

Preview: Steelers at Browns

Written by {ga=hermanfontenot}

Saturday, January 01 2011 2:14 PM - Last Updated Saturday, January 01 2011 5:01 PM

Pittsburgh Steelers at Cleveland Browns



Time: 1:00 pm, Sunday, January 2, 2011

Location: Cleveland Browns Stadium

Network, Announcers- CBS: Ian Eagle and Dan Fouts

Line: Steelers by five-and-a-half

Team W/L Records: Cleveland is 5-10; Pittsburgh is 11-4.

Coaches: Eric Mangini is 33-46 overall, 10-21 in his second season with the Browns; Mike Tomlin is 42-21 in his fourth season with the Steelers.

Last Week for the Browns: Suffered their third consecutive loss as Baltimore came into CBS and emerged with a 20-10 triumph. Colt McCoy suffered through his worst day as a pro, passing for 149 yards and throwing three interceptions. Cleveland outgained its opponent for

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only the fourth time this season but was undone by four turnovers and a botched onside kick to start the second half.

Last Week for the Steelers: *Drubbed pitiful Carolina, 27-3. Ben Roethlisberger threw for 320 yards and a touchdown while Pittsburgh's league-leading scoring defence held the Panthers to 119 total yards and seven first downs.*

All-Time Series: Pittsburgh leads 61-56, including two playoff victories over the Browns.

Last Meeting- [October 17](#) : Colt McCoy performed admirably in his pro starting debut but was outclassed by Ben Roethlisberger in his season debut as the Steelers won going away, 28-10. Roethlisberger riddled the Cleveland defence for 257 yards and three touchdowns through the air. On the other side of the ball James Harrison put both Joshua Cribbs and Mohamed Massaquoi out of the game with [helmet-to-helmet](#) hits- neither of which was flagged.

Out, Doubtful or Questionable for Pittsburgh: *RB Mewelde Moore (knee) and DE Aaron Smith (triceps) are out; S Troy Polamalu (ankle) and LB Jason Worilds (knee) are questionable.*

Out, Doubtful or Questionable for Cleveland: *RB Peyton Hillis (ribs), DE Kenyon Coleman (knee), DT Shaun Rogers (ankle) and G Floyd Womack (knee) are questionable.*

What to watch for the Steelers: *If you were hoping Pittsburgh would have nothing tangible to play for on Sunday, your hopes have been dashed. The Steelers have a ton to play for. A win clinches the AFC North, a first-round bye and a divisional playoff game at Heinz Field. And the Steelers are rested, with ten days off following their Thursday-night romp over Carolina last week.*

So we're going to see a healthy, highly motivated Pittsburgh team- not the injury-riddled, struggling group that lost to the Browns in December of '09. That isn't good news. You'd better believe the Steelers will look to make a statement on Sunday, a message to whatever opponents they face in the postseason. That isn't good news either.

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We haven't seen any blowout losses for the Browns this season. Indeed, the most lopsided game Cleveland has played was the twenty-point victory over 13-2 New England, the team with the best record in football. But all that could change on Sunday, especially if the Steelers start fast. Pittsburgh has repeatedly embarrassed the Browns in Cleveland since 1999, winning by scores like 43-0, 41-0 and 34-7. We could very easily see another instalment in that shameful series on Sunday.

What to watch for the Browns: *Cleveland, on the other hand, has very little to play for. At 5-10 the Browns have secured their third consecutive season of double-digit losses. Eric Mangini has been all but written off in terms of his job security. The brief surge of momentum generated by the back-to-back wins over the Saints and Patriots has long since dissipated. It's become yet another season of playing out the string.*

The only thing left to play for, other than possibly the head coach's job, is pride. And Cleveland had better show some pride, because this game has all sorts of blowout potential if it doesn't. Pittsburgh isn't looking to give any quarter whatsoever on Sunday. If the Steelers get the Browns down early they're going to want to pour it on- and they've got the ability to do it.

So for one last time in this frustrating season, the Browns will have to suck it up. They're going to have to figure out a way to generate some offence against a Steelers team that has given up fewer points than anyone in football. They're going to have to find a way to stop 1,237-yard rusher Rashard Mendenhall and cover 1,152-yard speedster Mike Wallace. They're going to have to match the physicality of the Steelers. This game is going to get ugly if they don't.

Next Week for Both Teams: The season ends for the Browns; Pittsburgh's playoff qualification is secure, while the opponent and time remains to be hashed out.

Trivia: Cleveland has finished behind the Steelers in the standings for eighteen consecutive seasons. The Browns haven't finished ahead of Pittsburgh since 1989.