This is a big football game today. If the Browns can go on the road and slay the 0-7 Rams, who have guaranteed a win and will feature a returning Stephen Jackson, the Browns will be 4-3 heading into a very winnable home game with Seattle, and with a relatively easy schedule down the stretch. Can the Browns keep the momentum going? Jesse Lamovsky checks in as he does every Sunday morning to preview the Browns game.

Time: Sunday, October 28, 1:00 PM

Location: Edward Jones Dome, St. Louis

Network, Announcers: CBS- Don Criqui and Steve Beuerlein. Criqui is a veteran of many broadcasts from Municipal Stadium; it's just a shame he won't be bringing his erstwhile partner, Bengals chauvinist Bob Trumpy.

Line: Cleveland by 3

Team W/L Records: Cleveland is an unexpected 3-3; St. Louis is an even more unexpected 0-7.

Coaches: Romeo Crennel is 13-25 in his third season with the Browns. Scott Linehan is 8-15 in his second season with the Rams

Last Week for the Browns: On the bye; kicked back and watched Pittsburgh and Baltimore lose, to the delight of all good and decent people in the world.

Last Week for the Rams: Made it two consecutive games without a touchdown in a 33-6 loss at Seattle, a place that was once the Rams' home away from home. It's the Greatest Show on Turf no longer- the anemic "Lambs" are on pace to score 180 points, their lowest output since 1942, when the franchise played in League Park on the East Side of Cleveland.

All-Time Series: Tied at ten apiece. The Rams are 2-0 against the Browns in their St. Louis incarnation. Cleveland's all-time record against Gateway City competition, Cardinals and Rams, is 12-10-3.

Last Meeting: December 8, 2003- It was a bitterly cold Monday Night by the Lakefront. But Browns fans stayed warm by booing Kelly Holcomb, who hit Aeneas Williams in the numbers twice in 24 seconds late in the first half; the first was returned for a touchdown, and the second set up the score that made it 23-7 St. Louis and effectively ended. Tim Couch, in his last fading grasp at Cleveland glory, led the Browns to within six, but that was as close as it got. The Rams clinched a playoff spot with a 26-20 victory.

Out or Questionable for St. Louis: WR Dante Hall (ankle), DE Leonard Little (toe), and C Brett Romberg (ankle) are out; LB Quinton Culberson (hamstring) is questionable.

Out or Questionable for Cleveland: TE Darnell Dinkins (hand) and RB Jamal Lewis (foot) are questionable.

What to watch for the Rams: The Rams aren't going winless. At some point, they are going to beat someone. That's a given. They just got embarrassed on the road against a division opponent, they're at home in the dome (childhood memories of the problems Browns had at the Kingdome and Silverdome make me wary of those places as a road venue), their pre-season fantasy all-stars is gradually getting healthy (although Orlando Pace's season-ending injury has possibly dealt them a crippling blow). Cleveland hasn't played for two weeks. It's a trap game by definition.

What to watch for the Browns: See above. The Browns haven't won a road game yet. The last time they started 3-3 with all the wins at home was 2004, and the ending to that season was decidedly not stellar. With Seattle and monster roadies at Pittsburgh and Baltimore looming, a loss to the Rams might quickly expose the so-far pleasing season as sitting astride a very thin reed. As much as nationally-televised showdowns, these kinds of games separate contenders from pretenders. The former, when confronted with a reeling opponent, handles business with cold efficiency. The latter we know all too well of around here.

The fork in the road lies in St. Louis. Will the Browns stay north on the I-70 of promise and progress? Or will they head south on the I-44 of "same &%$#, different day"?

Things are looking up. Stars are emerging, unexpected heroes have filled critical voids; the team is finally beginning to forge an identity, and best of all, it has two wins in the division. The Steelers loss was just plain awful, but it's gratifying to see the team respond like a talented group whose pride had been wounded, and not like a bunch of suckers waiting for the next beat-down. *Mazol tov* to all Browns fans and here's to a memorable last ten weeks, starting Sunday.

Good Past Win over a St. Louis team: October 28, 1979- In lieu of a Browns win over the St. Louis Rams, the team's history against the Cardinals is in play. So we'll go back to exactly twenty-eight years ago Sunday and the Kardiac Kids, who improved their record to 6-3 and stayed in the thick of the AFC playoff race with a rare comfortable win over the struggling Cardinals at Busch Stadium. Cleveland blew open a 17-13 game with three fourth-quarter touchdowns, including long runs by Cleo Miller and little Dino Hall, and sailed to the 38-20 decision. Rookie Ottis Anderson and receiver Pat Tilley accounted for St. Louis's offensive scores.

Bad Past Loss to the Rams: October 24, 1999- The winless expansion Browns had it tough enough going into St. Louis to take on the Rams, who were undefeated and averaging nearly 37 points per game. But that didn't discourage Kevin Johnson, who boldly guaranteed a victory over Warner, Bruce, Faulk, and the rest of the Greatest Show on Turf. It didn't happen. St. Louis rolled up 436 yards- including 200 from scrimmage by Marshall Faulk- and rolled by a 34-3 score that wasn't that close. KJ, for his part was held to a quiet 35 yards on three receptions.

Sunday's game is eight years and four days after the first trip to St. Louis. Both games involve winless teams and members of those teams guaranteeing a victory. Both also involve dark-horse quarterbacks who have helped send offensive power surges through formerly-downtrodden teams (not to imply Derek's '07 is at the level of Kurt's'99, one of the five best seasons a quarterback has ever had). Not to mention the fact that both franchises have called Cleveland

home and both won their first NFL championship at the expense of the other. All the Browns need to do is beat the Rams 34-3 and we'll be in the realm of the Lincoln-Kennedy parallels for general eeriness, although to be sure, neither the '99 or '07 games have a Vice-President named Johnson.

Next Week for Both Teams: Cleveland hosts Seattle; St. Louis is on the bye

Trivia: On the last play of the first half of that 1999 rout in St. Louis, Tim Couch pulled the ball down and ripped off a forty-yard gain against a soft prevent defense before he was finally knocked out of bounds at the Rams three-yard line. Sofa's garbage-time jaunt would stand as the longest run from scrimmage by a "new" Browns player until William Green's 68-yard dash in the final game of the '02 season against Atlanta.