The Cleveland Browns signed ILB D'Qwell Jackson to a 5 year extension today, a deal worth reportedly around $42.5 million ($19 million guaranteed).

The Browns had planned on using the Franchise tag on DQ if they were unable to come to an agreement, but this signing not only frees up some cap space (with the prorated contract amount vs. the Franchise amount) but the Franchise tag as well, which can now be used to keep someone like, say, Phil Dawson from leaving.

The contract specifics are obviously not out yet, so there is really no reason to debate if it was too much to pay or not. Essentially, the contract is for $19 mil, since that's all that's guaranteed.

What we do know is that while DQ is hardly an All Pro Linebacker, he's certainly more than functional at a position of weakness (his 158 tackles in 2011 was 2nd in the NFL, and - no - they were not all 5 yards down the field as the sadists would have you believe). On the field, his internal value is increased by his role as "QB of the Defense". Not to mention that he is truly one of the few veteran team leaders on the team, and the fact that he chose to sign this contract and essentially make himself a career Brown sends a message to the locker room as well.

D'Qwell is 28 now and will be 33 at the end of his contract (in the event he makes it that far), so a 5 year deal seems a bit lengthy. But he also spent the bulk of 2009-2010 sidelined with an upper body (pectoral) tear - hardly putting the miles on his body that he would have had he played. Regardless, if you get 3-4 solid years out of him, this contract is probably worth it. It's not like he wouldn't have gotten similar somewhere else.

Some have speculated that DQ might be better served to be moved to the outside, where his speed and lack of size wouldn't be as much a detriment. Which I find an interesting idea. But working in the more concrete, even if he stays in the middle, he may never be a world-beater but at least the Browns shouldn't have to *worry* about that position for a while.