As the Browns season has dragged on, as the losses have outpaced the wins, the drumbeat has become louder. Perhaps drowned out only by the din from the multitudes begging for Romeo Crennel's dismissal, one player's cause has become something of a crusade among Browns fans everywhere: Play Jerome Harrison more. In Erik's latest, he examines the reasons why Harrison has just 20 carries in 10 games.

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Play Jerome Harrison more.

It's hard to argue with results. Harrison is third on the team in rushing attempts with 20, behind Jamal Lewis with 185 and -- I kid you not -- Derek Anderson with 22. Yet seemingly every time he touches the ball, he electrifies.

Lewis' 185 attempts have netted him 658 yards for a Leroy Hoard-esque (or Reuben Droughns-esque, depending on your era) 3.6 yards per carry. With six games remaining, Lewis is going to have to ramp up his production in a big way to achieve his second straight 1,000-yard season as a Brown. He has just four touchdowns in those nearly 200 attempts, and his season-long run is 29 yards.

Compare that with Harrison, who has turned his 20 rushes into 207 yards for a jaw-dropping 10.4 yards per carry. His season-long scamper is 72 yards on Monday in Buffalo, ending in his only his second touchdown of the season.

In short, every time Harrison touches the ball, something big could very well happen. The same can't be said for Lewis, who has turned into a short-yardage pile driver in the latter part of the season, his quickness waning and his body apparently starting to wear down under the increased workload he publicly demanded from his coaches after just 12 carries in the Week 3 loss to Baltimore.

So why does Crennel and his staff seem so hellbent on keeping Harrison as the perennial trick up the sleeve? If Harrison has this much big play potential, why isn't he playing more in a season in which the offense has desperately needed playmakers?

There are probably two theories to which Crennel and Co. subsrcibe. Accept them at your own peril:

1. Harrison can't block.

At 5'-9" and a shade over 200 pounds, Harrison's ability to pick up blitzing linebackers or safeties is virtually nil. The best he might hope to do is give a parting love-tap to a pass rusher and release into the flat for a pass. So if Harrison is the lone back, the defense knows the ball is probably going to him, otherwise he wouldn't be out there. That might work once or twice a game, but not 20 or 30 times.

Which plays into the second theory...

2. Defenses will figure Harrison out if they see him too many times.

Smart defensive coordinators can probably diagram plays to contain Harrison if they know they're going to see a steady diet of him. Speed is his only real weapon, meaning fast linebackers can take away Harrison cutback lanes with repeated practice, and once they get their hands on all 5'-9" of him, he's going down.

Keep in mind, these are theories, not facts. Barry Sanders, a diminutive back, made a career out of making far bigger players miss him. But that was Sanders, a rare talent with the body coordination of a ballet dancer. Harrison hasn't shown moves like that, but Sanders proved that small stature alone shouldn't exclude a back like Harrison from a larger role in the offense. The litmus test is seeing if he can perform in an expanded all-around role.

So far, perhaps afraid of what might happen if Harrison is given more carries, Crennel has been reluctant to give him that chance.

But in a scuttled season in which Brady Quinn is now stating his case to be the Browns' starting quarterback of the future, why shouldn't Harrison be given a chance to prove himself on a larger scale as well? If he fails, he's not going to damage a playoff run.

Like Quinn, Harrison has played well when given the chance. Like Quinn prior to his promotion, Harrison is stuck behind a starter who seems to be struggling more with each game.

Harrison might never be a meal-ticket running back who can strap a team to his back and win games by grinding out yards in the fourth quarter. That might still be Lewis' department for the foreseeable future. But as Lewis' muscles and joints start to fatigue, Harrison has proven he deserves a shot to at least share in the feature back role.

If the often-outspoken Lewis has a problem with that, he can gripe to the media until his heart is content. Lewis is the present, but if he's still a feature NFL back by the end of the 2010 season, it will be just short of a miracle.

Harrison is the future. Or at least he deserve a chance to show whether or not he can be the future. If the 2008 season has become open auditions for 2009, it would only make sense to give him that chance for the remainder of the schedule.

Of course, that would require Crennel to be innovative, non-stubborn and willing to take a risk. If you're waiting on Crennel to exhibit any of those three qualities without major front-office prodding, I have some beachfront property in Arizona to sell you.