



Coming into the 2011 season, it was surmised by most that the Browns and Madden coverboy Peyton Hillis would embrace in a harmonious hug and ink a deal to make the previously-unheralded RB the face of the future.

However, in what would prove to be one of their wisest moves, Heckert did not agree to the likely exotic demands of a one-hit wonder. This was followed by ineffective running, mystery ailments, random agent changes, secret player meetings, and locker room discord. Seemingly no one was on Hillis' side, and for players to turn on a fellow player during a battle with management, said player has to really piss them off.

Whatever the reasons, Hillis was allowed to walk away and sign a feeble one-year contract as a backup (thus trumpeting what the rest of the league thought of his value), leaving the Browns with a massive hole.

On draft day, the Browns listened to persistent rumors that Tampa wanted to trade with Minnesota to leapfrog Cleveland and steal Alabama's Trent Richardson, seen as far and away the best RB prospect in the draft. So they traded a couple mid-to-late picks to move up one spot and secure themselves their Franchise Back - if such a thing truly exists in this day and age.

The addition of Richardson instantly transforms the RB spot from a gaping, oozing, festering wound into a position of perceived strength. Trent comes into the league with the supposition that he will soon be a Top 10-type player, if he doesn't become so immediately. With Jackson back from his 2011-killing injury and 2 players with some potential fighting it out for #3, the Browns might be able to throw an arsenal of runners at other teams that will make them actually notice they exist.

Regarding The Running Backs

Trent Richardson - Rookie/1st round - Alabama - 5'10/224 - 22 years old - (jersey #33) - It's rare for the #3 overall pick to be getting so little buzz, but I think the reason for that is twofold: 1 - The floor for Richardson is perceived to be very high, that even if he isn't "great", he'll be "good", and this leads to number 2 - Since he's "safe", the focus will be on the more boom-or-bust draft picks like Weeden and Gordon.

Obviously, Richardson will be the clear-cut starter, and the only drama for Training Camp/Preseason will be how many carries he gets.

Marcellus Wiley on one of those insufferable ESPN shows said he didn't expect much from Brandon Weeden this year because "*all he'll be doing is handing the ball off.*" While I think that is a massively lazy attempt at analysis (which is par for the course from national media types when discussing the Browns), I do agree that Richardson will get a TON of carries.

Win-now-burn-him-out-by-the-end-of-his-first-contract carries.



ELEPHANTS

Larger than the moon