The Mitch Man checks back in with us on this Wednesday afternoon with his latest version of "Random Thoughts" ... a piece in which he looks back at the previous weeks Browns game and also takes a look around the NFL. This week, Mitch eats a little crow on Derek Anderson and Jerome Harrison, talks about the Browns dynamic (did I just say that?) offense, begs for a fix to the run defense, and makes the argument that this years Browns ... yes this years Browns ... can go to the playoffs. Playoffs? Playoffs?

Imagine, if you will, a world of suffering and pain that has endured for longer than Moses had to wander in the desert. A world of dashed hopes and shattered dreams. A world of sports teams too terrible for words or more heartbreaking than a more generous god would allow.

A world of "The Drive", "The Shot", "The Fumble", Jose Mesa in the ninth, "Red Right 88", The '94 Baseball Strike, Art Modell, two OSU losses to Florida for national championships in the same year.

And then imagine that one day you wake up, and your baseball team is one win away from the World Series despite a payroll ranked 23rd. That your basketball team is about to begin the season as the returning Eastern Conference Champions, playing with the greatest player in the game. That your favorite college football team is ranked #1 in a rebuilding year.

And that your professional football team is competitive, with an offense that is one of the best in the league.

You have entered...

The Cleveland Sports Twilight Zone.

I Must Always Gripe About Something

It's a habit I just can't break.

Now, I could gripe about that terrible defense (and trust me...that's coming)...but that's like complaining about the fact that Paul Byrd can't throw as hard as Sabathia or Carmona: It goes into the "No Shite, Sherlock" category.

No...let's pick on someone that truly deserves it due to his smugness and his cluelessness. And while that could imply that I'm going to bitch about Manny Ramirez, I have another smug, clueless person in mind...

Let's Gripe About That Idiot Mitch Cyrus!

Last week, I stated, *"Anderson has the accuracy of Joba Chamberlein with a face full of midges"...*

Derek Anderson completed 72% of his passes on Sunday.

A couple of weeks ago I said that Anderson had *"th e vision of John Daly five hours after walking into a Hooters with an open bar tab"...*

Derek Anderson repeatedly hit the right receiver at the right time, and at least twice threw the ball away rather than risk an interception.

On Sunday morning, I implied that amongst Phil Savage's mistakes outside of the first round were Jerome Harrison and Lawrence Vickers...

Both of whom had exceptional games on Sunday.

Lat week, I made comments about NyQuill Jackson having NEVER made a play behind the line of scrimmage...

D'Qwell makes an incredible open field tackle on a screen pass to Ronnie Brown five yards behind the line of scrimmage: One that would have resulted in a huge gain had D'Qwell missed.

On the other hand, D'Qwell was still pretty useless other than that, so I'm still tending to place that one in the "Blind Squirrel: Meet Acorn" department.

Yes, it is that kind of incredible insight and miraculous forecasting ability that may force me to change the name of this weekly feature to "Babblings From Nostra-Dumbass".

Therefore...in order to give a HUGE assist to the Cleveland Indians in Game 5 tomorrow night, I'm going to complain about how badly C.C. Sabathia has stunk up

the joint thus far in the playoffs. He has looked nothing like a Cy Young winner, and all too much like Charlie Nagy...nervously picking at the corners. Perhaps the Indians front office knew what they were doing when they paid big money for an extension for Travis Hafner, but no real progress on shelling out mega-bucks for C.C. If this is what they Indians can expect from their investment, they would be better trading C.C. next year to some National League team while they still can. That way, they'll get some good players out of it, while still having Fausto Carmona as the staff ace, along with all of the other good young arms Shapiro and his farm system have been developing.

There. Don't you all feel better now, knowing I've just about made it an iron pipe lock that C.C. will turn in a masterful performance tomorrow?

Do the Browns Have an Offense, or What?

This offense is definitely developing into something very special.

What was shown this week, probably more than any other, was how much of their success is a direct result of the job Phil Savage did on FINALLY stocking up on the offensive line. One sack of Anderson against a very good front seven. 116 yards rushing from Jason Wright and Jerome Harrison. Repeatedly stepping up on third down situations.

They have been amazing...and it's only going to get better as Thomas continues to learn (no sacks or pressures given up by him against the Fins), and Tucker gets back into playing condition. I need to give props to Seth McKinney and Hank Fraley as well. They've been the forgotten men in all the praise towards Thomas and Steinbach, but they have done yeoman's work this year. Last year, the pressure on the QB always seemed to come up the middle as Andruzzi and Coleman were constantly overmatched. This year? 180 degree turnaround. And just think what it would be like if LeCharles Bentley really can come back and make a contribution this year.

Jerome Harrison has made it so he will never find his way back onto the Travis Wilson Memorial Inactive List again. How could Romeo have left him off the roster every week, based on his performance on Sunday? He's by far the fastest back the Browns have, and showed enough strength to break tackles as well. He also did well in the receiving department on his one screen pass...and should be out on the field in third down situations as much as possible, even after Jamal returns from his injury.

On the other hand...if Jerome is 5'9", as listed on the roster...I'm 6'8" and can post up LeBron.

Jason Wright did OK...except for that fumble on the first play after Eric Wright's interception. But he averaged less than 3 yards per carry, while Jerome averaged over 7. He has his moments based upon his speed, but he just doesn't seem to have the vision to be a starting RB.

Every week I prattle on and on about the incredible talents of Braylon Edwards and Kellen Winslow. Same thing this week...more exceptional contributions by the pair. 3 touchdowns by Braylon, and 97 yards receiving from Kellen.

I noticed a lot more use of Eric Heiden as what was basically a sixth offensive lineman through much of the game. In one particular play, he lined up in the LT spot next to Steinbach (while still being the end man on the line), and Thomas flipped over to the right side and lined up next to Ryan Tucker. The Browns had a lot more success running over the right side than I've seen before, and most times, it was on plays where Heiden was helping out on that side.

What that also meant was probably fresher receivers, as Edwards, Winslow, and Jurevicius would rotate as the two wide-outs on plays where both Heiden and Vickers were on the field.

And then there was Derek Anderson...slamming the door on the "Play Brady After the Bye" clubhouse doors. He was outstanding on Sunday; throwing the ball away when needed, running when needed, dumping off to his backs, finding Winslow or Edwards every time the Browns needed a big play.

Who was that guy, and what did he do with Derek?

What I liked best is how the offense responded after Miami took advantage of Grantham being asleep at the wheel. After closing it to 3 points, DA methodically led them down the field on a nearly seven minute drive and stuffed it in the end zone. After a 3 and out for the Fins, he then drove the nail into the coffin, kicked dirt on it, and then pissed on the grave by driving the team 67 yards in 4 ½ minutes to keep Miami winless.

So now what? Looks like Brady may end up being like Carson Palmer, sitting and learning the whole year...and that's not a bad thing. Look at the three first round QBs from last year that ended up being the starters. Matt Leinart was constantly benched this year in favor of Warner, prior to having his season ended with a broken clavicle. Jay Cutler is floundering in Denver, with more picks than TDs. And Vince Young is paying for his "run first" mentality, injured last week, and struggling this year as a passer.

But this won't be an old Jake Plummer, a over-achieving Jon Kitna, or a contract-expiring Drew Brees to shove aside...but a young, talented QB who will be a restricted free agent at season's end.

With the dearth of quality quarterbacking in the league, Anderson will be a hot commodity. If he keeps this up, he'll be too good to keep as a backup

(see also; Shaub, Matt). So what do the Browns do? Give him a top tender as a restricted free agent and accept a first round draft pick in exchange if someone signs him? Sign and trade? That scenario to Chicago might just solve two team's biggest needs if they'd trade him for Lance Briggs.

Brady Quinn WILL be the QB of the Browns in 2008. How the rest plays out will be something unusual for all of us; the Browns dealing from a position of power.

Your Assignment for the Bye Week, Todd and Romeo

Figure out a way to stop the friggin' run! Another week, another 100 yard rusher. That's six for six so far this year, and one can only hope that Stephen Jackson is still banged up when the Browns play in St. Louis next

weekend.

Something has to be done, or else the Browns have no chance to compete regularly against the better teams in the league. And in fairness, the defense did perform well in the first half against the Dolphins, and then stepped it back up in the fourth quarter (although they were playing prevent as well). But that third quarter was just brutal to watch...I don't know what's worse...watching them in the third quarter of seeing Joe Borowski trotting out from the bullpen with a one run lead.

So adjustments must be made. Since they can't kill Andra Davis, D'Qwell Jackson, and Leon Williams (sigh), hopefully they can teach them to tackle in the next two weeks...something that also applies to every

other member of the defense not named Eric Wright.

Romeo has made his reputation as a defensive genius...and if he truly is that, and not just Bill Belichick's caddy, he needs to find a way to compensate for the major shortcomings the Browns have at inside linebacker. On replay, I was focusing on Davis, Williams, and Jackson, and they were constantly blown away by blockers, and when they weren't blocked cleanly, they don't have the speed to make plays.

So come up with schemes that protect them. Mix it up...and not just by going back to that 4-2-5 defense with McGinest and Wimbley as defensive ends. Start going with exotic blitz packages more often. Confuse people

(preferably people NOT wearing orange helmets). Take chances.

Yeah, you might get burned on them sometimes, but I'd rather take a 25% of getting burned than the 90% probability of a score on a long, sustained drive that seems to be their habit now.

And do something to wake up Sean Jones, this week's winner of the Of the Same Monetary Value as Mammary Glands On a Sus Scrofa Award™. Once again, Sean showed his Ralph Brown level coverage skills in getting beaten by half a football field.

Playoffs? PLAYOFFS!?!?!?!?!

Psst...the Browns are 3-3.

After the bye week, they go to St Louis to play a winless Rams team that is in disarray with injuries and a beleaguered first year head coach.

And then a home game against a very average Seahawks.

Two tough road games follow against the Pittspuke Squealers and the Kosovo-on-the-Chesapeake Ratbirds.

And then games against Houston, Arizona, the Jets, Buffalo, the Bungles, and San Francisco.

That's 8 games that this team CAN win.

If they can win six of them...and split the away series against Pittsburgh and Baltimore...

PLAYOFFS?!?!?!?!

Blurbs From an ADHD Mind:

~ Hey, Joey Porter! How's that crow taste?

~ Maybe now that the Browns are doing well...they can stop being the only game that's not broadcast in HD? Don't bet on it next week against the St Louis Lambs.

~ The Dolphins have officially thrown in the towel in trading their best receiver, Chris Chambers, to the Chargers. I wonder if they'll pass up Brian Brohm with the first pick in next year's draft? That'll be a no-win

scenario, as they passed up on Quinn to get Ginn and John Beck, a 26 year old rookie (that worked so well for the Panthers drafting 28 year old rookie Chris Weinke several years ago). Pass on the best player...or admit you screwed up big time the year before.

~ Trent Green...for the love of God, man, RETIRE! On the other hand, with one more hard hit to the head, he'll be a perfect anchorman for Fox News...good looking with no brains.

~ So how many of you switched off

from the Dallas - New England game to catch some of that riveting matchup between Vinny Testeverde and Tim Rattay?

~ You don't need to wait for my Friday's version of The Crystal Ball, I've already discovered the Worst. Sports Movie. Ever, and it hit theaters this Friday. Hopefully the theaters hit "The Comebacks" back, as this will do for sports movies what "Gigli" did for Beniffer's career.