Passing any type of judgments on a team or players based on three or four series of the first pre-season game is pure folly and an exercise of a mad man. But let me say this: If, during the regular season or playoffs, any opponent is forced to play their 3rd and 4th string defense against our Cleveland Browns, well, Thad Lewis will surely carve them up real good.

It's a Browns-centric edition of the Weekend Wrap.

Who Are You? Who Who? Who Who?

I really want to know.

What is the identity the Browns are seeking to establish here under Pat Shurmur and in the final season of Mike Holmgren's Reign of Error™?

Are they a power running team that will set up play action off the run? Are they more of a finesse WCO that will kill you by inflicting a thousand paper cuts and exploiting every open area of the field? Are they some hybrid version of those two philosophies? I ask because it's been a couple years with numerous personnel changes, changes in coordinators and draft picks spent to 'upgrade' various important positions, but as I sit here and watch the Browns play I still have no real feel for what identity they are seeking to establish.

Much like I said it's foolish to draw any conclusions regarding performances from Friday night;

it's also foolish to expect an identity to develop in the same period of time. But it would be nice to have a goal to work toward. It would be nice to chart the progress of players like Brandon Weeden, Trent Richardson and Mitchell Schwartz by having an idea of what the organization hopes they will become. I wonder if the players actually know what is expected of them. I wonder if the coaches know.

Friday night didn't answer many questions. In fact, Friday night just reiterated and galvanized some of the doubts I have about this team.

Let's look at a few players that I watched, that you saw and that still have me wondering how quickly they'll take to acclimate to the speed and power of the NFL:

Brandon Weeden

Here's the good news: Weeden has a strong arm and he didn't look scared.

Those were things we were told would be true of Weeden when the Browns drafted the 28-year old QB. Both are facts. Weeden didn't look nervous, didn't look flustered and looked like he belonged on the field. And you could hang your laundry on some of his throws. The problems that we were told would accompany Weeden, lack of mobility and pocket presence, well, those weren't lies either. If you're going to be a Weeden supporter you also have to acknowledge that Friday night didn't dispel the concerns. The rookie QB has almost no mobility. He can't get wide of the pass rush and he didn't step up into it and deliver the football. Maybe that will come. But against the Lions he simply backpedaled for as long as he could and then tried to get rid of the ball.

Weeden will need to make decisions more quickly and deliver the ball to a target or a sideline quicker if he can't buy time with his feet. He may well learn with experience how to step up into the pressure and create space and precious time to make a throw.

But he's not there yet. The eye test and the numbers would have to say that much to even the most hopeful Weeden fan.

Mitchell Schwartz

This mauler was a mess.

There's no other way to say it. Schwartz was beaten all over the field, jolted backward more than once at the line of scrimmage and he got a little jumpy while committing a couple false starts. Again, first game at quasi-NFL speed against a chippy, nasty, aggressive and talented Detroit defensive line. But Schwartz didn't show well in his debut.

That's not going to be good enough regardless of whether the Browns fancy themselves a West Coast offense or more of a tough, punishing offense. What Schwartz provided Friday won't do in either case. Not to mention that even if the Browns are a WCO there will be moments in a game when they need a yard or two and need to be that physical, punishing football team.

Cohesiveness and camaraderie and chemistry and all of that happy crap take a lot more than a half of the first pre-season game to develop, so it's not even remotely a worry at this point. But in terms of assuaging any concerns about that right side of the offensive line, umm…, Friday night didn't go very far in that regard.

Josh Gordon

There's a lot to like physically with Gordon. There's a lot to work on mentally and in regard to actually running some type of distinguishable route with Gordon.

Gordon is going to have to improve exponentially to be more of an asset than a liability this season for the Browns. The good news is this is a team and a year where he can take his lumps and make his mistakes and not really cost the squad much in terms of wins. Hopefully he's willing to work and to improve. If not, well, it's not like the Browns are entering virgin territory in regard to being horribly wrong about 2nd round receivers.

Josh Cooper

That's an interesting receiving prospect right there. In fact, the Browns 'Z' receivers or slot guys looked really good as a group Friday night. Bert Reed, Cooper, Jordan Norwood and Travis Benjamin all looked solid Friday night. In fact, the only 'Z' that really concerned me was Mohamed Massaquoi, but we'll get to him later.

Cooper has ridiculous hands. He made a one handed (his left hand, no less) catch Friday night that made me sit up, stop the DVR and rewind. It was that pretty. And he's been doing it all camp too. He can catch a greased seed. And he's intriguing because consistently found soft spots in a zone defense and he exploited them. An offense needs that kind of inside receiver. Every slow white guy with decent hands is compared to Brian Brennan in this town but Cooper is the first guy I've seen who may fit the bill. That's coming from a guy who worked with the team when Brennan was there and counts Brennan as one of his all time favorite players.

Cooper's going to have to make the team, earn the time and establish himself just like Brennan did. And if he does he has a chance to really make some money and some plays as that invaluable inside receiver who guys will fall asleep on often enough to see Cooper blow by them. One thing Cooper will absolutely have to have is toughness to run routes in there. Brennan was 5'9" or 5'10" at most and he weighed 180lbs in soaking wet pads. But he was a tough, tough kid, made even tougher with the abuse that Hanford Dixon and Frank Minnifield piled on him twice a day in training camp and then in practice.

And that brings us to…

Mohamed Massaquoi

I think it might be time to start wondering if MoMass really applied himself in college and got a degree, because his football career may sadly be coming to an end. You cannot play fullback or slot receiver in the NFL if you get concussions every time someone drops a pot in the kitchen. And that's sadly where MoMass seems to be.

With Greg Little as the 'X' and Gordon as the 'Y', Massaquoi is going to be utilized mainly as that starting 'Z' receiver and be spending a lot of times ducking blows after making caches. And he just doesn't have the technique or the instincts to make a living in the middle of the field, 10-15 yards from the line of scrimmage.

You also have to start wondering when self-preservation will overtake the desire to make a catch. The last thing the Browns need, as offensively challenged as they already are, is for the OL to provide time for an inexperienced QB to deliver a good ball on 3rd down and have Massaquoi looking for the next potential collision as opposed to the football.

It's not going to work.

Football is a hard way to make an easy living and I'm not trying to be callous or unsympathetic to MoMass's situation. Rather, I'm thinking about the next 60 years of the kids' life. Massaquoi, the Browns and the league really need to consider his well being before he ever takes the field again.

Buster Skrine

He may be fast and he may end up contributing for ten years in one way or another in the NFL, but he should never, EVER be forced to line up isolated on Calvin Johnson again. Tackling dummies don't get run over like Skrine did by Johnson. Keep Buster in space and lined up on some little guys please.

Colt McCoy

Anyone see McCoy's frustration/anger/competitiveness flash Friday night. He was genuinely pissed by a couple calls that went against the Browns, a couple mistakes his receivers made, and a couple times when he was given no time to throw the football. At first I assumed it was McCoy competing. You can denigrate his arm all you want but the kid competes. What he also

does is keep plays alive with his feet, moves in the pocket really well and probably extends drives with two or three running first downs per game.

But he was pissed Friday and I really believe it's more because he wanted to audition for other teams than actually score against the Lions.

I like a pissed off Colt McCoy. I like the fact that maybe him getting a hard on because of the crap sandwich he's had to deal with the past couple years may make the kid more aggressive. Way too often McCoy plays his hand too safely. He looks for the check down unless some receiver is running wide open and free down the field.

He reminds of a passive card player who will play only aces and kings and who checks or folds his way to broke on any other hand. If McCoy plays more hands and plays them aggressively he has a chance in this league. As I said, he's mobile, he's smart and his arm, despite the stupidity suggesting it's inadequate, is strong enough to make a good living for a long time if he learns to take his shots more often.

Maybe that comes when he's not playing for an organization that's done none of their QBs any favors in terms of consistency, coaching and talent around them. Maybe McCoy masters a system where he can use his recognition skills and solid talent around him to anticipate a second faster and compensate for arm strength issues with the football getting in the air just a bit sooner. The 40+ yard throw he made to Jordan Cameron was very well thrown and it was thrown 45-50 yards in the air, over and between defenders, in the middle of the field. It was, simply put, a really good NFL throw.

He just needs to choose to throw, and complete, a lot more of those. Playing it safe will put him out of the league.

Jordan Cameron

He's the reason, if his back is okay, that Evan Moore won't be making this team. You see the athleticism and the improvement. After Ben Watson, Cameron is the guy. And in a year or so

he'll replace Watson. Just mark it down.

Moore is lazy, seemingly disinterested too often, always dinged and not a guy it appears you want in that fox hole next to you. I could be wrong and maybe Moore makes it this year, but with Cameron, Watson and coaches favorite Alex Smith around, and with Brad Smelley poised to play an H-Back role, I think Moore is expendable and in trouble.

Brad Smelley

Another guy like Cooper that brings some instincts and smarts to the offense.

Smelley is not a dynamic blocker in the mold of Lawrence Vickers. But he's big enough and quick enough to get 'pieces' of his targets and do enough to create space for his running mate. The chip he made on Adonis Thomas's TD run Friday is a case in point.

But where Smelley shines is with the actual ball in his hands. He's comfortable with the football and he understands the nuances of getting open and making plays. His TD catch from Seneca Wallace was pretty. Not because it was difficult or artistic but because of how Smelley reacted to his QB being flushed to the right. Smelley was being marked by a LB who had to move up to play Wallace and the ball. Smelley, knowing where he was on the field, followed the LB for a couple yards toward Wallace then quickly retreated a couple yards back. That created plenty of room for Wallace to lob the football. Smelley played the ball like a veteran too, almost dekeing defenders in the area by relaxing his body and hands and grabbing the football at the last second and backing into the end zone.

That's a play you see good receiving backs make all the time. It's worth mentioning, however, when you consider that watching Owen Marecic with the ball is like watching a monkey hump a door knob. The point is good receiving backs make that kind of play and make it instinctively. Smelley is the only fullback on this team who can both block and be of value in the receiving game.

You do the math. I say it adds up poorly for Marecic.

Stunning Development

Dwight Howard ended up in LA after getting his accomplished coach fired and making a giant douche-bag of himself the past two seasons. Can you believe an entitled, selfish and arrogant NBA star dictated what coach he would play for and in what city he would not?

Can you believe that such an arrogant, selfish and entitled a-hole ended up in one of the two or three biggest media markets in the country and on a coast?

This is a shocking development, no?

I can't believe only nine of the twelve 2008 Olympic Basketball team members play in either NY, LA or Miami. What the hell are those other three dudes doing?

Just 6-10 teams already. Or make it an eight team league with two teams each in NY, LA and Miami with one in Chicago and one in Texas somewhere. Quit pretending there's a level playing field for teams like Cleveland, Utah, Denver and Milwaukee. Quit pretending those teams have to be absolutely perfect in their drafts because there's not an elite, young, affluent player in the NBA who's going to make one of those cities his free agency destination.

Better yet, come up with a way to level the playing field. Consider the EPL relegation system where the worst 4-6 teams each year would be relegated to the D-League, lose their TV revenue money and have their players dispersed to the other teams in the league, worst record getting first choice of eligible players. That would keep teams from purposely and ridiculously tanking and they top 4-6 teams in the D-League each season would move up to take the place of those relegated. Yes, they'd be fodder too, but it'd bring NBA play to cities they don't currently have it.

That's probably too far-fetched and radical but contraction isn't. I don't want the dreaded participation ribbon known as 41 home games against teams better than mine. If I don't have a

chance to legitimately contend for a title other than for a year or two where a ping-pong ball brought us LeBron, then screw the NBA.

Screw them, screw the entitled, arrogant players like Dwight Howard and LeBron James and screw paying major league prices for the right to watch my minor league team get its ass kicked 60 times a year.

I'll continue to watch the best players in the world play on 8-12 teams play each other on TNT. That'd be a war every night and fun to see. But stop pretending like the team here in town is relevant or has a chance.

They don't. Neither do a dozen others. Saying they do is pissing on my leg and telling me it's raining.

How Do You Like That?

2,800 words spent on the Browns 'unimportant' first pre-season game and the freaking NBA in August. You think maybe the Indians aren't worth writing about right now?

You're welcome.

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