With nothing to play for but their future, the Cleveland Browns beat the Kansas Chiefs 41-34 on the back of historic performances by running back Jerome Harrison and kick returner Josh Cribbs. Harrison, buried on the bench for most of the season, ran for 286 yards and 3 touchdowns and now holds the team's single game rushing record. Cribbs ran back two more kick returns for touchdowns, giving him 8 for his career and placing him atop the NFL's all-time list in that category. Despite the historic performances, the Browns had to survive a late scare to secure the win. Gary talks about it all in his latest.

With nothing to play for but their futures, both the Cleveland Browns and the Kansas City Chiefs had about equal number of reasons to both mail it in and give it their best shot. They opted for the latter and the Browns, on the back of historic performances by running back Jerome Harrison and kick returner Josh Cribbs, hung on for a 41-34 victory, giving the Browns a modest two-game win streak.

Even with Harrison setting the Browns single game rushing record and Cribbs becoming the NFL's all time leader in kick returns for touchdown, the Browns had to survive a late scare by the Chiefs to secure the win.

After going ahead by 7 with 44 seconds remaining after Harrison's 3rd touchdown of the day, this one a 28-yarder, Chiefs' quarterback Matt Cassel hit receiver Mark Bradley for 34 yards and nearly a touchdown before Bradley was tripped up.

He then got the Chiefs down to the Browns' 26-yard line but his final desperation pass in the end zone was knocked down as the game ended.

Harrison's performance was simply brilliant. With the kind of running backs this franchise has had, it's nothing short of amazing that the mostly forgotten 5'9" Harrison now holds the single game rushing record. On this day he ran for 286 yards on 34 carries and shattered Jim Brown's previous record of 237 yards set in 1961.

Cribbs was nearly as brilliant, running back two kick returns for touchdowns, the first for 100 yards and the second for 103. That gives him 8 kick returns for touchdowns for his career and placing him first in that category on the NFL's all-time list.

With Harrison quietly running for 73 yards in the first half, the game seemed to be setting up early on as a dual between Cribbs and Chiefs' running back Jamal Charles, who ended the day with 154 rushing yards and 1 touchdown. But Harrison got hot in the second half and was the focal point for both teams. He had a 71-yard touchdown run early in the third quarter, an 8-yarder early in the fourth quarter and then the 28-yarder as the clock was ticking down in the 4th quarter, vexing fantasy league players everywhere who kept him on their bench.

Before that final Harrison touchdown it looked like the teams were heading for overtime after Kansas City tied the game at 34-34 on a Cassel-to-Bradley 12-yard touchdown pass. Cassel was able to get the Chiefs in position for the tie after the Browns' Phil Dawson missed a 52-yard field goal that ended up

giving the Chiefs the ball at their own 42-yard line and put them in position to move quickly for the score.

Even with a 41-point outburst, early on it looked like it was going to be an offensive struggle for the Browns. Despite taking an early 3-0 lead on a 47-yard field goal by Dawson, the offense couldn't quite find its rhythm.

Indeed, if not for Cribbs' two kick off returns, the Browns might have been left wondering how they got run over by the Chiefs.

After Charles took a simple run around the left side for a 47-yard touchdown, the kind of play that's burned the Browns' defense all season, the Chiefs were up 17-13. The Browns then went 3-and-out on their next drive and then couldn't execute perhaps the one play they should have had perfected by week two, the punt.

As the Browns lined up inside their own 20 yard line, long snapper Ryan Pontbriand snapped the ball before the team was set. The ball hit up back Nick Sorenson on his right leg, bounded into the end zone and was recovered by Alex Studebaker for the Kansas City touchdown and the 24-13 lead.

The Browns were clearly out of sorts, a state that ended quickly when Cribbs took the ensuing kickoff 103 yards for the score, helping bring the Browns back to within 4 at 24-20.

That provided the springboard for Harrison's second half heroics. He opened the scoring quickly in the second half with his 71-yard run on the Browns' first possession. From there the Chiefs defense could never seem to find the right formula for containing Harrison as he added over 140 more yards in the half and two more touchdowns.

Despite Harrison's historic performance, the victory was anything but easy. After taking a seemingly insurmountable 10-point lead at 34-24 off of Harrison's second touchdown, the Chiefs quickly moved down the field but couldn't capitalize and had to settle for a 27-yard Ryan Succop field goal.

It was a drive that easily could have yielded more for the Chiefs but also could have been disastrous as Cassel threw late over the middle near the goal line. The ball landed in and then bounced out of the hands of linebacker Kaluka Maiava.

With the way Harrison was running, an interception at that moment would have given the Browns the opportunity to run out the clock.

As it was, even Harrison's 3rd touchdown didn't provide sufficient breathing room.

With the hiring of a new grand wizard of football operations lingering over this team like a stack of dirty holiday dishes from the party the night before, the last few games of the season have turned into mostly an extended interview process for just about everyone associated with the Browns except owner Randy Lerner.

But no one has more at stake than head coach Eric Mangini.

The irony now is that it may be two players with their own checkered histories with Mangini that save his job. In the case of Harrison, Mangini has basically kept him mostly buried on the bench even though he's performed every time he's been given the ball.

In the case of Cribbs, the team's most inspirational player, Mangini has kept him dangling all season over a

new contract despite his being promised one before the season started.

Though Sunday's victory comes against a lousy Chiefs team, it was an important win nonetheless. After beating the Steelers a week ago, a step backward in Kansas City would have taken any shine off that victory and halted the incremental progress that's been made.

Instead, the Browns were able to follow it up with a solid effort and another baby step forward.

If nothing else, the Browns are establishing themselves as a running team. While Harrison was phenomenal, credit too should go not only to the offensive line, but also to fullback Lawrence Vickers for consistently do what a good lead back should and offensive coordinator Brian Daboll for sticking with the running attack.

On the day, the Browns only threw 18 times while running an astounding 49 times.

Although quarterback Brady Quinn statistically was awful, 10-17 for 66 yards and 2 interceptions, he was able to maintain his poise at critical moments. For example, on the Browns' first scoring drive, Quinn threw to Chansi Stuckey for 11 yards. Stuckey made a very questionable catch but the Chiefs never had a chance to look at it again as Quinn hurried the team to the line and snuck it forward for 2-yards.

Then, in that wild last few minutes of the game, Quinn ran for 24 yards on a bootleg on a crucial 3rd and 1 play from the Browns' 39-yard line.

If not for that run, the Harrison touchdown might not have happened and the game may have gone to overtime and all the uncertainty that entails.

The Chiefs fighting the Browns for AFC inferiority struggled much of the day with Braylon Edwards disease, a malady in which receivers can't seem to hold onto balls that hit them in stride. Despite what seemed like a dozen dropped balls, Cassel still went 22-40 for 331 yards and 2 touchdowns.

Cassel's first touchdown pass came after the Browns took a 13-3 lead on a 30-yard field goal by Dawson. Charles' ability to grind out tough yards set up the pass perfectly as Cassel, utilizing the no huddle offense twice found receiver Chris Chambers, the first for a 39-yard gain over Eric Wright and then for a 9-yard lob pass for the touchdown that helped pull the Chiefs to within 3 at 13-10.

Cassel's second touchdown came after the Dawson missed the 52-yard field goal attempt with just over 4 minutes remaining and the Chiefs trailing by 7. Af ter the Browns had forced the Chiefs into a 4th and 6 from the Cleveland 12-yard line, Cassel, out of the shotgun, was able to step up into the pocket and avoid the rush long enough to find wide receiver Mike Bradley coming open in the end zone.

The Succop extra point tied the game at 24.

The Brown, 3-11 on the season, now have a chance to make it three straight victories with the Oakland Raiders coming in and sporting a whole host of quarterback problems. But before that takes place, it looks to be an interesting week in Berea.

Mike Holmgren appears to be on the precipice of getting the keys to the Browns' football operations, a dubious Christmas present if ever there was one. With all the questions that raises for the future of this franchise, the best way Mangini and his staff can answer most of them is by putting together two more similar performances.

And as Browns fans saw on this day in Kansas City, even when things are workings nothing comes easy.