

## Braylon Post-Mortem

Written by {ga=davekolonich}  
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Who is Chanci Stuckey? What does the loss/removal of Braylon mean for Mohammed Massaquoi? With Braylon gone, who steps up? Do you think Eric Mangini likes draft picks? Before today, did anyone in Cleveland know who Jason Trusnik was? What does this trade do for the Jets? Do the Jets know something we don't? Or, vice versa? Who got the better of the deal? And are we happy? These are the questions Dave Kolonich answers in his post-mortem of the Braylon Edwards trade. So how about a little warning, Mangini?

As I'm prattling away earlier about report cards and Dick Jauron, Eric Mangini and company go and pull off one of the most surprising trades in recent Browns history. Surprising in the sense of timing, more than anything. Certainly, it was becoming clear that Braylon Edwards was not part of the Browns long-term plans, but the suddenness of the move was kind of jolting.

And in case you haven't heard, here's what happened.

### [Braylon Edwards Traded to Jets](#)

So, before any panicky jubilation, or post-Phil Savage depression sets in yet again, let's try to figure out what just happened.

#### 1. Just who is this Chanci Stuckey?

First of all, the player who is filling Braylon's roster spot, but not necessarily taking his place is a smaller possession type receiver who lined up in the slot under Eric Mangini in New York. While clearly Stuckey is not going to be playing the Braylon role any time soon, his arrival makes you wonder what kind of role he will play in Cleveland.

For starters, the Browns already have a decent slot receiver in Mike Furrey and if the Bengal game was any indication, Braylon Edwards' phantom production will likely be filled by Mohammed Massaquoi. It will be interesting to see how the depth at the position sorts itself out in the coming weeks.

#### 2. What does the loss/removal of Braylon mean for Mohammed Massaquoi?

Admit it - two weeks ago, you were still trying to figure out how our new star wideout's last name was pronounced. And nearly five football quarters later, this same player has become the team's new Messiah. What a difference a week makes.

As for how Massaquoi fits into this whole situation, he has instantly become Option #1 for the offense moving forward. And considering that Massaquoi will be making just his second NFL start this coming weekend, this is indeed a jump of astronomical proportions. Unfortunately for the Browns - and no disrespect intended towards our talented rookie - but Braylon's presence last week was a major reason for Massaquoi's first NFL success. Let's see what happens this coming weekend.

### 3. With Braylon gone, who steps up?

In most respects, the answer to this question is Massaquoi. However, Braylon's exit also signals an opportunity for someone at the bottom of the depth chart to emerge as a contender for some playing time. Already, Mangini has thrown out Brian Robiskie's name in regards to today's trade. Perhaps this was an attempt by Mangini to motivate the "polished" rookie wideout to emulate the example set forth by Massaquoi.

Another intriguing development to keep an eye on is Mangini's insertion of Mike Furrey into the defensive lineup. Furrey was solid in some limited defensive action and has a secondary background. It will be interesting to see if Mangini continues to lean on Furrey here in the coming weeks. If so, this could loosen up another spot on the receiver depth chart, or effectively allow Stuckey to replace Furrey. And if all this happens, what becomes of the Josh Cribbs Experiment?

### 4. Do you think Eric Mangini likes draft picks?

Initial reports have suggested that the "undisclosed" draft picks included in the deal contain the Jets 3rd and 5th round choices next year. If so, these picks - which are desperately needed in Cleveland - could be used to target key areas of need, including right guard, right tackle, defensive line, safety...all right, I'll stop now.

As we witnessed in the frenzied first Mangini draft in April, the new Browns management is not afraid to make a deal. Having two additional picks, plus potentially a young quarterback to trade and most likely a Top 10 overall selection will give the Browns some great flexibility next April. And considering the amount of holes on this roster currently, we can use all the help we can get.

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5. Before today, did anyone in Cleveland know who Jason Trusnik was?

I pride myself on having an incredibly active B.S. filter, so I'm always conscious of when I'm committing the very offenses I usually rail against. So, having said that, I know absolutely nothing about Jason Trusnik. And I truly doubt that you do either.

What I do know is that Mangini liked him enough to bring him to Cleveland and that supposedly he is a solid special teams player. But, in the end all that matters is that the Browns need all the linebacker help they can get. Also, any additions to the special teams are beneficial to a team that desperately needs to win field position battles in order to compete.

### 6. What does this trade do for the Jets?

Since the fortunes of the Browns and Jets seem to be unextractable, or in a more practical sense - since the Browns seemingly can only trade with the Jets - today's trade severely limits what the Jets can do next April. Basically, the Browns already own almost half of the Jets' choices next year, which makes the possibility of yet another trade very difficult to pull off.

As for Braylon's fortunes, he has to be overjoyed at the prospect of heading to the world's largest media market. Finally, his dreams of male modeling, acting and perhaps a music career can come to fruition. And also, he could maybe fit some football into his new metropolitan life. Clearly, the Jets have instantly become the league's new glamour team, with Mark Sanchez in the spotlight and now Braylon along for the ride.

For the Jets as a whole, they are clearly playing for right now. Despite the presence of a rookie quarterback, the Jets must feel that they can win in 2009, but just need a boost to get them over the top. In the short term, this could be a great move for New York, but trouble could soon follow the first time Braylon doesn't feel "embraced" by the city, or in the next year when the precocious one is ready for contract talks. Clearly, Jets' management was not swayed by such concerns, as it appears they jumped at this deal in the hopes of going for broke in 2009.

Why else would a first place team make this kind of move?

Which brings me to this...

### 7. Do the Jets know something we don't? Or, vice versa?

There were reports yesterday that the league is currently investigating Braylon's potential assault case. If found guilty, Braylon would be facing a serious punishment from Commissioner Roger Goodell, based on Edwards' previous speeding charges. Add it all up, and Braylon could be facing a league suspension, handed down by a Commissioner that is intent on cleaning up his league's image. Throw in the New York media's lust for celebrity blood and soon Braylon's calendar could become wide open.

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So - if all the above is accurate, then why would the Jets trade for a player who

could potentially be suspended? It's obvious why the Browns would trade away such a player, but the Jets' motives do not exactly make sense. So, does one side know something the other one doesn't? Is this not that big of a deal? It's not like any dogs, babies or guns were involved in Braylon's various incidents.

The answer may lie somewhere in the next question...

### 8. Who got the better of the deal?

On one hand, you can say that the Browns just made a classic &quot;addition by subtraction&quot; move. However, when it comes to football, it's sometimes hard to succeed with only ten players on offense. Certainly, the Browns removed their biggest remaining on and off-field distraction, but in terms of talent, their receiving corps are pretty bare.

The extra draft picks are great, and again gives the Browns some flexibility heading into next year's draft. The pickup of Trusnik could work out (and yes, I had to scroll back up to remember his name) and if the likes of Brian Robiskie can emerge in Braylon's absence, then mission accomplished.

However, I again have to go back to what each team knew before making this trade. I wouldn't necessarily call this trade a &quot;robbery&quot; by either side, but I have to wonder if the Browns &quot;settled&quot; here. If the Jets were truly desperate to improve their receiving corps in a &quot;win-now&quot; year, couldn't the Browns have wrangled a first-round pick out of New York? It's very curious that the Browns settled on this decent, but not spectacular package.

Hopefully, more details will come out in the coming days. But then again, considering the clandestine nature of Mangini, it is possible that the rationale for this trade will never be spoken of again.

### 9. Are we happy?

Sure - why not? This trade gets rid of an underperforming, emotionally fragile player who was going to cost us a ton of money to keep around. In return, we get a decent, young #3 receiver for a fraction of the cost and a couple of draft picks, which can be spun into some quality future players. The additions of two mid-round picks, plus the cap money the team will save by not having to pay Braylon will more than make up for the loss of a potential star player.

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For Mangini, this is yet another example of him showing his clear, unchallenged authority in Berea. In case everyone wasn't paying attention after the K2 trade, or after the release of Shaun Smith, this move more than affirms Mangini's control of the franchise, for better or worse.

And of course, how can I forget the best part of this trade? After over a decade of reexistence, we finally have a guy named Stuckey on the roster.

It's about time.

10. And since it's Cleveland, what's wrong with this picture?

Call it a horrible coincidence, but after the offensive horrors of the past eleven months, the emergence of a legitimate threat such as Mohammed Massaquoi now has the potential to be derailed by the removal of Braylon. While Braylon is probably not the ideal player for Massaquoi to emulate; at least during the Bengal game, he took the heat off the talented rookie.

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Now, Massaquoi's development will be accelerated, as he quickly becomes the team's top wideout.

And finally, is it time to officially declare Phil Savage's first Browns draft a complete bust? With the exception of Brodney Pool, who inexplicably and finally came into his own last week against the Bengals, none of the Browns 2005 selections have made a real impact in Cleveland. Now with Braylon gone, that list shrinks even more.

And with this move, the Browns window to the recent past feels much further away.