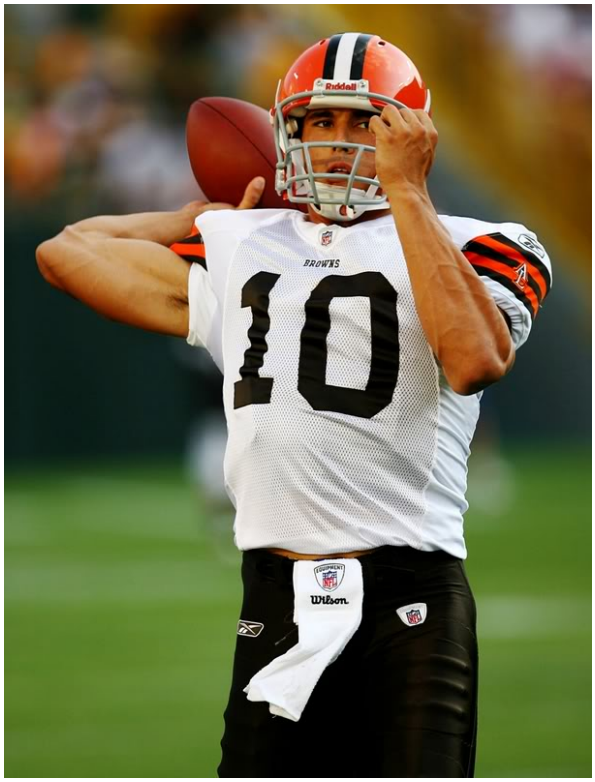
There's no real way to sugar coat it ... that was an ugly performance by the Browns on Saturday night up in Green Bay. However, as Nick Allburn notes in his Ten Points column, it wasn't ALL gloom and doom. Brady Quinn looked pretty good, as did Josh Cribbs. And the defense was missing it's nucleus in Shaun Rogers. And Bernie Kosar was back in the public eye, looking good, and doing a super job as always as an analyst.



1. Grading the quarterbacks.

I guess this is where we have to start. Brady Quinn was the "starter", and handled the opening series and the final series (fourth, sequentially) of the first half. EricMangini gave Derek Anderson the two series in between.

Let me preface any analysis with full disclosure: I want Brady Quinn to start for this team all season, regardless of the results. This excellent piece by TCF writer Erik Cassano summarizes my stance on the quarterbacks, as well.

Quinn is largely an unknown at the pro level, but we've seen enough of Derek Anderson to know that he isn't a viable starting quarterback. We don't know what we have in Quinn, but considering his tremendous collegiate success (if not for the Bush Push , Quinn may have won the Heisman Trophy and Notre Dame may have made the Rose Bowl), status as a top prospect (friend of TCF Scott Wright ranked Quinn the second best player in the 2007 draft), and the premium draft

picks the Browns invested in him, Quinn must start for at least a season. The Browns need to find out whether or not Quinn is an NFL starter, and if not, then the front office can start looking elsewhere for a signal caller.

Back to the game - Quinn led a solid 11-play, 56-yard drive to start the game for the Browns offense. Highlights of the drive included, a 29-yard end around to JoshCribbs, and two third down conversions on passes to Mike Furrey. Look for Furrey to make some noise as a slot option. Quinn had one ill-advised throw while trying to avoid a sack (unblocked blitzer) that could have resulted in an interception. Quinn has to learn to either eat the sack, or make sure he's throwing the ball where nobody can make a play on it.

The drive stalled on the Green Bay 13-yard line when Quinn was unable to find Cribbs. It looked like Cribbs didn't run the right pattern, and Quinn was expecting him to break more towards the sideline. That's why these games don't count.

Phil Dawson kicked a 31-yard field goal, but holding was called on Hank Fraley. Holding calls on field goals are rare. It's such a bang-bang play that frankly, there isn't much time to hold. But Fraley's hold was pretty egregious, and the Browns were backed up 10 yards. Dawson tried again from 41 yards, but missed wide right, so the Packers maintained their 7-0 edge.

After the Packers marched down the field for another touchdown, Derek Anderson got his first chance of the exhibition season. There wasn't much to talk about. Anincompletion and two running plays netted just four yards, and the Browns were forced to punt. We didn't learn much about Anderson on his first series.

We learned more on Anderson's second series, and it wasn't encouraging. After Mason Crosby bonked a 60-yard field goal off the left upright (note that it had the distance - Crosby has a huge foot), the Browns took over at midfield with prime field position. On first down, Anderson had a dangerousincompletion nullified by a defensive holding call, and Jamal Lewis dove into the line for a yard on the next play. On the following play, Anderson threw a 35-yard wounded duck that was picked off at the Packers' 11-yard line. In fairness, Anderson was hit as he threw, but on the other hand the pressure was in front of him, and he shouldn't have taken the extra time to load up on the throw.

That was all for the D.A., and his stats for the day were 0-for-2 with an interception. It wasn't much fun to be Derek Anderson last night.

If Mike McCarthy's goal was to showcase Mason Crosby's range last night, he succeeded. Brady Quinn and the Browns took over at their 45 after Mason Crosby missed a 55-yarder that once again had the distance. The clock read 1:50, so it was a good opportunity to see if Eric Mangini's harping on the two minute drill in practice had paid off.

Quinn started off red hot, completing his first four passes. The highlight of the drive was a 22-yard pass to Josh Cribbs, and without grabbing Cribbs' face mask, Green Bay's Anthony Smith wouldn't have tackled the Kent Stater. Coupled with the 7-yard (half the distance) face mask penalty, Quinn had led the Browns to the Green Bay 7-yard line. Jamal Lewis dove into the line for a yard, and then Quinn did a nice job threading the defenders to hitBraylon Edwards for the team's first touchdown of the season.

NOT SO FAST! Braylon's hands of stone struck again, and with his trademarked unnecessary leap, Edwards dropped a sure score, and my post traumatic stress syndrome started acting up again. Quinn was intercepted on the next play when he tried to force a ball between Edwards and Anthony Smith. It was a bad pass, butBraylon certainly didn't work too hard to break it up. Still the ultimate team player, eh B-17? I don't like him, and it's solely because he went to Michigan!

That was it for the headliners, and Quinn finished 7-for-11 for 68 yards and one interception. Brett Ratliff played the entire second half. On a final Anderson/Quinn note, it's worth mentioning that Quinn completed several quick slants to receivers who were moving. One of my biggest complaints with Anderson over the last couple of seasons is that he struggles to make accurate passes unless a receiver is stopped, which limits yards after the catch, and also makes it easy for defenders to jump routes and pick off the ball.

2. What about Brett?

After seeing him light up the Browns last summer, noting the fact that Mangini went out of his way to trade for him, and reading that he's been making some noise in training camp, I was anxious to get a look at Brett Ratliff. I haven't been this disappointed since I actually spent money to see *Spider-Man 3*.

Ratliff didn't have the "deer in the headlights" look of Anderson, but he was lousy, plain and simple. And in fairness to Anderson, he had just two short series to work with, while Ratliff had the whole second half. Just about the only

thing Ratliff had going for him was that Packers backup QB BrianBrohm was actually (and shockingly) worse. The final stats on Ratliff were 7-for-13, 84 yards, 2 interceptions. Gross.

While I'm certainly wary of Anderson being named the starter, if Ratliff doesn't show much, much more over the next three games, I'm not at all comfortable with trading or cutting Anderson. You need a backup quarterback who can fill in competently for a few games - or at least walk and chew gum at the same time - and for at least one half (a very small sample size, obviously), Ratliff didn't look like a capable backup.

3. Yeah, about that running game...

While Brady Quinn was clearly the best of the quarterbacks last night, even he didn't look his best. At least some of the quarterbacks' struggles can be attributed to the fact that the Browns running game was absolutely abysmal. Take away JoshCribbs ' 29-yard end around, which is not a conventional running play anyway, and the total for the Browns' plowshares was 30 yards on 14 carries. But hey, at least they broke two yards per carry.

Mangini's been preaching a power running game, but it didn't make the trip to Lambeau. Although the pass protection was serviceable, it didn't look like the line was getting much push on running plays. Jerome Harrison had a huge missed block during the two minute drill at the end of the first half. James Davis might be able to take a bite out of Harrison's playing time if he proves he can block consistently.

4. Take the defense's performance with a grain of salt.

The Packers were able to score touchdowns on their first two drives, but I'm not too worried about the defense (yet). Shaun Rogers didn't play, and most defenses have problems when you take their best player away, especially when he plays the most important position in the 3-4.

Aside from that, the scheme was obviously very vanilla. The Browns didn't get pressure unless they blitzed, but that's not particularly unusual for a 3-4 defense. Only rushing three or four guys on several third downs definitely hurt the Browns. Given Rob Ryan's reputation, I don't expect that to be the case during the regular season. It's also worth mentioning that the blitzes we did see were pretty

effective, and certainly much more creative than what we saw from the Crennel regime, who probably thought a "corner blitz" was one of the ways you win at bingo.

We also need to keep in mind that the Browns play three of their four exhibition opponents during the regular season (Packers, Lions, Bears), which is bizarre, and means that neither team will likely get too fancy in these games.

5. Check Craig's List for available receivers.

To say the receivers were pretty garden variety might be putting it lightly. Braylon Edwards' only recordable stat was a drop, although he also displayed a terrific lack of desire to block anyone on Cribbs' end around.

Mo Massaquoi grabbed a 6-yard catch, and Brian Robiskie picked up 15-yards on a bubble screen in the second half. It is probably a mistake to expect a huge contribution from either rookie at the beginning of the season.

The two guys who stood out (and understand that "standing out" is very relative given the group's performance as a whole) the most were Mike Furrey and surprisingly, Josh Cribbs. Furrey , as I mentioned earlier, had a pair big catches to move the chains on third down, and finished up with 3 catches for 26 yards. He might not be the biggest or fastest guy on the field, but at leastFurrey is sure-handed. Cribbs appears to be making progress as a receiver, although he'll likely still be susceptible to the occasional route running mistake like he made in the first quarter. If Cribbs could develop into a modest contributor at receiver, but maintain some trick play flair (please make him throw more!), he could beutilized similarly to Antwaan Randle El in Pittsburgh circa 2004-2005.

6. Bad Alternator.

I understand that he's trying to run a perfectly fair competition, but switching quarterbacks after one drive is a good recipe to ensure that neither emerges the clear victor. Sure, the idea is to make sure that both guys get a shot with the first teamers out there, but it might be smarter to just give each QB a quarter, or two to three consecutive drives to give them a chance to find a rhythm.

7. Cousin Mose (ly).

Defensive end C.J. Mosely, one of Mangini's former Jets, stood out in the second half with a sack, good pursuit of the quarterback, and a solid stuff on one particular running play. Mosely's play is encouraging, and might be a sign that defensive line depth could be one of the strengths of the team. Corey Williams is reportedly having a much better camp now that he's completely healthy and has had more time to adjust to the 3-4, and we already know thatRobaire Smith can play, it's just a matter of whether or not he can stay healthy.

Check out the depth chart according to the official site . Kenyon Coleman, Shaun Rogers, and Williams are listed as the starters, while Smith, Mosely, and Ahtyba Rubin are the second string. Obviously defensive linemen are frequently substituted, but you have to feel pretty good about those three reserves. Those three guys probably make a better defensive line than the Browns fielded in 2005, 2006, and maybe even 2007, too.

8. Mack Attack.

Considering that he hasn't exactly earned glowing reviews from training camp thus far, I'm a little worried about the development of first round pick Alex Mack. When you take an offensive lineman in the first round, let alone a center, you expect him to step in and play from day one. But Mack has had trouble learning the offense, and apparently he's also struggled against pro defensive linemen. Count me among the worried.

Mack played most of the second half, and although he had a holding penalty called against him, it was a pretty lightweight call. (Cue John Madden's *"You know, there's really holding on every play, it's just a matter of how much the refs are willing to tolerate.")*
All I know is that if Mack doesn't replace Hank Fraley before the opener, or at least at some point during the season, it will be a very bad sign.

9. Wright on schedule.

Eric Wright is starting to look like a difference maker at cornerback. The highlight of the night for Wright had to be his excellent man coverage of Greg Jennings on a deep sideline route - not an easy task, considering Jennings posted 1,292 yards and 9 touchdowns last season. The Browns haven't had acornerback playing this well since Leigh Bodden was in his prime.

10. Finally, some good news for Bernie.

Amid all the bad news regarding his divorce and financial problems, it was good to hear Bernie Kosar delivering the color analysis along side Jim Donovan. It is no secret that things haven't been going Bernie's way lately, and it breaks my heart to see him down on his luck. To me, Kosar embodies Cleveland sports more than any other athlete.

While LeBron James continues to play the hot high school girl with a dozen prom invites, Kosar actually manipulated the NFL's draft rules to play in Cleveland for the team he loved in his youth. Although Kosar was about to be Belichicked out of Cleveland just when my interest in the NFL was peaking, there is no Browns player to whom I have more emotional attachment.

Much to the delight of my father, Bernie and I share the same birthday (November 25). When Kosar was cut in 1993 I was only six, but the next day I showed up in the school guidance counselor's office, my face covered in tears. (After all, she said to visit if we ever needed to talk about anything serious.) I refused to go to swim practice the following afternoon, and "Philcox" became a dirty word in my vocabulary. "Todd" remains one of my least favorite names. When the Dallas Cowboys won the Super Bowl in the '93-'94 season, I was the only kid who was excited thatKosar was allowed to take the final knee.

But cutting the digression short, Bernie really is an excellent analyst. As a player, he won games between the ears, and from his analysis you can see why. If he wanted to,Kosar could probably nab a network color analyst gig, but I wonder if he might not prefer to coach.

Kosar made a failed run to coach his alma mater, the Miami Hurricanes, a few years back. While Kosar has no coaching credentials and understandably wasn't hired as the head coach, he would be more than capable as a quarterbacks coach or offensive coordinator at either the professional or collegiate level. Maybe he just likes being retired. At any rate, I'm sure I'm not alone in wishing Bernie the best of luck with any and all of his future endeavors.