

Let the games begin baby. March Madness is here. And FIVE Ohio teams made the field! Cleveland State, Ohio State, Akron, Dayton, and Xavier. Should make for a very fun Thursday/Friday for all of us. Not quite as fun was the news out of Miami, FL that Browns WR Donte Stallworth was involved in a fatal accident Saturday morning when the car he was driving hit and killed a pedestrian. In the Weekend Wrap, Peeks hits on all this, as well as the Cavs wins over the Kings and the Knicks on Friday and Sunday night.



Let the Games Begin

Akron is in. They travel to Portland, OR to take on Gonzaga as a 13th seed.

Ohio State is in. They earn an 8 seed in the Midwest region and a game with Siena.

Cleveland State is in. CSU stays in the Midwest as a 13th seed and take on Wake Forest Friday.

Nearly 5% of the NCAA tournament field is comprised of 'local' Ohio teams providing NE Ohio hoops fans with a lot of rooting interest and options as the tournament gets under way on Thursday afternoon. Add in Dayton and Xavier and Ohio is extremely well represented in the tourney this March.

Akron and CSU reached the field of 64 by virtue of winning their conference tournaments and OSU got there by way of a solid regular season followed by a couple impressive wins in the conference tournament that propelled them into the Big 10 championship game where they lost to Purdue 64-61.

The NCAA tournament is great by itself. Add in some local flavor and this is 'Must See TV' starting Thursday.

Just Terrific

I had forgotten Donte Stallworth was a member of the Cleveland Browns until this weekend. That's not difficult to do when you consider he may go down, after Andre

Rison, as the worst free agent signing in Browns history. I mean, if there's one who turns out worse than Stallworth I hope I'm dead and buried long before the guy suits up in a Cleveland uniform. Word out of Miami is that Stallworth was involved in a fatal accident Saturday morning when the car he was driving hit and killed a pedestrian.

That's a horrible story regardless of the circumstances and condolences go out to the family of the deceased. It's made worse here when you consider how high the anti-Stallworth sentiment runs in Cleveland these days after his first season in Cleveland.

Stallworth was a joke after signing a multi-year, multi-million dollar contract before last season. Nagging, phantom injuries that seemingly came out of nowhere, little to no production as the receiver expected to help free up Braylon Edwards, and his name is now continuously scrolling across the bottom of the ESPN ticker for this.

Pending the outcome of a police investigation into the

fatal accident, Stallworth will wear this incident for the rest of his career and the rest of his life. Let's hope Stallworth is stronger mentally than he is physically. Because that's a big burden to carry.

Play the Game

We want to believe in the Cleveland Browns.

We want to believe that Eric Mangini and George Kokinis know what they're doing and history may show that they do. We also want to believe that the organization is dialed in and does things the right way. History may not judge that one quite so favorably based on the way the Joe Jurevicius release was handled this past week.

Let me make this perfectly clear; I have no problem whatsoever with the release of Joe Jurevicius from

a football standpoint. None at all. Jurevicius was a fine player. He made the tough, chain-moving catches and was a willing and able blocker. He was a solid teammate and excellent in the community.

But Jurevicius is also heading toward 34 years old and is coming off SEVEN knee surgeries in the last year.

Read that again and digest the important numbers; 34 years old and seven knee surgeries in the last year. Add in another number, about \$2.4million dollars Jurevicius would have been made had he remained on the roster, and it's clear that from a football standpoint this was the correct move.

The issue is, as usual with the Browns, how it was communicated. Jurevicius was given the typical cut and paste blurb via a press release where his being waived was announced along with the typical,

"We appreciate...., we wish..." boiler plate crap.

The Browns had an opportunity for a lay up to score a few points with their fans based on Jurevicius being a local product and well respected here in NE Ohio. How hard would have it been to convert this roster move into something more?

How about something like:

"Joe Jurevicius was a valuable member of this organization both on the field and off and the Cleveland Browns appreciate the contributions the native Clevelander made. Given the current economic conditions the Browns are looking to maximize their payroll flexibility and after multiple conversations with Joe's representatives we've agreed to release Joe so that he may pursue playing opportunities with another organization.

We've made it clear to Joe that the door is always open if he wishes to discuss future opportunities with the organization down the road."

Even if it isn't.

The organization had an opportunity to get back in touch with their fan base by appealing to their fondness for a hometown kid that gave all he had and received a staph infection and seven surgeries for his effort while never saying a demeaning word.

They came up short again from an organizational standpoint. It's nothing that winning won't erase, but it's not only on the field where the Browns need to add some talent.

Etcetera

- Not a bad week and road trip for the Cavaliers huh?

They knocked off the Knicks Sunday to run their record to 53-13 on the season. But before they did that let's quickly revisit the past 6 days:

The Cavs spotted the Los Angeles Clippers a 19 point 4th quarter lead before coming back and completely demoralizing the Clips in a four point win on Tuesday night. They then outran and outscored Phoenix on Thursday night before making another furious 4th quarter comeback Friday night against Sacramento to force overtime and eventually get the win that game and earn a sweep of the western roadie.

That's all.

Been saying it for months; 1995 Cleveland Indians. That's the image this team invokes and the western trip solidified that opinion. The Cavs are winning in a variety of ways, one more improbable than the next.

Now, getting down 19 to the Clippers and 10 to the Kings in the 4th quarter is clearly not the optimal way to go about things. But the bottom line is the Cavs found a way, despite not playing well, to put those games in the 'win' column.

It's time for the Cavs to make some hay at home over the next couple weeks where they'll play seven of their next eight games.