April 6, 2011, a day of monumental importance for the future of the NFL as we know it, came and went with all the fanfare of a WNBA Draft. And at least something happened at the WNBA Draft, at least something was accomplished. The Brady-Manning-NFL-Lockout-Injunction hearing turned out to be a fizzle, with the Judge delaying any judgment and pressing the 2 sides to get back to mediation (which seems difficult since one side is supposed to be pretending that it's not really a Union, but whatever).

At least that's presumably happening. Not that I expect the prima donnas to come to terms with the trust fund babies, but I also once predicted that I'd never see a professional sports championship in Northeast Ohio, and then along came the Cleveland CrunchForce to win the National Major Indoor Soccer League Association of America Championship back in... maybe the 90's?... and, well, I've been a believer ever since.

Anyway, something might happen, something might not; I can't be bothered to pay attention.

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Regarding Defensive Linemen

Did the Free Agent-ish Wide Receivers last week, so now we go on to the other area of greatest need, the D Line. With the move to the 4-3, we now have one real bona-fide starter - Ahtyba Rubin, a Defensive Tackle. They'll need at least one more DT and 2 DE's if they expect to field a team that has any shot of reminding the opposing QB that football is supposed to be a violent sport.

One could surmise that Matt Roth, who may or may not be Restricted, could fill one of those DE spots. But one wouldn't be excited about it.

One could also surmise that the Browns might well address one of these positions with the 6th pick in the draft. That's fine, but that one stitch won't close the whole wound.

As with last time "U" means unrestricted. "5" and "4" means that's how many years they have under their belt. They might be unrestricted, they

might be restricted... it all depends on the new CBA.

Defensive Ends

Jason Babin (U) - With 58 tackles, 12.5 sacks, and 2 forced fumbles last season as a Titans DE, Babin is sure to be in high demand. He's threatening to join the CFL or UFL if the lockout continues, but that's just blabber.

He'd have to play in the CFL for 132 years just to make what he'll get as a signing bonus in the NFL.

There's very little in the way of quality DE Free Agents out there (teams tend to not let them get away), so the Browns might do well to be the team that pays that bonus.

Shaun Ellis (U) - Well, he's getting up there in age (34 in June), and he's one of a plethora of listed DE's that probably would play DT in a 4-3, but I'll keep him here because of his pass rush ability and the fact that he CAN play 4-3 DE too. He might be one of those 1 year, incentive-laden contract guys that can be had relatively reasonably.

Jason Taylor (U) - Sold yer soul for a bag of magic beans, and what'd they getcha? Well, the AFC Championship Game, but that's beside the point, it still wasn't the Super Bowl.

Ha!

And you lost on that dancing show.

Double ha!

Akron still hates you!

Oh, wait, no, that's some other guy, Akron actually likes you.

Never mind.

PS, not an option for the Browns.

Matt Roth (U) - Damn. He's actually starting to look good now. Not that good, but still kinda good. Had 86 tackles last year, but that stat is outta whack because he was an OLB in the 3-4.

3.5 sacks, 2 batted balls... at least he doesn't look like he's "lost it" (if he ever had "it", that is).

Vernon Ghoulston (U) - Stop laughing. Seriously, stop. Yes, dude's an epic flop as a 3-4 OLB.

That's not what he played in college, though.

There, he was a 4-3 DE, and he was good enough at that to get drafted damn high.

So before we write him off forever, it would be interesting to see how he fared at his natural position.

And he could be had for pennies on the dollar.

I'm not saying pin your hopes to this guy, but counting on him as a backup and giving him a shot... no problem with that.

Ray Edwards (5) - If he's Restricted, he's got a 1st Round tender on him, but he'll likely be Unrestricted and fair game to the highest bidder. Edwards is in his prime and a solid pass rusher (16.5 sacks the last 2 years), so his services will sure to be in demand.

That means he'd be a difficult sign, but not impossible.

Mathias Kiwanuka (5) - A similar situation to Edwards, as he has a 2nd Round tender on him that will likely never see the light of day. Kiwanuka was hurt most of last season and got somewhat lost in the Giants' deep DL rotation, but has shown good pass rush ability in the past and could thrive on a team where he was The Man.

Jayme Mitchell (5) - Mitchell was the source of some controversy earlier this year when Tom Heckert somewhat slammed Eric Mangini for not playing this guy more after the Browns traded for him in the middle of last season, calling Jayme the Browns' "Best Pass Rusher".

It would be nice to find out if he was right (though I'm not breaking the bank to do so).

Charles Johnson (4) - Good enough that the Panthers considered Franchising him, and that's expensive for DE's. Sadly, he'll likely be Restricted, which will make it damn difficult to pry him out of Carolina, but his 62 tackles and 11.5 sacks make a compelling argument to try. The kind of player that maybe you have to trade for.

Cliff Avril (R) - Only 3 years in the league, and the Lions tendered him with a 1st and 3rd, so it will be next to impossible to get this guy in a Browns uniform for 2011. Still, 8.5 sacks last year, 5 batted balls, 1 forced fumble... he's a playmaker.

Stranger things have happened.

Not many, but some.

Defensive Tackles

Cullen Jenkins (U) - 7 sacks in 11 games last year. It sounds like the Packers have enough depth (and he might be expensive enough) that they might let him walk.

Jenkins is described as scheme-diverse, which is babble for him being good in either a 3-4 or 4-3.

But Jenkins likely is a DT in a 4-3, so ignore any listings you see that have him as a top DE prospect.

Pat Williams (U) - I know most people think of him as a Nose Tackle, but he's played in a 4-3 for like forever, and has always been a great run stuffer. Problems? Well, the Vikes really want him back, and he's more like to go back there than here.

And he's actually older than I am (38), so he's prone to not being around/healthy long.

I'm thinking Ted Washington here.

Ted Washington was good for a long time.

Ted Washington wasn't good at the end.

Aubrayo Franklin (U) - Really more of 3-4 NT, and looking to cash in as such, so probably out of the Browns picture. Still, a very solid player that the Browns should perform due diligence upon.

Kris Jenkins (U) - Also more of a 3-4 NT, but could certainly play a decent 4-3 DT, and is looking for a grass field to (hopefully) prolong his career. The reason for this, of course, would be that he'll be 32 once the season starts with 2 ACL surgeries on his left knee.

Probably not ideal for what we need.

Ron Edwards (U) - Good run defender that had decent stats (26 tackles, 2 sacks, 1 pass defensed), but he's also in his 30's, looking for a big paycheck, and likely to re-sign with his current team (Chiefs).

Anthony Hargrove (U) - This is more along the lines of what we need. 29 tackles and 1 sack last year (5 sacks in the SB year of '09), in the height of his playing career (28), maybe can be swayed into giving Cleveland a chance by ol'-buddy-ol'-pal Scott Fujita (I have no idea if they're friends or not, but it's worth a shot).

Tommie Harris (U) - A lot of people think the injuries have done this guy in and that he'll only be a shell of the player he once was. Could be. Knee injuries really screw with the careers of linemen. But he could be a good one-year, incentive-laden project if the powers that be deem it so.

Marcus Spears (U) - He's got an easily recognizable name, but his best years are likely in the rearview and not as close as they appear. Plus, he's yet another 3-4 DE that probably plays DT in a 4-3. I don't imagine that Heckgren will be zoning in on this guy.

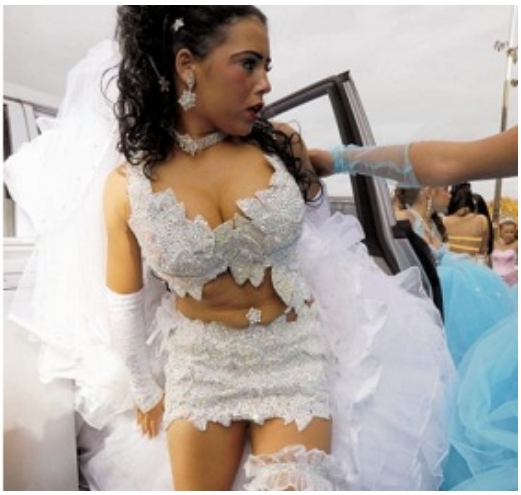
Robaire Smith (U) - Robaire is 157 years old now, and has had more injuries than the armless/legless knight from Monty Python. Still, I love the old guy and he can be productive when healthy. I wouldn't

mind seeing him back in Berea... but probably not as a starter.

Gerard Warren (U) - Yeah, pay him the veteran minimum and make him come back here and earn his first contract. For someone who will be forever thought of in Cleveland as " *The Pick That Could've Been LaDainian Tomlinson*", Warren's still in the league for an 11th year.

And if he were a 3rd Round pick instead of the #3 pick, you might actually say he had a semi-decent career.

But the only reason I'm throwing him in here is just to mock him.

I'm shallow that way.

Shaun Smith (U) - Everyone's favorite guy. Led the league in nut-grabbing. And not all that good either. I put him on here for the same reason as L'il Money.