

Before the Browns engage in some sinister Black Monday moves - or Black Tuesday as it is will be known in Berea - let's take a look at what could be Eric Mangini's final offering as "czar" of our beloved franchise. And if indeed Sunday proves to be Mangini's Berea swan song, he delivered to Browns Nation a most fitting end - finishing the season with four victories, two over teams that allegedly were in the playoff hunt. Dave Kolonich takes a look at the win over the Jags as well as the future of Eric Mangini in his latest piece for us. Before the Browns engage in some sinister Black Monday moves - or Black Tuesday as it is will be known in Berea - let's take a look at what could be Eric Mangini's final offering as "czar" of our beloved franchise. And if indeed Sunday proves to be Mangini's Berea swan song, he delivered to Browns Nation a most fitting end - finishing the season with four victories, two over teams that allegedly were in the playoff hunt.

Yet come Tuesday, Mangini could find himself among a similar horde of jobless Americans - albeit, his will be of the "paid vacation" variety.

Anyway, before the real drama occurs, let's take a look at [yesterday's scorecard](#)

*1. Perhaps for the last time ever, I ask you Browns Nation, which DA will show up this afternoon?*

If indeed yesterday was DA's final composition as Browns' QB, it was rather obvious that our soon to be departed gunslinger delivered a typical uneven performance. At times yesterday, DA reminded us all of his somewhat unhinged potential, by lacing a crucial third-pass that set the Browns up to run out the fourth quarter clock. In addition to this, let's just say DA was efficient...when handing the ball off.

But much like the career arc of DA, his evil side manifested itself once again by underthrowing a wideout near the sideline, which led to a rare Browns' December turnover. And again, it is worth noting how much more successful the Browns offense has become since the team's brain trust made the decision to take the ball out of the QB's hands.

*2. Within the context of the game, can DA not only finish the season strong, but also salvage his now fledging NFL career?*

Let me just say this - DA, it's been real. Unfortunately, the West Coast offense isn't for you. Hope it works out for you in Seattle...or Buffalo...or wherever else an

## Black Tuesday Edition: Browns/Jaguars Recap

Written by {ga=davekolonich}  
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NFL city requires constant teasing.



*3. Do the Browns continue their successful offensive strategy of the past few weeks - i.e., how many carries will Jerome Harrison get this afternoon?*

Is it cold by the Lakefront in early January? Talk about making a career out of four games. If Harrison were given another game, he could easily eclipse a 1,000 yards rushing for the season. Not bad for a player who less than two months ago couldn't shake off his inactive status.

And once again, credit the coaching staff for realizing that a strong rushing attack equates to successful December football. Although this realization may have been reached based more on the team's woeful QB play - in the end, the Browns' four-game win streak rests squarely on the shoulders of the offensive line and Lawrence Vickers.

Of course, in retrospect, the question now becomes - where was all of this three

months ago?

*4. Assuming that DA makes just one play downfield, who is on the receiving end this week?*

I guess the play of Mohammed Massaquoi sticks out this year, based on the idea that the Browns typically only complete 8 passes a game. Consider that if Massaquoi catches 1-2 of them, then it looks like he's making some solid progress. So in saying that, I have to credit Massaquoi for having a solid rookie season and also for perhaps the last time - have to admit that the Browns' passing offense is historically inept.

*5. Speaking of which, can the Browns take advantage of an injury-riddled Jaguar secondary?*

I guess if the idea of Harrison and Josh Cribbs bowling over members of the Jaguar secondary counts, then yes. An emphatic yes.

*6. We already know about Joe Thomas and Alex Mack, but was Floyd Womack the answer at right tackle all along? Really?*

In terms of run blocking, we could have done a lot worse than Womack all along. In fact, we did with more than a dozen starts by John St. Clair. And regarding the line, I had another chilling vision of 2010 roster turnover that including an emphasis towards drafting smaller, more athletic blockers. Let's hope that I'm making too much out of this.



*7. Can the Browns' run defense continue to improve, even in facing one of the league's top backs in Maurice Jones-Drew?*

Outside of one big gain, the Browns' D kept one of conferences better backs in check throughout the afternoon. Chalk it up to the Jags' unwillingness to confront cold weather (and really - the schedule makers didn't do the Jags any favors this year), but credit again needs to go to Rob Ryan.

Who knows what will happen after Tuesday's meeting with Holmgren, but one thing has been proven in 2009. Rob Ryan is a pretty good defensive coordinator. Taking a collection of castoffs and raw rookies and producing a quality unit is quite the impressive feat. However, like Mangini - Ryan could easily be out of work by the end of the week.

*8. Is this the point in the season when I reveal my secret man-crush on David Bowens?*

Only because he is not likely to return under a non-Mangini regime will I admit my man crush on Bowens. Although I was convinced that Bowens' arrival had little to do with actual on-field play, I admit that in most respects, he is the team's defensive MVP. Playing a variety of positions, Bowens has proven to be effective against the run and has taken advantage of some Kamerion Wimbley double-teams and given life to the team's third-down defense.

Along with Bowens, the play of Matt Roth has been impressive - and incredibly unexpected. Could anyone have predicted that kind of production? And really, the run-stuffing abilities of Jason Trusnik have helped, and yesterday saw the culmination of Kaluka Maivia's 2009 potential.

Which is all great, until you consider that this entire unit could get blown up in a few short months.

*9. Or, will I just continue to pile on Jason Trusnik as he fruitlessly gives chase to a receiver some twenty yards downfield?*

If I am anything, it is consistent. And once again, while Trusnik is a solid special teams player and has some decent skills against the run, he is in no way the answer at linebacker. Unless of course, another team hires Mangini.

*10. Has the past month of the season simply served as a mirage of the Browns' true talent? Does a near playoff-bound team offer a more genuine contrast for these Browns?*

This was the most intriguing aspect of yesterday's game. I wonder how many of the Jaguar players truly thought they had a shot at the playoffs before kickoff. And while I'm not criticizing the Browns' effort - which again was inspired - it appeared that the Jags conceded this game after coming out of halftime.

Again, blame it on the weather, but the Browns essentially wrapped up this game late in the first half. It was obvious yesterday which team wanted the game more - and it was not the team who still had an outside shot at the playoffs.

*11. Is this the end of the road for Mangini? Or, perhaps a better question - is there anything he can do today to still salvage his job?*

Of course, none of us will know anything until tomorrow - or possibly even beyond. But I can't imagine that a decision was made based on yesterday's performance. As of now, Mangini probably has too much baggage in the form of off the field developments, including the George Kokinis situation and volumes of negative - albeit somewhat unjustified - criticism.

Also, Mangini's short history with the Browns - however dramatic it has been - will likely prove to be his ultimate undoing. Using the current roster as an example, it is obvious that this team is ripe for yet another gutting. And with a highly paid czar and new potential GM about to take over, the idea of deferring to a coach who merely produced a 5-11 record seems implausible.



## **The Pick - Part Two**

But then again, who knows?

Come Tuesday evening, there may be some accord struck between the out of options Mangini and the now all-powerful Holmgren. It is possible that Holmgren could view Mangini's future presence as his ticket to once again don the headset come 2011 or 2012. Certainly, it would be much easier for Holmgren to accomplish a full takeover by shoving Mangini aside, as compared to hiring a new coach.

Or, perhaps the writing has been on the wall for sometime and we are about to enter yet another new phase of the never-ending reconstruction of Berea. If so, I feel we should remember Mangini for what he gave to Browns Nation, rather than focus on what he failed to deliver.

In this sense, the past month of the season has featured some of the best &quot;team&quot; football seen in Cleveland in many years. And although I may be reaching a bit here, Mangini's late-season brand of football has been as enjoyable and rewarding - if not more so - than the 2007 version of the team that imploded a year later.

And if this truly is the end of Mangini's reign in Cleveland, let's hope the decision is made based on the overall development of the franchise, as framed within the context of rebuilding, and nothing else. I would hate to think that Mangini would be released due to the nefarious thoughts and opinions of others who solely base his worth on PR value.

Because in the end, Mangini is a good coach. I would not be exaggerating to suggest that he has been the best coach the team has had in the new era. Unfortunately for Mangini, his attempt at rebuilding the team has encountered resistance from a poor system of management, as instituted (or not) by Randy Lerner.

So, in the end - maybe Mangini was just a victim of bad timing. Consider that much like the Lakefront winds in January, the NFL is a league of change. And in Berea, our continental owner's feeble mind is often shaped by these winds. For Mangini, the potential end of his tenure is more a reflection of bad timing than anything else.

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And unfortunately for Mangini, his time may be up.