I am just going to start this week's Kibble and Bits article straight from the fan perspective and get the rant out of the way.

I don't know if I could be more disappointed in a team's performance based on my expectations. I understand that the Browns could have played worse, but not when they were playing an opponent that I clearly felt they wouldn't have a problem beating.

I also understand that I created my own expectations and therefore assume some of the blame for my anger but to lose to a team that employed a simple offensive plan that everyone anticipated in the season opener at home is extremely disappointing.

It wasn't like a week one loss by the Saints to the defending World Champs in Lambeau… it was a loss to a team that started a rookie QB who was playing in his first career game and who then got hurt and was replaced in the second half by a career journeyman who only completed 5 of 12 passes for 92 yards.

Disappointment was the theme of the day Sunday September 11, 2011 in Cleveland Browns Stadium and it came from many different sources so there is plenty blame to go around.

Ok….now I am done with the emotional rant let's break down the game and try and figure out specifically why they lost as well as talk about some of the good that came out of the game.

Before I get into the article I wanted to give readers a heads up on the order of content. In the K & B articles that contain game reviews I start off with the 'Reason Why' section. This section will contain, as you might guess, thoughts on the reasons why we won or lost. I will talk about the good or bad counter points in the game note section.

Reason Why We Lost

Offense- By far this is the group that disappointed the most during the game. All facets of offense were off Sunday. The Passing game was not in rhythm with Colt McCoy only completing 19 of his 40 passes… the running game averaged a measly 3.2 yards an attempt… coaching can even be thrown into the bad category if you look at the results of the first ten plays.

The reason I say coaching is because the first ten plays are usually scripted and those first ten plays netted minus 5 yards as a whole. Sure some of it could be execution but clearly as a coach your job is to get the offense into a rhythm and those plays simply did not. Penalties also generally fall into the coaching category and the Browns had 23 yards in penalties on the first two drives alone. By the start of the third drive, Pat Shurmur's Browns had already accrued more penalties than what Eric Mangini's version of the Browns averaged for an entire contest last year.

The coach may not commit the penalties but it is ultimately his job to make sure they don't happen so Coach Shurmur will have to figure out how to get that done ASAP.

Shurmur also is the offensive play caller and he only got the ball to Josh Cribbs and Greg Little a combined 3 times the entire game. I remember Coach Shurmur saying as soon as he arrived in Cleveland that one of his goals was to find ways to get Josh Cribbs the ball. He is already failing miserably in the Cribbs category and if he can't find a package in which to get Cribbs on the field he needs to at least let him run the wildcat. A good coach finds a way to get the ball into his playmakers hands and I am waiting to see Coach Shurmur deliver on that.

Let's talk about some more numbers. The Browns were 4 for 15 on 3rd downs. If I had to pick one stat that affects the overall outcome of a game that stat might be it. The inability to keep drives going not only kills an offense's rhythm but totally gasses your own team's defense. Constant 3 and outs will lead to second half collapses by the defense over the course of a game and season. The Browns need to be better.

Another stat that looks odd to me is Mohamed Massaquoi getting targeted 7 times. The guy just came back to practice last week and hadn't played at all in the preseason but yet gets more targets than Cribbs and Little combined… I don't know about that logic.

The last group of numbers has to do with the second half possessions and their productivity. The Browns went 50 yards and scored a FG with their first possession of the second half but only mustered 62 yards on their last 6 drives that netted zero points.

The offense did more than stalled... it basically stopped after that first drive in the 2nd half. I really don't understand how the Browns had the ball for 9:50 in the 4th quarter and failed to score a single point.

Defense- The defense was nowhere near as bad as the offense but they gave away big chunks of yards too often and were really burned by their lack of awareness on the 4th quarter TD by A.J. Green.

If you take away the last TD run of 39 yards to ice the game by the Bengals, Cedric Benson only averaged 3.4 yards a carry which is respectable. But the reality of defense in the NFL is that breakdowns (both physical and mental ones) that lead to big plays will trump stats more times than not, and the snafu to Green that resulted in a TD as the Bengals caught the defense napping was the big play that made the Browns go from winning on the scoreboard to losing. Making it worse is there was simply no excuse for it.

When you look at the stat sheet a few things stand out that have to change. For example the Browns registered 4 sacks with zero coming from the starting DL. This is a red flag for sure.

The Browns also gave the Bengals 3 first downs on penalties. Good defenses find a way to get off the field and don't commit penalties that keep them on it.

The last stat I will bring up for the defense is zero turnovers. Good defenses create turnovers and the Browns failed to capitalize on a couple of potential fumble recoveries and the defenses also failed to pick off any passes.

I am done harping on the defense. They played better than the offense and that race wasn't even close but like I said earlier you can't give up big plays because they can ruin a good day's work and let victory slip away in an instant

Game and Player Notes

****Colt McCoy**- We all know this is the year Colt will be evaluated in order to determine if we need a QB of the future. McCoy struggled in week 1. I understand there are some mitigating factors like no offseason learning the offense, endless combinations of WRs to get used to, and a make-shift OL but in Colt's first chance to impress he flat-outfailed to do so.

He looked O.K. in spots and did have some good throws but as a whole he didn't look comfortable in the pocket and failed to show he had command of the offense.

Some of the issues people thought he would have trouble with in the NFL were proven true in week 1. Like finding the throwing lanes and climbing through the pocket. Far too many times when things got hairy in the pocket instead of climbing up through the pocket he escaped the pocket all together and other times he didn't make it through his progressions before looking for a dump off.

Another issue scouts talked about was his ability to play in bad weather because of his hand size and, although it was just one throw, his last throw of the game where the wet ball slipped right out of his hand made me start to consider if I should just get used to the poor

performances Colt had in the December games of the 2010 season. He will no doubt need some good bad weather performances in order to put that notion to sleep.

To his credit he did make some good plays like the backside read to Ben Watson for the TD and the pinpoint throw to Evan Moore for the score.

It is a long year and the idea is to see a steady progression so no glaring conclusions will be made at this point on what he will be as a starting QB in the NFL, but his start to the 2011 season was shaky at best. Let's look for some growth in week 2.

****Musical WRs**- To piggy back a little on the Colt McCoy comments and to help his cause… Let's talk about the "everybody will play" stance for playing time at the WR position.

Please, enough with the merry-go-round WRs. I understand that there was no OTAs or minicamps to figure this stuff out but let the QB and WRs develop chemistry. Pick your best two, then three, then four and go with it for a while (3-4 games). Then once you see who is performing and who is not, change the combination around some. It is too much to ask a young QB to learn how 5 different guys run a route.

The coach has to make a command decision here and pick players and spots then go with it.

****D'Qwell Jackson and Phil Taylor** are studs. They both showed up all over the field making plays. It's a great day for a DT to have 6 tackles, 2TFLs, and 1 QB hit. Phil Taylor started off his rookie campaign like a beast.

Jackson had 11 tackles, 2 sacks, 1 QB hit and 1 TFL to go along with a forced fumble. Jackson is truly at home in this defense and is playing with the type of hunger a player who hasn't been able to play in two years plays with when football is in his blood. Keep it up D'Qwell.

****Play Calling**- Pat Shurmur failed to get the team in rhythm the way he did when I watched the

Rams 2010 season in review. Sometimes a play caller can have a bad day and I think Shurmur had a bad day.

He didn't find a way to get the ball into Cribbs and Little's hands and certainly never let Hillis get into a rhythm. I don't remember any type of screen game, not to the RBs, WRs, or TEs.

I think maybe Coach Shumur knew the Bengals would study the Rams and he therefore purposely went away from some of the stuff that he used in St. Louis. Sometimes coaches forget to do what works and they attempt to use other stuff in the name of surprise.

I honestly loved the way he called games in St. Louis and I suggest he digs some of that up even if that means treating Colt McCoy more like a rookie than a second year player.

****Great job on the slot WR of the Bengals**….how many times do you remember Jordan Shipley's name called?

****Evan Moore**- Two things on Evan Moore. First off he should have caught that gorgeous ball Colt McCoy dropped over his shoulder. That was a poor effort.

The second topic is more of a comment than anything. I really do understand how hard it is for a CB to stop Moore on slant passes but is he done running routes from the conventional TE position? Double TEs doesn't always have to be a gimmick when those guys challenging the seam are Moore and Ben Watson.

Just as I thought, **Dick Jauron is still a conservative coach. He will bring pressure from time to time but there is nothing exotic so far about his defense. It could evolve but they are pretty straight forward right now.

****Joe Haden**- Haden had an incredible 5 passes defended in the game. He was everywhere and on every pass in his direction. When his technique and focus is sound it allows his superior

athleticism to shine. He is the most gifted athlete the Browns have had since their return to the league in 1999.

Now that his technique is looking sharp, look for him to take the next step and collect some picks… especially when playing second or third WRs.

****Special Teams**- First off the punting was horrible and the Browns have placed McGee on the IR and signed Brad Maynard, a longtime NFL veteran.

It is great to actually go to a game so you get to see Josh Cribbs work as a gunner on the punt team. That guy works his butt off and always finds his way to the football. You can't teach the type of "want to" that he has.

Phil Dawson's leg is as strong as ever. The reason why Brandon Tate stopped having success on the kick returns is because Dawson changed the kick type. On the kicks that Tate got tackled at the ten Dawson only kicked them 6 yards deep in the end zone but he put extra high trajectory on them that allowed the coverage team to get down faster. That type of kick takes a really strong leg to execute and Phil showed off his strength on those kicks.

One last special teams note….Did you see the Greg Little's block on the punt return that almost went the distance? If that block doesn't get the football juices moving nothing will.

****Usama Young and Mike Adams**- If these guys were one player we would have two T.J. Ward's. One is good at the pass and the other is good at run support. I hope with playing time Young develops a better understanding of passing concepts because that guy can bring the wood. He could be a difference maker in the run game.

****Scott Fujita and Chris Gocong**- It seems like these guys are O.K. with D'Qwell making all the good LB plays. If these guys don't start showing up and making an impact, the coaches might as well let some young guys play. Start making some impact plays.

****Stretch**- One of the things I will give the Bengals major kudos for is the stress they put on our DEs in the running game. Because we start two big DTs and have two inexperienced DEs, the Bengals ran zone stretch left and zone stretch right all day long.

This was a great strategy based on our personnel and it worked out good for them in the end because they stuck to it. Get the big guys in the middle moving laterally and press the DEs to see if they can set a proper edge.

Jay Gruden did a good job of sticking to the plan and Cedric Benson did a good job of hitting the creases when they showed.

Summary on Loss

In general that game Sunday was lost by sloppy play and mental breakdowns. Too many penalties and too many mental lapses permeated the day. I saw players like all world LT Joe Thomas miss assignments and when those things are happening it is going to be a long day for any team.

Sunday the Browns struggled on offense and therefore created more plays for the defense to ultimately make without breaking down and making a mistake. This has been a common theme in Cleveland since for some time. The defense isn't good enough to do that and the offense needs to help.

I honestly thought Pat Shurmur would have the offense perform like a well-oiled machine and the defense would struggle but much to my surprise it was the other way around.

To remain a head coach in this league, your team has to either do well as a unit or you at least need the side of the ball that you have a background in to excel. Shurmur needs to work out the

kinks in the offense and show off the coaching talent that earned him the job.

In my opinion the Bengals won that game for a few different reasons but there are two that come to mind first.

The team who made the least number of mental errors won that game and the Browns failed in the passing game when it counted.

Mental mistakes are the easiest to fix so I would start there immediately. The passing game will be a work in progress all season but it will get better when the QB gets some more experience and a higher comfort level with the system and his players.

Thoughts from Around the League

-Wow! Cam Newton really stepped into the league with a statement. The guy is far more than a “running” QB.

-Ouch! The Ravens put the smack down on the Squeelers something terrible. I don’t care what anyone says to the counter….. The Ravens were letting Pittsburgh know they are going after home games in the playoffs this year. The Ravens must be tired of playing the AFC Championship on the road.

-Why does Tony Romo seem to find a way to mess things up? This guy must have done really bad things as a kid because his Karma seems cursed.

-If you saw Tom Brady in action Monday night you should have no question on who the best QB in the league is. Tom is the man and I almost even felt sorry for Chad Henne, he had a career day and still got beat by 14 points.

-O.K. if Brady is the best (and he is), how about the show Drew Brees and Aaron Rodgers put on to open the season last Thursday night? As a NFL fan you could not have asked for, or created a storyline like the one that played out in that game. If I didn't know any better I would have sworn the NFL had hired Vince McMahon and his writers to create that storyline.

-Wade Philips is the poster child for horrible head coaches but crazy good assistants. The Texans may finally play defense at a level worthy of their offense.

-Randall Cobb is a very explosive player, if you followed the Feeling A Draft series you know I previewed him and I was actually going back and forth debating on choosing him or Greg Little for my projected Browns pick. I ended up picking Little based on size and blocking but the Packers made one heck of a pick with the last pick of the second round.

That's all for now…. Go Browns!

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