Thirty years ago, this is the week when it really started.

The roller-coaster ride everyone would associate with the Kardiac Kids truly began on October 19, 1980, in what at first appeared would be an unremarkable game against the mediocre Green Bay Packers. The Browns had clawed back to the .500 mark at 3-3, and needed a victory over Bart Starr's Green Bay Packers to keep pace in the crowded AFC playoff hunt.

Yet for much of the week, it looked like they'd have to do it without their leader.

The one bit of bad news that came out of the Browns' dominating victory in Seattle seven days earlier was that Brian Sipe had been dinged up far worse than the fans knew. After taking a hit to his left knee late in the game, Sipe was later told by doctors that he'd suffered a partial ligament tear and was unable to practice early that week. As late as Wednesday, it looked like rookie Paul McDonald would be making his first start that weekend. Wearing a stiff, custom-made knee brace, Sipe's condition improved as the week went on, but on Friday Sam Rutigliano announced the decision on who would start would be a game-time decision.

Considering what Sipe would accomplish on that overcast Sunday afternoon at Cleveland Stadium, it's hard to imagine what he would have done on two healthy legs.

The Browns' momentum from the Kingdome carried over as they controlled the line of scrimmage in the first half and took a 10-0 lead to the locker room. Yet the margin should have been greater. Facing fourth-and-goal at the Green Bay 1 with fourteen seconds left in the half, Sam opted to roll the dice and forgo the chip-shot field goal to shoot for a back-breaking touchdown and a 17-point lead. Instead, Charles White was buried at the line of scrimmage and the lead remained 10.

As Greg Pruitt would say later, right there is where an easy game became a hard game. Yet on the other hand, had White scored, the remainder of the 1980 season may have unfolded completely different.

A field goal by Don Cockroft early in the third quarter made it 13-0, but the Packers cut the lead to 13-7 on a Lynn Dickey scoring scramble. Mike Pruitt fumbled on the Browns' next offensive play, and five snaps later, the Packers had their first lead at 14-13 with just over a minute left in the third quarter. The crowd of 75,000-plus groaned in disbelief. Here they'd go again.

Things only got worse as the final stanza opened. The Browns went three-and-out, then the Packers drove 80 yards and stretched the lead to eight points on a Dickey-to-James Lofton touchdown pass with 7:23 to play. Now needing two scores with the offense floundering for the first time all day, the Browns were in deep trouble.

It took all of two plays to get back into the game. Sipe, now nursing sore ribs and a creaky elbow in addition to his wobbly knee after taking a smorgasbord of vicious shots all day, looped a toss down the sideline for Calvin Hill, and the aging veteran weaved his way through Green Bay defenders for a 50-yard gain to the Packer 19. On the next play, Sipe connected with Ozzie Newsome in the end zone to make it 21-20. The scoring drive took 18 seconds.

The Browns' fate would now rest with the Cleveland defense. With less than seven minutes remaining, the Browns needed a quick stop to get the ball back to their maestro under center and give him a chance to pull out another victory. Instead, with the game hanging in the balance, the Browns suddenly couldn't stop the Packers. Green Bay racked up three first downs and reached the Cleveland 38 at the two-minute warning. Facing fourth-and-two and not wanting to give the Browns good field position, Starr played it safe and punted. Sipe and Co. took over at their own 13 with 1:53 to play.

His weary muscles and bones now aching, Sipe hit Hill for 15 yards, then sprinted for nine more. Mike Pruitt broke loose for an 11-yard gain into Packer territory with a minute remaining, then Sipe hit Hill again for 16. With the crowd beginning to taste victory, Sipe dropped back from the Packer 36, found no one open, and improvised, rushing around the right side for 14 yards for a first down in field-goal range with 49 seconds left.

But before the fans could truly celebrate, a yellow hankie changed everything. Cody Risien was penalized for holding on the play, pushing the Browns 10 yards back. Now, instead of first and 10 from the 22, they'd face first and 20 from the 46. Making matters worse, Sipe misfired on his next two passes, bringing up third and 20 with 25 seconds remaining.

The goal for this critical play was just to try to pick up about 15 yards to nudge into Don Cockroft's range - though over the previous few weeks, the veteran kicker's range had been about as unpredictable as the Cleveland weather. Reggie Rucker was the prime target, right up until the moment Sipe stepped up to the line of scrimmage and saw the unbelievable: the Packers were going to blitz.

Knowing that meant the pressure would be on the Green Bay secondary if the Cleveland front wall could keep the charging defenders at bay, Sipe knew what he was going to do. He looked to his right to Dave Logan, lined up at wideout, and nodded. Logan nodded back. The play was no longer going to Rucker.

Sipe dropped back and lobbed a long, lofty pass deep down the right side. In less than a second, Logan could tell the ball was underthrown - which was exactly what Sipe wanted. Packer cornerback Mark Lee - five inches shorter than Logan - was matching his man stride for stride, but when Logan put on the brakes and leapt over him to get the ball, Lee was suddenly helpless. He staggered backward as Logan caught the football at the Green Bay 19, sprinted downfield, and literally skipped into the end zone for the go-ahead touchdown with 16 seconds left.

The Stadium crowd went berserk as Logan's teammates mobbed him in the end zone. In the thunderclap of one of the most miraculous plays in Browns history, Don Cockroft's missed extra point (his fourth of the season) and Robert L. Jackson's game-clinching interception at midfield on the game's final play were all but forgotten. This day would forever be remembered for Dave Logan's leaping catch that rescued victory from the esophagus of defeat.

For many, the 26-21 win over Green Bay remains the most incredible of the 1980 season.

“That’s when we really became the Kardiac Kids,” Thom Darden would say. “Everyone thought we were going to lose that game. That started the whole thing.”

While Logan was crowned the hero, it was Sipe who truly saved the day. Fighting through three separate injuries, he completed 24 of 39 passes for an astonishing 391 yards - 10 short of Otto Graham’s franchise record - as he sparked the offense to a 471-yard performance, the team’s best in a regulation game in nearly two years.

The magic continued the following evening when the Steelers were dominated at Three Rivers by the Oakland Raiders, setting up a three-way tie for first in the AFC Central with the Browns and Oilers. After winning four of their last five, the Browns had wiped out their miserable start and were somehow in the running for the division crown.

It wasn’t so much grabbing a victory that gray October Sunday, but rather the fashion in which it came that forever altered the course of Browns history.

“That’s when I started to think fate was on our side,” Joe DeLamielleure would remember years later. “That made everyone believe. We knew we had something going here.”