You knew when Brandon Weeden managed to not get trapped under a giant American flag during pre game that this Sunday was going to be a better day for the rookie QB than last Sunday was. To be fair, the only way it could have been worse would involve death or dismemberment, but Weeden actually looked like a competent NFL quarterback for periods of time against the Bengals. This week the part of The Goat was played by Browns defenders who apparently forgot how to tackle over the last seven days. That was the difference in the Bengals 31-24 Sunday in Cincinnati.

And this is the Weekend Wrap. It's Browns-centric this weekend because, the way I figure it, if the Indians ownership, front office, coaching staff and players don't care about the last two weeks of the 2012 MLB season, well, neither should we.

Muy Bien

That may not have been precisely what the Browns envisioned out of the quarterback position on Sunday, but it was a hell of a lot closer to it than last week's abortion. Weeden was far more poised and made far better decisions this week against the Bengals than he did last week. Weeden was 26-37 for 322 yards, two TDs and, perhaps most pleasing, no interceptions. It makes no difference whatsoever that some of those throws and some of those yards came when the Bengals were more than willing to concede each because Weeden did a nice job Sunday in getting the ball away quickly and cleanly and, for the most part, on target.

His first TD pass was a dump off to Trent Richardson who did all the work in weaving and running through Bengals defenders on a pretty run, but his second TD pass of the day, on a deep crossing route or skinny post to Greg Little, was a thing of beauty. Weeden dealt calmly

with the pressure as his pocket collapsed, stepped up into what was left of that pocket and made a strong throw to Little despite being crowded enough that he couldn't follow through.

No matter. Weeden has plenty of arm and the throw was not only dead on but Little actually held on for the easy TD that brought the Browns back into the game, for however briefly that may have been the case.

There weren't too many other throws down the field on the day but Weeden managed the game, took what was given, took a few shots and made the most of that approach by utilizing Richardson as well.

Richardson was a monster, a beast, a stud, whatever you want to call him. 19 carries for 109 yards and a TD (a dazzling 32-yard jaunt through seemingly the entire Bengals defense) as well as four catches for 36 yards and a TD. Richardson, also putting a miserable debut last week behind him, showed it all Sunday. He demonstrated speed, vision, strength and a nose for the end zone, all of which he was heralded for coming out of Alabama.

If that's 'ordinary', as Jim Brown and Rey Maualuga claim it is, give me eight years of that ordinary stuff and then let's have an ordinary party in Canton five years after Richardson retires when they ordinarily induct HoF players. If TRich stays healthy it's only going to be better. Without benefit of a pre-season game or carry Richardson walked into a buzz saw last weekend and quickly figured out just how fast the NFL game is compared to NCAA football. He leaned quickly though and he made some adjustments Sunday that saw him get to the hole quicker and then make a man miss. Last Sunday Richardson hesitated and waited, looking for the Browns OL to open a hole like his Alabama linemen did against Florida International.

Not going to happen on Sundays and, to his credit, Richardson figured that out and had a huge day Sunday.

Can we give Weeden the same benefit of the doubt and learning curve? We can and we will all year. The difference for me is knowing Trent Richardson was a 'special' player when he was drafted in April. Weeden will better in November than he is today, but 'special' is never how I would have described his college career nor his NFL potential.

More good?

- ·I didn't hear Mitchell Schwartz's name called once all day.
- ·Toward the end of the day the Browns didn't stupidly take Richardson off the field on 3rd down (although it could be that he hasn't firmed up his blitz protection skills as of yet)

- ·John Hughes was getting after it all day and the Browns defense did another nice job of getting pressure on the QB.
- ·Phil Dawson is a bad-ass.

Muy Mal

Good thing Joe Haden wasn't needed Sunday. I mean, it's not like Bengals receivers were running free in the Browns secondary all day long Sunday.

That was brutal. And not only do I attribute a good deal of the difficulty in covering AJ Green and the other Bengals receivers to Haden's suspension, but part of the issue with missed tackles as well. Not only is Haden a sure tackler but his ability to cover one on one frees up safeties to position themselves where they prefer to play rather than provide more help to overmatched CBs and perhaps be out of position for plays elsewhere on the field.

Now that I've hung Joe Haden's absence out there, let's also be sure to note that the Browns tackling, positioning aside, was atrocious. Bengals receivers (including Benjarvus Green-Ellis) had 318 yards receiving and I'd bet damn near half of it came after the catch. As a matter of fact, Andrew Hawkins may have run about 75 yards on his 50-yard TD catch that gave the Bengals a 31-17 lead five minutes into the 4th quarter.

The Browns front four actually held Green-Ellis in check and didn't allow him much more than what he typically gets against everyone, but the linebackers and DBs were pathetic in terms of tackling Sunday. That needs to improve regardless of whether Haden is playing or not.

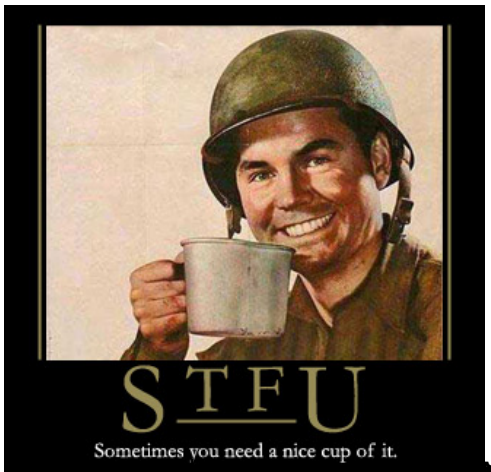
Some of the other very bad:

- ·How many more times will we get to see a Browns QB complete a three yard pass on 3rd and 8? Better yet, who the hell is the genius that drew up the four yard slant from the Bengals 11-yard line with less than a minute to play? And why would Weeden throw that football knowing the very best that could come of it is a very short game and 25 seconds coming off the clock? That was ridiculous.

- ·When will we actually see these 'Yards after Catch' things that we keep hearing about? If you're going to base your passing game off YAC shouldn't you have a guy or two on the roster capable of earning them?
- ·Mondays move faster than Josh Cribbs does these days.
- ·Chris Ogbonnaya, you are a 3rd string specialty back at best. You should thank Jeebus and the Gods above for every opportunity you get to catch a football and cash a check. Those opportunities will end if you put too many more footballs on the ground.

- ·Weeden needs to look off his receivers more than he does now. I always get a kick out of NFL commentators and fans noting how it takes time and reps before QBs do that when all I hear on Saturdays is how the accomplished college QBs are adept at looking off receivers and coming back to a guy who's open. Do you lose this ability and skill when you cross over to the NFL? I know defenses are schematically different and faster, but the ability to look off receivers should not be a completely new concept.
- ·Joe Thomas was more conspicuous Sunday, due to his failings, than Mitchell Schwartz.
- ·Owen Marecic sucks. I'm not sure how to candy coat that or say it any differently. He's useless catching the football and, while he's a willing blocker, he's not athletic enough to seek guys out n space and lay a hat on them. End of story. Brad Smelley is a lightweight next to Marecic, but if he can add a pass catching threat to the offense and get in the way of some defenders than I'd rather see him at FB.
- ·Where is Jordan Cameron?
- ·At some point TJ Ward needs to stop looking for kill shots and start covering someone.
- ·I'm disgusted with myself for feeling better about this loss than I probably should. It wasn't a complete abomination like last week and I really shouldn't be buoyed by that. Losses are losses and for good times they all mean the same thing. There are no degrees of acceptability. For the better part of 13 years we've been telling ourselves that there's something to build in on most losses. And all those losses have built thus far are more losses and several regime changes and the reset button being hit. It's gotten old.

STFU Award Winner



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