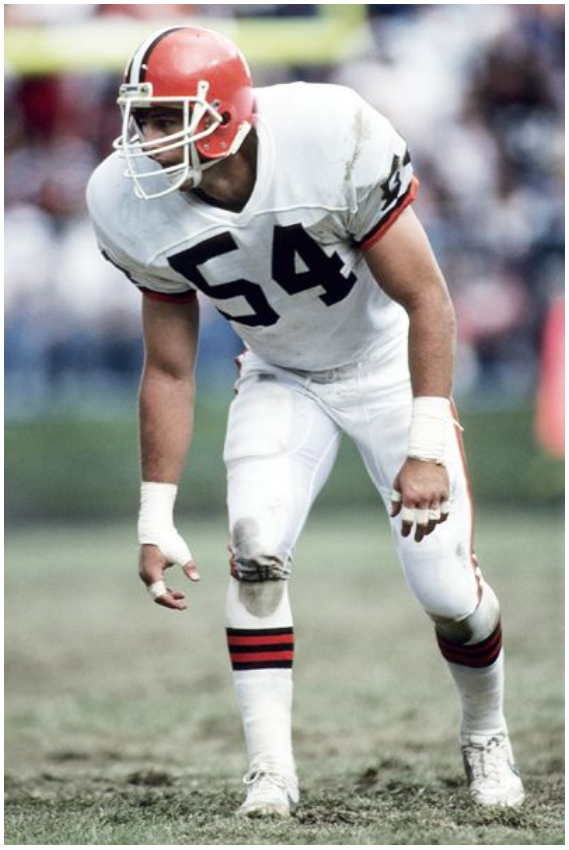

I don't know about you, but this 2011 draft has really allowed me to ignore the labor issues of the league. After all, if sports can't be fun, what good are they?

Tom Heckert's first draft holds a lot of promise- how will history judge his second year? What does he value most in a player? His measurables? His intelligence? Perhaps his actual ability to play NFL football?

As usual, I've been able to rely on theclevelandfan.com to keep me up-to-date on what I should be looking at, as a Cleveland Browns fan. The articles and the Browns forum have been great.

Let's take a moment to look back to when the Browns enjoyed their last extended run of success - in the late 1980s. One of the key draft picks of that era was the linebacker out of Duke University, Mike Junkin.

Marty Schottenheimer was the coach for that Browns team. He last created a buzz locally when he publicly acknowledged Romeo Crennel's lame duck status as the pitiful 2008 season wound down.

Here's a quick quiz for Browns fans:

Which of the following statements is false?

A) Schottenheimer posted a .620 winning percentage while at the helm of the Browns.

B) He was known for "Marty Ball": a philosophy of running the ball on first and second downs, with passing as an option only to create further opportunities to run the ball.

C) He won 3 division titles with the Browns, and had the team in the AFC Championship Game twice. Both times, the Browns lost to the Denver Broncos. Many fans blame at least one of those losses on his ‘prevent defense'; Marty seemed to prefer to die a slow death by being too concerned about the big play while conceding a string of short yardage gains.

D) He coined the phrase, "mad dog in a meat market."

1985 had been Marty Schottenheimer's first full season as the Browns' head coach. With the aid of rookie quarterback Bernie Kosar, the Browns bounced back from a 5-11 season in 1984 to finish 8-8 with a playoff berth. In the Wild Card game, Cleveland led Miami 21-3 in the third quarter- a memorable and improbable breakaway run up the middle by Earnest Byner was a highlight from that game. While the Browns ended up on the losing end, they were young and the future was bright indeed.

Prior to the 1986 season, reigning defensive rookie of the year Don Rogers tragically died of a cocaine overdose during his bachelor party at his mother's home. This was only eight days after the similar death of Boston Celtics draft pick Lenny Bias, and Rogers' death weighed heavily on the franchise as the season began. After a 4 - 3 start, the Browns finished the season winning 8 of 9 and captured the AFC Central title. This was the year of The Drive, when John Elway drove the Broncos 98 yards for a touchdown at the end of regulation, and then Rich Karlis kicked a 33 yard field goal in overtime to win the game (the video seems to leave some doubt as to whether the kick really sailed between the uprights, but some who were there have said that they agreed with the call on the field). Prior to the Denver game was the double overtime playoff win over the New York Jets, which is must-see TV if you ever get the chance. Mark Gastineau of the Jets was penalized for roughing Kosar late in the fourth quarter, pumping up the Cleveland crowd as Bernie led the Browns back from a late ten-point deficit to tie the game and eventually win.

As the 1987 NFL Draft approached, Marty Schottenheimer had consolidated his control over the team to the point that, in addition to running the defense (his specialty) and the offense, he had the final decision on personnel matters as well. He had inherited linebacker Chip Banks from the Sam Rutigliano era. Banks was a physical freak who could intercept passes at the line of scrimmage. His presence persuaded offenses to avoid him when game-planning, and this allowed the defensive backs to defend accordingly. Banks' contemporaries favorably compared his physical skills to those of Hall of Famer Lawrence Taylor. However, Marty had begun an offseason training program in Cleveland, and Banks did not participate. Marty soured on Banks. Clay Matthews became featured in the Browns' pass rush, and the knowledgeable fans in Cleveland would boo when Banks would leave the field on third down. Banks, an introvert, began to sulk. On the day of the draft in 1987, Marty pulled a ‘shocker': he traded Chip Banks and the Browns' first round pick to the San Diego Chargers for the Chargers' No. 5 pick in the draft (other picks were exchanged as well).

With the fifth pick in the draft, most of the Browns' brain trust agreed on linebacker Shane Conlan out of Penn State. A linebacking crew of Clay Matthews, Chip Banks, Mike Johnson, and Conlan would have been interesting. The way it played out, as Browns area scout Dom Anile said later, "All the scouts are in the draft room and there's a major meeting going on in Art

Modell's office. Art's in there with his ‘committee' for quite a while. Finally, Marty comes into the draft room and calls everybody to attention and announces we've just made a trade with San Diego for Chip Banks, and says with the fifth pick in the draft we're taking ‘the mad dog in the meat market'. And everybody's jaw just dropped. He certainly wasn't the fifth pick in the draft by anyone's estimation." (Tales from the Browns Sideline, Tony Grossi)

The answer to the quiz question above is D). While Marty Schottenheimer did cause ‘mad dog in a meat market' to be etched in the annals of Browns lore forever, it was Dom Anile who originally coined the phrase when he had scouted him weeks before the draft.

To be fair, Mike Junkin's ‘stock' had risen dramatically in the days leading up to the draft. Virtually everyone had QB Vinny Testaverde and LB Cornelius Bennett being selected at the top of the draft. But noted analysts such as Will McDonough of The Boston Globe ranked Junkin in the top ten by late April, ahead of DL Reggie Rogers (brother of Don Rogers) and WR Haywood Jeffires.

When Marty selected Junkin, names still on the board included DB Rod Woodson, DT Jerome Brown, and yes, LB Shane Conlan- who enjoyed a solid career for perennial contender Buffalo. Also of note: Bo Jackson, who had been taken No. 1 by Tampa Bay in 1986 but did not sign, was taken in the 1987 draft in the seventh round by the team he'd eventually star for, the Los Angeles Raiders.

In the final preseason game of 1987, Mike Junkin intercepted a Green Bay pass in overtime and returned it for a game-winning touchdown. It was the highlight of Junkin's career (unless you count the fact that his brother Trey had a long and solid career as Seattle‘s version of Ryan Pontbriand). Later, Marty admitted Mike Junkin was in the wrong place and covering the wrong receiver when he made the play.

Chip Banks' post-Browns career had its ups and downs with the Chargers and the Indianapolis Colts until his retirement in 1992.