Before I get into some of my thoughts on the game, I want to start the article off by talking about one of the weirdest after game environments I have ever been exposed to. That Seattle game Sunday at Cleveland Browns Stadium was such a drain it created a sort of vacuum that literally sucked the life right out of the crowd.

Usually after the game the walk back to the car is either filled with an overwhelming buzz of disgruntled conversation or continuous chants of “here we go Brownies… here we go” that are quickly followed by an echoing unified “woof,woof”…. There was neither on the walk after the Seahawks vs. Browns contest.

There was actually an eerie silence of fans that couldn’t bring themselves to complain about a win but refused to give praise for it either. The group I was walking with was just a mob of 10,000 dazed fans all moving in the same direction and all of us were moving as if we were on autopilot with no one at the controls.

There was even the usual trombone player sitting in the median trying to horn the song to start the “here we go “chant and I heard someone yell “you got nerve, nobody feels like barking after watching that”.

It’s funny, I have always been one of those guys who says, “A win is a win…I will be happy just win the game”, but I totally understand what the people were feeling because I was feeling it too.

I know fans at home were feeling it but if you were at home, at least you could flip the channel during commercials and get a break. If you had the redzone channel you could actually get some highlights of games where their actually some points being scored…..if you were watching the broadcast at least they probably offered some game breaks showing what offense could be.

Sitting in the Stadium there is absolutely nowhere to hide or any sort of distraction. You just sat there getting the football life sucked out of you with nowhere to hide. It was nuts, I would never trade a win for a loss because I am way too competitive, but that was brutal to sit through.

With all that being said, it was a victory and it pulled the Browns even for the year at 3-3 and keeps them only two games behind our division leaders. The hangover is done and when you look at the stat sheet, it looks way better reading 3-3 vs. 2-4.

As usually we will stick to the format and look at the reasons why we won while putting the pros and cons that the tape showed in the game notes section. This week it was pretty clear cut why we won so let’s get started.

Reasons Why We Won

Honestly this game was the easiest yet when it comes to analyzing why we won. The formula was simple….a great defensive effort combined with total dominance in time of possession and

the team finally jumped on the back of its “franchise” player Phil Dawson.

Offense- The offense was its usual self against the Seahawks…. they were inconsistent, had a horrible yards per carry average, had zero down field plays, and failed to score TDs.

They did however move the chains, keep the clock running and only turned the ball over once. I give coach Shurmur credit for the continued effort in the running game, even though we managed only 3.2 yards a carry, the 44 attempts netted the Browns 141 yards rushing and allowed them to dominate the time of possession 42:56 to 17:04 and that is pretty mind blowing for an NFL game.

The fact that you can run that many times and not have any fumbles lost is also something that shouldn’t be overlooked. Seattle’s defense was aggressive to the ball and hit hard all game but the Browns managed to keep the ball in our own hands which should be counted as a positive aspect of the game.

Also when taking a look at the stats, you have to be happy with the number of drives that the Browns exceeded 10 plays or more. The Browns managed 5 separate drives where they reached the double digit marker and all of those drives went at least 11 plays so as you can see, Pat Shurmur isn’t afraid to run the ball if the Browns are not playing from behind like they have been in previous weeks.

Although the passing game failed to have a play of more than 19 yards (screen to RB), it was effective enough to account for 12 of the 20 first downs the Browns accrued.

I imagine most of you actually saw the game so I will quit now before you feel like I am trying to trick you into thinking that the final score wasn’t actually 6-3 because it was, and therefore the offensive praise should be virtually nonexistent and I will treat it as such.

Defense- The defense was the star against the Seahawks. You can say what you want about Seattle’s backup QB and RBs getting the starts but the fact of the matter is pretty simple. The defense was supposed to dominate Seattle and they did.

The defense only gave up 137 net yards on 50 plays and that is ridiculous. They forced 4 series into 3 and outs and had 9 drives in total accumulate 6 plays or less. They held the Seahawks to 65 rushing yards and surrendered only 72 net passing yards. Those stats are dominating at any level of football so the fact that Seattle had backups playing at QB and RB is noted but the effort shouldn't be lost in those notes.

The defense was aided by some dropped passes by the Seahawks on their way to forcing Seattle into an abysmal 2 for 12 on third down conversions, and the stat still is great no matter if some of them were unforced errors or not. The defense also played like the second ranked pass defense that they are by breaking up 5 passes and getting 5 QB hits.

The Browns defense didn't let Seattle gain any confidence and forced them to be consistent in order to move the ball and the backup players Seattle used in conjunction with the normal starters failed miserably……. and just when Seattle thought they could rely on the Browns playing a safe and predictable scheme, coordinator Dick Jauron mixed in some zone blitz looks as wells a few DB pressure schemes to keep the young Seattle QB confused and off balance.

The defense did exactly what they were expected to do against an inexperienced group and you shouldn't blame them for that or take it for granted either, as a matter of fact, you should praise them for it. That same QB who couldn't manage to move the ball at all against the Browns looked great in a relief performance before the bye week against a good N.Y. Giant defense in NY…. so don't be so quick to blow off the performance.

Sometimes the hardest thing to do in the NFL is to simply beat the teams that don't stack up personnel wise and Sunday the Browns and the defense in particular did what they were supposed to. The easiest way to consistently put up a good record in this league is to beat the teams you are supposed to beat and that is what the Browns did against the Seahawks. So when you get over the emotional drain and the stress of a close game, just be sure you treat it like the win it was and not the loss it felt like.

Game/Player Notes

*Colt McCoy still can't shake the funk he is in. Once again he was erratic with his throws and he failed to make the right choice on a few reads. One in particular was a 3rd down play where he had a wide open Greg Little on the left side who was open because of a great designed pick play and Colt chose to force the throw to the TE on the right side and the ball was batted away.

He is really struggling with the one thing (besides winning) he was elite at doing throughout college and that is consistent accuracy. Even in his first year as a starter for Texas he was a 68% passer. His 56% so far this year is alarming. I understand the new system and that whole argument but I am not judging him on all the plays he is missing, I am simply floored by the throws that he is making that are off the mark. The short ones are the plays that are killing the offense the most. Until he hits the short throws accurately and allows the WRs to run after the catch, the deep throws will continue to be harder.

Getting first downs and sustaining drives in this offense relies on accurate throws so runners can get yac and inside WRs/TEs can make catches in traffic. I won't even get into things like throwing WRs open because it will probably not happen for him this year. Those are the types of things that get easier with experience in your offense and as you get better at diagnosing defenses. I am giving him a pass on that stuff but he has to be accurate on the easier throws. You simply can't be inconsistent in this offense and keep drives going.

Two throws jumped out at me when I watched the game a few more times. The first was a missed 3rd down pass to Ben Watson on a roll out to the right side where Watson ran an out. The ball was high and it skimmed off the TEs hands for an incompletion. You can't miss that throw it was an easy first down and would have kept the chains moving. The second was on Colt's interception. That ball was a bad throw into double coverage, if nobody else is open then you have to live for another play and throw the ball out of bounds An interception right there totally ruined a nice 11 play 50 yard drive and turned the ball over in the opponents territory.

To McCoy's credit, he did have a different energy to him against Seattle. He wasn't down or pouting after every mistake and actually looked up beat. He needs to keep that up no matter how many throws he misses because that negative energy is a virus you don't want the QB to be spreading. Something like that can quickly create an uphill climb for an offense and the Browns don't need the slope that they have been on to get any slipperier.

*The right side of the offensive line struggled. Shawn Lauvao and Tony Pashos had a rough day in general. They had issues in the running and passing game. Lauvao got over extended on a

few plays in pass protection and failed to get good push when blocking in running plays where he was responsible for the man directly over him. I thought Jason Pinkston at LG would struggle but it has been Lauvao who has been the inconsistent one and I am a bit surprised by that….on both players' account.

Pashos must be really hurting from the foot injury he has because he looked like he was playing on one leg. He also looked like he had conditioning issues because he was moving in slow motion getting into his pass sets and he was reaching for blocks way too much. As an offensive lineman, it is tough to be good in games when you are not practicing much and Pashos has been limited in practice since he has come back.

A good young RT has shot to the very top of my wish list for the draft. Pashos's body can't be relied on, it just keeps breaking down and his play is suffering because of it.

*The defensive line is making progress. None of those guys had started in the NFL at the positions that they are playing before this year and as a group they are all getting better. Phil Taylor struggled against fellow rookie John Moffitt on Sunday which was surprising to me but Ahtyba Rubin played great. Jayme Mitchell is not the liability against the run that I thought he would be based on his preseason and rookie Jabaal Sheard gets through his moves quicker and gains confidence every week.

The future all of these players is looking bright, especially Rubin who I underestimated. I didn't think he was a DT in this league but I was clearly wrong.

*Dick Jauron once again threw in a few wrinkles on Sunday using another zone blitz dropping Jayme Mitchell into coverage and I saw him bringing multiple DBs on other plays. He has these young players playing fast because he isn't complicating things and clouding their minds and it shows in their play.

* When I was at the game, I thought the offensive line was playing horrible in the run game but when I watched the game later a few times I changed my mind. They played much better than I first thought. I saw many more holes on tape than I thought were there when I watched in person.

Montario Hardesty once again left a lot of yards on the field. He probably is going through some of the struggles that a rookie goes though combined with a slight hesitation about his leg because he is running what I would consider a bit erratic.

On some plays he hesitates to the hole on other plays he flies out too fast and doesn't let it develop. A few times he made moves when no one was there. The best example of that was a sweep play to the left side and the line blocked it beautifully but instead of seeing the whole and running with confidence through it, he spun right into the back of one of his blockers. It was a bit confusing to me and instead of a great gain it was just a good one.

There were also a lot of runs where he seemed to lack good vision. He ran like he didn't see the huge cutback lanes. He just continued on straight ahead for O.K. yardage when he could have had so much more. I hope he gets better with time because he could be getting much more on some of the running plays than he is getting right now.

I will however give him credit for his conditioning. He looked very strong in the 4th quarter and he carried the ball 33 times. I am pretty sure his leg is good to go because that is a tremendous workload in a NFL game….Oh yes, I can't forget to give him his due for not dropping any passes…it was much appreciated.

*The DBs for the Browns have been good all year and they continued against the Seahawks. T.J. Ward was active and a factor in both phases of the game. He even stayed with his man in the redzone resulting in a broken up play and FG instead of a TD. Joe Haden was his usual lockdown self in the passing game and once again showed why he is the perfect cover 2 CB providing great support against the run.

The duo of Mike Adams and Usama Young is still having success with Young providing big hits when he is in there and Adams staying around the football in the passing game when he is in.

The old man Sheldon Brown had a solid game, I was shocked at how physical the refs allowed him to play. I thought there was at least two plays he had too much contact but no flag was thrown. I will take it, I was just surprised.

*The defense almost did it again, I am referring to the big play that they both gave up and avoided at the same time. That 38 yard pass reception Sydnie Rice had down the right sideline could have lost the game for the Browns if it were not for him losing his balance and stepping out of bounds. They left him all alone and it could have resulted in another game lost because of a big play but we were spared. I am glad he stepped out but we can't continue to have break downs like that. It already cost us losses to the Bengals and Titans, I don't want any more losses due to big plays.

Division Peek

The AFC North is still competitive and tight through 7 weeks of the NFL season. Pittsburgh is the only team not to have its bye week yet and they stand atop the division with a 5-2 record. Followed by the Ravens and the Bengals who both are 4-2, the Browns are in 4th place at 3-3.

The Bengals are coming off of their bye week and travel across the country to Seattle in order to face the Seahawks. RB Cedric Benson is unavailable for the Bengals this week as he serves a one game suspension for some legal issues he got into during the lockout. The Bengals are playing good defense and are ranked second in the league in total yards allowed per game so it will be interesting to see if the Seahawks rebound after their horrible offensive performance on the road in Cleveland or if they continue their struggles against the solid defense of Cincinnati. The Bengals will have a shot to get to a 6-2 start if they will this game because they have a struggling Tennessee Titans as their week 9 opponents.

The Ravens are coming off of a loss to the Jacksonville Jaguars on national TV in a game that many think Baltimore was overlooking. The Baltimore offense and QB Joe Flacco looked horrible and wasted another good performance by the defense. The defense held Jacksonville to 4 FGs but the offense could only muster 7 points as Ray Rice was held to 28 yards rushing and Joe Flacco threw for a woeful 137 yards. The Ravens look to bounce back against the lackluster Arizona Cardinals defense who is giving up almost 400 yards a game. The Ravens usually don't look bad two weeks in a row so we will see what they do on Sunday.

The Steelers are coming off of a win against the Arizona Cardinals in which QB Ben Roethlisberger had a 360 yard passing performance and OLB Lamar Woodley accounted for 2 sacks. The Steelers will need every bit of that momentum this week as Tom Brady and the New

England Patriots travel to Heinz Field in Pittsburgh on Sunday to face the AFC North division leaders.

This should be a great game to watch as both teams will look to gauge how good they are at this point in the season. So far, both teams are on pace to qualify for postseason play so this could be feeler game for a possible playoff matchup. Look for this game to come down to the arms of the two Super Bowl winning QBs. The Patriots are averaging 35 points a game with Tom Brady averaging over 350 ypg passing while the Steelers defense is only giving up 171ypg passing….something has to give. This should be one of the better games on the schedule for week 8 of the NFL season.

Around the League

*One of the players I previewed for my Feeling a Draft series Demarco Murray torched the St. Louis Rams for 253 yards in his first NFL start… that is pretty incredible rookie…good job.

*In week 4 we couldn't get a RB to 50 yards against the Tennessee Titans…in week 7 the Houston Texans had two backs over 100 yards against them…Wow, don't we still have to play the Texans?

*You think the Carolina Panthers Steve Smith is glad he backed down from his "trade me" stance…rookie QB Cam Newton and offensive coordinator Rob Chudzinski have him averaging 117 yards receiving a game…he didn't even have one game of over 85 yards in 2010…ummm QB or WR…chicken or the egg?

*I know Rob Ryan was not a fit any longer and Dick Jauron is doing a great job, but Ryan is a difference maker as a defensive coordinator. The Cowboys are leading the league only giving up 69 ypg rushing. They are playing great team defense and Ryan is the reason why.

*If there is a better division for QB play than the NFC South…..then show it to me. All of those teams have true Franchise QBs and at least 3 of them may have another ten years in them.

*There is without a doubt truth to the thought about systems and players needing to be a match. Sam Bradford looks like a totally different QB then the one I watched in the 2010 season. I watched the Rams 2010 season a few times while studying Pat Shurmur and Bradford looks nothing like he did last year. His confidence in reads, his sight adjustments, his accuracy and anticipation were all things that jumped out at me when watching his rookie season.

I see a lost QB when I watch the games this year he was played in so far. Shurmur did a great job of scheming throws that Bradford would excel at. He is having trouble with Josh McDaniels and his offensive system and it shows when you watch the tape.

*I think LB Pat Angerer of the Colts is playing defense by himself. He has 80 tackles through 7 games. Will somebody in Indianapolis please help the guy?

*The Bears better just pay Matt Forte right now. With every game that passes he makes himself more money for next year… he is the leading position player in total yards a game and he is playing at an extremely high level and without a doubt he is the only consistent offense Chicago has. Pay him!

That's all for this week Browns fans….as always….Go Browns!

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