

It's that time Browns fans. Time for your weekly dose of all things Cleveland Browns, Hutchison style ... in The Browns Outsider. This week, Chris looks back at the Browns entertaining but ultimately disappointing 38-37 loss to the Lions in Detroit. He talks about Brady Quinn's play, Brady Quinn's future, Mike Holmgren, Megan Fox, the Browns 2009 draft class, the Mangini timeout, Mangini's future, and the upper echelon of quarterbacks that will be available in the 2010 NFL Draft.



### ***A View From The Cheap Seats***

Finally, for the first time all season, our boys in orange looked like a valid NFL team. I suppose one could argue that this was the second time, that they looked OK in the Bengals game as well. Fine, I'll give you that, but THIS time they roared out to a 21 point lead in the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter.

That was certainly the first time they *roared* this season.

Yet, in typical fashion, they managed to blow the game, this time in one of those bizarre ways that have been patented by and are the sole property of the Cleveland

Browns.

You have The Meltdown (giving up a 14 point lead to Chicago with less than a minute to go), Bottlegate (having a 1<sup>st</sup> Down overturned after another play had been run against JAX), The Helmet Toss (personal foul allows KC to kick the winning FG on an untimed down), and - now - The Hail Mary Interference Call.

The Browns lead the universe in losses on Untimed Downs at the end of games.

How many Hail Mary's have you witnessed in your football-watching career? And how many times have you seen Pass Interference called?

Yeah, this is the first one I can remember too. Only the Browns.

Of course, all those other teams that didn't get nailed with PI on a HM were without the services of the incomparable Hank Poteat, whose brilliance allowed him to deduce that mauling a Receiver and pushing him out of bounds while the ball was in the air was *good Defensive strategy*.

Hank rationalized that he had been taught that once the QB left the pocket you could push the Receivers.

Well, that's true Hank. As long as the BALL'S NOT IN THE AIR.

Illegal Contact goes out the window when the QB leaves the pocket, not Pass Interference. [Here's the rule](#)

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*Once the quarterback hands off or pitches the ball to a back, or if the quarterback leaves the pocket area, the restrictions (illegal chuck, illegal cut) on the defensive team relative to the offensive receivers will end, provided the ball is not in the air.*

So if Hank had shoved Calvin Johnson out of the End Zone before Matthew Stafford threw the ball, then he was golden. As the ball floated down towards them? Not so much.

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As depressing as the loss was, some of the reaction afterwards was ridiculous. I heard one host and a local talk radio station proclaim that even if the Browns would have won, it would have felt like a loss because the Lions were a bad team and the Browns let them come back.

Dude, are you freakin' kidding me? Have you watched the Browns this season?

Sure, the Lions are a bad team. But so are the Browns. Really bad. Bad enough that anytime they play a competitive game and actually have a chance to win, it's a shock. I'm just happy they looked like an NFL team for once.

Maybe if you're the Patriots, barely beating a bad Lions team is almost like a loss. But if you're the Browns, you're happy to beat ANYONE.

Then another host called this "the worst Browns loss since The Return."

To quote Kyle's Mom: *WHAT WHAT WHAT???!!!*

A loss by a 1-8 team with a Dead Coach Walking and a destined massive overhaul is the "worst"?

I don't know about you, but I think the Bottlegate loss was a bit worse. That pretty much knocked the Browns out of the playoffs. How about the playoff loss to the Steelers the following year? That was worse too. Or the loss in Cincy in 2007? That one still hurts.

This loss means nothing, except maybe in some draft slotting. In the grand scheme of things, the difference between 2-8 and 1-9 is like the difference between mauve and lavender - it's hard to tell which is which, and they both suck.

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## Game Recap

The Browns Offense went insane, hitting mid-range and deep balls with regularity to wide open Receivers. Quinn hit Massaquoi on a 59 yard TD pass, then Stuckey on a 40 yard TD. After a short Cribbs TD catch following an Eric Wright INT, the Browns were up 24-3 in the 1st Quarter.

"Way too much time," I told my daughters, who weren't paying any attention.  
"The Browns can still easily blow this game."

The momentum shift wasn't gradual - it was instant. The Defense was spotted a 21 point lead and had no idea what to do. So they decided to take a nap and ponder the meaning of it all. By the time they woke up, the game was tied at 24 (thanks to horrific pass Defense), and it still wasn't even Halftime yet.

Quinn drove the Browns down the field, and would have scored another TD before Half if Chris Jennings had just caught the perfect pass. Cleveland proved just how clever they aren't by forgoing a FG and converting a 4th Down (it worked, but it wasn't smart) and then getting another 1st Down on a fake FG pass (it worked, but it wasn't smart). 27-24 at Half.

In the 3rd Quarter, the teams exchanged punts before Detroit went on a disgustingly easy 84 yard TD drive to take the lead 31-27. The Browns went 3 and Out, but a good punt by Hodges pinned the Lions deep, and Stafford got nailed with an Intentional Grounding penalty in the End Zone (rushed by Jason Trusnik), so the score was 31-29.

With about 12 1/2 minutes left in the game, the Browns went on a 75 yard scoring drive that was just about the most impressive thing I've seen them do all season. They converted four 3rd Downs, took

nearly 7 minutes off the clock, and scored a TD plus 2 point conversion to take a 37-31 lead.

Brodney Pool picked Stafford in the End Zone on the next drive, so the Browns had the ball and an opportunity to run out the clock. But Quinn missed Massaquoi on 3rd and short with under 2 minutes left however, and the Lions got the ball back, needing to go 88 yards in 1:46 with no Time Outs.

You know how that went. And, if you're like me, it was about as surprising as snow in January. Only the Browns.

**Final: □ Lions 38, Browns 37.**

## Conclusion

Time of Possession: Cleveland - 34:46, Detroit - 25:14

Total Yards: Baltimore - 473, Cleveland - 439

First Downs: Detroit - 26, Cleveland - 22

439 Offensive yards? 22 First Downs? Holding the ball for nearly 35 minutes? Call a priest - the Browns be possessed.

The numbers were every bit as close as the score would indicate. If the Browns and Lions played each other every week, they'd probably both end up 8-8.

Most of the time, when horrible teams play each other, you get horrible games, like that train wreck we witnessed against Buffalo. But sometimes you get what happened on Sunday, where Suck Bowl 2009 was their Superbowl, and they played like it. At least Offensively.

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## **Gameballs**

*Brady Quinn* - 21 of 33, 304 yards, 4 TD's. A Cleveland QB getting a Gameball? Start watching for the Rapture.

*Michael Gaines* - A big blocking TE who can also catch. Can we cut Robert Royal now?

*Josh Cribbs* - Just because he's the best player on the team. OK, well, no, Joe Thomas is the best player on the team. But Cribbs is second.

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## **Honorable Mention**

*Chansi Stuckey* - Finally, he showed up. 5 catches, 76 yards, a TD... the only reason he didn't get a GB is that he went out of bounds with 2:46 left on the clock, saving the Lions a Time Out and about 40 seconds, which we know ended up not being a good thing.

*Mo Massaquoi* - Certainly not a #1 Receiver (on a good team), but had a nice game. Just wish he would clean up some of those drops, and I'm not a

huge fan of his body language on the field. I don't know why watching him reminds me of Kevin Johnson.

*Jason Trusnik* - Caused the Safety with his pass rush.

*Eric Wright* - Had a beautiful pick in the 1st Quarter, and played a pretty decent game against Calvin Johnson (when he was guarding him).

*Mike Adams* - For not being Brandon McDonald.

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**Wall of Shame**

*The Special Teams* - Lawson, the ball is going out of bounds. Just let it go. Not to mention shoddy Kickoff Return coverage all day. Usually, this area is strong.

*The Whole Defense* - For blowing a 21 point lead and giving up about 500 yards to the friggin' Lions. The Backs and Wide Receivers were just running around WIDE OPEN.

*Eric Steinbach* - He whiffed on a block in the 2nd Q that resulted in a sack on 3rd Down, killing a drive. Then he tripped Quinn later on, and he gets so little push on running plays. Not a good game at all.

*Brodney Pool* - Nice coverage on that 75 yard TD pass to Calvin Johnson.

*Kaluka Maiava* - The victim on more than one TD pass. Not doing a bang-up job covering Backs and Tight Ends out of the backfield.

*Chris Jennings* - I'd have given him an Honorable Mention, but he dropped that sure TD pass (Quinn's best pass of the day) right before Half, so you get bumped down a peg.

*The Brown Pants* - I still hate 'em.

*Whoever Called the Fake FG Pass Right Before Half* - It worked, but it really accomplished nothing, and the odds of non-success (and, thus, non-3 points) were large.

*Brian Daboll* - I'm just too used to him being down here. It's comfortable for me. Plus, he looks like he

still plays D & D in his mom's basement.

*Randy Lerner* - Holmgren still ain't hired.

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## **Bleeding From The Anus**

I had to invent a new category for this guy.

*Hank Poteat* - Why he is still on this team, in this state, alive, is beyond me.

First things first - here's [an interesting article](#) on Holmgren and the Browns by Len Pasquarelli of ESPN.

Basically, it states that Mike Holmgren is interested in the Cleveland job, and would be a good fit for the Browns.

*&quot;Holmgren, whose 17-year head coach résumé in Seattle and Green Bay includes 174 victories, a dozen playoff berths, three Super Bowl appearances and one title ring, could restore that sense of faith and bring back the civic pride that once barked from the Dawg Pound. Browns owner Randy Lerner, a second-generation franchise steward but a firsthand fan, and a man who desperately wants to bring a championship to the shores of Lake Erie, could do worse.*

*He has, in fact, done much worse, and this might be*

*one of Lerner's few remaining opportunities to get it right.*

*Mike Holmgren, it says here, is the right man for this terribly daunting task. And Lerner should summarily squelch any rumors that Holmgren could return to the Seahawks in some front-office capacity, by hiring him quickly.&quot;*

No doubt. If Holmgren truly is willing to take the job, why isn't he here already? What are you waiting for, Randy? It's like having Megan Fox agree to go to bed with you, then waiting a couple weeks and asking her, &quot;*Are you sure?*&quot;

You can wait on a Charlie Casserly. You can wait on a Floyd Reese. You can wait on a Bruce Allen and a Michael Lombardi. Those guys have been available for a while, and it's highly likely they'll still be available in a month. If those are the choices

you have, then you might as well wait and see if you can get a Tom Heckert or a Rich McKay (or even a Bill Cowher).

But Holmgren's going to be in demand, and it makes no sense to wait around until he gets cold feet or some other suitor does show him the love (and money).

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Watching the Browns Red Zone program on STO on Monday night, I was struck by how many callers rang in to support Mangini, stating that he deserved at least 3 years and that firing coaches left and right was the sign of a bad franchise.

There seem to be 2 solid camps on this Mangini

issue: Either you feel he should get a few more years to prove himself, or he should be fired and summarily shot and buried in a landfill tomorrow.

There always seems to be 2 camps on everything as far as the Browns are concerned. There is no gray; there is no middle ground. When issues like this get polarized, it makes for some damn boring conversation. But I will try.

First, I'd like to speak to you, Mr. Mangini Supporter.

*Me: Do you want a strong football presence in the front office to run football operations? Someone like, for instance, Mike Holmgren?*

*You: Yes.*

Me: *And, to lure a person with that kind of credibility and demand to Cleveland, don't you agree that he will have to be granted full control of football operations?*

You: *Yes.*

Me: *And that would include the power to hire and fire the Head Coach?*

You: *Well... yes.*

Me: *And if this person, Mike Holmgren, for instance, feels that he needs to fire Mangini and hire his own guy, you are going to complain?*

You: *I just think that it's stupid to be firing coaches...*

Me: *But you want this Holmgren type to come here, and you agree that he should have the power to run the football ops the way he sees fit, but only if that means that he agrees to keep Eric freakin' Mangini? You're picking Mangini over Holmgren?*

You: *That's not what I said, I just think that Mangini should get a second chance...*

Me: *But if it comes down to keeping Mangini, or hiring Holmgren who will most likely fire Mangini, which one are you choosing? □ Mangini or Holmgren?*

You: *That's a very simplistic way to look at it...*

Me: *This ain't an essay question. □ Mangini or Holmgren?*

You: *Well, if you have to put it that way, Holmgren, I guess.*

Me: *There you go. If you choose Holmgren, that includes trusting him to make the correct decision regarding the Head Coach. The fate of Eric Mangini is no longer your concern. It's Mike Holmgren's.*

Now I'm speaking to you, Mr. Mangini Hater.

Me: *Do you trust Randy Lerner to make the correct decision regarding the Head Coaching position?*

You: *Hell no.*

Me: *How about a strong football presence in the*

*front office, someone like, say, Mike Holmgren? □  
Would you trust his judgment?*

*You: Well, I'd have to, until he proved himself  
incompetent like the rest of the fools.*

*Me: So why would you want Lerner to make a  
decision about Mangini right now? □ Wouldn't you  
rather have a Holmgren come in and make the  
decisions to fire and hire coaches?*

*You: I don't really care at this point, I just want  
Mangini fired today.*

*Me: Who's going to take his place for the rest of the  
season? □ Who's going to be his Terry Robiskie?*

You: *Rob Ryan.* The Defense plays hard some times.

Me: *Yeah, and it sucks sometimes too.* This team is going nowhere this year, with or without Mangini at the helm. Firing him will change nothing. Might as well let the new football czar come in and make the Mangini decision his first stamp on the organization. We all know that whoever comes in is 99% certain to fire Mangini anyway.

You: *I don't care.* I just want Mangini fired today.

Me: *Gotcha.* Oh look! It's someone else. 'Scuse me, I've gotta go talk to them instead.

Bengal Defensive Lineman Jonathan Fanene [guaranteed a win](#)

against the Browns this week. His exact words were:

*"We're going to win this game. We're going to (sweep) the division. I guarantee that. It's going to be a win. I promise."*

A. Wow, that's brave. You're guaranteeing a win against the 2009 Browns? That's like Tim Tebow guaranteeing a win against Ohio Northern. That's like me guaranteeing I'm going to take a leak after pounding a case of Natty Light. You are bold, young man!

B. Who the F\*\*\* is Jonathan Fanene? Does he even play, or maybe he just blocks on extra points? Hell, even some of the Browns hadn't heard of him before. Robaire Smith didn't know him, and Jamal

Lewis just asked, &quot;*Who?*&quot;

I'm not sure why the media even bothered to print Fanene's quote. It's kind of like posting a headline &quot;*Cashier at Local Mall's Manchu Wok Guarantees Victory!* &quot;

Justin Fanene... what a tool.

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2009 draft picks Brian Robiskie, David Veikune, and Coye Francies were healthy scratches for the Lions game. Robo and Veikune were 2nd Round picks, and Francies has looked good every time he's been in there, yet the Coach did not see fit to put these guys on the active roster for a 1-8 team.

What does that say? For the love of Apollo, even Hank Poteat was freakin' active.

I guess I do appreciate the Coach that doesn't play guys just because he drafted them, that can admit (potential) mistakes.

I don't appreciate the Coach that made the (potential) mistakes in the first place.

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Who cares that Mangini took a Time Out right before the untimed down, allowing Stafford to sneak back in? Daunte Culpepper, a one-armed Matthew Stafford, Akili Smith... that D was gassed. It probably wouldn't have mattered who ran that play. It was hardly the reason they lost that game.

Modern Sports Fan has become such a whiny little bitch.

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I hate domes. It was a beautiful Fall Sunday, and, watching the game, it looked like it was night. Soulless cursed edifices.

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Jerome Harrison was inactive. You're going to have to talk pretty fast to convince me he's not one of the 45 best guys on that team. Wonder whose dog he kicked?

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I was listening to the Steve Czaban show on the radio the other day, and he and his co-host were discussing how it was curious that Ben Roethlisberger had magically overcome his "concussion like symptoms" just in time to play the Ravens.

To paraphrase Czaban: *What does Ben care if he plays? What, his IQ is gonna drop from 55 to 53? Don't get me wrong - great Quarterback. But MENSA ain't callin'.*

Well played, my man. Well played.

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**Braylon Watch**

In order for the conditional pick the Browns received for Braylon Edwards to be bumped from a 3<sup>rd</sup> Round to a 2<sup>nd</sup>

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 (6 games): 17 catches, 2 TD.

Yet to go (6 games): 38 catches, 3 TD.

Only one catch, some big drops, running the wrong route and causing a pick, a false start

penalty... in a big game, no less... I am SHOCKED that Braylon would fail his team when they need him most.

\$10 mil a year. Pity the team that shells out that dough for Mr. Edwards.

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Many people feel that we can at least take from this game the fact that Quinn is a viable starting QB in this league.

Not so fast, my friends!

It will take more than one game for me to be convinced. I disregard the excuse that some have thrown out that his performance doesn't count because it was against the Lions. This is an NFL team, people, not the Big 12. They're all pros, and there's talent on all those damn teams. And Quinn's not necessarily working with A Plus talent on his side of the ball, either.

However, Quinn still seems to get rattled under pressure. He rushes and throws the inaccurate ball. Plus, his deep balls are still a bit underthrown. That's fine when the WR is running 5-10 yards wide open, but it will usually end up an incomplection or interception when the coverage is good.

I'll reserve judgment on him until the end of the season.

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## **QB-O-RAMA - Version 2010**

**Sam Bradford** - Oklahoma (vs. Texas Tech) - DNP. Gonna have to start doing some more research on YouTube.

**Colt McCoy** - Texas (vs. Kansas) - 32 of 41, 396 yds, 4 TD, 29 yds Rushing. His stats are starting to get up there in the "Holy Crap" altitudes. Yes, I'm very interested in him.

**Jake Locker** - Washington - Bye. How is it that all these teams have byes so late in the

season?

**Jimmy Clausen** - Notre Dame (vs. Connecticut) - 30 of 45, 329 yds, 2 TD, 1 Rushing TD. My friend asked me the other day who I would take if the Browns had the #1 overall pick, and, after thinking about it for a long time (not an easy choice), I took Clausen (which probably reinforces my perceived idiocy for some of you). My reasoning was that if you take a Safety with the #1 overall pick, he'd better be Troy Polamalu and Ed Reed rolled into one superhuman being. A QB has a much better chance of being a bigger influence on the game and team as a whole, and Clausen is probably the QB with the best chance of NFL success of this lot.

**Tony Pike** - Cincinnati - Bye. It should be

interesting to see how the QB rotation will break down in Cincy over the next two games (especially the season-ender vs. Pitt).

**Dan LeFevour** - Central Michigan (vs. Ball State) - 25 of 28, 344 yds, 4 TD, 59 yds Rushing, 1 Rushing TD. In the last 2 games, he's scored 11 TD's and completed over 80% of his passes. That's impressive - I don't care who you're playing. However, I still don't take him before the 3rd Round (maybe with that extra pick we got in the Braylon trade). I have my qualms about how his skills will translate to the NFL.

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**NFL Bottom 10**

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Time to give props to the mutant denizens of the lower regions of football hell. Their parents shouldn't have ignored the fact that they were siblings.

1. *Cleveland (1-9)* - It's official, sports fans! Your official 2009 Suck Bowl Champions! (You see, the loser "wins" the Suck Bowl - that's what makes it so unique and special).

2. *Tampa Bay (1-9)* - They got blown out and the Browns barely lost, but there might have been a difference in the caliber of their opponents (New Orleans).

3. *Detroit (2-8)* - They beat the Browns. How far did you think that would carry them?

4. *St. Louis (1-9)* - Still playing tough against much tougher opponents than the teams ahead of them.

5. *Seattle (3-7)* - People in the great state of Washington scoff at the idea of Holmgren going to Cleveland because "the Seahawks are in a much better position". Really? That's one bad team, and it's not getting any younger.

6. *Buffalo (3-7)* - New coach, same drab, horrible, unwatchable crap.

7. *Washington (3-7)* - They may have lost in Dallas, but they're playing tough football, despite the fact that Jason Campbell will probably never be any good.

8. *Oakland (3-7)* - Beating the Bengals - with Bruce Gradkowski at QB, no less - was impressive. Almost as good as KC beating the dreaded Steelers, a victory so pleasurable that it raised the Chiefs right the hell off this list.

9. *New York Jets (4-6)* - Ooh, the Browns traded us the pick that got us Franchise QB Sanchez! Ooh, the Browns traded us Franchise WR Edwards! Superbowl, baby! Superbowl!

10. *Chicago (4-6)* - Some guy had the audacity to offer me a trade where I would get Jay Cutler and some junk for Drew Brees. Uh.... tempting, but no thanks.

## Reader E-mail

From Isaac Doe, Toledo: *"This team has so many problems, I just don't think they can draft a QB this year in the first round. I think they should draft a bunch of other players to shore up their problems, ride through the next couple seasons with Quinn, and draft a franchise QB like Luck from Stanford in 2012."*

The flaw in your logic, of course, would be assuming that the Browns will still be drafting high enough in 2012 (or even 2011) to be getting themselves a blue chip Franchise QB type like Andrew Luck. Who knows what the future holds, but if Luck's luck holds, he'll be a Top 5 pick whenever he comes out, and if the Browns just happen to go 6-10 that year, they'll

miss out on that.

Of course, if the Browns don't get their QB mess fixed, you're probably right to assume that they'll still be picking in the Top 5 in 2012.

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## Next Up

*The Cincinnati Bengals (7-3).* Offense - 17<sup>th</sup>,  
Defense - 10

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(The Browns are 31<sup>st</sup> in Offense and 32<sup>nd</sup> in Defense).

A bad Bengals team ended the Browns' 2007 playoff dreams in Cincy, and it would be very satisfying if the Browns could return the favor. The only thing wrong with that outcome would be that it would open the door for the Steelers, and I wouldn't want that to occur, no matter what.

I still can't help but feel that the Bengals are paper tigers. Yeah, they swept the Steelers, but that's a hollow shell of the team that won the SB last year. Yeah,

they swept the Ravens, but the purple ones probably aren't a playoff team. Plus, Cedric Benson will still be gimpy, and the Receiving corps ain't as scary with Chris Henry out of the lineup.

Still, coming off a horrible loss to the Raiders, and playing at home, I'd have to assume the Bengals will have enough to pull it out.

*Bengals 24, Browns 13.*