

Riddle Me This: The Year That Was

Written by {ga=jerryroche}

Tuesday, December 07 2010 5:00 AM - Last Updated Monday, December 06 2010 9:43 AM



Almost a full year ago, we listed the top 10 Cleveland sports questions for 2010. Three were related to the Indians, three to the Cavaliers and four to the Browns, who were in the middle of a regime change at the time.

And now, as Father Time gets ready to flip the calendar again, he's given us all the answers.

What follows is a reprint of those once-burning questions, along with the answers to each. I've also listed my actual comments at the time the questions were first posed. (Word for word. You could look it up.) Allow me a brief moment to bask in the glory of my predictions...

10. What kind of manager will Manny Acta prove to be?

ANSWER: Acta brought a wide-open optimism to the Indians that was a refreshing change from Eric Wedge's stoic simmering. Yet the Indians still ended up with a 69-93 record -- just four games better than 2009 -- and were a distant fourth in the A.L. Central.

WHAT I SAID ON NEW YEAR'S: "It really doesn't matter, because baseball managers really don't matter. The truth is that Acta will need to be nothing short of a miracle worker for the Indians to compete this season. Nothing in his history indicates that he is."

0-10 ACCURACY: 8.5

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9. What will the Indians' starting rotation look like?

ANSWER: In April, the starters were Jake Westbrook, Fausto Carmona, Jensen Lewis and David Huff. In September, they were Carmona, Josh Tomlin, Mitch Talbot and Carlos Carrasco. During the course of the season, 10 different pitchers started games.

WHAT I SAID ON NEW YEAR'S: "We fans may see as many as 18 to 20 pitchers start at least one game over the course of the season; and the September starting rotation probably won't look anything like the April rotation."

0-10 ACCURACY: 6.0

8. Will the Indians finish above .500?

ANSWER: No. Not even close.

WHAT I SAID ON NEW YEAR'S: "The Tribe will be mediocre at best. Las Vegas lists the team's chances of winning the World Series at 200-1. No other team has worse odds. Sad but true."

0-10 ACCURACY: 7.5

7. Who is going to start at QB for the Browns next season?

ANSWER: The starter out of training camp was Jake Delhomme, but due to injuries, all three new QBs -- Delhomme, Seneca Wallace and Colt McCoy -- have had their chances to start.

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WHAT I SAID ON NEW YEAR'S: "Brady Quinn and Derek Anderson have been largely unimpressive -- so unimpressive that you have to wonder if either has a future with the Browns. The only thing that we can say for sure is that Peyton Manning and Drew Brees are out of the running."

0-10 ACCURACY: 8.5

6. Who will be the starting power forward for the Cavaliers in the NBA playoffs?

ANSWER: Antawn Jamison, traded from the Washington Wizards with about two months left in the regular season.

WHAT I SAID ON NEW YEAR'S: "Pundits have thrown around names like Antawn Jamison, Anthony Randolph and Troy Murphy. I'd put my money on Jamison, who the fading Wizards might agree to trade."

0-10 ACCURACY: 10.0

5. Is Mike Brown capable of head-coaching a team to an NBA title?

ANSWER: Not yet. And, since Cavs owner Dan Gilbert fired him after the playoffs, we may never find out.

WHAT I SAID ON NEW YEAR'S: "Not so far. If he cannot win a title with the present roster, some doubt must be cast on his ability to ever win one."

0-10 ACCURACY: 10.0

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4. What impact will Mike Holmgren have on the Browns?

ANSWER: Interestingly, not as much as everybody (including me) predicted. At least not yet. He gave general manager Tom Heckert the power to make personnel decisions (including the college draft), and he retained head coach Eric Mangini. On the other hand, he made it clear to Heckert that he liked McCoy in the draft. He's also established a front office with an actual chain of command, and he has accepted the responsibility of being the team's lead spokesman in management matters -- both of which have been missing for a long, long time.

WHAT I SAID ON NEW YEAR'S: "The easy answer to this question is 'a major impact.' Holmgren's history tells us that he has had a major impact on every NFL team that he's ever been associated with."

0-10 ACCURACY: 7.0

3. Will Eric Mangini stay or go?

ANSWER: He stayed, though many NFL observers believe that Holmgren still has him on a short leash.

WHAT I SAID ON NEW YEAR'S: "Contrary to the opinion of many major sportswriters (like John Clayton of ESPN), I might bet a few bob on Holmgren giving Mangini one more year to prove that 'the Mangini process' can mesh with 'the Holmgren philosophy' -- whatever that may be."

0-10 ACCURACY: 10.0

2. Who will the Browns draft in the first round?

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ANSWER: After the K.C. Chiefs took safety Eric Berry ahead of us, the Browns picked Florida cornerback Joe Haden -- a choice that has worked out very well so far, Haden having been named Defensive Rookie of the Month for November.

WHAT I SAID ON NEW YEAR'S: "The more intelligent boards -- to which I subscribe -- have the Browns taking safety Eric Berry of Tennessee."

0-10 ACCURACY: 2.5

1. Will [the Traitorous Scuzball Who Shall Remain Nameless] stay in Cleveland?

ANSWER: No. The bum took his talents to South Beach, creating the most controversial sports story of the decade when he paid for an hour of ESPN's air time to broadcast "The Decision."

WHAT I SAID ON NEW YEAR'S: "A recent rumor: the Miami Heat clear enough cap space to make a run at having LeBron join Dwyane Wade, who's one of LeBron's closest friends. I can't see that working -- but I may be partaking of too much wishful thinking."

0-10 ACCURACY: 8.0

Overall: Wishful thinking, indeed. Even when we're right, the results are disastrous for Cleveland fans.

OVERALL ACCURACY: 7.6 (close, but no cigar)

COMING IN TWO WEEKS: "Eleven Questions for 2011" -- Questions about Cleveland

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professional sports that promise to be answered during the next calendar year. Reader submissions are welcome.