

Turning Around the Browns

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CLEVELAND –Once a powerhouse in the National Football League, the Cleveland Browns have been tainted by years of turmoil on the field and in their management. Prayers for a long-awaited turnaround by Browns fans are seeming to be answered this year, with a new rookie quarterback Baker Mayfield who is not only keeping them in the game but making them competitive again.

In the early days of the NFL, before the Super Bowl or Vince Lombardi trophy, the Browns won eight titles, four in both the All-America Football Conference championships and the NFL championships between the years of 1946 – 1964. Much of this was with Jim Brown, an exceptional one-of-a-kind running back who in his nine-year career broke every major NFL rushing record.

The shadow cast over the team appeared in '96 when owner Art Modell moved the team to Baltimore, creating the Baltimore Ravens and ending the Cleveland Browns. This was a shocking change to both spectators and Cleveland fans alike. In '99 Al Lerner purchased a new team and the Browns were born again. They assumed the history, name, colors and logo of the former team, but seemingly none of the glory.

Under their new ownership, the team made one playoff appearance in 2002 – as a wildcard– losing to the Pittsburgh Steelers. Lerner died in October of '02 and passed the team to his son Randy, which began years of restructuring the management and the team.¹

Tallying 12 seasons with over ten losses and ending their 2017 season with a “perfect” 0-16 – only the second time in NFL history– the Browns have long been painted as the worst team in the League.

29 different quarterbacks have started for the team since their return in '99, and they are on their tenth head coach after the mid-season firing of head coach Hue Jackson alongside Offensive Coordinator Todd Haley.²

The beginning of their 2018 season started strong, pushing the game against the Steelers into overtime, and holding it to start off with a tie. It wasn't a win, but it more importantly wasn't a loss and broke their 17-game losing streak.

¹ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Cleveland-Browns>

² <https://www.pro-football-reference.com/teams/cle/index.htm>

They continued to make plays on both sides of the ball and showing a different Cleveland Browns than had been seen in years. They triumphed against the New York Jets and Baltimore Ravens, but fell short in five other close matches, pushing four games into overtime so far this season.

The 2-5-1 record going into week 8 was not enough of a turnaround as Cleveland expected, so again they shuffle the cards.

The promising arm of rookie Mayfield alongside several trade pick-ups like receiver Jarvis Landry and young playmakers like Myles Garrett and David Njoku are being looked to carry on the season as they interview for a new head coach and OC. Here is just a taste of the kind of plays this group can make under pressure:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FPzLxyCwvUY>.

Cleveland media has pushed the positive changes this season is going to bring and continue to push these big names as the changes that the Browns have been waiting for. With the new change in management, the attitude continues to be geared toward a positive outlook for the rest of the season.³

With a history that can easily warrant concern and apprehension, the conversation continues to be favorable and fans are ready to end a 15-year drought and return to the playoffs once again.

³ <https://www.clevelandbrowns.com/news/>