

## Kibble & Bits: Week 6 Recap

Written by {ga=jta1975}

Thursday, October 20 2011 8:00 AM - Last Updated Wednesday, October 19 2011 7:07 PM

---



This week's Kibble & Bits contains a game review as well as a look around the league at how the Browns rookies are stacking up to other rookies around the league.

The Raiders game was one that may bring some reality to the kind of year the Browns are heading toward. It was a game in which the Browns once again struggled to move the ball consistently, the defense playing well enough to win and the special teams having a couple mental lapses that led to big plays in the kicking game. The Browns ended up losing the game by a 24-17 score but don't let the score fool you, the Browns played much sloppier than the score indicated especially on offense.

The worst part about the loss is the fact that even though they failed to execute for the majority of the game, Colt McCoy and the Browns still had a chance to tie the game and force overtime in the closing moments of the game only to come up short. That earned the team it's 4th loss in 6 games.

The Browns created the chance to tie by recovering an onside kick with 1:06 to go in the game giving them the ball at the 50 yard line. The Browns not only failed to score, they ended up failing to get a single first down and turned the ball over on downs.

## **Kibble & Bits: Week 6 Recap**

Written by {ga=jta1975}

Thursday, October 20 2011 8:00 AM - Last Updated Wednesday, October 19 2011 7:07 PM

---

That last drive was a great example of how the offense has failed to execute throughout this early portion of the season. The defense doesn't get a pass on the loss either. They had their part in the loss by giving up a fake FG that extended the lead to 24-7. I'm not gonna just throw the fake FG in the special teams category because the FG team is made up of defensive players and is essentially an extension of the defense from my perspective. The kickoff return is on the special teams, so they can eat that one.

The one thing you can say with certainty about the team performance is the Browns were let down in all three phases of the game on Sunday. With that being said..... let's take a closer look at what the Cleveland Browns put on tape against the Raiders.

### **Why the Browns Lost the Game**

Offense- Once again I am going to lay the biggest part of the losing pie on the offense's plate. The offense used the same formula they exhibited before the bye week and that formula consisted of no running game + inconsistent throwing + no rhythm + slow start x zero big plays, and all of that equaled a sluggish, uninspired performance.

The offense this year has solely relied on the arm of a young QB and the legs and hands of an inexperienced receiving core because the running game is missing in action. It is really tough to play offense when the defense just pins their ears back and they don't have to worry about the running game.

The Browns running game is ranked 30th in the league. They have a pathetic ONE running play over 20 yards all year and zero for over 40 yards. They are averaging 3.3 yards a carry and have only 2 rushing TDs this season.

The Browns held true to all of these stats on Sunday, as they stumbled to a team total of 65 yards rushing with an average of 3.1 yards a carry against a team that came into the game giving up over 120 yards a game.

## Kibble & Bits: Week 6 Recap

Written by {ga=jta1975}

Thursday, October 20 2011 8:00 AM - Last Updated Wednesday, October 19 2011 7:07 PM

---

I won't leave Colt McCoy and his 46% completion percentage out of the conversation about bad stats either. The Browns passing game is so poor on the year that they are the ONLY team in the NFL who doesn't have double digit completions of over 20 yards. Their lame passing game has only mustered eight throws over 20 yards and one over 40. All that from a passing game that throws the ball more than any team in the league other than the New Orleans Saints.

I'll give you another chuckle; the Browns only managed to average 4.3 yards per passing play which is just ½ yard more than the Raiders averaged per rushing play.

When you look back at the flow of the game, the offense really failed to gain momentum and get a lead in the 2nd quarter when they possessed the ball for 10:17, but only managed to score 7 points. For a team struggling to create big plays, you absolutely cannot afford to put together an 11 play, 6+ minute drive and end it with a punt. Those sequences are the ones that keep you in a hole and playing from behind.

From the coaching standpoint, I have issues with a couple of things on offense. First is the lack of touches for players like Josh Cribbs and Ben Watson. Cribbs is the perfect weapon against a team that uses as much man coverage as Oakland does because if he gets the ball short and beats his guy, he's headed for a big play.

But Cribbs got the ball twice.

Watson didn't even see a pass until the 4th quarter. No one is saying Watson is an Antonio Gates, but he is closer to Gates than he is to Robert Royal so you can't forget about him until the 4th quarter. That is just not acceptable.

The other issue I have is play calling. Not for what Pat Shurmur called but more about what he didn't call. I think I only saw two screen attempts all game. Why in the world can't this team find a screen game? We have the personnel, including the young agile OL to do it, but yet we struggle to execute any screen unless it is a smoke screen to a WR.

The offensive performance on Sunday was status quo for the year including Colt McCoy and

## Kibble & Bits: Week 6 Recap

Written by {ga=jta1975}

Thursday, October 20 2011 8:00 AM - Last Updated Wednesday, October 19 2011 7:07 PM

---

Shurmur. I expected more coming off of a bye, but we just didn't get it. This offense is struggling to find its way and until it does, the Browns will continue to find itself with the short straw.

Defense- The Defense once again played solid but not great. Giving up a TD on a kick-off is always tough to swallow but the fake punt is something they should not be given a pass for. Like I said earlier, most of the FG team is made up of defensive personnel, so it is not the same as a kick-off at all, and therefore they should own up and take the same level of credit for that TD as they would for any other TD scored on them.

Coaching should be criticized for that play also, because if they think putting Chris Gocong as the safety valve is appropriate then they need their heads checked. I hope he was the guy back because they had a FG block called and the normal protector is a safety, because if not they will be subject to more fakes in the future.

I am satisfied with the defense giving up 10 points without the kicking game scores but they need more than one QB hit and one pass defended if they want to have a bigger impact on how the game turns out. They did end up with a fumble recovery which is good, and stripping the QB like rookie Jabaal Sheard did can potentially lead to big plays in the future, so I am not going to be overly critical of the defensive play as a whole. If you asked me beforehand I would take that performance almost every game, so I think they played well enough as a group to win.

Overall I think the Browns used the same exact formula to lose the game against the Oakland Raiders that they have used in all 3 loses thus far. The offense played terribly inconsistent football while getting no big plays and the defense/ special teams gave up too many of those big plays. I thought the Browns would have resolved some of these issues over the bye week but clearly they were the same exact team after the bye then they were before it and the burden of that blame should fall on the man in charge.

### Game/ Player Notes

Owen Marecic- I know the rookie FB is naturally going to be subject to ridicule after being a 4th round pick at a position that has extremely low impact in a Pat Shurmur offense but you can't add to it with POOR special teams play.

## Kibble & Bits: Week 6 Recap

Written by {ga=jta1975}

Thursday, October 20 2011 8:00 AM - Last Updated Wednesday, October 19 2011 7:07 PM

---

On consecutive plays the rookie messed up two kickoffs. On the Jacoby Ford TD, he veered out of his own lane responsibility while chasing the ball, and the ball carrier cut back right into Marecic's responsibility. With no one being in Marecic's lane, Ford raced 100 yards for a TD.

On the very next play (kickoff to Cribbs) the rookie let the guy he was blocking run right through the block, tackling Josh Cribbs at the 13 yard line. When you play a low recognition position like FB you can't afford to make too many mistakes because they will be amplified, especially because most of the plays that you can make to atone for the screw up are not easily seen by fans.

LBs- D'Qwell- Jackson is one of the best MLBs in the league at exploding through a hole to blast zone stretch running plays. He did it twice for 2 tackles for loss on Sunday.

Kaluka Maiva- played well when he was inserted at SLB after the Scott Fujita injury. He played basically the whole 4th quarter and showed up re-routing running plays throughout the period. (Broken Record) He and Jackson read their keys really fast and it shows.

Chris Gocong- 1 tackle, enough said.

DT- The Browns rested Ahtyba Rubin and Phil Taylor more and it showed down the stretch, they seemed to play better in the 4th quarter.

Sometimes you see the DL doing drills in training camp and you say to yourself "why do they do that, they will never use it during a game". Well, on Sunday if you can remember the play where Rubin came busting in the backfield but missed the sack on Kyle Boller, Rubin used one drill to perfection. The drill is where the DL explodes off of the ball, then uses right handed and left handed clubs on the standing bags, and then the D-lineman finds the QB and makes a sack.

On the play during the game, Rubin exploded off the line, left hand clubbed the center, then right-hand clubbed the guard on the way to the QB. He ended up whiffing once he got to the QB

## Kibble & Bits: Week 6 Recap

Written by {ga=jta1975}

Thursday, October 20 2011 8:00 AM - Last Updated Wednesday, October 19 2011 7:07 PM

---

but he used excellent technique to get there. Hopefully he finishes next time with a sack but if you are or know a young D-lineman you might want to show them that play.

Alex Smith- In my quarter pole article I was hard on Alex Smith but he showed up Sunday making a couple of nice catches (1 for TD) so I will acknowledge his production.

Colt McCoy- I have two Colt McCoy thoughts for this article. The first has to do with his play on Sunday and I think, for the first time this year, I can say he was the main factor in the offenses ineffectiveness. When I re-watched the game a few times, I counted at least 8 throws that were bad.

He is doing a good job of limiting his turnovers but he is missing a ton of throws in various ways. High, low, long, wrong side of WR, short, he didn't get it done on Sunday and I am putting most of it on him for that game. Of the 24 incomplete passes I only put 3 or 4 in the drop category. His ball placement as a whole was also a big factor in the 7 defended passes that Oakland had and Colt needs to start putting it together and show the organization and the fans he's "THE" guy and not "A" guy.

The second thing about him that I noticed against Oakland was his body language and mannerisms. I think his intensity may be headed down the wrong path.

Playing the QB position is a touchy one when it comes to leadership and transferring energy to your team. He is starting to get frustrated too easily and that is transferring to his teammates. After every series the offense fails, he seems to get tighter and tighter and that is not a good thing.

You absolutely want your guys focused but you don't want them uptight. He needs to find the balance of focus and relaxed, so guys are playing fast and relaxed and not constantly thinking and stressing.

I don't know that he is nasty to anybody, but you know as well as I do that other people can feel your vibes, and units like teams can be destroyed by negative ones. He needs to make sure his

## Kibble & Bits: Week 6 Recap

Written by {ga=jta1975}

Thursday, October 20 2011 8:00 AM - Last Updated Wednesday, October 19 2011 7:07 PM

---

stays on the right side of the street with his emotions or his offense will never get 100% in sync.

Greg Little- Little had mixed reviews in his starting debut. He did make 6 catches for 72 yards but he was targeted 12 times so he needs to do his part in getting that percentage up. You can see that he is still a bit raw at the position. Some of those balls down field that he got his hands on, like the one in the 4th quarter down the left sideline, he needs to catch.

Consistently making catches down field in a crowd is one of the last things a WR gets comfortable with, and with Little's inexperience he needs to keep working on that part of his game. Those are the types of plays that will take time and reps in order to see results, but I do believe he can make them.

The type of play that he can excel at right now was also on display in that 4th quarter when he took the short pass in the middle, made a spin move, and ran through two defenders while bullying past another two defenders for a 13 yard gain. That is the physical, hard to tackle WR he was while at UNC, and the more time he gets to kick off the rust, the more you should see him making those plays on a regular bases.

Mike Adams- Adams is good football player individually and a great football player for a team. His versatility and team-first mentality is exactly what you want in your locker room. He also has a nose for the football that you can't teach. Whether it is catching a short kickoff and getting the ball out the 40 yard line or it is picking up a fumble, the ball always seems to find him and he usually makes the play.

Shawn Lauvao, Alex Mack, Jason Pinkston- I want to commend these guys for the game against the Raiders. They were great in pass protection and for the most part held their own in the run game. Richard Seymour and Tommy Kelly combined for 2 tackles and 1 QB hit, which is very good considering how much those two were controlling games as of late. Coming into the game the inside matchups had me worried but the young players held their own.

Shawn Lauvao does however need to stop with the penalties. He seems to get at least one a game and overall he has gotten two unsportsmen-like penalties for cleaning up piles. He needs to get a grip on that. We love tough linemen in Cleveland so keep that part up but this offense in particular doesn't need any help going backwards.

## Kibble & Bits: Week 6 Recap

Written by {ga=jta1975}

Thursday, October 20 2011 8:00 AM - Last Updated Wednesday, October 19 2011 7:07 PM

---

Pat Shurmur- It was disappointing to see the team making similar mistakes and having the same offensive issues coming out of the bye week. As head coach the responsibility is his and he didn't do a good job of fixing the offensive problems during the off week. I honestly am not as concerned about the outcome of that game as I am about seeing the same offensive pitfalls.

He should also listen and learn from Josh Cribbs getting upset. The reality of this team is that it has a limited amount of offensive players that defenses are worried about and Cribbs is one of those players. He shouldn't have to ask for the ball or complain about touches, he should be getting the ball. If it wasn't for that busted play where Colt McCoy found Mohamed Massaquoi down the sideline he would have the highest average per reception on the team at 13.1. Massaquoi's is 13.2 but we all know which one of those players will get a defense's attention.

Coach Shurmur needs to be more in tune with the players who can put points on the board and get the defense's attention. Sometimes coaches can get too cute, out thinking themselves while trying to feature specialized players, but the way you get a reputation is to have patterns of success. There is nothing wrong with running fewer plays or formations if you do it well.

You can't get tricky and fake a defense until you have formed some tendencies, so we need to get the ball to the playmakers in this early part of the season and we need to keep doing it until everyone expects it. Only then should you worry about changing it up. Personally, I think in the games leading up to the bye week, the offense was trying to be too unpredictable so we had way too many personnel groupings and were trying to spread the ball around too much.

Teams that go to the next level offensively do so by building on what they have already done, not necessarily being good at everything. We need to find out what it is that we can do really well and establish a name like that. Right now this team is struggling to find something they can do really well and that is when coaching makes a difference.

I am waiting for the offensive coaches to figure that out like the defensive staff has done already. The offensive staff needs to know what exactly they should and shouldn't do and play off of their strengths to form an identity. To me it is pretty clear the defensive coaches have a better grip on their identity than the offensive coaches do, and it is time for the head coach to make a difference.

## Kibble & Bits: Week 6 Recap

Written by {ga=jta1975}

Thursday, October 20 2011 8:00 AM - Last Updated Wednesday, October 19 2011 7:07 PM

---

I am not calling for the guy's head at all I am however calling for the guy to step it up and get it fixed.

### Around the League

\*NFL fans from cities like ours can't help but to look up to an organization like the Green Bay Packers with both envy and hope. Green Bay has built a team up through the draft and those players have taken them to the top of the NFL. The Packers are far from having a Super Bowl hang-over, they are still tearing up the league and aren't looking back.

\*I am surprised incidents like the one between Jim Swartz and Jim Harbaugh don't happen more often. Coaches try to act like it is one big fraternity but you know some of them can't stand each other. I guess most of them tend to bite their tongue because they know that is the way to get their million dollar payoff, but I guess an ex-player like Harbaugh still has the same fight in him that earned him the name Captain Comeback during his playing days and hell, he was already rich so what does he care about ruffling some feathers?

By the way, that was a great game this weekend. The 49ers are for real and so are the Lions. It is good to see some new faces creep closer to the top because it gives fans from all cities confidence that with the right people in place (players and management) good things will happen.

\*If you didn't catch it in my divisional update a few weeks back, the Ravens defense is back to the point-scoring-turnover machine of years past. In 5 games they have only given up 5 TDs on defense. Wow!

\*In case you don't play fantasy football and aren't in tune with league leaders, there are 6 QBs averaging over 300 passing yards a game passing including rookie sensation Cam Newton.....there are also two QBs in Tom Brady (360.5) and Drew Brees (358.7) who are averaging over 350 yards a game.

## Kibble & Bits: Week 6 Recap

Written by {ga=jta1975}

Thursday, October 20 2011 8:00 AM - Last Updated Wednesday, October 19 2011 7:07 PM

---

Only 7 teams average under 200, so to me the Browns being 4th in the league while giving up 192 yards passing a game is an even bigger accomplishment than I initially thought.....well on second thought when your 27th against the run giving up 129 yards a game rushing, teams don't you don't need to pass on you that often....

### Rookie Class

The Browns rookie class is holding its own when it comes to production. In fact... I would put the Browns 2011 class up against any other team and challenge them to show me who was making a bigger impact as a rookie class.

To date, Phil Taylor is 4th amongst all rookies in tackles and he is the top tackling rookie defensive lineman in the class. Jabaal Sheard is tied for 8th amongst all rookies and is also tied first amongst the DE position with Houston rookie J.J. Watt.

The top sack leaders in the rookie class are OLB Aldon Smith of the 49ers and OLB Von Miller of the Broncos. The Browns defensive linemen rookies each have 2 sacks which is good for a 7 way tie for 3rd place. Jabaal Sheard is also tied for 1st place in forced fumbles with 2.

I expect Greg Little's totals to sky rocket now that he is starting and not leaving the field at all. Starting should keep him right at the top of the list for receptions, if not give him the lead at some point during the year. Currently he is in a two way tie for 3rd place with 20 receptions on the year and only 9 behind the Bengals A.J. Green who has 29 so far this season.

Little has some work to do in order to catch A.J. Green's 4TDs, but I am sure Little will get some scores in bunches once he gets over the hump of scoring his first NFL TD and close the gap a bit.

## Kibble & Bits: Week 6 Recap

Written by {ga=jta1975}

Thursday, October 20 2011 8:00 AM - Last Updated Wednesday, October 19 2011 7:07 PM

---

Other than those players who play positions that can easily measure production, the Browns also start Jason Pinkston at LG. If you're trying to quantify his play I guess you can give him credit for his part in the Browns offensive line giving up only 9 sacks on the year, which is good for 4th best in the league.

FB Owen Marecic is the other rookie to start for the Browns in their inaugural season.

As you can see, this was another good draft Tom Heckert had for the Browns. The second year GM now has the ability to boast about drafting starters with his first 4 picks in 2010 and his first 3 in 2011. In total the Browns are starting 9 first or second year players this year which is a lot for any team. It is yet to be seen if they turn out to be quality starters but that is still an impressive accomplishment after seeing so many drafts wasted since Cleveland's return to football.

This is a youth movement we have not seen executed by previous management staffs in Cleveland and I am excited to see if it works, but I know many Clevelanders are anxious like me to see the day when the first round pick can't even get on the field in year one because the roster is so good. If those days get here we will finally be on our way to the top of the football totem pole where we belong.

That's all for now, be on the lookout for the Seahawks game preview toward the end of the week and.....Go Browns!

[FOLLOW ME ON TWITTER](#)