With thousands of registered members, our message forums here at The Cleveland Fan are as popular a bastion for online Cleveland sports talkers as you will find on the web. As he does each Sunday in "The Feel Of The Fan", Cris Sykes takes a look at what people have been talking about in there. The most popular topics this week? What the Browns will do at #5 overall in the draft, what the Indians lineup will look like, the Cavs lack of respect from referees, and the Buckeyes' '09 recruiting class.

All About April

It is what we do as fans of the Cleveland Browns. You know the cycle. Excitement in August. Pity in November. Bitterness in December. Hopefuleness in January. And curiousity in April.

What will the Browns do on April 25th and 26th in the NFL Draft?

It's been a hot topic of discussion in the message forums here at The Cleveland Fan.

Brian Orakpo. Orakpo is a huge, fast and athletic

freak of nature. He can do things in the weight room that make some of the strongest football players on the planet look like mortals. Of course, the Browns will continue to play the 3-4 defense, so Peeker sums up many on the boards thoughts with, " *No thanks on a guy you don't know what to do with. At #5 it should be obvious where the guy you draft is going to wreak havoc and that he actually will. I don't want any part of hybrid/tweener/project types. Not right now when you don't have to with clear needs everywhere.* "

Of course, there are those measurables. Since pass rush is what we need, Hoodooman is reminded of someone else Browns fans know quite well, "*You remember watching much of Terrell Suggs at ASU? And Orakpo's all over Suggs in terms of measurables. I think it's possible that Everette Brown would have a more natural transition, but you really never know. (One of the reasons it's nice to wait until at least the 2nd round if you can--but my god do we desperately need a*

pass rush)"

Rey Maualuga. For those sick of relying on what someone does in shorts at a combine, I offer you a football player. Aggressive. Attitude. Attacking. Words anyone likes to see when describing a linebacker. Commenting on one of the reports out of Senior Bowl practice, JB tells it like it is, " *This report screams FOOTBALL PLAYER and not "athlete". That will allow him to be knitpicked to death. This, of course, means he'll fall like a stone and we'll pass and he'll end up in Pittsburgh making our lives miserable for the next decade. D'Qwell can stay at home and clean up the mess, but if this isn't 100% what this D needs, I do not know what it does*
."

Noted Steeler Fan (yes we allow them as long as they are not total tools), Lubber thinks the Browns should be weary of "Rey-Rey". Based

on poor reports about a lack of discipline and poor coverage skills, Lubber puts a red flag up, "*Th ose are two huge aspects of life in the NFL. Not worthy of the #5 overall pick in my opinion. 10-15? yes*
."

Take the time to read through the entire thread. There is a very strong debate over which is more important for 3-4 defense, linebackers or secondary. Or maybe they both feed off the defensive line. Also, it is a great place to check out ole Triple-S's signature, a nice image of Rey's USC jersey morphing into the Brown and Orange!

Trade Down? One of the other rites of passage in Cleveland around this time of year is the trade down scenario. In a bogus report out of New York, the possibility of the Browns and Giants hooking up and the G-Men wanting Michael Crabtree at five, with the Browns getting the 14th and 28th

from New York got the talk rolling. Alas, the NY media was talking out of its ass (shocker) and the Giants do not have the 14th pick.

Hiko threw some cold water on the festivities by reminding us, "*I don't even bother to consider trade down scenarios because they never happen. It's so easy for everyone to say "trade down", much harder to actually do it...If they can pull off a trade down for two 1st Round picks, then that's great. But I'm not gonna clamor for it, because even if they wanted to it most likely won't happen."*

Crash Davis reminds us why trade down scenarios are so loved by most fan bases, and what the Browns could do should they be able

to move the five pick, "*This would give us three picks out of the first 36 and this is exactly the type of scenario needed to follow up the '07 draft in order to add some much needed talent to the nucleus. You take the best three talentwise and hopefully at least two are on defense* ."

This thread also brings up the idea of trading Bralyon Edwards. Why? rk points out, "*B etter to offer Braylon, who is what Plaxico was before his was a Gint up to Michigan (the state not the school) roots, for any first round pick the Gint are willing to give up. We can throw in a 3rd or 4th if they balk for Braylon straight up but he's better than anything they're getting in the mid 20s. No one trades up for a WR because rookie wideouts rarely contribute. But the Gints staff and Eli would probably be able to straighten out Braylon. Assuming he doesn't carry a gun.*

"

That, obviously makes you weak at the wide receiver position, which Ziner quickly points out, "*And we just plug Syndric Steptoe in as the WR1* ?"

Dog Days of Winter?

The New York Yankees have finally stopped their spending spree, but the anticipated movement on the middle tier free agents has not picked up yet. That has left the normally chaotic Indians message board slightly quieter than normal.

One of the hotter topics in currently in Tribeville was started as a tongue in

job special by Lokais simply titled, "Tribe won't sign Manny". It was started in response to General Manager Mark Shapiro's equally tongue in cheek response to a young's fans question, "Could you sign Manny?" To which Shapiro answered, "Could I, or would I?". Who knew Shapiro had that skill?

It seems Manny being Selfish has rubbed Erie Warrior the wrong way. Erie, it would appear, is considering petitioning the Baseball Writers of America, "*I absolutely could not*

stand watching the guy in the field or on the base paths. My disdain for this man is so profound, I think the baseball writers need to consider him as a DH, and not vote him into the HOF."

Angelfan makes an appearance on the boards and he does not think the lofty title of one of the top five right-handed hitters of all time is sufficient, *"He's better than top five right handed hitters all time. Name one better. He's THE greatest right-handed hitter of all time."* Rebelwithoutaclue took that

challenge,
"Rogers Hornsby, A-Rod, Albert Pujols"

Almost as large of a ritual as talking Browns draft in January, taking some shots at what the Indians lineup should look like in April is as reliable of a thread as there is. Sure Grady hits first. Victor is in the middle somewhere. What about the other seven guys? They are scattered all over the place in possible lineups by our posters.

There was this fun little banter as a side part of this thread:

Erie Warrior *- "We should do an over/ under on the number of different lineups used this season."*

Chief24Wahoo *- "LOL I say 80. One of my biggest pet peeves about Wedge."*

Stu *- "we should do an*

over/under on the number of different lineup THREADS created this year."

Jamesboy is curious about the chances of Jeremy Sowers. Can he once again harness some of the magic that allowed him to dazzle in his first trip through the American League? Or has the league caught up to him and he is destined to be tagged as a "quadruple A" type of player?

BothThePruittMoves offers a nice little

breakdown, *"He struggled mightily in 2007 when his fastball was averaging just 85.4 MPH. In the offseason he bulked up a bit, but continued to struggle in 2008. Still, his fastball velocity increased a full 4 MPH to 89.7, above where he was in 2006 (88.5). Unfortunately he also added too much velocity to the changeup, so there was not enough separation between pitches. And he had big-time struggles with consistency."*

Dazindiansfanuk, channeling his inner Lee Corso comes quickly with a

not-so-fast-my-friend, *"The problem with thinking that he's going to take a tick or two of his changeup is that Sowers and Carl Willis already know that he doesn't have enough seperation, but they still haven't been able to figure it out. The easiest way is obviously hold the ball deeper in your palm when throwing the change, but apparantly (so I read) Sowers has girls hands (wasn't put that way in the article I read it mind you!) so as a result can't wrap his fingers around the ball enough to make the change-up as effective as it needs to be."*

Crab Dribble

Could there be a connection between the LeBron crab dribble comments a couple of weeks ago and this thread? Or, as sk82day points on in the thread starter, could it be *"it seems like after every whistle Cavs players go and discuss the call with the refs, over and over. Sometimes as many as 15+ times a game. Could this be part of the reason for the sudden drop in calls for them?"*

Toxicadam does not think it is anything to really be concerned with, *"It's just the way the league is. Home cooking has become an understood reality. Next time we are at home, try to be objective and see the calls that start coming our way."*

Personally, I am thinking it is a combination of what Toxicadam said, and this thought from

OldDawg, *"A major reason the Cavs aren't going to the line is that they aren't going inside nearly as much. They are taking a ton of jump shots (a horrible habit for this team to get into). They aren't attacking the rim on the drive or posting up nearly as much. That is how you go to the line."*

You want to know how to enhance your chances of

landing in ‘The Feel of the Fan'? Combine a solid take, with some spouse smack. Need an example? Juannieboy provides it, *"I think part of it is that LeBron is so good and so gifted and he makes it look so easy that if a call is "borderline" he won't get the call. But, lets face it, at times he has been absolutely mugged without a call too. Having said that, the refs hear it from both sides all game long and during*

time-outs. After listening ,or pretending to listen, I bet they just tune it out. Like I do my wife sometimes."

More Signings To Come?

Jo Jo White popped into the Buckeye Forum to link us up some predictions for those top recruits who have still not signed on any dotted lines. There are a few left out there that

Senator Tressel still has his sights set on.

One of the bigger guys out there, both literally and figuratively, is offensive tackle Marcus Hall , from Cleveland Glenville. Thought to be a strong Buckeye commit just days ago, McCreek passes on something, *"I thought I read*

somwhere that Michigan is now Marcus Hall's new favorite b/c of the instant PT he would get there."

Resident Buckeye Expert, Furls is still thinking Marcus will lean Buckeyes and passes along this bit, *"People close to*

Marcus Hall recruiting are saying that nothing has changed and that he is still 100% OSU. I have no first hand info, but these are guys that are generally right. FWIW, Hall would probably have immediate PT at OSU also on the second team. OL 2nd teamers get plenty of PT and with Shugarts injury status in doubt, Hall could

realistically compete for the RT job next year."

‘Buckeye Leaves' author Wiz1001, gives us a glimpse of where Marcus Hall would fit into the Ohio State offensive line in 2009, *"Some people see Hall as a prototype right tackle, while others*

think he could just as effectively slide down to guard. I doubt that he could start in '09 (I think Cordle and Boren will be the guards, and Adams and Shugarts/Browning the tackles) but he could conceivably be in the 2-deep at tackle or guard. He looked very good in the Army A-A Game (at RT)."

Post of the Week:

Simple. And to the point. BruceK is the winner of this week's Post of the Week. What does Bruce think of all the crapola flinging around Berea?

"I'm tired of all the purity tests.

I don't care if our owner is or isn't a saint
I don't care if the owner is a skinflint or profligate
I don't care if the team does or doesn't honor their old players
I don't care if we have or don't have cheerleaders

I don't care if we have new or old uniform designs
I don't care if we have or don't have a helmet emblem
I don't care if the team is friendly or unfriendly to the media

Just put a winner out on the damn field"

Well said Bruce. Very well said.

Until next Sunday, I am gone like T.J. McCreight.