

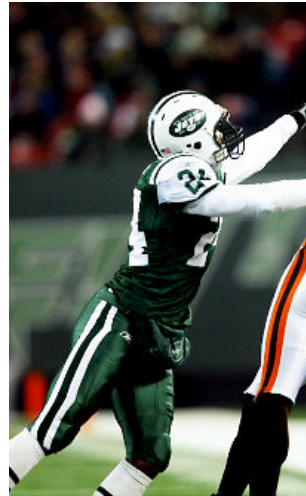
## Don't Let The Door ...

Written by {ga=gdbenz}

Tuesday, October 06 2009 7:00 PM -

---

It's official. Less than a day and a half after throwing a punch at one of LeBron's friends early Tuesday morning after leaving a night club, Braylon Edwards is a Jet. The Browns sent the frustrating wide receiver to New York this morning for Chansi Stuckey, Jason Trusnick, and two conditional draft picks. In Gary's latest he talks about the trade, calling it addition by subtraction, and also takes a look at the two newest ex-Jets on the Browns roster.



The news broke that the Cleveland Browns traded disgruntled (and I mean really disgruntled) receiver Braylon Edwards to the New York Jets and even before I knew who and what the Browns received in return I couldn't help think about Lenny Dykstra's quote when the Philadelphia Phillies traded Von Hayes to the Indians years ago, "great trade, who'd we get?"

And that's the point, isn't it? Does it really matter who the Browns get in return for Edwards? Isn't this the ultimate addition by subtraction trade?

There was an entry on the message boards at The Cleveland Fan that saw this trade as somehow being engineered by Cavaliers general manager Danny Ferry as his way of ensuring that LeBron James won't end up in New York. Good thought.

As it turns out the Browns received linebacker Jason Trusnik, a 4<sup>th</sup> year player out of Nordonia High and Ohio Northern who came into the league as an undrafted free agent, wide receiver Chansi Stuckey, a 7

th

round pick of the Jets in 2007 out of Clemson, and two draft picks.

That makes a good trade even better.

The Browns actually received real live players and Mangini's favorite currency,

draft picks, in return, although the level of the picks hasn't been disclosed.

Trusnik is mostly a special teams player and Stuckey is the Jets' number two receiver on a team with very average wide receivers. For his career, Stuckey has 43 catches for 479 yards and 4 touchdowns. He missed all of 2007 with a foot injury. He'll bring some experience but an undistinguished resume.

No matter.

If he can just catch the ball more than he drops it then he'll be an immediate contributor.

More importantly, this trade should at least put a permanent end to second round pick Brian Robiskie's days as an inactive bystander on game day.

What makes this trade important from a Browns' perspective is not what the Browns received in return but the statement that it makes to the rest of the players. To put it charitably, Edwards was a problem, not just for head coach Eric Mangini but for Romeo Crennel before that.

Edwards was the center of his own universe and playing for a coach who only wants the planets revolving around him and no one else.

Edwards always had his own agenda and while he tried on occasion to talk a good game his actions spoke volumes about where he placed himself in the team dynamic.

Edwards was a rock that was headed for Mangini's windshield during the offseason. It's not secret that Mangini tried to trade him in the run up to the draft but couldn't quite work out a deal with the New York Giants. This time Mangini found a fit and a sigh of relief is being breathed city-wide.

Certainly Edwards' latest problem, the near brawl he allegedly started early Monday morning, was the precipitating factor in his sudden departure. But this was a move that was coming sooner or later. The Browns could have retained Edwards by making him a franchise player at the end of the season, thus effectively keeping him from signing elsewhere.

Practically no one thought that was a likely scenario.

What was always far more likely was a trade such as this that keeps the Browns from facing the difficult decision of having to either sign Edwards or let him go for nothing. Argue all you want (as I would) that letting Edwards go for nothing is still a plus for this franchise, but take it on a leap of faith if you must that other teams would have thought the Browns were crazy had they let that scenario play out.

Indeed, the fact that Mangini and general manager George Kokinis were able to get two active players and two draft picks for Edwards tells you that others in the league still have the outsider's view that Edwards has value. It's what's called the greater fool theory in business. No matter how deep you may have stepped into it there's always a bigger fool out there willing to bail you out.

Count this is just the latest mess made by the former regime that

Mangini is extricating the team from.

If you want a baseball comparison, think Milton Bradley. Teams like Oakland and the Chicago Cubs thought that they had the secret recipe for keeping Bradley, a talented malcontent, motivated and engaged and so they showered him with millions.

The Cubs sent Bradley home before this season ended because he's such a disruptive source and they are surely regretting the multi-millions they guaranteed him before this past season started.

Someone will take Bradley off their hands, though he may be running out of chances.

Edwards is Bradley a few years removed, with the Jets proving the point. The Jets, like the Browns, are very thin at wide receiver and wouldn't a former Pro Bowler look just great? Despite their good start, they don't look to go anywhere fast with such a weak unit even as strong-armed rookie quarterback Mark Sanchez lights up Broadway.

Undoubtedly the Jets see Edwards as the 2007 Pro Bowl receiver and already have more than rationalized away the faults that dominate Edwards' profile in Cleveland. You don't have to attend the Jets' press conference to know that they will attribute Edwards' troubles in Cleveland to the unsettled nature of the franchise, the constant changing of the quarterbacks, and his having 4 different offensive coordinators in 5 years. But how does any of that explain why Edwards dropped a ball that was right in his hands on Sunday?

There will be those on the Cleveland side that will be disheartened by the Edwards trade because he represented one of the few potential playmakers on this team. But just as the team as a whole won't progress until it can consistently perform, Edwards is in the last year of a 5 year contract under which he rarely was as consistent of a performer as his talent might suggest. Fans who wanted to keep Edwards around are in a distinct minority.

As for what this signals for the Browns going forward, if there were any doubts that Mangini or owner Randy Lerner were taking a long term view toward rebuilding this franchise this trade quashed them. With a very young and very unproven receiver corps before the trade, Mangini has further depleted the limited potential this team has to score.

A high draft pick next spring is a certainty.

Still, that's probably not a bad thing. This team needs more of nearly everything and whatever contributions Trusnik and Stuckey can make, particularly to the dynamic Mangini is trying to build, the team will be better off for it. As for the draft picks received, Browns' fans have no expectations in that regard.

Year after year of fruitless drafting will wear down even the most ardent optimists.

Now Edwards is New York's problem. Surely he doesn't see it that way. He'll see it as the world's biggest stage and maybe that's what he needs.

But whatever success he may end up having just know it would never

## Don't Let The Door ...

Written by {ga=gdbenz}

Tuesday, October 06 2009 7:00 PM -

---

have happened in Cleveland.

Edwards' couldn't get over the fact that this is LeBron's town and even if James doesn't stay in Cleveland many will always be grateful that before he left it was he all along who was holding Edwards' exit door.