

The Fix

Written by {ga=davekolonich}
Wednesday, September 23 2009 7:00 PM -

It's been an ugly start to the 2009 season for the Browns and the vast majority of the fan base has already given up on the season. So, what can be done to right the ship and avoid more misery? Or, more correctly, is there at least a giant band-aid that can be slapped on the open sore that is the Browns? Short of importing an entire new roster of players, coaches and transferring ownership of the franchise to the capable hands of...well, anyone other than Randy Lerner, is there anything that can be done to save 2009? Dave Kolonich offers his thoughts.



While I've always held to the idea that the dead of the NFL offseason was the most depressing time of the calendar year, these past few days have forced me to adjust my thinking in a most sinister fashion. As the NFL has returned and the Browns still find themselves stuck in their traditional murky depths after two lackluster performances, the sentiments of fans and critics alike have taken a decidedly negative tone.

Take Pat McManamon's latest, in which he identifies the top ten issues currently plaguing the Browns. What's wrong, Pat? You could only find ten?

[McManamon's First and 10: Plenty of Bad with Browns](#)

And if that wasn't depressing enough, there is a good chance that the Browns biggest offensive weapon - who cannot truly still be considered a weapon anymore - may already be hurting.

[Browns RB Lewis Doesn't Practice, Sunday Status in Question](#)

And since this guy isn't a right tackle, he's probably not going to offer much help,

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either.

[Cleveland Browns waive tight end Martin Rucker](#)

The sense of hopelessness is at a fever pitch around Berea, despite the Browns participation in exactly two games. Usually, these familiar sentiments are shared much later in the season. Call it the Dance of Temptation, as the Browns usually spend the early months of the season seducing fans into believing that there is some substance underneath the occasional flash.

However, the largely sterile and almost soul-sucking performances against the Vikings and Broncos have already convinced fans that 2009 will rank among the longest seasons in Browns history. While such despair fits more naturally with a Bruce Gradkowski interception during a cold, meaningless December game at the Stadium, it has already arrived before the official end of summer.

Simply put, this is going to be a long year.

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Looking at the Browns schedule, it is not inconceivable to see the team enter their midseason bye week winless. And if the depression is this rampant and fan sentiment this ugly now, just imagine the atmosphere come November.

So, what can be done to right the ship and avoid more misery? Or, more correctly, is there at least a giant band-aid that can be slapped on the open sore that is the Browns? Short of importing an entire new roster of players, coaches and transferring ownership of the franchise to the capable hands of...well, anyone other than Randy Lerner, is there anything that can be done to save 2009?

Probably not.

However, I can at least offer the following...

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NOTE: The above is a bit of a misnomer. Considering how poorly this team has played so far, the Browns may be beyond simple fixing. Maybe, "The Patch" is more appropriate.

1. At this point in the Browns development, athleticism may be more important than recognition. The coaching staff should just deal with this.
2. The linebackers are much too slow to run laterally across the field, and can be easily exposed to cutbacks. The solution is to find some more athletic players, which the team doesn't have - so why not at least plug in the rookie linebackers to see how they perform?
3. Much like the linebackers, the defensive ends are not doing a good job of pursuit. Why not substitute C.J. Mosley for Corey Williams? Or, how about line up Ahtyba Rubin and Shaun Rogers together?
4. What about running some 4-3 sets with D'Qwell Jackson at outside linebacker? Certainly, Jackson offers more athleticism than Kamerion Wimbley or David Bowens.
5. If Hank Poteat was beaten both physically and mentally against Denver, why is he playing ahead of rookie Coye Francies? Ultimately, what would be the difference? Why is Poteat even on this team? What do the Browns gain by playing

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him?

6. On the same hand, does Brandon McDonald need to be on the field on more obvious running downs? Running backs are going to continue to swallow him up in the open field.

7. Whatever happened to the preseason talk of the Browns playing more four man fronts and experimenting with the 46 defense?

8. Find a safety. Any safety. Take a corner and make him a safety. Make a linebacker into a safety. The Brodney Pool experiment is officially over. One more concussion and his career is over.



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9. Blitzing is great, but leaving a safety deep is sometimes better.
10. On offense, ignore the quarterback controversy and solve the right tackle problem. Either plug in someone new or never allow the tight ends to leave John St. Clair's side.
11. Why is Mohammed Massaquoi not receiving more snaps? Or, on the same hand, why is Josh Cribbs receiving so many?
12. Get a hyperbaric chamber - consult the frozen head of Walt Disney - do whatever to get Rex Hadnot back and then do more to preserve the left side of the offensive line.
13. Use more shotgun formations...to pass from. Maybe this way Quinn can see down the field.
14. Speaking of formations...since Josh Cribbs is at his best running straight ahead with the ball, why not line him up in the backfield and hand off to him?
15. Why is Jamal Lewis not running off left tackle more often?
16. An effective #14 and #15 could actually set up some effective play-action passing.
17. For the first time in our history, could we see a screen pass used BY the Browns, rather than AGAINST us?
18. Even if the possibility of completing a deep pass is non-existent, at least attempt to stretch the defense every once in a while.
19. Stop playing not to lose and start playing to win.
20. Think positive. There's only one direction we can go from here. It could be worse. Right?