

## Joe Horrigan calls it a "many decades love affair

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Readers of his book <https://www.brownsfanshop.com>, "NFL Century," will call it masterful. Horrigan, who retired as the Pro Football Hall of Fame's executive director on June 1, is America's most foremost historian on pro football. His book, published by Crown, is a superb compilation of anecdotes, little-known facts, insightful analysis and memorable quotes. While Horrigan jokes that he wasn't there in 1920 when the league was founded, he makes the readers feel as they are in attendance for many of the significant events through 99 seasons of the NFL. Wisely, Horrigan examines important trends as well as in-depth looks at the players, coaches and executives who turned pro football into America's Game. "I wanted to identify the important but not always visible recurring themes that emerge throughout the league's history," Horrigan writes, "link decisions to decision makers, identify the circumstances of play that influenced the league's development, and, when possible, explain the resulting impact. I wanted to separate fiction from fact, offer a slightly different look at some familiar topics, and share some lesser-known stories that also helped shape the league's colorful history." Among Horrigan's most enlightening tales is the story of the Cleveland Browns' dominance of the AAFC in the 1940s and subsequent powerful move into the NFL. Horrigan digs deep to analyze how Paul Brown built his franchise, strengthened it, then laid waste to one league before winning championships in another one. But everything in the book, from the roots laid in Canton, Ohio, to the exhaustive look at Roger Goodell's commissionership, is, well, Hall of Fame caliber. HAIRY SITUATION New Broncos coach Vic Fangio snipped the annual summer ritual of Denver Broncos veterans giving rookies hideous haircuts. "I just don't think it's right. I just don't believe in hazing," the Broncos' first-year coach explained. "There are traditions that stay put. Guys are getting up in front of the team and doing a little skit every night. Maybe a rookie's carrying somebody's pads off the field and so on [Browns Customized](#)

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or bringing in the doughnuts or the breakfast, but nothing physical. "That decree was met by relief from rookies who wouldn't have to endure haphazard hairstyles — or else shave off their own eyebrows like running back Philip Lindsay chose to do last summer." "I've seen pictures and stuff. I wasn't really going to fight it," first-round pick Noah Fant said. "It's nice that we don't have to do them. But we still have to do all the rookie shows and stuff like that. So, there's still a lot of rookie stuff that you have to do, but not to that extent." Some veterans didn't like the tradition's demise, arguing that the wacky haircuts were just a harmless rite of passage into professional football. "Oh, I'm upset about that," wide receiver Emmanuel Sanders, who said chopping off the rookies' hair "was fun. But at the same time I respect Vic. I love that guy, man. So, if that's how he wants it to go, that's how it is." The rookies used to have to keep their wacky haircuts for a few days and a preseason game before shaving off what was left of their hair, and they couldn't hide their haircuts under their helmets during the photo shooting periods, providing public proof of their compliance. The practice also took hold over the years in Dallas, New England, Washington and Oakland, among other NFL cities. NFL.com even did a montage of the best (actually worst) rookie haircuts a couple of years ago. Denver was the hotbed of hideous haircuts, in part due to Tim Tebow's Friar Tuck look back in 2010. Two years later, long snapper Lonie Paxton took great delight in chopping off the long locks of undrafted rookie Aaron Brewer, but the last laugh was on him when Brewer beat him out and Paxton got cut a week later. The Broncos have even had a barber's chair adjacent to their locker room for the last couple of years, one that's used for legit haircuts with real barbers during the season. Not all Broncos veterans were in on the haircutting hilarity. Von Miller prides himself as the Broncos' biggest prankster, but he never grabbed the clippers. "I like to mess with rookies, of course, but haircuts are not my thing," Miller said last summer when the ritual was still alive. "The rookies, it's not like they want to get their hair cut. I don't think it's straightforward. It's just not my deal." DAWG POUNDING Woof! "Dawg Pound Radio" is about to debut on SiriusXM, hosted by Bernie Kosar and longtime voice of the Cleveland Browns Jim Donovan. Kosar, who quarterbacked the

franchise to three AFC championship games — yes

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, the Browns once were successful, but that was before the franchise moved to Baltimore and an expansion group arrived in 1999 — and Donovan will discuss the 2019 Browns team that has been so hyped. The show will also look back at the storied history of the Browns, who have won eight league titles (four NFL, four AAFC) and boast 16 members of the Pro Football Hall of Fame. “My association with the Cleveland Browns started long before I wore that uniform. I’ve watched this team since I was a kid growing up Northeast Ohio,” Kosar explains. “I’m so proud to have been a part of this franchise’s great history and I’m excited about its future. Baker Mayfield, Odell Beckham Jr., Jarvis Landry, Nick Chubb, Myles Garrett . . . This is an incredibly exciting group of young Cleveland Browns players. I’m excited for the opportunity to team up with Jim, tell stories about my time with the Browns, talk with some of the team’s all-time greats, and cover everything happening with the current team.” The program will air Wednesdays at 7 p.m. ET beginning on Sept. 4. GET YOUR SUPER BOWL TICKETS RIGHT HERE So you want to go to the Super Bowl and you think your team will wind up in Miami in early February playing for the title. Well, put your money where your faith is. Through Lunatix (formerly ShooWin), fans have the opportunity to secure advance ticket reservations for the entire NFL postseason including the Super Bowl. Plus all Stanley Cup playoff games; every NBA postseason game; MLB’s playoffs and the World Series. Lunatix, which has been offering college football reservations for the past three seasons, and this season will again feature the College Football Playoff championship game, has a deal for the most optimistic fan. Lunatix offers customers reservations on postseason sports tickets long before the tickets become available from traditional online sites. A fan chooses the team, the game, the seating zone, and the number of tickets. Once the spot is reserved and if the team makes the game, the fan receives the tickets at no extra cost but the down payment. If that team doesn’t get so far, the down payment for the reservation is lost. With the Seahawks a perennial playoff team, a down payment of less than \$250 could land a Seattle fan a seat at Hard Rock Stadium for the Super Bowl — if the Seahawks represent the NFC. Fans can also resell their reservations through the Lunatix marketplace at any time before the chosen game, setting the asking price themselves. “There is nothing like experiencing the postseason in person, along with tens of thousands of fans, when every play matters,” says David Lane, CEO of Lunatix. “Unfortunately, supply and demand has made tickets to the biggest games in pro and college sports unaffordable and unattainable for fans. We believe every fan deserves the chance to experience the game of a lifetime. And through our unique reservation marketplace

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, every fan can now guarantee they will be there to see their team in the biggest games in sports.” FOXBOROUGH, Mass. (AP) — Bill Belichick was 39 years old when he coached the Cleveland Browns to a win over the New England Patriots in 1991 — his first as an NFL coach. As Belichick trotted toward the center of the field Sunday, his trademark cutoff hooded sweatshirt soaked in rain following the Patriots’ 27-13 win over the Browns, he did so as a member of a small, but elite group of coaches. Tom Brady threw for 259 yards and two touchdown passes to help Belichick earn his 300th career victory in the Patriots’ win. Article continues below ... Belichick sits behind only Don Shula (347) and George Halas (324) on the NFL’s all-time list. “Fortunately I didn’t play in any of those games,” Belichick said. “I was a part of those, but honestly, players win games in this league and I’ve been fortunate to coach a lot of great ones.” The Patriots improved to 8-0 for the third time in team history and the first time since 2015, when they started 10-0. The Browns have lost three straight games. Brady completed 20 of 36 passes, hitting Julian Edelman on eight of them for 78 yards and both TDs. New England capitalized on three first-quarter turnovers by Cleveland to take a 17-0 lead. Running back Nick Chubb had back-to-back fumbles and quarterback Baker Mayfield had an interception. The Patriots have now forced a league-high 25 turnovers this season. Safety and captain Devin McCourty said they now come into games expecting to force two or three turnovers. “It’s an awareness to hunt the football,” he said. “As a defense we all know that.” The Browns did trim New England’s lead to 17-10 early in the third quarter. But the Patriots struck right back on their next possession, using a 59-yard completion from Brady to James White to help set up a 14-yard touchdown pass from Brady to Edelman. Chubb ran for 131 yards, and Mayfield

finished 20 of 31 for 194 yards and a touchdown. The Patriots have now won 21 straight games against first- or second-year signal callers, the longest such streak in NFL history. Cleveland's first-quarter turnovers came on three consecutive plays. After the Patriots took a 3-0 lead, Chubb took a handoff from Mayfield but had the ball inadvertently kicked out of his hands by left guard Joel Bitonio . It was scooped up by Dont'a Hightower and returned 26 yards for a touchdown. On the first play of the ensuing series after the Patriots' kickoff landed out of bounds, Chubb got the ball again, this time getting around the edge and scampering 44 yards down the sideline. He appeared headed for a touchdown, but New England cornerback Jonathan Jones gave pursuit and hammered the ball from Chubb's hands on the Patriots 4. It was recovered McCourty. Following a Patriots' punt, the Browns' next series ended when Lawrence Guy broke into the backfield and stepped in front of Mayfield's shovel pass attempt to Jarvis Landry on the Cleveland 16 for his first-career interception. New England needed just two plays after the changeover for Brady to connect with Edelman for an 8-yard touchdown. "They're going to take advantage of stuff like that. That's just the kind of team they are," Mayfield said. "This isn't Nick Chubb's fault. He's going to be very hard on himself." Cleveland finally found some traction in the second quarter on their sixth possession, capping a six-play, 54-yard drive with a 21-yard pass from Mayfield to Demetrius Harris. The Browns made a handful of changes on both sides of the ball in hopes of ending a two-game losing streak to the Patriots. On offense Justin McCray made his first-career start left tackle in place of Greg Robinson. Starting cornerbacks Denzel Ward and Greedy Williams returned to the lineup on defense after missing the past four games with hamstring injuries. The Patriots tested both early on. On New England's second drive of the game Phillip Dorsett beat Williams along the sideline and caught a 33-yard pass from Brady to get the Patriots into Browns territory. But after the Patriots extended the drive by converting on a fourth-and-7 on the Browns 33, Ward nearly intercepted Brady's third-and-2 pass into the end zone intended for Dorsett. New England settled for a field goal. Brady said they are already looking to add to Belichick's win total. "The only thing better than 300 is 301," he said. STREAK BUSTER Mayfield's TD pass to Harris in the second quarter ended a 71-0 scoring streak by the Patriots. They scored the final 21 points in their win over the Giants on Oct. 10 and then shut out the Jets 33-0 last week. BAD COMPANY Cleveland's three turnovers on three consecutive offensive plays marked the first time any team has done so since the Dolphins did it in Week 1 of the 2012 season against the Texans. It is only the seventh time it has been done since 2000. UP NEXT The Browns visit Denver. The Patriots are at Baltimore.

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