The Cleveland Browns 2009 season was one for the ages. It could be summed up in as little as one word "oy" or 100 million. Gary Benz has opted for somewhere between the two, penning a super restrospective on the '09 Browns season. In the second installment of this four part series, Gary takes a look at the offseason moves orchestrated by Eric Mangini and then "General Manager" George Kokinis, and also the wheeling and dealing we saw from the team on draft dat before they made Alex Mack their first round selection.

Note: The Cleveland Browns 2009 season was one for the ages. It could be summed up in as little as one word "oy" or 100 million. I've opted for somewhere between the two. It may be that all of you, or most anyway, are so tired of this past season that you'd rather have your toe nails pulled than read another word about it. Believe me, I understand. But for those brave few willing to go along on one final journey with me, just know that I appreciate your courage and have tried to make it worth your while.

Click here to read the first installment of Gary's four part retrospective on the 2009 Browns season.

Part III. This is the Part Where Mangini and Kokinis Lower the Bar and Blame the Past

The interesting thing about Mangini is that whenever he really wanted to get some kind of information out there, he was usually able to find a way. In a story he or someone inside the organization essentially tipped to the Plain Dealer, Mangini let it be known that he felt the franchise was being handicapped by the former regime because of roster bonuses due several

players, including Joe Jurevicius, Kevn Shaffer, Derek Anderson, Stallworth, Joe Thomas, Corey Williams, Shaun Rogers and Jamal Lewis.

In truth, these roster bonuses were simply the by-product of trying to fit high-priced players into a salary cap by signing them to long-term contracts. The Browns were well under the salary cap anyway and the structuring of these contracts was one of the reasons why. Moreover, these bonuses served as convenient mile posts for making future decisions about certain players. They kept the Browns from being locked up in salary cap hell in the future.

Using them as an excuse was a nice narrative for Mangini to try to get out there, but it just wasn't accurate. Paying players like Thomas and Rogers was a no-brainer. Anderson was a little more iffy as was Lewis. Jurevicius was only owed $250,000. But the biggest question mark of all was Stallworth, who was owed $4.75 million. He was signed by Savage in the same way that Andre Rison was signed by Bill Belichick years earlier. It worked out about the same way.

Ultimately, Mangini paid him the money. It was a decision he and the rest of the Browns' organization would come to regret.

After getting word that the Browns were going to pay him the roster bonus, Stallworth spent the evening in Miami Beach celebrating. Among those celebrating with him was Braylon Edwards, the franchise's proverbial bad penny. After a night of drinking, Stallworth got into his car, drove for a bit and then plowed into Mario Reyes, who was looking to catch a bus to return home to his family after working the third shift. Reyes was dead at the scene.

After paying the Reyes family a healthy, but undisclosed amount of that bonus money, Stallworth worked out a very sweet deal with the local prosecutors. He served a brief prison sentence and is in the midst of a lengthy probation. He's also on indefinite suspension from the NFL.

For a coach that likes to draw lines as bright at Mangini does, particularly about player conduct, he dithered on what to do with Stallworth, because of the money. It was a sad testament. Mangini could have made a bold statement and cut Stallworth immediately. It would have accelerated his salary and bonus for cap purposes but that was a highly manageable and

transient concern. Instead, Mangini let the league handle it. Penny wise, as always, and pound foolish, as always.

As March was coming to a close, it was the first time that Mangini and his hand puppet Kokinis made it first known that they were leaning toward keeping both Anderson and Quinn and conducting an open competition for the job once training camp opened.

The fact that they wouldn't pick a starter from among those two was hardly surprising. Anderson was coming off an awful 2008 after a brilliant 2007 and Quinn had looked good in limited time before getting hurt. Still, at the time, many thought that Mangini was just being coy, not wanting to tip his hand in case anyone else in the league was paying attention. They weren't.

Meanwhile, the Plan Dealer's Bud Shaw was pleading with the Browns to move heaven and earth to sign Jay Cutler, an Anderson clone with a slightly better record, at the expense of Quinn. Cutler ultimately was traded by Denver to Chicago where he went on to huge stretches of ineptitude followed by fleeting moments of mediocrity.

With Mangini holed up in the background somewhere plotting his revenge on the NFL via the upcoming draft, the NFL and the ESPN found a completely worthless way of burning two hours of programming via their 2009 Schedule show. Yes, it took them two hours to reveal each team's upcoming schedule and provide the kind of meaningless analysis you've come to expect from the World Wide Leader.

The NFL, with more primetime games to fill than deserving primetime teams, gave the Browns two national appearances, down from the 5 the previous season. One was a late season Monday nighter against the Ravens. The other, an even later season Thursday nighter against the Steelers.

Now in another one of those foreshadowing moments that I have from time to time, after looking at the Browns' 2009 schedules I said about the final game against Jacksonville in Cleveland "I hope you're enjoying that perk at a half-filled stadium freezing under a blanket while a steady 20 MPH wind, gusting to 45 MPH, whips across your cheeks like a worn razor blade." I think the only thing I got wrong was the wind speed. On Sunday it looked to be about a steady 25 MPH.

Part IV. This is the Part Where Mangini Turns Into Monty Hall

As the draft was approaching, the rumors the Browns were floating around the league had them trading Braylon Edwards to the Giants for Domenick Hixon and some draft choices. Indeed, Mangini did try to make that trade but the Giants balked. As it ultimately turned out, Mangini wasn't kidding about trying to move Edwards. In a season full of so many missteps, this wasn't one of them. The only one who didn't think so was ESPN's Colin Cowherd, who spent a few shows spinning it all good in Edwards' direction. I'd say he'd probably wish he had those shows back, but with Cowherd it's always hard to tell.

When draft day finally approached in late April, the Browns spent the day moving up, down and sideways in the first round before trading down late into the first round and finally settling on California center Alex Mack. To make that happen, Mangini had to trade with his former club, the Jets, who used the Browns' pick to draft quarterback Mark Sanchez out of USC.

The choice of Mack was at once a stretch and an insight into Mangini's thinking. It was similar to his move in New York when he drafted Ohio State's Nick Mangold.

Building a team from the lines on out is always a good choice. But the rest of Mangini's draft was, well, just plain weird. All the wheeling and dealing got him a boatload of extra draft picks which Mangini used in the most random of fashion. The second round tells the story. In it he drafted two receivers-Ohio State's Brian Robiskie and Georgia's Mohamed Massaquoi-and then really reached in taking defensive lineman David Veikune from Hawaii. Sure, these were areas of need, but no one thought these were the players we needed.

Maybe the draft is best explained by reference to the veteran free agents Mangini brought with him from the Jets, players like Kenyon Coleman and Abram Elam. Mangini took some grief for bringing in those players but it did make some sense. As converts to the Mangini way they would be counted on to spread the gospel to a locker room full of skeptics. But those players looked to also be gap fillers that would allow Mangini to focus elsewhere in the draft, or something like that.

The lack of cohesion to the draft choices made it difficult to grade it. Even now, Mangini's first draft is at best a mixed bag. None of his drafted players were major contributors although Mack started and played all season at center and got much better in the process. As for Robiski, Massaquoi and Veikune, the jury looks to be out for awhile.

With the draft completed and mini-camps beckoning, one story emerged that continued throughout the season: the plight of Josh Cribbs' contract. In May, Cribbs hired a new agent who took a look at the contract that Cribbs signed two seasons ago and essentially said it was "outrageous, salacious and preposterous." He then went about pleading his case.

The problem that Cribbs' agent, J.R. Rickert, found was that the new regime wasn't too excited about honoring the commitments that the previous regime had made. Crennel had named Quinn the 2009 starter, for example, only to see Mangini declare it open season on picking the new quarterback. Now Rickert was finding a similar stonewall when trying to enforce a commitment that Savage, with Lerner's blessing, made to re-do Cribbs' contract.

Mangini, again with an eye on the budget, felt that giving big money to a special team's player, even one as valuable as Cribbs, might not be the best investment. He wanted to see more out of Cribbs, including whether he could be a regular on offense. He laid a carrot in front of Cribbs in May and left it dangling throughout the entire season, often telling the media that he thought a new contract would get done soon. Soon still hasn't arrived.

While Cribbs and his agent were making the most noise about renegotiating a contract, with Cribbs at times seemingly threatening to sit out, one that flew under the radar screen was Phil Dawson. Dawson refused to report to any of Mangini's pre-camps in a bit of a silent protest about his contract situation. Dawson eventually reported to preseason training camp without a new contract in hand. He didn't help his case by getting hurt.

As for the rest of off-season Camp Mangini, it was going along swimmingly, at least from Mangini's mad scientist perspective. He was irritating the bejeezus out of the players by having having them run laps for making mistakes, like false starts. He also was irritating the bejeezus out of the local media for playing hide the sausage on even the smallest bits of information. Finally, he was irritating the bejeezus out of both Anderson and Quinn as the so-called open competition commenced.

And if all that wasn't enough, Mangini committed still another public relations blunder of his own by "volunteering" his rookies for a 10-hour bus ride to Connecticut to work at his football camp. Meanwhile, Mangini, trying to build team camaraderie, flew to Connecticut instead.

After word broke out about the camp, thanks to a whole bunch of agents who had gotten an earful from their disgruntled clients, Mangini rode the bus home. But the specter of the bus trip caused an inquiry by the league and the Players Association, one of three they were forced to make of Mangini this past season.

If only the Browns hadn't fired their entire public relations staff all of this might have gone down much more smoothly. As it was, though, the Browns had bigger problems. They were having trouble selling loges and went into business with the Indians who likewise were having the same problem, offering a so-called "Touchdown Package" that would allow fans, for the price of $15,000, to watch the Tribe play St. Louis and Detroit and the Browns play Pittsburgh, all from a luxury box, refreshments extra.

As the dawn of Mangini's first real training camp beckoned, word came down that the Browns were being sued by one of their own, Joe Jurevicius, who had missed the entire 2008 season because of a staph infection contracted after relatively routine arthroscopic surgery following the 2007 season.

Jurevicius claimed in his lawsuit that the Browns did not properly maintain, disinfect or clean their therapy devices making it likely that he would suffer a staph infection.

Staph infections have been a particularly thorny issue with the Browns as a number of players have suffered from them over the years. While I understood the concerns and frustration of players like Jurevicius, I always doubted his claims. Yet, isn't it interesting that following the filing of the complaint and with all the Browns' injuries this season there hasn't been a staph infection?

One of the more refreshing aspects of the Browns' training camp was simply the fact that every player was under contract before it started in earnest. Cribbs wasn't happy not having his contract renegotiated and neither was Dawson. But both were in camp as was every draft choice. For a team in desperate need of anything positive, this would be it for awhile.

In the early days of camp, Mangini made his presence felt in the form of summarily dismissing defensive lineman Shaun Smith. Smith, as most remember, got into a locker room fight with Quinn the previous season with Quinn ending up with a fat lip. Smith always had his own agenda anyway and served as the perfect foil for the point Mangini was trying to drive home. It helped that Smith also wasn't very good. Smith spent the next several months on the sidelines before landing, briefly, with the Detroit Lions. The Cincinnati Bengals picked him up, cut him a few days later, and then signed him once more when more injuries hit. As a point of reference, the week after Smith was signed again the Bengals lost their last game of the season to the Jets, 37-0. As another point of reference, the Bengals lost in the playoff re-match the following week.