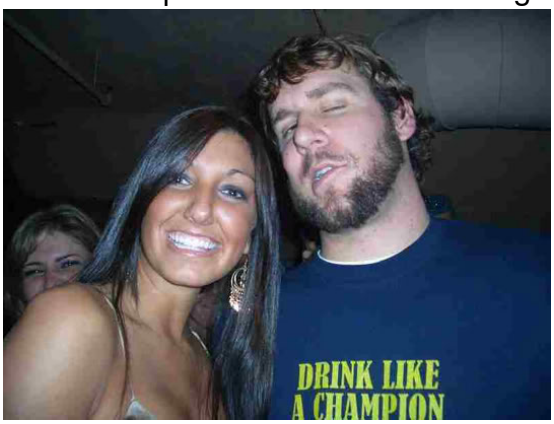
It's been eleven months since the Christmas Eve Debacle last year that saw the Browns lose 41-0 on their home field to the arch rival Steelers. The Browns are talking like a team hell bent on revenge, and one that plans to give the Steelers their best shot in this revenge game. But talk is cheap. Can the Browns avenge last years disaster? The Rhino is here with the preview.



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During the 11 months since last year's Christmas Eve debacle, the Cleveland Browns have said a lot of things about the Pittsburgh Steelers. These statements range from Phil Savage's remarks last June about "doing some damage to Pittsburgh for a change," to Braylon Edwards' comments this week about the team's intention to "coming after their (butts)."

Talk's cheap. Now it's time to stand and deliver. The question is, can they? Personally, I doubt it.

Sure, the Pittsburgh Steelers are a mediocre team. They're 3-6, and haven't won a game on the road all season. However, they have one of the AFC's leading rushers in Willie Parker and ranking among the top in total offense. While Pittsburgh's defensive unit hasn't been as dominant as in years past, it's still pretty formidable, particularly against the run.

So how did they end up tied for last in the AFC North? Turnovers are a big part of the answer. The Steelers have turned the ball over 24 times, which is --believe it or not--even more than the Browns have. The Steelers' -8 turnover margin ties them with the Browns and Raiders for last place in the AFC . The Steelers are also a different football team outside of Heinz Field. They have yet to win a game on the road this season, and while they've averaged over 30 points per game in each of their home appearances, the Steelers are averaging only 16 points per game on the road.

Of course, it's hard to know how much of a factor Pittsburgh's road woes will be today, when they play in front of a crowd that, if last year's game is any indication, will probably be about evenly divided between Cleveland and Pittsburgh fans. The fact that the Browns haven't beaten the Steelers here since 2000 and own one of the league's worst home records

suggests that you probably shouldn't count on Pittsburgh's road woes being much of a factor this afternoon.

I don't think the Browns are expecting the Steelers to do anything differently on offense than they've done in the past. The key to making it all work for the Steelers is their ability to run the ball, and they still do that pretty well. With the retirement of Jerome Bettis, Willie Parker has become more of a complete Steelers-type running back . He's got the speed to get outside, but he's not afraid to stick a shoulder into people.

Today's game may well come down to whether the Browns can stop Parker's onslaught. If you watched him romp for a career high 213 yards against the Saints last week, you'll probably have your doubts. I know that I do. If you think the glass is half full, you'll probably point out that Parker is among those Steelers who appear to be the most daunted by the absence of home cookin'. Parker averages almost 130 yards per game at home, but less than 60 yards per game on the road, and has yet to put together back-to-back 100 yard games this season.

Ben Roethlisberger struggled during the first part of the season, but he appears to have settled down and has played pretty well over the past five weeks . He's 3-0 lifetime against the Browns, and unless they can somehow figure out a way to get some pressure on him, I doubt you'll see the kind of mistakes that plagued him earlier this year.

Drew Brees passed for almost 400 yards against the Steelers last week, and the Saints 517 yards in total offense demonstrates that you can move the ball against the Steelers, but the Browns better be firing on all cylinders if they expect to do that. With Droughns nursing a sprained foot and unlikely to be much of a factor even if he does play, the Browns may be even more one dimensional than usual. You know that the Steelers, who currently rank 3rd in the AFC in both sacks and interceptions , are licking their chops at the prospect of coming after Charlie Frye again.

I hope I'm wrong again, but I think that Pittsburgh still has Cleveland's number. What about all the talk from the Browns? Sorry, but it's just that. I look for Pittsburgh to bust out of its road blues in a big way today. Pittsburgh 24, Browns 13.