

BROWNIE BITS: WEEK SIX

Written by {ga=jonathanknight}
Wednesday, October 20 2010 6:00 PM -



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

MORE OF THE SAME: The Steelers' win increased their lead in the all-time series to 59-56 and their all-time record against the Browns in Pittsburgh to 37-21 - a stunning 32-6 since 1970. Including the 2002 playoff game, the Steelers are now 10-1 against Cleveland at Heinz Field and have won 17 of their last 19 games against the Browns in the Steel City. Overall, the Steelers have won 19 of their last 21 games against the Browns and are 20-4 against our guys since the Browns' rebirth in 1999. Of those 20 victories, 12 have been by at least 10 points. Adding to our ravishing disdain for That City Out East, over the past 14 years the Indians have posted a lousy 6-12 road record against the punchline Pirates, who over that time have regularly proven themselves to be the most miserable franchise in baseball.

SIX STRAIGHT: Though it was as short-lived as a relationship with Jennifer Aniston, the Browns did actually lead this game for a while, taking a 3-0 advantage into the second quarter. They've now held a lead in all six games played this season - marking the first time they've done so in their first six games since 2001. Butch Davis' '01 Browns stood at 4-2 after six games and finished 7-9.

SURPRISE!: Admit it - you were anticipating Sunday's game to be like watching a low-grade 1970s snuff film. An offense that wasn't playing that well to begin with was about to be saddled with a rookie quarterback seeing his first NFL action against a blitz-happy bunch of thugs. Instead, the opposite happened. The Browns put forth one of their finest offensive performances of the season, collecting 320 total yards (5.5 per play) - second only to their 340 total in Tampa (5.6 per play). While the running game was mediocre (70 yards on 22 carries), the passing game was surprisingly effective and consistent all day, rolling up a season-high 281 yards.

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BLUE OYSTER COLT: Going in, the over/under on the point in the game Colt McCoy would be killed was midway through the second quarter. To be sure, the rookie took some punishment, but looked surprisingly comfortable in his first pro appearance. His rating was a very respectable 80.5, and he completed nearly 70 percent of his passes actually throwing the ball downfield (I'm looking at you, Brady Quinn), averaging more than 12 yards per connection - all this against the NFL's fifth-ranked defense. By contrast, seasoned veteran Jake Delhomme (season rating: 48.2) has averaged less than 10 yards per completion, while Seneca Wallace (season rating: 88.5) is averaging 11. McCoy's completion percentage on Sunday was also seven percent higher than Wallace's season tally and 15 percent higher than Delhomme's.

MORE COMPARISONS: By picking up 22 yards on the ground on four carries, McCoy tallied more rushing yards on Sunday than Delhomme and Wallace combined over the entire season. What's more, facing immense pressure and very little run support on Sunday, McCoy was sacked on average, once every six pass attempts. Wallace's average is once every 16 pass attempts and Delhomme's is once every 60.

HAUNTED BY ONE OF OUR OWN: With the win on Sunday, Findlay High School's Rapey McDrunkard - whoops, make that Ben Roethlisberger - is now 11-1 lifetime against the Browns, 6-0 in Pittsburgh.

STILL TOPS: With six catches for 88 yards, Ben Watson maintained his title as the Browns' top receiver, now with 29 receptions for 318 yards on the year.

SPECIAL DELIVERY: The Browns' special teams very quietly had an outstanding day. Reggie Hodges placed four of his five punts inside the Steeler 8 and had no touchbacks for the first time all season as the Steelers tallied zero punt return yards for the game and averaged just 19 yards on their two kickoff returns. Despite handing Pittsburgh decent field position with three turnovers, with the special teams leading the way, the Browns still won the field-position battle: their average starting position was their own 27, while the Steelers' was their own 23.

TAKING CHARGE WHEN IT COUNTS: Going into the fourth quarter, the Browns had a three-minute advantage in time possession and a slight edge in fielding quarterbacks without a reputation for sexual assault. But Pittsburgh dominated the line of scrimmage in the fourth quarter, controlling the football for 10:11 to the Browns' 4:49. The Browns' opponents have held

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an advantage in time of possession in five of their six games this year.

THE STRING ENDS: Rashard Mendenhall's two-yard scoring plunge in the fourth quarter was the first rushing touchdown the Browns had allowed this season. The last time an opponent picked up a touchdown on the ground was in the second quarter of last December's statistical hoedown in Kansas City, a 47-yard score by Jamaal Charles. It would be the last rushing touchdown the Browns would allow for more than eight full games (33 quarters).

SHOWING UP FOR THE SECOND HALF: Another curious turnaround was the Browns' ability to actually move the ball in the final two quarters after having immense trouble doing so over the previous five games. After slogging to just 104 total yards in the first half (though - let's be honest, gang - more than we expected for the entire game), the Browns got cooking in the second, rolling up 216 - more than twice their second-half season average. It's fair to note, however, that 140 of the 216 came in the final six minutes of the game after the Steelers surged ahead by 18 points, the Browns were throwing on every play, and James Harrison had been sedated.

AIR MAIL: Colt McCoy's 281 passing yards were the most thrown by any Browns quarterback in 11 games, since Brady Quinn's 304 in Detroit last November. It was the most yards any Cleveland quarterback had thrown for against Pittsburgh in almost eight years - since Kelly Holcomb lit up the Steelers for 429 in the memorable 2002 playoff game. Interestingly (perhaps disgustingly), the Browns had gone six straight games against the Steelers without collecting even 200 passing yards. Since 2006, Browns quarterbacks were averaging just 111 passing yards per game against Pittsburgh. To make it sound better, let's say their average was 333 feet per game.

BIG-PLAY BROWNS: After going two straight games without notching a play of 25 yards or more, the Browns racked up a trifecta on Sunday - including three more of 20 or more - topped by the 34-yard pass from McCoy to Evan Moore in the fourth quarter. By contrast, the Steelers collected five plays of 25 yards or more. For the season, the Browns now have 10 plays of 25-plus yards while their opponents have 19.

COMPARING FIRST-TIMERS: Colt McCoy may not have delivered victory - or, for that matter, a guest spot on Friday Night Lights - but his numbers were particularly impressive compared to other Browns quarterbacks making their first NFL starts:

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*Colt McCoy (10/17/10 at Pittsburgh): 23 of 33, 281 yards, 1 TD, 2 INT (80.5 rating) - LOSS

Brady Quinn (11/6/08 vs Denver): 23 of 35, 239 yards, 2 TD, 0 INT (104.3 rating) - LOSS

*Derek Anderson (12/7/06 at Pittsburgh): 21 of 37, 276 yards, 1 TD, 0 INT (78.2 rating) - LOSS

*Charlie Frye (12/4/05 vs Jacksonville): 13 of 20, 226 yards, 2 TD, 0 INT (136.7 rating) - LOSS

*Luke McCown (12/5/04 vs New England): 20 of 34, 277 yards, 2 TD, 2 INT (80.1 rating) - LOSS

*Spergon Wynn (12/3/00 at Jacksonville): 5 of 16, 17 yards, 0 TD, 0 INT (40.3 rating) - LOSS

*Tim Couch (9/19/99 at Tennessee): 12 of 24, 134 yards, 1 TD, 0 INT (80.9 rating) - LOSS

*Eric Zeier (10/29/95 at Cincinnati): 26 of 46, 310 yards, 1 TD, 0 INT (84.5 rating) - WIN

Todd Philcox (9/20/92 at L.A. Raiders): 10 of 20, 200 yards, 3 TD, 0 INT (125 rating) - WIN

*Bernie Kosar (10/13/85 at Houston): 8 of 19, 208 yards, 1 TD, 1 INT (78.4 rating) - WIN

Paul McDonald (12/19/82 vs Pittsburgh): 19 of 40, 227 yards, 0 TD, 1 INT (54.9 rating) - WIN

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*Terry Luck (12/18/77 at Seattle): 6 of 15, 105 yards, 0 TD 4 INT (25 rating) - LOSS

Dave Mays (11/20/77 at N.Y. Giants): 13 of 24, 138 yards, 1 TD, 1 INT (67.7 rating) - WIN

*Brian Sipe (11/3/74 at San Diego): 16 of 23, 186 yards, 1 TD, 1 INT (90.1 rating) - LOSS

*Mike Phipps (11/15/70 at Cincinnati): 11 of 25, 170 yards, 0 TD, 1 INT (50.4 rating) - LOSS

Gary Lane (12/17/67 at Philadelphia): 19 of 39, 211 yards, 2 TD, 1 INT (71.6) - LOSS

*-rookie season

WHERE WE STAND: Now averaging 5.1 yards per offensive play, the Browns' offense is currently ranked 19th in the NFL, while the defense (allowing 5.7 yards per play) is ranked 23rd.