Preseason Week 3 – Cleveland at Philadelphia

You know football is back when you find yourself throwing a fit like a 3 year old in the 2nd Quarter of a Fake Season game.

Which is exactly what I was doing following the Worst Penalty Ever™ (also known as the Roughing the Passer call on a completely legal hit which wiped out an interception). My tension had been building, what with all the mistakes and bad calls and anticipation of the silly "Browns destroyed by Eagles" articles that were sure to follow.

Like this Herculean effort by the Associated Press when you get to the game page at NFL.com :

Vick rebounds from poor game vs. Steelers

PHILADELPHIA -- Michael Vick led three scoring drives, the first-team defense pitched a shutout and the Philadelphia Eagles beat the Cleveland Browns 24-14 in a preseason game on a rain-soaked Thursday night.

Barf. Did you even watch the game, Mr. Press?

First, Phil Dawson gets a chip shot FG blocked. Then Jordan Norwood trips over his own player and gets hit by a punt, gifting the Eagles 7 points. Then Evan Moore drops a sure TD pass, and Brian Robiskie is called for a phantom (or - at best - highly suspect) Offensive Pass

Interference call on the same drive. And finally the sack and pick which was nullified by Worst Penalty Ever
™, later resulting in a TD that shouldn't have been.

Some of it was just silly mistakes, some of it was poor reffing, but the Browns/refs gave the Eagles 2 TD's and negated 10 points of their own. Without that crap, the Halftime score was 10-3, Cleveland.

Thus my hissy.

In the quest for lower blood pressure, I hereby swear to try to avoid losing it over a meaningless game. Imagine if it had been the Regular Season. My damn heart would've blown up. But that call was just all kinds of awful - thus its name.

Also awful would be characterizing this game as anything other than an utter waste of time analysis-wise (see foolish mistakes and heinous penalties mentioned above, not to mention this is Fake Season). The Browns had no problem hanging with the vaunted Eagles. Whether that's due to Cleveland being better than advertised or Philly being a big freakin' hoax, I'm not sure. A bit of both, likely (with a lean towards hoax).

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Stats

Time of Possession: PHI – 34:44, CLE – 25:16
Total Yards: PHI – 282, CLE - 242
Yards Passing: CLE - 139, PHI – 135
Yards Rushing: PHI – 147, CLE - 103
First Downs: PHI - 18, CLE – 16
Turnovers Forced: PHI - 3, CLE – 2
Sacks: PHI – 5, CLE - 2
Final Score: Philadelphia – 24, Cleveland - 14

Like I said before, these stats mean less than a boxful of dead rats in a tampon factory due to certain officiating indiscretions.

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Game Balls

Auston English – This is probably a farewell game ball, but a lot of what Mr. English brought impressed me. He finished up his Cleveland career with a sack and forced fumble from Vince Young's blind side. Hope to see you on the Practice Squad.

D'Qwell Jackson – Second week in a row. Had himself a fine sack (which was foiled by the Wo rst Penalty Ever
™) and an excellent tackle for loss on 3rd and Short. He's not there quite yet, but soon DQ will have played himself on to Tom Heckert's

Must Extend
short list.

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Honorable Mention

Jarrett Brown – Since I ripped him last week, it's only fair that I mention he looked really solid against Philly. Showed nice touch on the sideline pass that got called for Defensive PI, and great running ability on his 16 yard scramble. Doubt he'll make the team, but should be Practice Squad fodder.

Brian Robiskie – Nice game, 3 catches for 23 yards, not to mention getting robbed of about a 40 yard catch (over Nnamdi Asomugha, no less) by an officiating crew clearly on the take. Finally showed some of the potential he flashed at the end of last season.

Kaluka Maiava – He's a backup, and he'll never be more than a backup. But the guy knows how to play football. The Browns need him badly right now.

Montario Hardesty – Mainly for just not blowing anything out. Seemed to run somewhat timidly, but I think that will ease as his worries do. Another couple games and he should have his knee paranoia in his rearview.

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Wall of Shame

Tony Pashos – He's just a step too slow. Has loads of trouble with speed rushers. This Right Tackle position has proven to be a major headaches since Ryan Tucker said Adieu.

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