



The year 2010 might have been a little short on good news for Cleveland sports fans, but it was far from uneventful.

That's why this year's countdown is a little different, rebranded from "Top 10 sports stories" to "10 biggest storylines."

Here you'll find the good, bad and ugly that made 2010 another memorable year in Cleveland sports. Some spots on our countdown will make you dream about the future, some might give you nightmares. But it's all here -- our send-off to 2010, as we wait with equal parts anticipation and trepidation for what 2011 will bring.

Over the last five days of the year, our top 10 Cleveland sports storylines will be unveiled here, leading up to No. 1 on New Year's Eve. Check back daily as the countdown continues.

3. Colt McCoy emerges as Browns' starting QB

October 17

He wasn't supposed to play this year. He was supposed to dutifully stand on the sideline, clutch a clipboard and learn.

Then Jake Delhomme sprained his ankle. Then Seneca Wallace sprained his. And Colt McCoy was pressed into action in an emergency role -- against, of all teams, Pittsburgh. That Oct. 17 start went about as well as could be expected from a third-round pick seeing his first NFL action against one of the league's best defenses.

McCoy went 23-for-33 through the air with a touchdown pass and two picks. The 28-10 loss didn't look so good on the scoreboard, nor did the two interceptions, but the record also showed that he completed 70 percent of his passes and compiled an 80.5 passer rating.

The next two weeks, he helped lead the Browns to upsets over New Orleans and New England, battled the Jets to a draw for 74 minutes and held a second-half lead in Jacksonville. McCoy was gathering street cred at an impressive rate when he sprained his ankle late in the loss to the Jaguars and was sidelined for three weeks.

The Browns have lost both games since his return, but even with a dud of a performance against Baltimore this past Sunday, he's almost certainly shown enough to be the Browns' starting quarterback heading into training camp next summer.

If you're in the camp that thinks native New Mexican McCoy can't hack it in bitter cold December Ohio weather, be prepared to gnash your teeth again next December, because he's probably going to get the chance. He's Mike Holmgren's pick, and Holmgren takes a lot of pride in his ability to develop quarterbacks.

And Holmgren did take another kid from down South and turn him into a pretty good QB in cold weather. Just sayin'.