

For a coach who is still a relative newcomer to the league, the career of Eric Mangini has been riddled with enough controversy and intrigue to last a lifetime. The latest drama? A \$25,000 fine for covering up an injury to Brett Favre late last season when Mangini was the head coach of the Jets. Also, yesterday, ProFootballTalk.com ran a story which claimed agents are steering players away from Mangini and the Browns. Dave Kolonich hits on both stories in his latest. The national media's love affair with Eric Mangini continues. Wait, did I say "love affair"? I must have meant inexplicable disdain. For a coach who is still a relative newcomer to the league, the career of Eric Mangini has been riddled with enough controversy and intrigue to last a lifetime. And considering that Mangini is among the more conservative coaches in the league, at least in terms of his carefully selected words and well-intentioned low profile, it is almost implausible that a mild-mannered personality could ever become such a lightning rod for genuine contempt.

But perhaps this is the problem. Much like a blank canvas or empty suit, Mangini appears to be the perfect foil for critics who are eagerly looking to paint an American tragedy by destroying an authority figure.

Here's the latest example...which begins with a credible prosecution of the former Jets head coach.

[Cleveland Browns Coach Eric Mangini Fined \\$25,000 by NFL](#)

Covering up Brett Favre's injury last year with the New York Jets has cost Browns coach Eric Mangini \$25,000.

Nine months after it happened -- and one week after Favre disclosed the Jets knew of his torn biceps injury -- the NFL disciplined the Jets and Mangini "for violations of the league's injury reporting policy."

The Jets were docked \$75,000 as an organization. Jets GM Mike Tannenbaum was fined \$25,000, as was Mangini.

After Favre's disclosure in a routine interview with Minnesota media last week, Tannenbaum took the blame for never listing Favre on the Jets' injury report. He said it was a mistake.

When asked a week ago how could a quarterback with a torn biceps tendon not be included on his injury report, Mangini said, "I can tell you that we always fill out the injury report by the guidelines set through the NFL."

Some of the President's Men: Mike Florio Edition

Written by {ga=davekolonich}

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Granted, Mangini was clearly in the wrong during the last month of the 2008 season. It became evident watching Brett Favre fall apart down the stretch that the veteran quarterback was injured. Mangini is responsible for not adhering to the injury policy that the NFL has in place. The league issued fines and Mangini was punished. So, case closed.



Based on Mangini's recent comments regarding his refusal to release specific injury reports, it is also evident that our new coach feels that an opposing team will target a player's injury, which obviously could be interpreted as a "competitive disadvantage." Call Mangini paranoid, call him a Belichick clone or question his logic, but the motives are clear...Mangini wants to protect both his players and any sense of competitive edge he holds.

However, one item that hasn't been discussed in this story is the role that Brett Favre played in the process. Considering that Favre was (and is) in the midst of an unbelievable Ironman streak of consecutive starts, was a sense of history and personal ego a driving factor in the refusal to reveal any injuries? Obviously, the decision still rests in the hands of the head coach, but whenever a personality the size of Brett Favre is involved, all possibilities must be raised.

But, since Mangini has an Isaac Sowell's sized target resting on his back, this story is not likely to go away anytime soon.

Witness...

[Mangini Sidesteps Talk of Double Standard](#)

Browns coach Eric Mangini, who already has a reputation for saying as little as possible publicly, is trying even harder to avoid talking about the \$25,000 fine imposed on him by the NFL on Wednesday for hiding an arm injury to quarterback Brett Favre when both were employed by the Jets.

Wednesday night, Mangini issued a brief statement regarding the matter: "I have worked with the league on this matter and now consider it closed. My focus is on our preparations for the Broncos."

On Thursday, he was asked about the situation during a routine press conference.

"What I always look to do is do the best job I can possibly do and make the best decisions possible for the organization," Mangini said regarding whether he now fears greater scrutiny of his injury reports. "That's what drives any decision that we make and any decision that I make. You always go through a process, just like talking to players, make sure that they look at the things that they've done, the things they've done well and the things that they can improve on. Then, figure out the best way to improve on them. That's a constant

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process for them, for me, for all the coaches. It doesn't matter whether it's the preparation, or any of the other things, that's something I'm always looking to do."

OK, what?

And there's another example of the Bill Belichick-Nick Saban art of talking without really talking.



I think it would safe to assume that there 32 men in the league who are very skilled in the art of "talking without talking." They're commonly referred to as "head coaches."

And although I feel I am defending Mangini solely based on the fact that he is universally despised...call it Rooting for the Underdog...I have to wonder what exactly any other coach could possibly say in the same situation. Find me one head coach who would openly reveal very specific injury information regarding his starting quarterback during a playoff run. Then, find me another who would legitimately apologize for trying to gain an advantage. Or, find me anyone who would not try to bend the rules in order to get ahead.

Florio goes on to refer to Miami's organization similarly failing to reveal injury information in 2008. Yet, where is the outrage pointed towards Tony Sparano and Bill Parcells? What if Chad Pennington were hurt during Miami's disastrous playoff game of a year ago? Would anyone care? Is the league currently investigating Miami? Does Brett Favre have any inside information on them? Has Bill Parcells not personally insulted Florio in the past?

And to further prove that Florio, who is quickly becoming the czar of NFL rumor mongering/online media, has some sort of bizarre personal grudge against Mangini, take a look at the following...

[Sources: Agents Steering Players Away From Browns](#)

Though the Cleveland Browns were able to lure to town today a couple of players with connections to coach Eric Mangini (safety Ray Ventrone and guard Billy Yates), multiple sources have told us that some agents plan to steer their clients away from the Browns.

Right or wrong, there's a sense of discontent regarding the new regime in Cleveland, where coach Eric Mangini and G.M. George Kokinis are running the show, with Mangini serving essentially as the man in charge.

A variety of issues have contributed to the situation, and we're in the process of tracking down specific details regarding some of the potential problem areas.

In the offseason, feathers were ruffled when Mangini took first-year players on a ten-hour bus ride to Hartford, Connecticut to work a youth football camp. Also, the

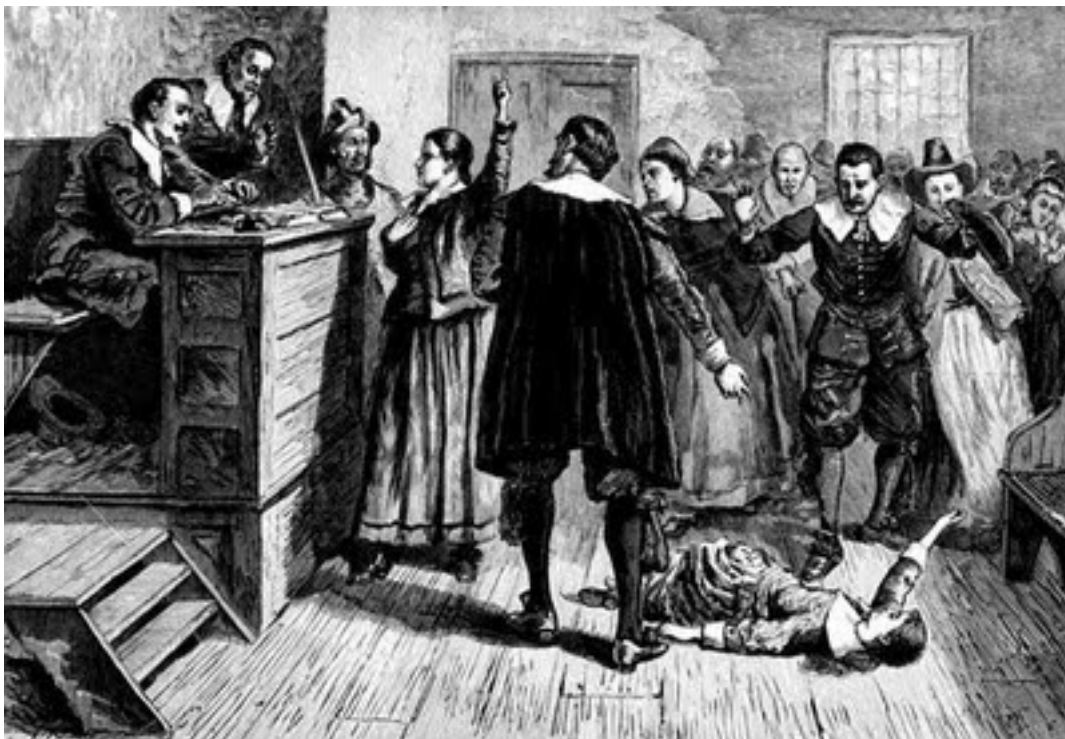
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lingering contractual impasse regarding receiver Josh Cribbs could be creating trust issues, given Cribbs' strong belief that owner Randy Lerner promised to re-work Cribbs' below-market deal, and the fact that Mangini/Kokinis have denied the allegation.

The Cribbs conundrum reminds many of the disputes that arose when Mangini coached the Jets, including guard Pete Kendall, receiver Laveranues Coles, and tight end Chris Baker. All claimed that promises had been made regarding their contracts, and that the promises had been broken.

As one source explained it, the Browns likely will be required to overpay free agents in the offseason. If the money that Cleveland is offering matches the money on the table from another team, the thinking is that the players will be far more inclined to sign with the team not named the Browns.

UPDATE: In response to this item, an agent who was not one of the sources for the original item contacted us, agreed with it wholeheartedly, and said, "I would put one of my players on another team's practice squad before putting him on the Browns."



Oh, Florio...you magnificent bastard. You've done it again. Talk about piling on.

For readers unfamiliar with Mike Florio, here's a classic example of his style of "journalism"...or perhaps we should just give up and refer to it as "new media." The strategy is simply known as "see if it sticks..."

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After basically revealing that he has no real evidence to make a claim regarding agents "steering players away from Cleveland", Florio then offers what is quickly becoming one of the most stale jokes in all of football...the infamous rookie bus ride...during which several undrafted free agents allegedly perished somewhere on the way to Hartford, Connecticut.

So, applying Florio's rationale means that veteran free agents will not sign with Cleveland because rookies have to take a bus trip. Makes sense.

As for the "update", Florio mentions another "source" who obviously has an issue with Cleveland and/or Mangini. So, therefore, based on this source's revelation, no one will sign with the Browns.

See how easy that is? You only need one source to "suggest" that the Browns will have trouble recruiting future players. Unfortunately, in terms of the "new media", that "one source" repeatedly appears to be Mike Florio.

And when it comes to objective journalism, there is no higher beacon of truth than Florio...

...who is currently contacting his "sources" for confirmation of his next headline...

Did Eric Mangini Cause Global Warming?

Stay tuned.