

In his regular Monday feature, Erik Cassano takes a look back at the Browns performance against the Lions in "The Morning After". Papa Cass warns us not to get too excited about Jerome Harrison and Reuben Droughns, but says we should be very excited about what we're seeing from Kamerion Wimbley and Leigh Bodden.



Visit the Papa Cass weblog at <http://papacass.blogspot.com/>

(Side note: I know this is actually three mornings after. I wasn't the one who decided to play the game on a Friday night, though.)

Browns 20, Lions 16 **Preseason record: 1-1**

Jerome Harrison sure looks like hot property after scoring his second touchdown of the preseason Friday night.

I'll admit, he looked good. So far, the rookie running back has shown an ability to cut on a dime and accelerate downfield. He has a set of hands worthy of catching passes, but unlike former Browns speedster Eric Metcalf, he isn't afraid to run the ball out of the backfield, either.

Every year, Cleveland fans always seem to find a Browns player in which to invest hope and hype. It happens every preseason. Last year, Charlie Frye was the "next big thing"; Josh Cribbs was a close second.

This year, Harrison has the fans' drool-o-meter going crazy.

Most of the time, those hopes fall flat and we're left criticizing the guy mercilessly. Think William Green.

That's why I'm not sold on Harrison. As with the entire Browns roster, let him prove his worth before falling in love with him.

If he has a monster rookie season, I'll be more inclined to place stock in him. But let's see how he's doing in October and November. In my mind, he's an undersized rookie rusher who just put up a good second half against the Eagles scrubs 10 days ago, then followed it with a good

game against the terminally-bad Detroit Lions.

You want my love? Do it against the Steelers. Do it against the Ravens. Do it in the playoffs. Then we'll talk.

Lost in the focus on Harrison was a nice performance by Reuben Droughns (44 yards on seven carries). Droughns is the real-deal rusher the Browns have needed since coming back into the league. The only question is, for how long? He has a pre-trial appearance in a Colorado court today on his domestic violence charge. The Plain Dealer reported today that the court is unlikely to push the trial until after the season. That could mean Droughns might have to miss a game to attend his trial later this year.

If Droughns is convicted, he could face jail time. Even more worrisome is the possibility of an NFL suspension should he be convicted.

Combine his legal problems with the fact that he has a very punishing running style and never seems to avoid contact, and I find myself not getting too attached to Droughns. At age 28, he strikes me as the kind of guy who could be washed up at 31, sooner if he suffers a major leg or neck injury.

Every time he touches the ball, I say to myself, "Man, if they can keep him healthy and out of jail, they might have a pretty good player on their hands."

Charlie Frye rebounded from an awful-looking wounded-duck interception in the first quarter to lead a touchdown drive. The interception by Dre Bly showed all of Frye shortcomings at one time: his inexperience, which led him to try and force the ball to Dennis Northcutt through a forest of blue Lions jerseys; his smallish hands, which might have led the ball to slip out of his grip awkwardly, causing the wobbly pass; and his lack of arm strength, which allowed Bly easy pickings.

Frye's ensuing touchdown drive showcased all his strengths: his huddle presence, his intelligence, his ability to read defenses and react, and his sideline-to-sideline mobility.

All in all, a positive showing from Frye. With any young quarterback, you are going to have to take the bad with the good. One of Frye's best characteristics is that he learns from his mistakes. I don't think you'll see him air-mailing passes into triple coverage again.

On defense, it was time for the youngsters to shine. Once again lacking Willie McGinest, Gary Baxter and Daylon McCutcheon, the kids had to step up. And many did.

Rookie Kamerion Wimbley used his performance against the Eagles to garner his first start against Detroit. He capitalized on it, netting a sack. In the second half, Baba Oshinowo matched Wimbley's sack.

D'Qwell Jackson was burned on a first-quarter touchdown pass, but rebounded with some nice special teams play.

And let's not forget Leigh Bodden, who had another standout game when the Browns' cornerback corps needed it most. They're still going to need a second capable cornerback, because once you get past Baxter, McCutcheon and Bodden, the talent level drops drastically. A trade might still be in the future if GM Phil Savage can find what he is looking for.

Up next: at Buffalo, Saturday, 6 p.m.