



For just the 46th straight year the Super Bowl will be Browns-less but there's still some Cleveland football to discuss this weekend. You'll hate where that discussion takes us. We'll also take a look at the Tigers being declared the 2012-2015 World Series champions and whether or not the Tribe should even field a team this season. And, yeah, I'll give you the Super Bowl winner, a final score and the inarguable reasons why I'm right (as usual) and I'll defend Kyrie Irving against the ignorant fools who pollute the local airwaves.

Only Lying When Their Lips Are Moving

The tired joke about being able to tell when lawyers are lying by whether or not they're talking also applies to general managers and front office personnel of professional sports franchises. The chances are if your GM replies to a question about whether this year's starting QB will be next year's starting QB by saying, "We'll evaluate that at the end of the year" or "As of now that's how it stands" then the situation has already been evaluated and it stands a certain way today because the real starter isn't on the roster yet.

No one in Pittsburgh or Green Bay or New England is going to need to evaluate their QB situation at the end of this season.

I'm clearly referring to the case of our Cleveland Browns and their QB situation. I believe, and I stated weeks and weeks ago, that Colt McCoy played his last game as a Cleveland Brown in that Thursday night loss to the Steelers.

I think the Browns have evaluated McCoy plenty and I think the brass finds him lacking in the ability to consistently make the throws he needs to make week in and week out. Brad McCoy did his son no favors with his whining to the Plain Dealer but let's be perfectly clear: if Colt McCoy was Aaron Rodgers then the Browns wouldn't give a shit about what his dad said or to whom he said it.

My point here is that you really shouldn't trust the words that you here coming out of Berea in terms of what their plans are for the QB position in 2012. But if you can't trust what they're telling you, how do you get any idea what they're going to do?

As is always the case, actions speak far louder than words and you can look back at the actions of the men running the Browns for an indication of how they're most likely to proceed. With that in mind, I believe there is a very good chance that the QB under center in September 2012 could be.....

Kevin Kolb.

Don't boo me, roll your eyes or grunt out a, "You've GOT to be kidding me". I know Kolb has been underwhelming in Phoenix after losing his job in Philadelphia when Mike Vick performed his Lazarus act in 2010. But that's part of the reason the Browns may be looking at Kolb. His value has probably never been lower and not all of that is Kolb's doing (or not doing, as the case may be).

Kolb dutifully sat behind Donovan McNabb for a couple years in Philadelphia before being handed the reins and losing them via injury to Vick. Vick never gave the back and Kolb was expendable. That's why he was dealt to Arizona for Dominique Rodgers-Cromartie and a 2nd round 2012 pick.

Why would the Browns be interested in a guy who was not significantly better than Cardinal backup John Skelton and who seems to be unable to stay on the field for an entire season? Well, is there an ex-Eagle player or coach that Mike Holmgren and Tom Heckert haven't had interest in?

I think H&H look at Kolb as a guy who's miscast in the Cardinals more vertical passing game engineered by Offensive Coordinator Mike Miller. Miller has a history with the Bills and Steelers (where he initially teamed up with Cardinals HC Ken Whisenhunt and Asst. head Coach Russ Grimm) and his offense isn't based much on West Coast principles.

H&H also clearly have man crushes on the Eagles' Andy Reid and his offensive philosophy and Browns Head Coach Pat Shurmur tutored Kolb during their time together in Philadelphia. It's not hard to see how the Browns, who are patterning (and I know it's hard to see and patterning or planning for that matter) their offensive approach off of Reid's Eagles system wouldn't be intrigued by Kolb. And it's not too difficult to make the leap that if Kolb's value is lower than it was last year that the Browns might be interested in packaging a 3rd round pick or some type of offer to Arizona to bring Kolb to Cleveland. Keep in mind the Browns also have multiple picks in the 4th round (their own at #5 and Atlanta's at #23) so they have the ammunition to get a deal done.

It's been addressed many times in the recent past, but Holmgren's biggest QB successes have not been 1st round, top five picks. He's had success with Brett Favre and Matt Hasselbeck specifically, and he poached each of those guys off of other rosters.

So you have Holmgren's history, Kolb's west coast experience and potential availability and the draft pick bullets to potentially get a deal done. That's where my money would go if I had to bet today on how the Browns were going to play this hand.

As to Kolb's potential and ability, I'm not sure what's up with him. He's going to be 28 before the season starts and he's got the 'right' height and weight profile in that he's 6'3" and 220lbs. He has the arm to make any throw you'd want out of a QB and he's a gifted runner.

The issue is despite the build-up he received in Philadelphia and the price Arizona paid to get him, Kolb was a 2nd draft pick in 2007 out of Houston who has pretty much played like a 2nd draft pick to date. He hasn't developed into a franchise QB and there are concerns he won't ever do so. He takes chances with the football that big-armed QBs will take, his accuracy hasn't been good enough and some criticize his ability to read and breakdown defenses.

That's not exactly screaming out "can't miss".

But it still wouldn't surprise me if the Browns aren't sold on RG3 or aren't willing to include more picks to go up and get him. And if that's the case I think Holmgren's history of grabbing guys off other rosters could lead them to believe that Kolb may be a guy who's been trumped by a freak QB in Philly and miscast in a foreign system in Arizona and that he could be a viable target as a QB candidate here in Cleveland next season.

If I'm wrong? I'm fine with that too.

Tigers Declared Winners of 2012-2015 World Series

I'm late the dance on this because the issue has been addressed here and everywhere else, but because my weekly glance back at the week in sports looks as much at the media and fan reaction as the events themselves, well, I can't help but laugh.

When do we figure out that moves like this, especially in baseball, aren't the end-all/be-all in regard to championships? Is it because the Heat won the NBA title last season? Is it because the Eagles are clear-cut favorites to win the Super Bowl next Sunday? Why is it so difficult to understand that these moves guarantee nothing?

Yeah, it'd be awful ice to be on the receiving end of the news that Prince Fielder signed here in Cleveland, but we've been down this road so many times before that we should know better than to even signal for the turn.

My rationale for not crowning the Tigers just yet is based on a few things:

1. They are a Justin Verlander elbow twinge from being an afterthought in the AL Central much less in the World Series sweepstakes. I'm not rooting for Verlander to get hurt and I'm not counting on it either, but he's thrown over 700 innings the last three years. You might say that shows he's durable and it does. He is durable. He's a stud. Maybe he's Roger Clemens in terms

of arm health and everything else when all is said and done. But he's nearing 29 years old and has thrown 1300+ innings in what's been basically a 6 year career. He hasn't endured the major league arm injury rite of passage and the Tigers are not equipped to deal with it if it happens.

Doug Fister was terrific after being dealt to the Tigers last season. But I wouldn't count on that level of production from him again all year. Rick Porcello has been up and down and the Tiger bullpen is a mixed bag of meh and bleh.

1. 2. You also have to consider that Fielder, while a terrific hitter in any park, is also replacing a terrific and productive hitter in Victor Martinez, who was lost for likely the entire 2012 season with a serious knee injury. My crack data analysts tell me that Fielder had a WAR (wins above replacement) number of ~5 last season, meaning having Fielder as opposed to a solid AAA or "Four A" type player would yield five more wins during the year. But if he's replacing Martinez how much better are the Tigers than last season? They may be nominally better on the field but you have to take into account the value Martinez has in that clubhouse and as a calming voice of leadership on that team.

I simply don't see the Fielder acquisition as a nail in the Indians coffin at all. The Tribe's issue is with the Tribe and has been clear since last season ended. The Indians, whether the Tigers signed Fielder or not and whether the Tigers lost Martinez or not, were 15 games behind Detroit when 2011 ended and they need to get better.

They have to have improvement and development from Lonnie Chisenhall and Jason Kipnis if they want to compete in the division no matter whom else is in it. They need for there to be limited or no regression from their bullpen. They need to see no regression from Justin Masterson. They need to see Ubaldo Jimenez return to his 2010 form. They need to see Shin-Soo Choo return to his 2010 form. They need to get 700 healthy at bats from the player now known as Grady Hafner. They need to get 20 wins combined from Derek Lowe and Josh Tomlin.

If the Indians get this stuff they'll contend regardless of who's playing in Detroit. If they don't then it never really mattered. Every baseball season has a surprise or two. Masterson qualifies as such a surprise when you look back at 2011. Maybe David Huff is Justin Masterson in 2012. Maybe, beyond all signs pointing otherwise, Matt LaPorta figures things out and becomes a viable corner infielder and offensive contributor. Maybe Aaron Cunningham was in dire need of a change of scenery and nails down a corner outfield position.

Baseball seasons aren't seamless and fluid. One injury, one player developing at a crucial time can change the direction of an entire season. I'm telling you that the issues the Indians faced before last week and the issues they face now are the same. Nothing has changed. If they take care of their business and get out of guys what they need to get out of them they can play meaningful September games and they can contend for the division.

They have almost no margin for error. But they never do.

Pigskin Peek Predicts

The Giants over the Patriots in the Super Bowl next Sunday.

I just think you have to be able to score with the Patriots and right now Eli Manning is on a heater that gives the Giants a legit chance. You look at the playoff games and the last couple of regular season games and you'll see that, despite his legendary status in the game, Tom Brady falls short over that time period to Manning.

I think the game will again be close and it could come down to a final possession but I like the Giants defense doing just enough with two weeks to prepare to maybe win the turnover battle and make the difference.

I have no clue why the Giants can't run the football with their stable of backs but the Patriot defense might be the tonic for those running game woes too.

The Giants have the better defense and the hotter QB. That equates to a win. The fact it'll be a nail-biter is a testament to the greatness of Brady and Bill Belichick, but a 31-28 type NYG win is what I'm looking forward to seeing.

Context Anyone?

I heard 923TheFan's Ken Silverstein on Saturday morning taking Kyrie Irving to task for the rookie's 32-point game Friday night. Silverstein was ranting about Irving's post game interview in which Irving said he felt he was lacking energy and that he felt like he was taking possessions off early in the ballgame before going OFF in the 4th quarter.

Silverstein's expert opinion was that Irving shouldn't take plays, possessions or quarters off. He was off base in how he interpreted the words and the situation. Irving wasn't condoning taking plays off or saying he was consciously not giving effort. He was saying that's how it *felt* to him. Irving was saying that he was disjointed and too passive and that he realized that later in the game. He wasn't pacing himself though that was Silverstein's inference.

It'd be great if guys like this to get off Irving's back for the time being. The kid is 19, played almost no college ball, is now matching up every night against the very best athletes in the world, has to figure out how and when to get his points while involving and engaging others and is doing it without being in the very best shape endurance wise because of his injuries last season at Duke and the shortened training camp caused by the NBA labor stoppage.

Seriously, let the kid play 40 games before you tell incorrectly interpret what he's saying to begin with and make some judgment on his effort.

I know it's hard to fill three hours of a radio show but the guys at 923TheFan are really going the TMZ route in order to fill their time. I was hoping they'd obliterate WKNR but it's just more of the same unlistenable crap. Thank God for podcasts, Pandora and Spotify.

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