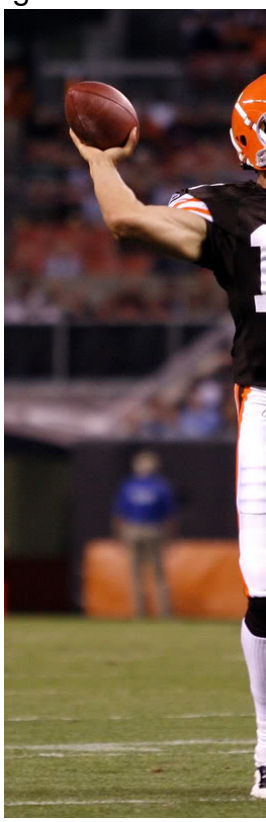
There's been no official word from Berea yet, but the Browns quarterback competition officially ended on Saturday night says Brian McPeek in the Weekend Wrap. Peeks also hits on another position battle he sees brewing at running back between the exciting rookie James Davis and incumbent vet Jamal Lewis. Peeks also touches on the fans that were too quick to judge the Browns after the Packers pre-season game, and also the resurgence of Andy Marte.



Put it in the Books

Derek Anderson is about to become much more popular in Cleveland than he has been in a couple of years.

Because backup quarterbacks are always popular.

Anderson is that backup guy again after Brady Quinn finally put some space between himself and DA on Saturday night. There's been nothing official in that regard from Berea but that competition is done and over

with and Quinn is the winner. Eric Mangini can swing from side to side of the street and straddle all the fences he wants to but Quinn will run out of that tunnel two weeks from now for the first time as a starting NFL quarterback and with him will ride the fortunes of this franchise for the foreseeable future.

It's a competition Mangini wanted Quinn to win as opposed to having DA lose. And that's the way it will go down too. Heading into the meaningless fourth preseason game Thursday night in Chicago the two players were statistically close. Quinn did enter the third game with fewer interceptions than Anderson. And when Saturday night ended and DA had nearly been intercepted twice more, Quinn went 11/15 for 128 yards, 1 TD and no turnovers against one of the game's better defenses.

Mangini wants a guy who approaches the QB position like a physician; first, do no harm. If that guy can make plays and make big throws then bully for that guy. But first, do no harm. If DA were a doctor his name would be Jekyll Kevorkian.

So all's well that ends well in the QB-derby. It went to the wire, which also works perfectly for Mangini. He gave the incumbent Pro Bowler who had a terrible season last year a long look and the benefit of the doubt. But the younger guy actually put more points on the board and did so with fewer mistakes and took the job. Excellent. Everybody had a fair shot and a good look and that goes over well in any clubhouse south of Minnesota.

Your Hair Will Grow Back

All those desperate, depressed folks who lit themselves on fire after 15 minutes of the first pre-season game are going to be standing on the outside of the bus with pus dripping from their flesh and with their eyebrow-less faces pressed against the glass. They're probably off the morphine-drip or the oxycontin tablets and they'd like to get back on board.

They were the ones screaming after about 9 plays that the Browns lacked discipline and had wasted more draft picks and that Mangini couldn't find his ass if you gave him two more hands and a mirror.

The Browns did lack discipline at that moment and the kids that were drafted did look overmatched. But again, it was 5 minutes into their professional careers. The United States has one of the best trained and supplied armies in the world. They have excellent leadership, especially from the ground up. But I'm thinking that you probably wouldn't know any of that if you had to judge the US military after the first day of boot camp. You probably would be less than impressed with the guy running the drills and you'd probably be less than impressed with the guys performing them given they had no real clue what they were doing and no natural inclination as to how to get it done.

So yeah, I think those that freaked at about 810pm on Saturday, August 15th, 2009 are crazier than an outhouse rat. But you're allowed to jump on and off the bandwagon. You don't even have to ask. Apologize? Forget about it. Just don't drool all over the windows this time.

You don't even have to promise you'll be a bit more patient when the situation comes up again. Because you won't be more patient next time either. It's just how some people are wired. I get it. There's a lot at stake when you're invested.

This Browns team may very well be putrid. But it just takes more time to make that determination than many of us allowed.

Etcetera

- I don't know why we've wasted all this time on watching and worrying about the competition between Quinn and Anderson. The Wrap is on record as stating

that Quinn was going to be quarterbacking this team in Game #1 for a long time now.

I think the more interesting race is between Jamal Lewis and James Davis, the rookie 6th round pick out of Clemson. I think there's no way Lewis loses the race between now and two weeks from now but I'll go on the record and say I'll be stunned if Davis is not the lead back by the halfway mark of the season. That's not to say Davis will be starting by then or after that, because the start is often a ceremonial honor bestowed upon veterans of Lewis's stature long after they actually earn it on the field.

But Davis will be the ‘feature' back by the middle of the season.

Davis is simply quicker to the hole, faster when he gets through it and just generally more effective on the football field than Lewis is at this point. Jamal looks older and slower and the reason for that is simple; Jamal is older and slower.

Lewis will get his share of carries while the kid cuts his regular season teeth. But yards aren't the biggest focus for Lewis this season. Teaching Davis the ropes may be far more important when it's all said and done.

- Man it is nice to see a smile on the face of Andy Marte as opposed to the normal looks of confusion and frustration. Marte has put together the best two week stretch of his career to close out August.

He took an ugly o-fer on Sunday as the Tribe and Orioles split their four game weekend series but up until Sunday afternoon Marte was hot. He had raised the average to .290+ and had a 10 game hitting streak with a couple homers. One of those homers was the source of the big smile and grin I'm talking about. On Thursday night with the Tribe trailing in the 9th inning Matt LaPorta had a big two-out single to give Marte a swing. Marte hit a 3-2 fastball to left field that got into the first row of seats and gave the Indians an unlikely, come from behind win. Marte was stunned that the ball got out, nearly

tripped over first base and damn near missed second base in his joy and haste to reach the plate.

Maybe something's clicked for the kid. You hope so because he works hard and is a decent guy by all accounts. But his success in the last couple weeks is clearly due to the fact that someone's been able to convince him there is a whole other half of the field he needs to consider when swinging the bat. I watched Marte look to the middle of the field more often in the last two weeks than he ever has. He drove a couple balls to center field and he notched a couple hits that way. That means guys can't just get him out with soft stuff away and that he's not consistently rolling over on everything on the outer half either. He got himself into some better counts, hit enough balls hard to the middle of the field to get pitchers to move back to the inner half and he hit some of those hard too.

Maybe the someone who convinced him of the need to consider the right side of the diamond was solely Andy Marte. Maybe he overcame each and every Indians coach and instructor who was out to ruin him as some folks would have you believe. You know, all those baseball guys you know who always say, "Kid, you can get by just pulling everything all the time because you're that good. Don't worry or even consider the opposite field because you don't need it."

Or maybe the Indians organization deserves some credit for sticking with the kid and whispering in his ear about how talented he was and about how things could fall together if he believed in the proper approach and applied it.

Either way, that ‘Eureka' moment has come and gone. It took Marte years and years and about 800 minor league games to figure out the fact he needed an effective approach. For the last two weeks he's had it.

Know what that means? It means he needs to adjust again real soon because pitchers all will be adjusting to him starting today. How he handles this next adjustment that these pitchers make will determine if Andy Marte is a Cleveland Indian next spring.

Credit to Marte for finally making pitchers have to look at a different page in his book to try and get him out. Hopefully he's got some confidence and some hunger to adjust with them. And hopefully it doesn't take nearly as long to happen as the first adjustment took.