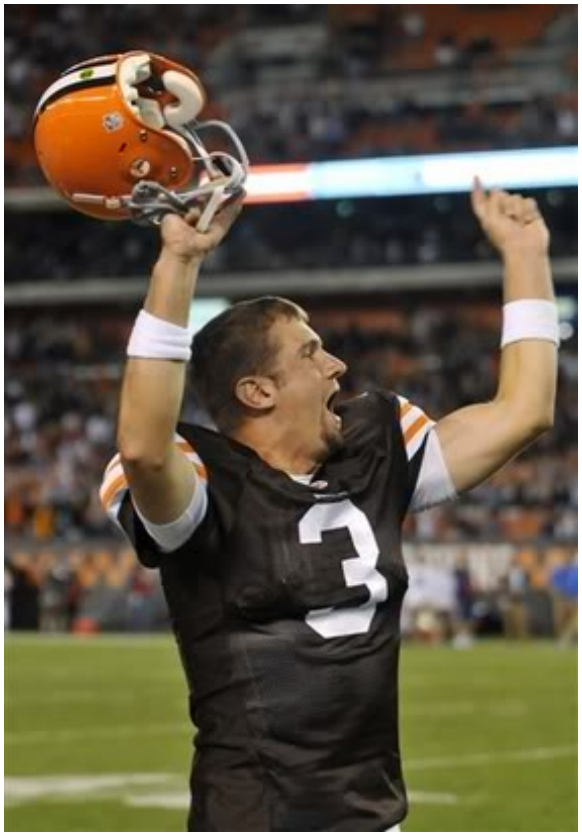
Just a week removed from their game in Green Bay where the Browns looked confused, lethargic and just plain bad they took advantage of the bottom feeding team in the NFC North and beat up on the Detroit Lions 27-10 at Cleveland Browns Stadium on Saturday night. In this Monday's Weekend Wrap, Peeks hits on the game, James Davis, Fausto Carmona, and the latest interview from LeBron that has people convinced he is leaving Cleveland at the end of the coming season.



The Lions Can Cure What Ails You

If the Browns could just play only teams that were winless in 2008 that now start a rookie at the quarterback position I'd be feeling really good about this season.

Just a week removed from their game in Green Bay where the Browns looked confused, lethargic and just plain bad they took advantage of the bottom feeding team in the NFC North and beat up on the Detroit Lions 27-10 at Cleveland Browns Stadium on Saturday night. The Browns

scored on a punt return for a touchdown by Josh Cribbs (who also returned the opening kickoff for a TD that was nullified by a penalty), on a short run from Jamal Lewis and on an 81-yard run by impressive rookie running back James Davis.

On the other side of the ball the defense changed looks constantly, mixed up coverages and blitzes and just generally harassed Lions rookie quarterback Matthew Stafford the entire time Stafford was in the game. Even on the rare occasion when Stafford did have open receivers available to him he threw erratically and missed connecting with his target. Credit the defense for those creative looks and coverages as they screwed with Stafford's internal timing clock and made him miserable.

Yes, it was just the Lions. Not that Browns fans should look down the end of their nose at anyone but Detroit was 0-16 last season and they could really add a few more losses to that impressive streak they have going before they get a win.

But the Browns came out of the tunnel and looked like a different team. Not just on the scoreboard but in their approach to the game itself. They showed some fire, some tenacity and some ability to tackle on Saturday night and that was a welcome sight. What is not welcome is that they piled up eleven more penalties that cost them 85 yards and that Cribbs return. The surest sign that guys ‘get it' and that some discipline is seeping into those orange helmets is to see those penalties cut in half. Points aren't too difficult to come by against the Lions but shooting yourself in the foot against almost any other team is a sure way to lose a football game.

And I'll give Derek Anderson a nod for his performance for much of the first half. He put points on the board. That's the bottom line. However, he also put points on the board for the Lions at the end of the half when he threw another one of his high fastballs that caromed off Davis's hands and was intercepted by the Jets with five seconds left in the half. Some roster fodder by the name of Swayze Waters hit a 51-yard field goal with zeroes on the first half clock to cash in the Anderson gift.

That's Anderson in a nutshell; alternating between "Wow, did you see that throw he just completed?" to "Wow, did you see the throw he just attempted? What the....?"

I beg of you Brady Quinn: please do not screw up this opportunity to step up, make some plays and separate from DA.

So yes, it was the Lions, but it was still nice to see the Browns come out of the tunnel and look like they at least gave a damn about playing some football. That team needed something positive to happen Saturday night. And while some might say they got it when the visiting team's bus made it to the stadium in time for kickoff, they took advantage of the situation they were handed and took a step in the right direction.

Like What I See

Boy, after the staph infections and Romeo's tenure and all the

drama from last season (and about 80% of the other seasons as well) it sure would be nice for a little good fortune to smack the Browns in the face. Drafting James Davis in the 6th round of last April's draft might just be that smack.

The 5' 11" 220lb rookie out of Clemson rushed 12 times for 116 yards including that 81-yard TD run at the end of the third quarter. Davis got the ball on a 3rd and 12 draw play, made a terrific move in the hole to make one defender miss and then sprinted up the left sideline to cash in the score.

Davis isn't a burner but he was never caught on the long TD run. I'm not Butch Davis so you're not going to hear me say that other than that long run Davis only picked up 35 yards on his 11 other carries. They all count and there's no saying that his earlier carries didn't wear down a defense to the point where he was able to break the big one.

Davis's progress bears watching. Jamal Lewis is

long in the tooth and has taken Davis under his wing. They went to the same high school a decade or so apart and Davis has been making noise in camp since the day he arrived.

Maybe, just maybe.....

Etcetera

- Not sure where, when or why Eric Mangini's began to covet Brett Ratliff and why he had to have him included in that draft day trade that was made between the Browns and Jets. That kid looks lost and he's been in that system for longer than Anderson or Quinn. I know it's early and Ratliff's roster spot is virtually assured as that third QB, but I'm not feeling it where Ratliff is concerned. Of course, if it comes down to starting a third quarterback

you're screwed anyway. But damn, how about a game without a turnover Brett? Just for kicks and giggles?

- Here's hoping Sunday's Fausto Carmona effort was a harbinger of things to come and not some false promise. Carmona was just devastating against Seattle in the rubber game of the Indians-Mariners three game series. He beat Mariners ace Felix Hernandez 6-1 with some help from his offense who strung together a number of timely hits.

But the big news was Carmona going seven full innings and giving up just five hits. He also walked just one Mariner while striking out a season-high eight hitters. That was 2007 Carmona out on the hill Sunday afternoon and he got those results by getting ahead in the count and then mixing in a really effective change-up to keep Seattle batters off balance.

That performance was a sight for sore eyes and makes his start in Baltimore ‘must-see' television for anyone hoping that Faust can get back to consistently performing close to that 2007 level.

- Damn. Matt LaPorta has some strength. LaPorta hit what amounted to a one handed double to the base of the wall in left field off Hernandez in the 6th inning. He was fooled on the off-speed pitch, had all of his weight on his front foot and had nothing back in his swing except for his hands when he hit a laser over the head of left fielder Ryan Langerhans to drive in a run and give the Indians a 5-1 lead against the Mariners ace.

It was an impressive piece of hitting and gave Tribe fans a glimpse of what the Indians are excited about where LaPorta is concerned. That was basically a

meaningless at bat in a season that's been over for two months but you can see some of the gifts LaPorta is blessed with at the plate.

- Much has been made about this little conversation LeBron James had with Rachel Nichols recently. Some see it as a sign that LBJ is headed to another NBA destination after the 2009-2010 NBA season.

Of course, those are also the people that also see signs that James is leaving when they look at the last few Cheerios in their cereal bowl.

I see it as a sign that I'm getting bored with LeBron James and his interviews and that

I'm going to be pissed if he lets this impending decision have any affect whatsoever on the upcoming season. Honestly, this is going to be a sideshow in every city he visits until his name appears on a new contract.

I don't begrudge the guy his right to choose where he plays. He's earned that. But he better be able to put it all on the back burner when they tip it off in November and he better hope his teammates are able to deal with it too.

Because it doesn't have to be an issue. He can end all the talk and all the distractions that could come into play with a couple of

strokes of the pen. And if all he cares about are titles it might be a worthy consideration to nip it in the bud sooner rather than later.