

Let's face it Browns fans; this was a most likely a five to seven win season for the home town team even before things went horribly wrong. Now, when you're looking at that kind of season it's difficult to reduce your expectations to even lower levels but, as the overplayed saying goes, it is what it is. The bottom line is this is a terrible football team that could legitimately give the 2008 Lions a run for their money. Brian McPeck sees a silver lining in this horrifying set of circumstances, and tells our readers about it in his latest.



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But knowing this team isn't going to challenge for a playoff spot can have its advantages if you accept that fact and move on. The '09 Browns have an opportunity to provide the 2010 Browns a great service if they accept that development and education are more important than wins in 2009.

The first thing the '09 Browns need to do is commit to Brady Quinn for the entire season. If they're willing to do so publicly that would be all the better (though I'm pretty sure that public

announcements regarding personnel are not forthcoming under this regime). Quinn looks like he's playing to distance himself completely from the image of Derek Anderson. He's managing the football game as opposed to playing for points and he's seemingly scared to death to make a mistake with the football. That's got to stop. Quinn needs to throw the football down the field when the opportunity presents itself and sometimes even when it doesn't. Quinn accomplished this at Notre Dame (albeit with better receivers at his disposal-just a joke to lighten the darkening mood) and the questions about his arm strength are overblown. The problem with Quinn right now is in his head and in his heart, not in his arm.

After hearing for two straight years about DA's penchant for critical mistakes and turnovers and his inability or unwillingness to check down and effectively deliver short throws Quinn seems to be going out of his way to ensure that those criticisms can't be levied against him. The problem is that NFL teams have already figured out that Quinn is unwilling to take big shots down the field and they stack the line of scrimmage as a result. Not only does that affect the short passing game but it makes it next to impossible for Quinn's aging running back, Jamal Lewis, to see any unoccupied space. Add in the fact that your #2 receiver is basically learning the position and is not yet a gifted route runner and you have the makings of, well, what you watched in the first two games; a field crowded with bodies at the line of scrimmage and ten yards beyond.

While we're mentioning the WR position I'd like to see the Josh Cribbs experiment end. Cribbs is a gifted and talented PR/KR and special team gunner. There is no shame in that and there's also a decent living to be made with those skills. Keep him out there and let him do what he does best. You can also occasionally use him out of the wildcat formation to get him a few more touches but Josh Cribbs does not look like an NFL wide receiver to me. The Browns also spent a couple of high level picks on receivers when they selected Brian Robiskie from Ohio State and Mohamed Massaquoi from Georgia back in April. Robiskie was selected because of his route running ability and hands and Massaquoi possess the size and strength that NFL scouts like to see in a receiver.

This may be a leap given I'm not an NFL scout, but one could reasonably believe that both Robiskie and Massaquoi, as polished division one college receivers, would be further advanced in the skills that it takes to be a solid NFL receiver than a hybrid-type athlete like Cribbs who played QB at Kent State. Robiskie was picked ahead of Cincinnati linebacker Rey Mauluga, who caused a couple fumbles Sunday as a starting NFL defender. In a season that promised little hope of victories to begin with, why aren't we seeing Robiskie and Massaquoi lined up with Braylon Edwards week after week?

Likewise, one of the reasons the Browns passed on Mauluga was that they liked David

Veikune from Hawaii enough to make him the 52nd overall pick. A defensive end at Hawaii, Veikune was moved to LB by the Browns but hasn't been seen or heard from this season. And this isn't exactly a linebacking corps that reminds anyone of the '86 Giants. In a season like this one, why not have these young players that you sacrificed for in order to select line up and have at it on Sundays?

The worst that can happen is that the Browns find they made terrible errors in selecting them. That would suck and it would certainly warrant some heat on the front office personnel who made the selections. But in a lost year it's better to find out now rather than later that you have to look elsewhere for the help you need.

Many objective Browns fans realized that there was an immense rebuilding that was required with this football team. It seemed clear after draft day and after the free agent signing period ended that Head Coach Eric Mangini recognized that as well. There are 23 players on the current roster who were not with the team last season. But we're not seeing any benefit to the turnover. We're not seeing any fruits of the labor and that's frustrating, especially given that the players named above were high picks who one can and should reasonably expect to make an impact at the NFL level right away.

If Quinn's lack of aggression is a by-product of game planning or coaching than the staff needs to get off of his throat. If it's a by-product of Quinn's lack of confidence then the Browns need to coach him up and instill in him some of the confidence he needs. He showed far more promise and far more ability last season than he has in this one.

The Browns need to get the kids they selected over other contributing rookies on the field and see if they're the players needed to make this work going forward. Either way they'll get their answer through playing them. If they were worthy of being selected where they were they'll contribute to some extent and reveal the weaknesses that need to be addressed. If they weren't what they thought they were then everyone will soon know that the team needs to not only get guys who can play, but also that they need to revisit the process that led to selecting those players and overlooking others in the first place.

Expectations were low. The Browns don't get any other mulligans. They need to use the remainder of the season to evaluate and develop the roster. This should have been the focus to begin with but there are still 14 games remaining to get it done.

And while we're at it, is there any chance we can find a right tackle who isn't a human turnstile?
That would be nice too.