There's a fan divide of sorts when it comes to this Sunday's nearly meaningless home game against the Niners. Some fans think the Browns should use the opportunity to give Brady Quinn some time. Others feel the Browns should stick with Derek Anderson, and treat it as if they need to win it to get in the playoffs. In Nick Allburn's latest, he says that Romeo Crennel should rest some of the banged up guys we have on this roster, and should gear their thinking exclusively towards the playoffs.

As far as the playoffs are concerned, this week's Browns game has no meaning; zero, zilch, nada. Win or lose, Cleveland's postseason fate will be dictated solely by the result of the Colts/Titans clash which will take place in Indianapolis on Sunday night.

*Author"s Note: the Browns game would become relevant if the Colts and Titans played to a tie, but considering that there's been only one NFL tie in the last decade, this scenario is about as likely as anyone caring that Britney Spears" sister is knocked up.*

Although their fate is in the hands of Tony Dungy and Jim Sorgi , the Browns still have a very real shot at making the playoffs, and they need to prepare accordingly. The Browns should treat this Sunday's game against San Francisco as they would had they defeated the Bengals to clinch a playoff birth last weekend. In other words, Cleveland"s bench should be teeming with starters late in the second half.

First and foremost, there are several players who have been bothered by significant injuries this season, and should see no more than a few series (if they play at all). Such players include:

- **Leigh Bodden.** Bodden had his best game of the season against the Bengals after missing practice last week with back problems. Bodden also battled a groin pull earlier this season.
- **Joe Jurevicius.** Jurevicius has been limited in practice this week by a knee injury, and he's been banged up recently, only posting seven catches for 72 yards in his last three games.
- **Jamal Lewis.** By all accounts, Lewis is completely healthy, but he struggled with an injury to his right foot earlier this season that the Browns don't want to see re-aggravated. Lewis has also had a heavy workload of late, averaging more than 26 touches per game over the last six games. Avoiding the pounding of another 25-plus touches could reinvigorate Lewis for a potential playoff game.
- **Antwan Peek.** Antwan Peek has been a fixture of the 2007 Browns injury report. Peek is still suffering from an ankle injury he incurred against the Jets back on December 9th. Peek hasn't participated in practice so far this week, and I'd be mildly surprised to see him on the field against the 49ers.
- **Kellen Winslow.** Winslow has played, and played well, in each of the Browns' 15 games despite battling a partially dislocated left shoulder for much of the season. Winslow has been limited in practice this week by his surgically repaired right knee.

As for the other starters, many of them would benefit from spending a significant portion of the game as spectators. The Browns can use the second half of the 49ers game as an audition for various players who might be on the roster bubble next year like Colby Bockwoldt, Ricardo Colclough, David McMillan, and Travis Wilson. Young linemen who have seen little or no action like Nat Dorsey, Paul Eslinger, and Isaac Sowells can be rotated into the game to gain some valuable experience. And intriguing prospect Jerome Harrison can be given double-digit carries in an attempt to determine whether or not his production this season (in limited carries) has been a mirage.

Of course, there's also the quarterback issue; some have called for Brady Quinn to start this week, others have requested that Quinn receive some time in a relief capacity, and many want Derek Anderson to play the game in its entirety. The argument for installing Quinn as the starter is positively laughable. Obviously, the Browns are not going to make a quarterback switch this late in the season, and one lousy game should not make fans forget that Anderson has given the Browns very competent play for the majority of the season.

More importantly, starting Quinn, even if Anderson remained the starter for a potential playoff game, sends the wrong message to the Browns, the rest of the league, and especially to Derek Anderson. Starting Quinn runs the risk of dividing the locker room and causing a quarterback controversy on the eve of the playoffs. What if Quinn lights things up and fans are calling for him to start in the playoffs? A full-blown quarterback controversy is the last thing a team wants heading into the playoffs.

Keep in mind that Derek Anderson is an extremely valuable asset both to the Browns and to a potential trade partner this off-season. If the Browns started Quinn following Anderson's worst game of the season, the impression around the league could be that the Browns are down on Anderson, hence decreasing DA's trade value. Although it seems less than likely at this point, Anderson could very well be in a Browns uniform next season to compete with Quinn for the starting job. The last thing the Browns want heading into either the playoffs or next season is for Derek Anderson, whom many suspect is emotionally and mentally fragile, to think that the Browns have lost confidence in him.

Quinn **should** make his regular season debut against the 49ers in a relief capacity, with one condition. If Derek Anderson is struggling, he must be left in until either he turns things around or the game ends. For the sake of the Browns, the perception of other teams, and Anderson himself, Quinn cannot be inserted to "replace" Anderson. Quinn should only play if Anderson has a successful go of things against San Francisco, and if everything goes swimmingly, Quinn should play most of the second half.

The 49ers game is the perfect opportunity for Quinn to see his first regular season action. If Anderson plays well in the first half, playing Quinn in the second half will not indicate that the Browns have lost confidence in Anderson, it won't create a quarterback controversy, and the fact that the game is meaningless will provide a pressure-free situation for the rookie signal caller. It would also be nice for Quinn to play his first game in the friendly confines of Cleveland Stadium, and not in front of a potentially hostile road crowd.

*"That's why we play the games, to win them, right? Ten-and-6 is better than 9-7. I'm going to play to win the game. My starters are going to play to give us the best chance to win the game."*

-Romeo Crennel, earlier this week

Sadly, it seems unlikely that many of these moves will occur. For better or worse, Romeo Crennel is an unswerving fellow, and those comments appear to indicate that this game will be business as usual for the

Browns. I understand Crennel's intent; he doesn't want his players to treat any game as meaningless and he wants them to play hard every week. But these are professional football players, and focus should not be a problem, especially for a team with a winning record. It's understandable that Crennel doesn't want to send mixed messages by pulling starters, but is that really the best thing for the Browns?

While winning ten games would be nice, it has absolutely no bearing on the playoffs, and at this point the Browns need to gear their thinking exclusively towards the playoffs. Pulling the starters makes perfect sense in this situation, and if the Browns do qualify for the postseason, then numerous key players will be far fresher when the Browns travel to either Pittsburgh or San Diego next week. If Crennel does treat this game like any other game, leaving the starters in for the contest''s duration, then this Sunday will serve as yet another indicator that Crennel is not the right coach to lead this team to the promised land. Bill Parcells, you can have him.