

A decade. It's hard to believe that we're already coming to the end of another decade. On January 1, it will be the end of the Aught's, the end of the Double 0's. And a painful decade it has been for the Cleveland Browns organization and their fan base. An average of over 10 losses per year. 12 starting quarterbacks. And a lot of hardened livers for Browns fans. In this week's Outsider, Chris take a year by year look back at the decade. He also hits on the search for a new football czar, the failed fan protest, and the QB's the Browns may consider in the draft.



A View From The Cheap Seats

Why, Browns? Why do you make me care about you?

I was perfectly happy in apathetic shell I'd put around myself for the season, and then you made me care about you again (for a half). Maybe it was Monday Night, maybe it was how hard the Defense was playing... I don't know what suckered me in, but I was suckered.

What do I get for my foolishness? 3 quick plays in the 3rd Quarter to take a close game and shut it down. Anger. Pain.

"They're only down 2 scores," my girlfriend reasoned as the game entered the 4th

Q. I mocked her right out of the room.

They've scored 5 Offensive TD's in the last 14 games (now 15), and they'll somehow score 2 in a Quarter???
Anger. Pain.

As if this were a new feeling. It crept up on me, but, glancing at the calendar, I can't help but notice that we are little over the month from a new decade. And the Browns have made me feel anger and pain for pretty much the whole damn thing.

A decade. It's hard to believe that we're already coming to the end of another decade. On January 1, it will be the end of the Aught's, the end of the Double 0's. The 80's felt like a decade. This one?

Felt like maybe 4 years. How the flagnard is it 2010 already? Where has the time gone?

As far as Cleveland Browns football is concerned, what should we name this decade?

The Decade of Shame? 10 Years of Suck? A Prelude to Hell? The Lost Decade?

2000 - Record: 3-13. 1st Round Draft Pick:

Courtney Brown.

Starting QB's

: Tim Couch, Doug Pederson, Spurgon Wynn.

Leading Rusher

: Travis Prentice (512).

Leading Receiver

: Kevin Johnson (669).

Points Scored

: 161 (31

st

).

Points Against

: 419 (27

th

).

The second year of re-incarnation, Chris Palmer's 2nd (and last) season as Head Coach. This team was actually 2-1 after beating the Steelers at home in Week 3, but it went downhill, and the "runaway train" began after Couch got knocked out for the season after 7 starts. Also the year my first daughter was born, watching the games with me in her Browns onesie while the snow fell by the foot in the mountains of Southern CA.

Palmer was fired after the season by Carmen Policy for not being ambitious enough (predicting only 6 wins). Palmer later said *"If they had told me that I had 2 years, I'd have drafted Ricky Williams and played Ty Detmer* ."ot; But ya didn't, Chris. Ah, the sweet misery of hindsight.

This was Tim Couch's first year starting from Day One, and his career was not to be indicative of a #1 overall pick. His greatest accomplishment is probably marrying Playmate of the Year [Heather Kozar](#).

Probably the most depressing Browns season outside of the current one.

2001 - Record: 7-9. 1st Round Draft Pick:

Gerard Warren.

Starting QB's

: Tim Couch.

Leading Rusher

: James Jackson (554).

Leading Receiver

: Kevin Johnson (1097).

Points Scored

: 285 (25

th

).

Points Against

: 319 (15

th

).

Butch Davis left the University of Miami (despite swearing to them he wouldn't) to come to Cleveland as the new super-popular Head Coach (and de facto GM), and it seemed to pay immediate dividends. After the Browns beat the defending Champion Ravens, they were 4-2 headed into Chicago, a game I flew from CA to Chicago to see. And, as we already know, they blew a 14 point lead with less than a minute to go and lost on a pick 6 in OT.

That kind of nutso-ness was par for the 2001 season, which also included the legendary Ben Gay leading Cleveland to another victory in Baltimore and the epic drama of Bottlegate as the fans reacted

badly to the refs overturning a 4th Down ruling (after another play had already been run), basically ending the game and any Browns playoff hopes.

THAT was sight to see. Plastic bottles rained down from heaven like a biblical plague. Carmen Policy explained it afterwards: *He was glad the fans were passionate and those plastic bottles wouldn't hurt anyone.*

The Browns missed the playoffs, but got their first Pro Bowl player since The Return (Jamir Miller), and rookie

Anthony Henry had 10 picks. The future looked bright.

2002 - Record: 9-7 (9-8 with playoff game). 1st Round Draft

Pick : William Green.

Starting QB's

: Tim Couch, Kelly Holcomb.

Leading Rusher

: William Green (887).

Leading Receiver

: Quincy Morgan (964).

Points Scored

: 344 (19

th

).

Points Against

: 320 (10

th

).

The Browns loaded up on expensive Free Agents such as Earl Holmes and Robert Griffith and were primed for a playoff run.

However, Jamir Miller was lost for the year in the Preseason, and Couch injured his elbow before the

1st game, prompting Kelly Holcomb to start the season against the Chiefs, where he went ballistic, starting a QB controversy that would last for several years.

Cleveland should have won the game, but Dwayne Rudd removed his helmet on the field while the play was still going on (as the clock ran out), which is a 15 yard penalty and gave the Chiefs an un-timed down with which to kick the winning FG.

I finally got engaged in Prague to my longtime girlfriend, and our second daughter was born in November (during the bye week, which was handy). After that, the Browns won 5 of their last 7, including a Hail Mary TD against Jacksonville and the "Run William Run" victory in the final week against Atlanta.

Through a complicated array of tiebreakers, the Browns were in the playoffs. My fellow Ohio expatriates and I celebrated in a Valley Browns Backers bar.

A few days after that, my friends and I went to Arizona for the National Championship Game (couldn't afford the tickets, so we watched the Buckeyes beat the Hurricanes from a bar about 200 yards away from the stadium). I stayed long enough to watch the Browns play the Steelers in a Phoenix Browns Backers bar, seeing Holcomb (Couch was injured the previous week) light up Pittsburgh on the way to a 17-point lead, which they blew. Their fate was sealed when Northcutt dropped a certain 1st

Down pass, the Browns punted, and the Steelers plowed down the field for the go-ahead and game-ending TD. Typical Browns.

It was also during this season that Al Lerner died, leaving the team to his mercurial son, Randy.

2003 - Record: 5-11. 1st Round

Draft Pick

: Jeff Faine.

Starting QB's

: Tim Couch, Kelly Holcomb.

Leading Rusher

: William Green (559).

Leading Receiver

: Dennis Northcutt (729).

Points Scored

: 254 (29

th

).

Points Against

: 322 (12

th

).

The offseason was tumultuous. The Browns were forced to purge the roster due to salary cap restraints (it was explained that the team had known this was an issue, but they wanted to win a championship for the ailing Al Lerner), and fans

spent every waking moment arguing over the merits of Tim Couch or Kelly Holcomb as Davis opened Training Camp with a QB Competition, the first of many in Berea.

Holcomb won that, mainly due to Davis' "gut feeling";.

A few weeks after the Browns playoff loss, I packed up our

house and we moved back to Ohio, so I was present locally for the first football season since 1990, and I got married in Vegas just before it started. I put \$100 on the Browns to win the Superbowl. Ha!

The year started well enough as Cleveland went 3-3 in their first 6, including Tim Couch's finest hour - a 33-13

beatdown of the Steelers in their craphole city. That was the last time the Browns beat Pittsburgh.

William Green was very disappointing, getting arrested for DUI and pot possession during the season (was wearing only one shoe when pulled over), then later got stabbed in the back (literally)

by his fiancée. He was suspended for a significant portion of the season.

After that, it went downhill. Holcomb was on-again, off-again hurt/ineffective, and Couch wasn't much better in relief. They lost 5 in a row at the end of the season, a streak stopped only by a win in the final week against the

Bengals, sparked by rookie Lee Suggs' rushing performance, a win that (inexplicably) irked some because it robbed the Browns of the chance at a higher draft pick.

2004 - Record: 4-12. 1st

Round Draft Pick

: Kellen Winslow.

Starting QB's

: Jeff Garcia, Luke McCown,
Kelly Holcomb.

Leading Rusher

: Lee Suggs (744).

Leading Receiver

: Dennis Northcutt (806).

Points Scored

: 276 (27

th

).

Points Against

: 390 (24
th
).

Carmen Policy retired during the offseason, so Butch was now Emperor of Berea. He showed how wise allowing him that power was by giving up a high 2nd Round pick to move up 1 spot in the 1st

Round to draft Kellen Winslow (who the Lions weren't going to draft anyway). Kellen lasted until the 2nd game of the season, where he blew out his knee trying to recover an onside kick at Dallas. That was the beginning of a star-crossed relationship between Kellen and his knees.

Davis cut Couch during the offseason (he went to Green Bay and didn't make the final roster) and brought in ex-SF QB Jeff Garcia, who hooked up with (and later married) local hottie, bar-fighter, and Playmate of the Year [Carmella DeCesare](#), despite his rumored alternate sexual preferences. That was

about the only thing Garcia did right in Cleveland, since he was more suited to a West Coast Offense, and the Browns didn't run that.

Once again, the Browns started off 3-3, including the only Opening Day win of the expansion era (20-3

over Baltimore). Then they calmly reeled off 9 straight losses. Firing Butch Davis was the topic du jour, and, after a 58-48 shootout loss to the Bengals, Davis did everyone a favor and simply resigned.

WR Coach Terry Robiskie took over on an interim

basis, and he went 1-4, winning only the meaningless final game of the season. He was not retained.

2005 - Record: 6-10. 1st

Round Draft Pick

: Braylon Edwards.

Starting QB's

: Trent Dilfer, Charlie Frye.

Leading Rusher

: Reuben Droughns (1232).

Leading Receiver

: Antonio Bryant (1009).

Points Scored

: 232 (32

nd

).

Points Against

: 301 (11

th

).

Randy Lerner, with his first true executive decision, hired former Ravens' scout Phil

Savage as GM and 3 time Superbowl winning Defensive Coordinator Romeo Crennel as Head Coach. He also lured John Collins from NFL Headquarters to become team President. With this impressive array of talent aligned for glory, the Browns headed into a Brave New World.

The season got off to a rip-roaring start when Kellen Winslow nearly killed himself practicing bike stunts in a parking lot, lost control, and launched himself into a tree, blowing out his knee again and ending his season before it started. There was a popular groundswell to end his

awful term in Cleveland, but Savage instead restructured his contract in a more Browns-friendly fashion.

Garcia was flushed, as was Holcomb, Gerard Warren, and oft-injured Courtney Brown (and

numerous others). Very little of the Playoff-Run Browns team was left. Savage/Crennel brought in Trent Dilfer to run the show, sort of a veteran stop-gap/mentoring presence to heralded local-boy rookie Charlie Frye. The Browns traded for Reuben Droughns, who went on to become

the first 1000 yard rusher in Cleveland since 1985 (ye Gods!), and picked up Free Agent Antonio Bryant and undrafted rookie Josh Cribbs.

I was enjoying the sheer pleasure that is a separation and divorce,

so I got to watch most of the games from my buddy's couch (where I slept). It was a growing year, and the Browns were competitive in almost all their games (although a 41-0 loss to Pittsburgh in Week 15 would like to differ), but they still finished 6-10. At 4-7 and with the season

essentially lost, the Browns pushed Frye into the starting lineup to get him some experience. He was 2-3, and seemed to have a good repertoire with fellow-rook Edwards, but Braylon got a season-ending injury in their first game together.

As the season ended, it was rumored that John Collins wanted to fire Savage. Browns fans went nuts in protest, and Crennel went to bat for Phil. Collins lost the power struggle and "resigned", leaving the team without a President/VP of Football Ops/CEO/etc.

Just now is Randy attempting to resolve this issue.

2006 - Record: 4-12. 1st

Round Draft Pick

: Kamerion Wimbley.

Starting QB's

: Charlie Frye, Derek Anderson.

Leading Rusher

: Reuben Droughns (758).

Leading Receiver

: Braylon Edwards (884).

Points Scored

: 238 (30)

th

).

Points Against

: 356 (22

nd

).

By this time, I had my own apartment, and had to endure my first (and

only) horrible season of non-NFL Sunday Ticket since 1999. Charlie Frye entered the season as the anointed starter. Trent Dilfer was traded to SF for a box of condoms and Ken Dorsey, reportedly because he feuded with "Offensive Coordinator" Mo

Carthon (I put that in quotes because Carthon's idea of Offense was 90% screens to Fullbacks).

Kellen Winslow finally played, and Braylon Edwards was back, but the Browns Offense still

was unable to inspire the bards. Probably the best win of the season was the game where Frye got hurt. Backup Derek Anderson, a 2nd year player claimed off waivers the previous season who was a hometown friend of Playmate of the Year

Sara Underwood

, came in 14 down and led the Browns to glorious OT victory.

However, his subsequent starts were inglorious, and he and Frye combined to end the season on a 4 game losing streak.

The seat got hot in a hurry for Romeo Crennel. The Offense was so bad that Mo Carthon was forced to resign during the season, and Crennel didn't seem to have a clue about how to change the negative direction in which the

team was headed.
Only a huge turnaround
season could save
Romeo's ample ass.

**2007 - Record: 10-6. 1
st**

Round Draft Picks

**: Joe Thomas, Brady
Quinn.**

Starting QB's

**: Derek Anderson,
Charlie Frye.**

Leading Rusher

: Jamal Lewis (1304).

Leading Receiver

: Braylon Edwards
(1289).

Points Scored

: 402 (8
th

).

Points Against

: 382 (21
st

).

In 2007, I had moved into a new house with my new girlfriend, so everything was new, including the Browns. Cleveland picked up ex-Crow Jamal Lewis in Free Agency, and their draft was one of the most exciting in memory, selecting

Franchise Left Tackle
Joe Thomas and
moving up to take
(thought to be)
Franchise QB Brady
Quinn in the 1st
Round.

The season began

with another QB competition (this one between Frye and Anderson), and it was just as uninspiring as the others. Frye "won" the competition and started the first game against the Steelers,

where he was beat to hell and relieved mid-game by Anderson. A few days later, Savage traded Frye to Seattle for a bag of corn chips and a plastic sombrero, thus ending Frye's 18-start

career.

Anderson obviously started the following week, and went out of his gourd, throwing for 5 TD's in a 51-45 score-fest. He then

became the next-big-thing in the NFL, leading the Browns to a 7-4 start in multiple nail-biting wins, including the much discussed doink-FG OT win against the Ravens in Baltimore, where Phil

Dawson's tying kick bounced off the stanchion of the uprights and back through, causing officials to originally believe the FG was a miss. The refs had to call the Crows back onto the field after

they ran off in
celebration.

A few games later
came the Snow Bowl
at Cleveland Browns
Stadium, where a
blizzard made

conditions nigh
impossible, and the
Browns pulled out the
victory 8-0 to move to
9-5 and in prime
playoff contention.
But then the Browns
played in Cincy
against a bad
Bengals team, and

Derek Anderson -
whose 2nd half of the
season was much
less spectacular than
his 1st half -
threw 4 interceptions,
pretty much
single-handedly killing
his team's chances.

With the Titans holding a tiebreaker, the Browns watched helplessly (after beating SF in Week 16) as the Indianapolis Colts rested their starters for the postseason and Tennessee beat

awful awful awful Jim
Sorgi. The best
season of the
decade ended
prematurely.

Tons of Browns went
to the Pro Bowl -

Derek Anderson
(alternate), Braylon
Edwards, Kellen
Winslow, Josh
Cribbs, Joe Thomas,
and Ryan Pontbriand
(Butch Davis' best
draft pick). The
future looked bright.

2008 - Record: 4-12.

1st

Round Draft Pick

: None.

Starting QB's

: Derek Anderson,
Brady Quinn, Ken
Dorsey, Bruce
Gradkowski.

Leading Rusher

: Jamal Lewis
(1002).

Leading Receiver

: Braylon Edwards
(873).

Points Scored

: 232 (30

th

).

Points Against

: 350 (16

th

).

With pundits around
the country,
glory-drunk Phil
Savage made
several key moves.
He re-signed
Restricted Free
Agent Derek
Anderson (despite

Anderson's trade value never being higher and the fact that they gave up two 1st Round picks for backup Brady Quinn), and he traded high picks for Corey Williams and

Shaun Rogers.
That left the Browns
with no draft picks
until the 4th
Round, where they
took LB Beau Bell.

The season didn't start well, but it had its moments.

When the Browns beat the hell out of the defending Superbowl Champion Giants on MNF, they had

won 2 in a row to
get to 2-3 and were
looking to get into
the mix. 'Twas not
to be.

Several key things

went wrong: Lewis wasn't nearly as good as he was in 2007, Edwards developed a severe case of the dropsies and the boo-hoos, Winslow was hurt, and

teams had figured out Anderson.

Winslow developed the staph from a surgery, but the Browns (beset with a bad reputation of being staph-ridden) asked him to hush

it up, causing a
nasty rift.

Cleveland came
down hard on
Edwards and
Anderson, and
Savage dropped
F-bombs on fans.

After throwing a pick 6 to lose the game and finally break the camel's back, Anderson was benched for Quinn with the Browns at 3-5. Quinn's first start

went well, but the
Defense gave up
the lead late and
the Browns lost.
His second start
was less
spectacular, but still
good enough to get
a win against

Buffalo. But he broke a finger during that game, tried to go the next week, sucked, and got benched. That was the season for him.

The next game,
Anderson was
knocked out for the
year too. Horrible
Ken Dorsey and
street-roamer
Bruce Gradkowski
finished out the
miserable season.

The Browns ended the year losing 6 in a row, not scoring an Offensive TD in ANY of those games. Savage and Crennel were both shown their walking papers

(despite recent contract extensions). The future suddenly was back to dismal.

2009 - Record: 1-8.

1st

Round Draft Pick

: Alex Mack.

Starting QB's

: Brady Quinn,
Derek Anderson.

Leading Rusher

: Jamal Lewis
(385).

Leading Receiver

: Mo Massaquoi
(358).

Points Scored

: 78 (32

nd

).

Points Against

: 225 (27

th

).

Lerner jumped eagerly upon recently-fired Eric Mangini as Head Coach, despite not having a VP or GM in place. His attempts to hire a GM after the fact

were rebuffed by several reputable football front-office types, so Lerner was forced to settle for Mangini's old friend and hand-picked candidate, George

Kokinis, another member of the Ravens' staff.

The draft
(highlighted by 3
first round

trade-downs, the biggest with the Jets) was met with lukewarm acceptance, but most hailed Mangini's orderly, disciplined ways, especially when

compared to
Crennel's
relaxing/untaxing
camps. The roster
was again
overhauled,
sending Winslow
away in a trade
and acquiring

many of Mangini's
former players
from the Jets.

Yet another QB
competition once
again yielded no

clear results, so Brady Quinn got the starting nod (four days before the start of the season). The first game - a loss to the Vikings - was fairly close, but the

next 2 games weren't, so Quinn got benched midway through the 3rd contest, after which he put his house up for sale. Anderson, back at starter,

played decently
against the
Bengals, throwing
8 passes for 148
yards to Mo
Massaquoi. After
that performance
(and after Braylon
decided to

randomly punch
some friend of
LeBron James),
the powers that be
(Mangini) decided
that Edwards was
expendable and
traded him to the
Jets, apparently

the only team in
the NFL the
Browns are
allowed to trade
with.

The Offense and

Derek Anderson
fell completely
apart after that,
despite the fact
that the Browns
somehow
managed to eke
out a 6-3 win

against Buffalo (in a thrilling contest).

After a miserable loss to the Bears to drop them to 1-7, Lerner was so incensed that he promised to

acquire a
"serious,
credible"
football
organization
leader. A few
days later, Kokinis
was fired and

escorted out of
Berea. The
presumable
reason is that
Kokinis was hired
and given
personnel power
as GM, yet had

been relegated to
servant by
Mangini and did
not have the
personality type to
fight for the
powers that were
contractually his.

He basically nullified his existence, and Lerner relieved him of his plight.

Quinn was

re-named starter
for the 9th game of
the season after
Anderson had set
all kinds of league
lows in statistical
categories;
however, he fared

no better as the
team avoided a
fan-planned
protest but
couldn't avoid
another Offensive
nightmare.

Currently, Lerner is reportedly searching for a Football Czar to run the operations and evaluate Mangini (otherwise known

as

"fire"

Mangini).

And there you go.

Another awful

season to
bookend the
decade with 2 of
the most
miserable
seasons ever
conceived by
human kind. 10

years have gone by, and the team is basically in the same situation. With very little to show for it.



Decade:

Record: 53-101
(averaging about
5 wins and 10
losses per year,
and this year ain't
even over yet).

1st Round Draft
Picks still on
team : 4 (Kam
Wimbley, Joe
Thomas, Brady
Quinn, Alex
Mack).

Starting QB's: 12
(Tim Couch - 45
starts, Derek
Anderson - 32,
Charlie Frye -
19, Kelly
Holcomb - 13,
Trent Dilfer - 11,

Jeff Garcia - 10,
Doug Pederson -
8, Brady Quinn -
7, Luke McCown
- 4, Ken Dorsey -
3, Bruce
Gradkowski - 1,
Spurgon Wynn -

1)

1000 Yard

Rushing

Seasons: 3

(Jamal Lewis - 2,

Reuben
Droughns).

1000 Yard

Receiving

Seasons: 4

(Kellen Winsow,
Braylon
Edwards,
Antonio Bryant,
Kevin Johnson).

Points Scored:
2502 (about 250
a year, 15.6 a
game).

Points Against:

3384 (about 338
a year, 21.2 a
game).

But we lead the
league in QB's

with relationships
with Playmates
of the Year.

So we got that
goin' for us.

Which is nice.

Bring on the
Teens.

Game Recap

The Defense put
up a valiant effort
in the 1st Half,
but the O -
despite moving
the ball decently
the first couple
drives - did

nothing to help.
It was all bubble
screens and runs
up the middle
and short slants,
the kind of stuff
that gets you
nowhere if

employed on a
continual basis.
Still, at least they
didn't commit
any turnovers
that way, and the
Browns
managed to go

into Halftime tied
at Nil.

When playing
with the fire like
that, if you slip

up even once,
you get burned.
On the Ravens
first possession
of the 2nd Half,
Brandon
McDonald went
for the pick on a

short pass to
Derek Mason,
whiffed, and it
resulted in a 41
yard gain to the
13. Ray Rice
ran it in on the
next play.

The game was
still in doubt,
however, until a
couple plays
later when
Quinn tried hit
Ol' Stonehands

himself (Robert
Royal), the ball
bounced off his
mitts (was
thrown
somewhat
behind him) and

a Crow took it
back for an
easy Pick 6.
The game was
over then.

To solidify it,
Quinn threw
another pick on
the following
drive (this one
bouncing off
Mike Furrey's

hands), and the Ravens got another FG, then played it safe from there on out as the stadium - which

was excited and
loud in the 1st
Half - headed
for bed.

**Final: □ Ravens
16, Browns 0.**

Conclusion

Time of
Possession:
Baltimore -

31:32,
Cleveland -
28:28

Total Yards:

Baltimore - 274,
Cleveland - 160

First Downs:

Baltimore - 14,

Cleveland - 11

Not as ugly as
it usually is, but
they still

managed an L
in all 3
categories,
which -
shockingly -
often translates
to an L on the

scoreboard.
Especially
when you toss
in a couple
turnovers.

The Browns
have failed to
reach 200 total
yards in the last
5 games.

The fewest points scored in a 16 game season by an NFL team is 141 (1991 Indy Colts). That

Colts team also scored the fewest TD's in a season (14). The Browns (78 points scored and 7 TD's in 9

games) will be making a serious charge at both those records.



Gameballs

David Bowens -

He was

everywhere in

the 1

st

Half, including

2 sacks. Good

game in the
middle for
someone who's
usually on the
outside.

Honorable Mention

Kaluka Maiava
- Several nice
plays again
from the little
LB.

Brodney Pool -
I wrote his
name down
here next to
"nice
tackle",
so he must

have had a
nice tackle.

Wall of Shame

Brandon

McDonald -

You don't take

that chance in
that situation

Brady Quinn - I
haven't seen a

QB look that
bad since
Derek
Anderson. I
wonder if it has
anything to do
with...

Brian Daboll -
Someone
please put this
poor bastard
out of our
misery.

Eric Mangini -
Who hired
Daboll?

Robert Royal -

Why have
hands if you
don't know how
to operate
them?

Mike Furrey -
Wes Welker
you ain't.

Randy Lerner -

Fix this,
Jerkwater.

Rumor (also
known as Jim
Brown) has it
that

Mike Holmgren
is in town
talking to

Randy Lerner
about the open
VP Position.
Now, Brown
didn't say that
it was
Holmgren, not

in so many
words. To
paraphrase, he
said something
like:

*Randy is right
now talking
with someone
that could
become the
new Vice
President. □ |*

can't say who it is. The only thing I'll tell you is that he coached in Green Bay and Seattle, his

*initials are
M.H., and his
name rhymes
with Schmike
Schmolmgren.
I can't say any
more. □ My lips*

are sealed.

So, if this is
true, there are
two questions:

1. Would Mike
Holmgren take
the job?

2. Should

Lerner leap to
a decision?

As far as # 1 is
concerned, it's

hard to say.
Many around
the league
scoff at
Holmgren
coming here
because the

situation is
such a mess.
But that's the
national media,
and they scoff
at anything that
takes place

outside of New
York or Los
Angeles.

Is this such a

horrible job?
Lerner's
obviously
willing to give
full control of
the
organization. If

you're

Holmgren, you

come here as

Browns God.

Your will is

rule. You have

a team that is

decimated, but
has some good
players at key
positions, and
a couple
interesting
projects. You

have 11 picks
in the draft,
including
possibly the #
1 overall. You
have the power
to bring in

anyone you
want to Coach.

And you have
a rabid fan
base that will
pack the
stadium and

build statues in
your honor if
you even just
make the team
competitive.

The
opportunity to
return a storied
franchise to
former glory
must be
tempting to

many an NFL
mind.

This brings us
to # 2. Many

have argued
that Lerner's
biggest
mistake last
time was
leaping to nab
up Eric

Mangini,
especially
when he was
hardly a hot
commodity.
They argue
that the

Browns should
do their due
diligence this
time and make
sure they talk
to all possible
candidates and

makes a
thoughtful,
informed
choice.

However, there are a few drawbacks to that theory.

The first is that maybe you don't want to

give a guy like
Holmgren time
to think twice
about it.

Maybe you
don't want to
wait to the end

of the season
where several
other options
will open up -
some very
attractive -
allowing

someone else
to come and
steal your
metaphorical
bride just
because you
were too slow

to pop the
question.

Another
drawback is

that you lose 2
months of
preparation.
You lose the
chance for
Holmgren to
analyze the

players and
coaching staff
up close and
formulate a
first-hand
opinion of all of
them. You

lose the
opportunity for
Holmgren to hit
the offseason
knowing
exactly whom
he's keeping,

whom he's
letting go, and
whom he's
going after.

An advantage of that kind at this juncture could be huge for the Browns in 2010.

I still get the
occasional

Support-Mangi
ni e-mail, and I
admit that I am
impressed with
these people's
staying power.
I appreciate

their
unwavering
opinion and
their
inflexibility.

And they make
some decent

points.

But the
discussion has
passed its

validity. There
will be a new
Sheriff in town
soon, and he
will decide
whether
Mangini stays

or goes. I want
the new Sheriff
to succeed, so
I will adhere to
his coaching
decision. I
would do so

even if I
wanted
Mangini to
stay, and since
there is very
little chance
that the Sheriff

will want
Mangini to be
his Deputy, I'm
simply advising
giving up on
Mangini's
existence in

Cleveland,
whether it's fair
or not.

Arguing about

what Mangini
does/does not
deserve is
really as
fruitless at this
juncture as me
arguing with

my sister about
who left the
huge ink stain
on the
backseat of the
Cutlass
Supreme in

1982.

(It was her).



I must say that
I feel really bad

for Rob Ryan
and the
Defense after
that game. To
paraphrase
Butch Davis,
they fought

their guts out.
Really, the only
had 2 bad
plays all game,
and got
negative
assistance

from the O.

How is that the
32nd ranked D?
I've seen a lot

of bad Defense
in my day, and
that ain't it.

To me, the
play where
Josh Cribbs

got hurt as the
Browns tried to
score at the
end of the
game is as big
a non-issue as
fashion for

gerbils.

Players get
hurt. It
could've

happened at
the beginning.
It could've
happened in
the 3rd
Quarter. Just
because it

happened on
the last play
doesn't mean
that they
should've
thrown in the
towel just to

protect
everyone.
That kind of
attitude is
defeatist.

Hell, why not
just have them
start kneeling
in the 1st
Quarter?
They're not
going to win

anyway. At
least everyone
will be
healthy.

I'm just so
glad that NFL

Apparel has
embraced the
Ravens,
especially in
that
commercial

with Ray
Lewis writhing
in pain in slow
motion (he
was probably
just stung by

a jellyfish)
and a kid
emulating his
gyrations.

Because if
there's one
guy we want
our kids to
look up to, it's
Ray Lewis.

Glad to see
the protest

failed. It was
just such a
hair-brained
idea, and,
nationally, it
would've

come across
all sort of the
wrong way.

But the

cameras kept
showing
close-ups of
one of the
organizers,
Dawg Pound

Mike. You
know, the
dude with the
bone hat.

And, of
course, when

Quinn knelt
down tied at 0
with 30
seconds left
in the Half
deep in their

own territory
(and getting
the ball first in
the 2nd Half,
no less), DPM
shook his

head in
horrible
disgust
because the
Browns didn't
try to force

something
downfield.

And they say

fans are
dumb.

Besides, the
real protest

isn't empty
stands at the
start the
game. It's all
the empty
stands at the

start the 4th
Quarter.



Braylon

Watch

In order for
the

conditional
pick the
Browns
received for
Braylon
Edwards to

be bumped

from a 3rd

Round to a 2

nd

Round pick,

Mr. Edwards

must meet
certain
incentives.
The goal is
rumored to
be 55

catches and
a certain
number of
TD's. For the
sake of
argument,

let's say 5.

Goal: 55

catches, 5

TD.

Progress (5
games): 16

catches, 2
TD.

Yet to go (7

games): 39

catches, 3

TD.

Asking an
"elite"
WR to
get 55
catches in 12
games isn't

excessive.
But asking
that of
Braylon
Edwards is.
His biggest

number
since he
arrived is the
1-4 record.
Oh, and
don't forget

the fumble
and the 2
point
conversion
drop last
week. Good

'ol Braylon.

Yet,
strangely

enough, if
you go to thi
s Jets board
, they seem
to think that
the fact that

he hasn't
turned water
into wine yet
must be the
water's fault.

When I lived
in NY, I knew
many
down-to-eart
h, intelligent
Jets fans.

Apparently,
they don't go
to that
message
board.

I wonder
what they'll
be saying a
year from
now,
especially

after paying
Braylon the
\$10 mil a
year it will
keep to get
him?

Hmmmm...



—

I'm pretty
close to

being done
with Quinn.
Sure, he's
got no
Receivers,
no Running

Game, and
no Offensive
Coordinator,
but there's a
difference
between

being
thwarted by
your
surrounding
personnel
and just

looking bad.

Derek
Anderson

looks bad.
Watching
him, you
know he's a
bad QB, no
matter what

the excuses
are.

Brady Quinn

is right there
with him.

Dude can't
throw a ball
downfield
(without it

floating out
of bounds),
and even his
short passes
aren't that
accurate. I

was hoping
he would
come into
this game
feeling like
he had

nothing to
lose, playing
loose,
trusting in his
arm and
challenging

the Defense.

That

certainly did

not happen.

I still feel that
he should
get the rest
of the
season to
prove

himself. I
mean,
honestly,
he's only had
7 starts in his
career,

which is less
than even
Doug freakin'
Pederson
got with
Cleveland.

That, and I
don't want to
see Derek
Anderson
play for the
Browns

EVER
AGAIN.

But I don't

have a lot of
hope for
Quinn. His
stats always
look better
than he

does, and, in
this case, not
even they
looked good.
I can only
assume that

QB is
amongst the
highest of
2010 needs.

Which leads
us to...

QB-O-RAM

A - Version

2010

Sam

**Bradford -
Oklahoma
(vs. Texas
A&M) - DNP.
He's still
coming out,**

folks.

Colt McCoy
- Texas (vs.

Baylor) - 23
of 34, 181
yds, 2 TD,
13 yds
Rushing. It's
very hard to

ignore the
skill set that
McCoy
brings to the
table, even
though some

might
question how
he'll perform
in an NFL
system.

Jake Locker
- Washington
(vs. Oregon
State) - 14 of
23, 153 yds,
3 TD, 1 INT.

As
Washington
ceases to be
a factor in
the Pac 10
and their

losses get
more
lopsided, the
buzz about
Locker has
died down

somewhat.

It will be
interesting to
see how he
performs at
the Senior

Bowl/Combine.

Jimmy

**Clausen -
Notre Dame
(vs. Pitt) - 27
of 42, 283
yds, 1 TD, 1
INT, 1**

Rushing TD.
Lost in Notre
Dame's slide
into oblivion
(accompanie
d by

constant
Charlie Weis
job
speculation)
is the fact
that Clausen

is playing
really well
right now.
Of course,
some of his
stats get

padding
because he's
always trying
to lead the
Irish back
from big

deficits.

Tony Pike -
Cincinnati

(vs. West
Virginia) - 2
of 4, 17 yds,
2 TD.
They're
supposedly

trying to
work him
back into the
lineup, but
he sure
didn't get

much work
last week.
Still when
your only 2
completions
are TD's,

then you've
done the
best with
what time
you have.

**Dan
LeFevour -
Central
Michigan (vs.
Toledo) - 29
of 36, 341**

yds, 2 TD,

19 yds

Rushing, 4

Rushing TD.

They haven't

played since

my last
article.



NFL Bottom

10

Time to give
some love to

the
misshapen,
the unloved,
the mutant,
malodorous
masses

slowly
swirling
around the
toilet bowl of
humanity.

1. *Cleveland*
(1-8) - It's
impossible
for me to
pretend that
the Browns

haven't
climbed into
the Pole
Position of
Suck. At
least they're

winning
something.

2. *Detroit*

(1-8) -
Suck Bowl
2009 is only
2 days away,
sports fans!
Mark your

calendars
and program
your DVR's!

3. *Oakland*
(2-7) - The
best thing
Cleveland
has going for
it is that they

still get to
play 3 of the
worst 4
teams in the
league (with
themselves

being the 4
th

). Too bad
they can't
play
themselves.

4. *Kansas City (2-7)*

- At least
they're one
Larry
Johnson

lighter, and
that's
definitely a
case of
addition by
subtraction

to avoid the
multiplication
of division.

5. *St. Louis*

(1-8) -

Losing close

to a great

Saints team

is much

more
impressive
than winning
close
against a
horrible

Raiders
team.

6. *Tampa*

Bay (1-8)
- Still only
one win, but
they (along
with the
Rams) at

least appear
to be
noticeably
improving,
which is
certainly

more than
one could
say about
some
teams.

7. *Buffalo*

(3-6) - The
first
coaching
casualty of
the season

is Dick
Jaaron, the
only guy to
lose to the
Browns this
year. To rub

it in, Bud
Adams gave
them the ol'
multiple bird.
Suck it,
Bills!

8. *Seattle*

(3-6) -

Even when
they play
their A game
and even

when the
Cards aren't
up to par,
they still
didn't have
enough to

take a
superior
opponent
down.

9.

Washington

(3-6) -

They... won?

Against

Denver?

Wow, the
Broncs are a
bigger sham
than I
thought.

10. *Chicago*

(4-5) -

When your
fans start
pining for the
glory years

of Kyle
Orton, your
QB might be
throwing too
many picks.



Reader E-mail

From Henry

Doe,
Portland,
MN: "/
like the list
you
compiled on

*the VP/GM
candidates,
but I did
notice you
left off two
very*

*possible
choices -
Charlie
Casserly
and Floyd
Reese. □ /*

*was
wondering if
you did that
on purpose,
or if you just
forgot them.*

"

Well, a little
of both. I

see those
two as sort
of a lower
tier of
options, but I
guess since

they are
both
available
right now
(and guys
like McKay

and Heckert
are not), I
should add
them.

Floyd Reese
I like OK,
and I'd be
happier with
him than
Charlie

Casserly,
who has a
horrible W-L
record and a
1st Round
history that

is appalling
(David Carr,
Desmond
Howard,
Heath
Shuler,

Michael
Westbrook,
etc.). But
neither is
going to
make me

break out in
song.

Really, the

only viable
argument
I've heard
for Charlie
Casserly at
this point is

that at least
he's better
than what
we have
now. Which
isn't really a

viable
argument at
all.

In the end,
they're both
experienced
NFL Front
Office guys,
and they

would at
least fit the
criteria of
"serious
" and
"credib

le". If
they were
hired, I
guess I'd
just have to
work up my

enthusiasm
for them. A
few beers
ought to
help.



Next Up

*The Detroit
Lions (1-8).*

Offense - 26

th

, Defense -

31

st

■

Yes, the
Browns now
rank # 32 in
both
Offense
AND

Defense (if
you go by
Total
Yards). So,
in a battle
between

these two
teams - a
reprisal of
the Great
Lakes
Classic -

you have to
wonder if
the game
will end in a
scoreless
tie.

The Lions
have shown
a lot more
prowess
Offensively
than the

Browns,
and it
doesn't take
much D to
stop the
Cleveland

Aerial
Attack.
Unless
Detroit falls
prey to a
rash of

turnovers,
I'd have to
think the
Kitties takes
this one.

*Lions 20,
Browns 6.*