Friday at TCF means it's time again for Nick Allburn's "Heroes & Zeroes" as he recognizes the standouts and the goats from last weekend's Browns game ... and he had no shortage of players to choose from on both sides of the ledger this week. DA, K2, Cribbs, Bodden, Chud ... all were singled out bu Nick this week, who also updated his year to date standings for both the heroes & zeroes.

That was rough. When the Browns lose a game to a better team, or even a team of comparable talent, it's tough for fans to swallow. But when the Browns flat out gift wrap a game for a team, especially a team that's clearly inferior, it's beyond frustrating. And that's without a doubt what happened on Sunday; the Cardinals didn't win the game, the Browns lost it.

The glass half full perspective says that four turnovers including a pick-six is an insurmountable obstacle for most teams, and yet the Browns still had a chance to win the game on the final play. But there's no way to spin the fact that Cleveland should have beaten Arizona by multiple touchdowns, and the Browns let a golden opportunity go by the wayside on Sunday.

I swear, the Browns should carry Tim Couch on the roster solely for Hail Mary endgame scenarios...

This Week's Zeroes

Five Demerits: Derek Anderson

Derek Anderson seemed to be getting his turnover problem under control. In the three games prior to facing the Cardinals, DA had limited himself to just a pair of turnovers.

Apparently Anderson hasn't quite turned that corner yet, and DA Harvey Two-Face reared his ugly head on Sunday. Two interceptions, one returned for a touchdown, and a lost fumble, those are the numbers that really mattered for Anderson. Throughout his collegiate and professional careers, the big knocks on Anderson have been inconsistency, bad decision-making, and turnovers. We saw all three against the Cards.

Anderson"s pick-six to Roderick Hood put the Browns in a 7-0 hole. But Anderson"s fumble on the ensuing drive which led to another Arizona touchdown put the Browns behind the eight ball, and it was a lead that would prove to be too much for the youthful squad to overcome.

Anderson has only started 14 NFL games, and he looked like a first year starter against the Cards. But Anderson does deserve some credit for recovering from a putrid start to at least give the Browns a chance to win.

DA's struggles have allowed the Brady Quinn murmurs to restart. This is only natural when a high profile and very gifted prospect is sitting on the bench. But under no circumstance except injury will Brady Quinn replace Anderson this season. It just won't happen. Frankly, all the Brady Quinn in ‘07 talk is silly; it's time for everyone to get behind Anderson for these last four games, for better or worse.

And whether you're a Quinn guy or and Anderson backer, the fact remains that Derek Anderson playing well this season is great for the Browns both short term and long term. In the present, Anderson playing well means the Browns will make the playoffs. And if Anderson plays well, it will help the Browns in the future, when they will most likely trade him for draft picks in the off-season.

Four Demerits: NFL Rules Committee

Force-outs are not reviewable, but they should be.

Anyone with half a brain who watched the replay of Derek Anderson's 37-yard ""incompletion" to Kellen Winslow will tell you that K2 was forced out of bounds. I realize that a force-out is a judgment call, but there are plenty of reviewable plays that are judgment calls, so I'm not buying that excuse.

How about a sideline catch, isn't that a judgment call? The receiver needs possession of the football and two feet inbounds. How often does the official have to make a judgment call regarding possession?

I rest my case. NFL, get the rule fixed this off-season.

Three Demerits: Brian Billick

Author''s Note: There's a very good chance that Brian Billick may become this column's default whipping boy. It couldn't happen to a nicer guy...

Did you happen to catch that puffy coat Billick was sporting this week? Was that thing made of Gore-Tex? It didn't look like something that belongs on an NFL

head coach. By contrast, Bill Belichick's trademark hoody looked awfully classy.

I was enormously close to rooting for the Ravens on Monday night solely because they were playing the despicable Patriots. By game time I came to my senses.

Was there ever any doubt that the Pats were going to pull it out? It just felt like one of those games during which some unseen force wasn't going to let the Ravens finish off New England. But the Patriots have sure looked vulnerable the last two weeks. I'll definitely have an eye on that Pittsburgh/New England game during the Browns game's commercial breaks this week.

But back to the offensive genius at hand. It's often said that sports teams take on the demeanor of their coach, and in the Ravens' case, it couldn''t be more true. Billick has trained a team full of whiners, and he's trained them well. If you tuned in to any sports talk radio on Tuesday morning, you heard the whining of at least four Baltimore defenders bashing the officials from Monday night's game. It seemed that the general consensus in the Baltimore locker room was that the officials handed the game to the Patriots. *Losers*. It might as well have come from the mouth of Billick himself.

Sure, Bill Belichick was the reason that Rex Ryan called a timeout. Tom Brady obviously forced Jamaine Winborne to grab handfuls of Ben Watson's jersey on fourth down from the 13-yard line. And when Bart Scott threw a teenage girl temper tantrum and chucked a penalty flag into the stands, it was actually Randy Moss in disguise.

After his Ravens won 13 games last season, Billick's squad has plummeted to 4-8, losers in six straight. Remember when Billick was on the hot seat following the ‘05 season? He's about to get a refresher course in job insecurity.

Two Demerits: Joshua Cribbs

That two-point conversion was one of the coolest plays I've ever seen the Browns run, but it was Cribbs' fumble on a punt return that allowed the Cardinals to extend their lead to 11 points late in the third quarter.

Cribbs made a rare error in the return game, and he looked like the greenhorn punt returner we saw at the end of last season. JC has to realize that when you run more than 10 or 12 yards to catch a punt, the risk becomes far greater than the reward. When in doubt, just let the ball go.

We probably won't see this mistake from Cribbs again, so lesson learned. Plays like this make Cribbs'' fumble forgivable.

One Demerit: Leigh Bodden

Following Anderson's fumble on the second drive of the game, the Browns' defense had the Cardinals stopped. It would be fourth down from the Browns 37, and the Cardinals would probably elect to punt.

But Leigh Bodden earned a delay of game penalty for kicking the football after it bounced off the turf, apparently having watched *The Big Green* the previous evening. The penalty kept the Cardinals' second touchdown drive alive, and without it, the Browns would have been left with a much more manageable one possession deficit.

A quick side note: is it just me, or has Bodden looked really, really bad at times this year? I remember him being a dominant cover corner in the past, even Chad Johnson gave him props back in 2005 . CHAD JOHNSON! But this season,

Bodden's been getting torched all too often, and he''s frequently getting turned around by receivers.

In all fairness, Bodden has been a little banged up with that groin pull earlier this season. And to his credit, this looks to be the first season in which Bodden will play all 16 games, a notable achievement for a guy with a significant injury history. Still, it certainly wouldn't hurt things for Bodden to regain his form circa '05-'06.

This Week's Heroes

Five Dog Bones: Rob Chudzinski

Remember when one of the excuses made by Maurice Carthon apologists was "it''s hard to call plays in the NFL for the first time"? The Chud begs to differ.

I can''t say enough about Rob Chudzinski. Chud is arguably the biggest reason for the offense's improvement, and there's no doubt that the guy has some serious game when it comes to calling plays.

That two-point conversion play was without a doubt the coolest and most inventive play the Browns have run during Romeo Crennel's tenure. The deception of Anderson calling an audible was beautiful, and we finally got to see Cribbs throw a pass. Let's hope this is a sign of things to come, as giving Cribbs a couple of plays each game in a Kordell Stewart-esque role (a "Slash" role, not a lousy interception machine role) could really give opposing defensive coordinators nightmares.

The early deficit forced Chudzinski's hand a bit, as the running game became secondary. It's clear that Chud wants to pound the rock on the ground as Old Man Winter makes his entrance; the Browns had run the ball 30 and 33 times, respectively, in the previous two contests.

Four Dog Bones: Braylon Edwards

Our favorite Michigan Wolverine had himself a huge day in the desert. Isn't it weird seeing a Michigan guy in a stadium where they play BCS Bowls? It seems oddly out of place...

At any rate, Edwards has clearly mastered the Zen of the receiver , as his 149-yard day made him the first Browns receiver to break the 1,000-yard barrier since Antonio Bryant in 2005. Scary numbers: Edwards is only the Browns' third 1,000-yard receiver since their 1999 revival (the other being Kevin Johnson in ‘01).

Edwards'' 67-yard touchdown catch and run was controversial, but down by contact or not, it was still an amazing play. It was nice to see Edwards grab seven catches; he had averaged only 4.33 catches over the previous three games. The Browns need to work to get Edwards 10-plus looks in every game, especially in the vertical passing game where he's a threat to go the distance every single play.

Three Dog Bones: Sean Jones

Wow, Butch Davis actually got one right.

Jones is quietly putting together his second consecutive solid season. He's arguably the Browns' best playmaker on defense, as he's a human missile in run support, and a ball hawk in coverage.

Jones doesn't get the respect of guys like Bob Sanders, Ed Reed, and Troy Polamalu, but he's the glue of the Browns' defense. Without Jones.....well, let's just not entertain that theoretical.

Two Dog Bones: Kellen Winslow

Wow, Butch Davis actually got two right.

Winslow didn't put up his usual numbers, as he had only three catches for 35 yards. But he did execute the two-point conversion perfectly. The Browns made it look like a direct snap to Cribbs, and Winslow blocked an Arizona linebacker to further sell the illusion of a Cribbs run. The Cardinals took the bait, Winslow released from his block, and he was all alone in the back of the end zone to consummate the conversion.

But Winslow's biggest play of the game didn't show up in the box score. It was a 37-yard "incompletion" in the end zone on the game''s final play. I won't dance around the subject: it absolutely was

a catch. There's no doubt that Winslow was pushed out of bounds in midair, and had he not been pushed out, he would have landed with both feet comfortably in bounds. Touchdown, Browns! Phil Dawson kicks the extra point, we all go home happy. If only it was that simple...

The official didn't make the force-out call, and the Browns' fourth loss was finalized after a booth replay that was mostly for the sake of thoroughness. You can say the Browns got hosed, because yes, it was the incorrect call. But you''d be wrong, the Browns weren't really hosed at all.

That''s not a call that Winslow's going to get on the last play of the game. The final play is a completely different animal. Referees are extremely hesitant about making a game-changing call on the last play. To be called on the final play, a penalty needs to be visible to Stevie Wonder, or at least Snake Plissken . It's the reason that Derrick Mason wasn't called for mauling Asante Samuel on the final play of that Patriots/Ravens game on Monday night, and it's why LeBron James and other hoopsters have to put up with anything and everything that doesn't qualify as an assault charge on the final play of a basketball game. Whether it's right or wrong, the refs usually let the players determine what happens on the last play of the game.

Lone Bone: Ken Whisenhunt

The Cardinals are now tied with the Lions and Vikings for the NFC's second Wild Card spot. Considering the remaining schedules for the three teams, the Cards are my pick to grab that final spot. And

although the NFC is weak enough that Notre Dame might be able to break .500, Arizona averaged only five wins during the previous five seasons, so just being in the playoff conversation is a major achievement for that franchise.

No doubt, Whisenhunt's Cardinals have overcome some obstacles. Number one, they"re just not very talented on defense. Second, their starting quarterback struggled, and then suffered a season-ending collarbone injury in the fifth game of the season. And C, Kurt Warner has been limited by torn ligaments in his left elbow, leading to Warner playing with his left arm in a cumbersome brace, "wrapped up like a friggin' gordita", as one
NASCAR
great might say. Despite the hurdles, Arizona has managed to stay afloat at 6-6, and three of those six losses were by three points or less. All in all, a very impressive head coaching debut.

Whisenhunt made a great coaching move on Sunday, instructing Neil Rackers to keep the football away from Joshua Cribbs on kickoffs. The Cardinals were basically conceding that the Browns would start their drives at the 30-yard line or better, but they kept the ball out of the hands of the decidedly explosive Cribbs. It's a decision that more teams should probably make. If it were me, I'd squib kick every time because Cribbs has had problems handling squibs in the past.

Standings

Total Dog Bones

Offensive Line---23
Kellen Winslow---18
Joshua Cribbs---17 (t)
Braylon Edwards---17 (t)
Derek Anderson---16

Net Dog Bones

Offensive Line---21
Kellen Winslow---18
Joshua Cribbs---15
Braylon Edwards---13
Rob Chudzinski---12

Total Demerits

Romeo Crennel---25
Derek Anderson---16 (t)
Defensive Line---16 (t)
Brian Billick---12
Todd Grantham---10

Net Demerits

Romeo Crennel---17
Brian Billick---12 (t)
Defensive Line---12 (t)
Todd Grantham---9
Andra Davis---8

Playoff Picture

The Browns' loss to the Cardinals coupled with Pittsburgh's win over Cincinnati realistically squelched the Browns' opportunity to win the AFC North. For the Browns to achieve an AFC North coup, Pittsburgh must lose three out of its last four games, and the Browns have to run the table. The chances of that coming to fruition are faint, at best.

The good news is that although the Browns lost and are now tied with Tennessee for the second Wild Card spot, they still have a great shot at making the playoffs. If I had to put a rough number on it, I'd certainly give the Browns better than a 50-50 chance.

Other than Cleveland and Tennessee, the only real competitor for that second Wild Card spot appears to be the Buffalo Bills, who have quietly compiled a 6-6 record. Buffalo plays Miami this week, and if the Bills and Browns both win, it will set up a week 15 matchup at Cleveland Browns Stadium that could very well decide who's in the driver's seat for that last Wild Card spot. Denver and Houston are both 5-7, and have a remote chance of getting back into Wild Card conversation.

Games that the Browns should keep an eye on this week include Miami at Buffalo, Tampa Bay at Houston, Carolina at Jacksonville, San Diego at Tennessee, and Kansas City at Denver.

Up Next: 12/9, At New York Jets, The Meadowlands, 4:15

The New York Jets are not a good football team. If you remember, the Browns beat them last year when the Browns were completely rancid. Sure, the Jets made the playoffs last season, but much of that was attributable to a weak schedule, and some smoke and mirrors cleverness from wunderkind head coach Eric Mangini.

This year, the Jets aren't sneaking up on anyone (except the Steely McBeams) and they're gunning for a top five draft pick at 3-9. It's worth mentioning that two of those wins were against the Miami Minnows.

At any rate, the Browns are still a young, inexperienced team, so any road game could potentially be difficult. That said, the Jets don't really do anything well; they're twenty-eighth in total offense and twenty-fifth in total defense. But the Jets are still scrappy, and they have been in several close games, as seven of their games have been decided by a touchdown or less.

New York"s second year quarterback, Oregon alumnus Kellen Clemens, has struggled since taking over for Chad Pennington, the quarterback who once earned the emphatic approval of a frisky Joe Namath. (*I want to kiss you...YEEEAH!)*

Clemens has only four touchdowns against seven interceptions, and New York's new acquisition at running back, Thomas Jones, hasn't seen much daylight, averaging only 3.6 yards per carry. The Jets have two capable receivers in Jerricho Cotchery and Laveranues Coles, but they haven't seen the football very much with Clemens under center.

Number two running back Leon Washington, a former Seminole in his second season, is arguably New York's most explosive player, and he handles all the punt and kick returning duties. Washington has three kickoff returns for touchdowns this season, and is averaging a robust 30.6 yards per return.

This is a team that the Browns absolutely should beat, and they should do so by multiple touchdowns. The porous New York defense allows over 141 yards per game on the ground, so expect Rob Chudzinski to serve the New Yawkers a main course of Jamal Lewis, with a Jason Wright garnish.

The Browns need to beat a bad team in blowout fashion, something they've failed to do so far this season, in order to boost their confidence heading into the final three games. The Jets might be just what the doctor ordered.

My Call: Browns 38, Jets 17