

BROWNIE BITS: WEEK FIVE

Written by {ga=jonathanknight}
Wednesday, October 13 2010 5:30 PM -



Useless nuggets of information from Sunday's Browns game that you can certainly live without...

A LONG TIME COMING: Atlanta's win Sunday marked just the third time the Falcons have ever defeated the Browns. The Falcons hadn't defeated them since Thanksgiving weekend of 1993 at the Georgia Dome and hadn't won a game in Cleveland since Halloween, 1971 – when Nick Skorich was the Browns' coach and Eric Mangini was nine months old. Going into Sunday's game, the Browns had won eight of their last nine games against Atlanta. They lead the all-time series, 10-3.

GOOD NEWS, BAD NEWS: Here's the bad news: the Browns offense once again continued its second-half doldrums, amassing a weakly 125 total yards in the final two periods. The good news? It marked the Browns' second-best second-half performance of the season, trailing only the "whopping" 138 yards they racked up in the second half on opening day in Tampa. For the season, they're now averaging a measly 106 yards per game in the second half.

MORE NFC TROUBLES: The Browns' record over the past three years against NFC teams now stands at 1-9. Over that same period, they are undefeated against the Arena League.

NOT SO TRIUMPHANT RETURN: Jake Delhomme's return to the huddle was, shall we say, Derek Anderson-ian. Granted, he was playing hurt, but his quarterback rating for the game was a miserable 30.5, dropping his rating for the season to 48.2. No Browns quarterback had posted a single-game rating so low since Brady Quinn's putrid 27.7 against the Chiefs last December (10 for 17, 66 yards, two interceptions).

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ON THE OTHER HAND: Seneca Wallace, meanwhile, put forth the finest performance by any Browns quarterback so far this season with a quarterback rating of 124 (raising his season rating to 88.5). If you combine Wallace and Delhomme's numbers for the day (along with Josh Cribbs' one attempt), Browns' quarterbacks completed 25 of 39 passes for 246 yards with a touchdown and two picks for an overall rating of 69.

FIVE STRAIGHT: Though this was the first time all the year the Browns trailed for the entirety of the fourth quarter, they still managed to make a little history. By taking a lead into the middle of the third quarter, it marked the first time the Browns had held a second-half advantage in each of their first five games since 1995. The '95 team managed to hold on to win three of those five games, though went on to win just two of their last 11 (in the season mushroom-clouded by the announcement of The Move).

BETTER STILL: In the magical kingdom of third-down conversions, the Browns had their best day of the season, converting 7 of 15 for an NFL-team-caliber 47%. Their previous best had been 43% (6 for 14) against the Bengals.

BIG DAY FOR TURNER: The 140 rushing yards by Michael Turner was the biggest day for an opposing running back against the Browns in seven games, since Kansas City's Jamaal Charles rushed for 154 in the quasi-ridiculous Week Fifteen shootout last December. It was the first 100-yard individual rushing performance the Browns have allowed this season.

NOT-SO-BIG DAY FOR HILLIS: Limping around for much of the afternoon like Jim Brown in the middle of one of his early-1960s mind games, Peyton Hillis was quiet for much of the day. He was held to a season-low 28 yards rushing on 10 carries, though managed to snag four receptions for 49 yards. Now with 350 rushing yards on the season, Hillis dropped to the 14th-leading rusher in the NFL. As a team, the Browns rushed for a season-low 48 yards, averaging a woeful 2.4 yards per carry (by contrast, Atlanta averaged 5.3). More disturbing than Hillis' struggles was Jerome Harrison's spectacular six-yards-on-six-rushes performance.

BIG PLAYS AND A LACK THEREOF: For the second straight week, the Browns failed to notch a single play of 25 yards or longer. The Falcons, meanwhile, pulled off three. Over the past three games, Browns' opponents have collected 11 plays of 25 yards or more, while the Browns have had two.

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FIVE FOR WEEK FIVE: Mohamed Massaquoi caught more passes Sunday (five) than he'd caught in the previous four games combined (four).

SPREADING THE WEALTH: Browns quarterbacks completed passes to nine different receivers. Massaquoi, Chansi Stucky, and Ben Watson were the primary recipients, each catching five. Wallace completed passes to six different receivers, while Delhomme hit seven different targets.

A LITTLE BETTER: We're still waiting for a breakout game, but at least Josh Cribbs made his presence felt. His biggest play was the 34-yard kickoff return in the second quarter (13 yards better than his season average going into the day) that helped spark the Browns' only touchdown drive, while he rushed twice for 11 yards and completed a pass out of the Wildcat for 10. On the flip side, he failed to catch a pass for the first time all season and only got to return one punt for three yards.

ALSO STEPPING UP: Linebacker Matt Roth had his second straight big game, leading the Browns in tackles with eight (six solo) and adding a defensed pass. It was the second time this season a non-defensive back led the Browns in tackles (fellow linebacker Eric Barton racked up nine in Baltimore). Safety T.J. Ward continued to look like a veteran in his rookie year, collecting six tackles (five solo) alongside the blocked field goal and a special-teams tackle all while managing not to knock any Atlanta receivers unconscious.

OUTPLAYED IN THE TRENCHES: For the fourth straight game, the Browns were out-gained by their opponent as the Cleveland defense surrendered more than 300 total yards. Last year the Browns were out-gained in 14 of their 16 games and allowed more than 300 yards 13 times. The Browns have now been out-gained in 24 of their last 27 games and in 28 of their last 32. They are 6-22 in the games in this string in which they've been out-gained and 2-2 in the four games in which they've out-gained their opponents.

WEIRD BUT GOOD, PART ONE: The Browns defense has not allowed a rushing touchdown this season.

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WEIRD BUT GOOD, PART TWO: The Browns' leading receiver – both in terms of receptions and yardage – is tight end Ben Watson (23 catches, 230 yards). I invite you to join me in a collective “WTF?”

WHERE WE RANK: The Browns' offense has dropped to 24th in the league, now averaging exactly five yards per play, while the defense stands at 21st, giving up 5.6.