-Edwards-didn't-get-2nd-foot-re-established-before-catching-the-ball rule.

If I've seen it once...

1st and Goal, and Offensive Coordinator decided it was a good time for a whole mess of Wildcat packages, which is almost as good as the "Reverse to Northcutt on 4th Down" calls of the past. The problem is that Josh Cribbs wasn't able to get in, so TD wasted.

Vikings 10, Browns 6.

The Vikes and Browns traded 3 and Outs for a few possessions (here's where the Browns' O started to suck), and, after a Brodney Pool sack and near-safety by Wimbley, MIN punted with about 1:46 left, and Cribbs found himself a hole to the left and do what he do best. Somehow, the Browns had a

lead going into half.
13, Vikes 10.

Browns

Minsky went 3 and Out again (the D was fired up), and the Browns actually got the ball back one more time with about a minute left. Sadly, they went into Prevent Offense, playing it safe despite good field position and Time Outs, running out the clock.

Halftime: □ Browns 13, Vikings 10.

3rd Quarter

The Browns had the Vikes 3rd and 10 early on the initial 2

nd

Half possession, but Brett Favre beat the blitz with a well-timed screen to Vic Shiancoe.

Brandon McDonald had a bad drive defensively, getting beat for a TD that was fortunately called incomplete because the WR stepped OB, then picking up a Pass Interference at the 4.

The Browns made another valiant effort at a Goal Line stand, but Peterson got in for his 2nd

TD on 3rd

Down.

Vikings 17, Browns 13.

Needing an answer, Lewis ran the ball twice very well, and Quinn threw the ball on 2nd and short at Midfield. Problem was that he thought Braylon was running a route that he wasn't,

and you got to see a most disheartening boneheaded (by someone) pick.

Then, despite a great sack by Shaun Rogers (he was getting held and still finished it), the Vikings pounded the ball down the field and scored another TD, mainly via Percy Harvin (who should not be guarded by Hank Poteat).

Vikings 24, Browns 13.

That killed the Browns. They

went immediately into No Huddle
- a sense of desperation setting
in.

**End 3rd: □ Vikings 24, Browns
13.**

4th Quarter

Yes, the stench of fear was clear as Quinn started spraying the ball, and the Browns punted. A few Minnesota dropped passes killed their following drive, but all Cleveland did when they got the ball back is watch Antoine Winfield (freakin' animal) just about kill poor

James Davis on a tackle.

Still, Quinn actually had the Browns on a march after a few nice passes. He got into pressure at the CLE 40, broke out of the pocket and ran to his left, tried to throw the ball, and whoops!

Damn KY on the ball again...

slipped right out of his hand and the Vikes got it back.

A few plays later, MIN kicked a FG (thanks to a Wimbley sack).

Vikings 27, Browns 13.

Quinn almost hit Braylon on a nice long pass down the left sideline, but it was just out of

his reach. On 4th Down with about 6 minutes left and the Defense dying on the sideline, Mangini elected to punt - effectively ending the game.

It was over right then.

Then Peterson had his 64 yard TD run. You've seen pictures, so I don't need to rehash it. No

w it was REALLY over.

Vikings 34, Browns 13.

Pass-O-Rama started, but receivers started dropping everything, so the Browns punted again. But the Vikings brought in Tavaris Jackson, the Human Mercy Rule, and they went 3 and Out, allowing the Browns a

nice snappy drive against Minnesota backups to finally - FINALLY - break the Offensive Touchdown hymen that has been in place since the End Zone declared itself a born-again virgin in November 2008.

Vikings 34, Browns 20.

At least the TD pass from

Quinn to Robert Royal was
a thing of beauty.

**Final: □ Vikings 34, Browns
20.**

Gameballs

Abe Elam - Dude was everywhere from the opening kick. He beat McKinnie for a sack.

He recovered an Onside Kick.

He spent half the day in the Vikings backfield, making

tackle after tackle.

Finished with 8 tackles, 1 assist, and 1 sack.

Nice debut, Mr. Elam.

Kam Wimbley - That was about as active as I've ever seen the The Wimbley.

He had one sack, and got

severe pressure on Favre
several other times,
including almost getting a
Safety.

It appears to this casual
observer that moving Kam
around - not having him beat
his brains out against the
Left Tackle all day - has kept
him fresh and active.

Joe Thomas - He owned one of the best pass rushers in the league (Jared Allen).

And the Browns were able to effectively run to the left all day against even the vaunted Minny D.

Maybe the best performance of his career.

Josh Cribbs - You get a punt return TD, you get a Gameball.

Honorable Mention

Jamal Lewis - The stutter step was actually working.

I'm not saying he plowed into those holes, but he was hitting them, and was solid all day running and receiving.

He finished with 11 carries for 57 yards (about 5.2 per) and 3 catches for 47.

By far the best Browns back out there on that day.

Alex Mack - He was far from perfect. But you go against the Williams Brothers in your first game ever and you don't get owned like a Big 10 team in a Bowl Game, then that's pretty impressive.

Wall of Shame

Brady Quinn - There's no sugarcoating it; he played like dung. Besides being spazzy, jittery, holding the ball too long, Besi

and throwing some DA-esque inaccurate passes, that fumble was one of the lamer plays I've seen in many a moon.

Look for that on NFL Follies someday.

Eric Mangini - Solely for his "Mystery QB" boner of a plan.

Oh, and for punting on 4
th

and 7 down 14 points with 6
minutes left and the Defense
fainting from exhaustion.

That was truly a call from
the

*Romeo Crennel/France
School of Surrender*

.

Eric Wright - For getting
beat down like Tila Tequila
by Peterson on the 64 yard
TD run. That
was not pretty.

Conclusion

Time of Possession: Minnesota

- 33:22, Cleveland - 26:38

Total Yards: Minnesota -
310, Cleveland - 268

It was more lopsided than that before Cleveland's garbage time TD. You don't normally win a game with those numbers unless you win the Turnover battle, and the Browns lost that too, 2-0.

Part of the common theme that I've read and heard is that the Browns Run D is not improved. It's easy to look at Viking's 225 rushing yards and come to that conclusion.

It's easy to remember Peterson's 64 yard bitch-slap-fest TD run and settle for that answer.

But Stats can lie. The Run
D looked pretty improved
to me in the 1
st

Half when they held AP to
just 25 yards.

You know, when they
weren't left dangling on the
field by their Offense for
90% of the 3
rd

Quarter, and when they

weren't beaten down from their first full-game action.

If you look at Peterson's carries, it's fairly obvious:

1st Half: 9 carries, 25 yards, 2.77 per rush.

2nd Half, 1st Series: 5
carries, 15 yards, 3.0 per
rush.

2nd Half, 2nd Series: 5
carries, 36 yards, 7.2
per rush.

2nd Half, 3rd Series: 2
carries, 16 yards, 8
per rush.

2nd Half, 4th Series:
3 carries, 24 yards, 8
per rush.

2nd Half, 5th Series:

1 carry, 64 yards, 64 per rush.

Adrian Peterson is far too good a RB to be giving him all

those opportunities and not expecting him to bust one. Take away that last run, and AP went 24 for 116, which is a 4.83 average, but not embarrassing.

The Vikings had 5 series in the first 24 minutes of the 2nd

Half, in which Peterson alone got 16 carries.

During that time,

Minnesota ran 34
Offensive plays to
Cleveland's 17 and
held the ball for 16
½ minutes to the
Browns' 7 ½ .

The D wore down.

Some of it was their own fault. I mean, if you get the Vikings off the field, then it doesn't

matter if the
Offense couldn't hit
water if they fell out
of a frickin' boat.

The Ravens have
made a living
overcoming bad O.

But that first long drive by the Vikes started to tire them out, and they didn't get a chance to catch their wind again until the game was basically decided.

Look for the Browns Run D to continue to improve as the season goes on and they have to face less Adrian Peterson.

Can't say I was a
big fan of Mr.
Daboll's playcalling.

It was very
conservative - it felt
like they were
playing not to lose.

Several drives they
just gave up on,
and it'll be a while

before he lives
down the
consecutive Josh
Cribbs Wildcat runs
from 2
nd
and Goal from the
3.

Quinn's
interception in the
3rd Quarter was a

complete blown
play. He threw
it to the outside,
where he
obviously
expected Braylon
to be, but BE
broke it back
inside. Af

terwards, Braylon took blame, saying he ran the wrong route.

Then Quinn took the blame.

Some would say that a lack of reps together was the real culprit. Some would say that maybe an Offense with a Rookie snapping to a 4th

Start QB who is
looking for a 1
st

Start WR and
being backed up
on 50% of the
plays by a Rookie

RB, with 2 new
linemen and a
Rookie Offensive
Coordinator to
boot, could benefit
from spending as
much time
practicing as a

unit as possible.

Faugh! Twaddle
and flimflam!

I scoff at your

petty sniping!

Didn't you see
how confused the
Vikings Defense
was by Quinn's
surprise start?

They had no idea
what hit 'em!

Those players
are professionals,
and they should

perform at peak
aptitude at all
times, regardless
of your fictional
"Offensive
cohesion"
and
"chemistry&

quot;. Do you
think Peyton
Manning and his
top Receivers
practice all the
time? Hell
no!

They just go out there and do their thing!

Besides, Josh Cribbs was the

QB taking all the meaningful snaps in this game.

And, no, I am not worried about Brady Quinn. As I mentioned above, he played badly.

There's no doubt

about that.

But he had his
moments.

He did have a
nice long TD
pass negated by

the out-of-bounds shove, and I really think he would've made a spectacular play on that fumble if he hadn't, you know, fumbled.

And I saw at least
one play
(scramble to his
right, throw on
the run to Royal
on the first drive).

There is no doubt that you stay the course with Quinn for an 8 game minimum. Give the guy time to prove what he is and what he

isn't.

He might be
worse than DA -
that's always a
possibility.

But, honestly, if

you're turning to
DA, then you're
hiking up the
white flag
anyway.

Because we all
know the ancient

Confucian Haiku:

Year of DA Ball.

*Done before. □ Is
almost not*

*Worth watching
at all.*

That being said,
Quinn needs to
run the Offense
with more
certainty and stop
being scared to
make a mistake.
Step up, young

man!

If you're afraid of
losing your job,
you surely will.

And let's take this
moment to

applaud Jay
Cutler and Jake
Delhomme. Gent
lemen, thank you.

Next to your
performances,
Brady Quinn's

looked like a
cross between
Otto Graham and
Jesus.

Jake Delhomme
has mired himself
in a swamp of

suck. Backup
Josh McCown
was just placed
on IR.

I wonder what

Carolina would
be willing to give
us for DA?

I'm not trying to
get rid of him

necessarily, but if
someone offers
you enough, you
make the trade.

Terry Pluto had a
good point in the
PD the other day

, and I thought I'd
throw it in here in
case you didn't
catch it:

The special

*teams fell apart
on coverage.*

*Minnesota
returned three
kickoffs for 29, 29
and 41 yards.*

*Two punts came
back 18 and 36*

yards. Nearly every season with the Browns, Joshua Cribbs has led the special teams in tackles. They didn't use him on

*coverage
because he was
already on the
field as a starting
receiver and on
kickoff and punt
returns. But he
was missed, and*

*those solid
returns gave the
Vikings good field
position.*

Brian Billick is
just awful as an
announcer. I

thought the guy
was supposed to
be smart, but he
sure didn't seem
like it.

He said a number
of things that

made me wonder
if he were high
(Royal Roberts?

"Big
Daddy"
Shaun Rogers? -
although I do like

that better than
his real
nickname).

My favorite was
at the end of the
half where he
kept saying he

had to criticize
the teams
because they
shouldn't have
gone 3 and out
and given the ball
back to the other
team.

Like they *wanted*
to go 3 and Out,
Brian.

I need to learn his
art, so I too can

make insightful
broadcasting
music such as:

"*The
Receiver*

*probably didn't
want to drop the
ball there in the
End Zone* .
"

*" They
punted, but they
probably would
rather have had a
Touchdown
"*

"As a coach, you want to try and score more points than your opponent.

The best way to do that is to score

*points, and keep
your opponent
from scoring as
many*
.";

In case you
wondering, and I

know you were,
both my Fantasy
teams won this
weekend. Yes, *D*
on't Call Me
Stupid
rode Drew Brees
to victory, and

Gunga-Ga-Lunga
pulled away late,
thanks in large
part to those solid
2.2 points from
Braylon Edwards.

Serena Williams
is a Jehovah's

Witness. But she
sure uses a lot of
colorful language
that I've never
heard from any of
those Jehovah's
Witnesses that
show up at my

door.

E

ven after I turn

the hose on

them.

I don't really want
to start ripping
Tressel right now,

but I will just say
that I'm getting
more than a little
sick of the
conservative,
boring,
play-not-to-lose-b
ut-lose-anyway

bullpucky that I've
been seeing
lately.

Reader E-mail

From Larry Doe,
Strongsville: "
ot; *If*
Bill Cowher is

*willing to come
back and coach
the Browns next
year, do you
dump Mangini
even though he
only had one
year?*

"

Uhhhhh...

ummmm... ask

me in 8 weeks.



Next Up

The Denver Broncos

I watched a bit of
the
Broncos-Bengals

game last week,
and it was hard to
tell which team
looked more
putrid. Now, one
could argue that
the Bengals O is
probably better

than the Browns
O and the
Horsies still shut
them down, but
I've seen enough
of the Denver D
to not be scared
of it at this point.

Kyle Orton is no
Brett Favre. Know
wshon Moreno
might be good
someday, but
he's a dinged up
Rookie right now,
and he'll never be

Adrian Peterson.

No, this is not the
Denver running
attack of old.

The Broncos are in
a similar position

as the Browns -
new
Billichick-protégé
Head Coach, new
Offense,
mismatched
personnel.

There won't be many teams this season that I will be legitimately pissed off (I'm talking breaking shit. I mean it. I'll do it) to see the

Browns lose to.

Denver is one of
them.

Browns 16,
Denver 13.