

That was ugly. And just like that, another Browns season is over before it really even got started. Mirroring the opening week loss against the Vikings, the Browns again failed to give a solid defensive performance for an entire game, while again, the conservative offensive approach limited the team throughout. Dave Kolonich gives us the good, the bad, the ugly, and the rationalization of today's nauseating loss.

Perhaps my [mirror analogy](#) from earlier was a bit problematic. If the Browns and Broncos were truly representative of each other, it didn't reveal itself for long stretches of Sunday's game. In many respects, the Browns appear to be light years away from matching Denver's level of talent and overall direction, which is quite a dilemma, considering the Broncos are probably no better than a 7-9 team.

Mirroring the opening week loss against the Vikings, the Browns again failed to give a solid defensive performance for an entire game, while again, the conservative offensive approach limited the team throughout. In a departure from the toothless offensive output, the Browns defense again flashed some different looks and brought some blitzes, but were ultimately exposed in the fourth quarter, thanks to some poor tackling and mismatches in the deep secondary.

So what can we take from this week's loss?

Certainly, the Browns were no match for the playoff bound Vikings, but this afternoon's contest at least offered a glimmer of hope - which was extinguished sometime around Josh Cribbs' third quarter fumble, or perhaps swallowed up by Elvis Dumervil, or possibly even found during one of the Browns few successful third down conversions.

Anyway, before a shuddering sense of desperation sets in, let's take a closer and hopefully more lucid look at what just transpired.

Hide The Women & Children

Written by {ga=davekolonich}

Saturday, September 19 2009 7:00 PM -



The Good

It turns out that Braylon Edwards does play for the Browns. Edwards was one of lone bright spots in the Browns second consecutive sterile offensive display. In perhaps the rarest of Brian Daboll coached football, Quinn found Edwards downfield and the mercurial wideout managed to hang on to the ball throughout the game. Other than Edwards, the only other positive to note offensively could be the sparse occasions where Jamal Lewis found running room off left tackle. That's it - that's the list.

Defensively, the Browns interior was solid against the run - at least if you discount the last twenty or so minutes of the game. For most of the afternoon, Shaun Rogers was dominant and Eric Barton had a few nice stops. Early on, David Bowens forced some outside pressure and again, Abe Elam was effective closer to the line of scrimmage. On special teams, at least Phil Dawson handled the brutal Mile High wind, while Ray Vetrone had some nice special teams plays.

The Bad

The offensive approach the team has taken so far in this young season either represents a lack of confidence in Brian Daboll as a playcaller or in Brady Quinn as a quarterback. Despite some nice pre-snap movement and the occasional decent Jamal Lewis run, this offense does absolutely nothing that would put fear in the heart of an opposing defensive coordinator.

The most alarming trend established during today's game has to be found on third downs. Either running or passing, the Browns were completely inept on third down, which effectively killed some promising early downs in the first half and third quarter. Perhaps the most frustrating third down stalls came on a 3rd and short, where Jamal Lewis was stuffed and again in the third quarter, when Brady Quinn's pass was tipped for a third consecutive time.

Defensively, the Browns still cannot generate any scrap of a pass rush, or at least one that does not involve bringing extra blitzers to the line. There were far too many plays that saw Kyle Orton enjoy 5-10 seconds to make downfield reads. In terms of the overall look of the Browns defense, it is becoming glaringly obvious that the team still lacks speed, especially down the line and among the linebackers. Whenever the Broncos ran laterally across the field, the Browns were always one missed tackle away from giving up a huge play.

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The Ugly

John St. Clair makes me long for the days of Kevin Shaffer. Enough said.

While Elvis Dumervil's unique size and pass rushing skills presented a challenge, St. Clair's play was among the worst performance by a Browns offensive lineman in years. For an offensive philosophy that seems limited by design, the team cannot afford to continue allowing the right side of the line to repeatedly collapse. And in perhaps one of the more inexplicable moves of the game, the Browns refused to give St. Clair much help in trying to contain Dumervil...after he already recorded two sacks.

And speaking of questionable coaching, why was Kamerion Wimbley and later David Bowens matched up against the Bronco tight ends and wide receivers? While Wimbley has seemingly improved against the run, his strengths are not exactly maximized by covering pass catchers. And David Bowens? Really? As for some other questionable calls, the Browns reliance on bringing safety help to the line - which is not altogether a bad idea - helped to burn the team in the fourth quarter. Eventually, the Broncos caught on and the defense was hurt deep.

The Rationalization

Is the honeymoon over for Eric Mangini? Did it ever begin?

While this team is clearly rebuilding in 2009, one has to wonder about some of the coaching decisions made in this game. It is becoming obvious that Mangini does not have much faith in Brady Quinn beyond allowing him to simply dump off passes underneath. While great for reducing turnovers, eventually this offense has to be given some license to attack opposing defenses. But then again, considering the state of the Browns offensive line, perhaps Mangini is simply doing all that he can, given the current situation.

Defensively, it appears that Rob Ryan is doing the opposite. So far through two games, the Browns defense is light years away from last year's model, at least in terms of aggressiveness. However, the team's lack of overall speed is going to continue to be exposed. Basically, the Browns are going to be stretched across the field for the rest of the season, and unfortunately, the only remedy for the situation is to find some better athletes who can keep up.

The Rationalization - Part Two

I am refusing to look at the upcoming schedule. But I do have my eyes on Draft Day 2010.