



THINKING BELICHICK CLEVELAND 2.0

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November 1, 2018
New York, New York

I'll admit right off the top that the chances of his happening are probably less than good, however, it doesn't prevent me from hoping it happens and listing a few reasons why it should happen.

Bill Belichick is the greatest head coach in modern NFL history, of this there can be no dispute.

His rise to the top of the food chain of NFL head coaches mirrors the remarkable rise of the New England Patriots becoming the signature franchise in the NFL during this century.

As we all know, Belichick was deemed a failure in his first head coaching role in Cleveland from 1991 through the 1995 season. Many felt that Belichick was beyond his depth as a head coach and that his ceiling was that of a very good defensive coordinator.

Then came the one day hire as the Jets head coach followed by a messy divorce that saw Belichick land in New England with a star-crossed franchise that for years couldn't help but to always find the banana peel in the room to slip on.

Since then, and with an ever-changing cast of characters sans the quarterback position, the Patriots have become an NFL dynasty that has outdistanced all comers since winning their first

Super Bowl in 2001 while also winning 4 more big games and appearing in a total of 6 title games since Belichick took up residence in Foxboro.

But times seem to be changing in New England, Tom Brady is close to winding down an illustrious career, and there have been hints that Brady and Belichick might be tiring of each other and that Brady wouldn't shed any tears if Belichick were to leave soon.

Meanwhile, in Cleveland, as you all know, the Browns just canned their head coach Hue Jackson, and once again Browns owner Jimmy Haslem is looking for his next head football coach.

If I'm Haslem, I'm on the phone already with Patriots owner Robert Kraft inquiring about the possibility of what it might take to make Bill Belichick the next head coach of the Browns following this season.

The Browns will be linked with an innumerable number of names for the position, and among them, Lincoln Riley, who of course was Baker Mayfield's coach at Oklahoma, is certain to draw Cleveland's attention – and he should.

But what if Riley isn't ready to jump out of Norman yet, isn't quite ready to do all he thinks he can do in the college game, and at the tender age of 35 wants to take his time before considering a jump up to the next level? To say nothing of the fact that the NFL is littered with examples of college head coaches who don't make the same kind of impact in the pro ranks as they did coaching young amateurs.

Enter the possibility of Bill Belichick as the Browns head coach following this season.

Think of the juicy storylines that would accompany Belichick coming back to Cleveland in my scenario.

The one time failed Browns coach returning to the city where his reputation and credibility was damaged and now returning and viewed as a savior.

The opportunity to come back to Cleveland with a fresh start and with a quarterback already in place in Baker Mayfield that he can build around for the next several years.

The chance to do something that no other NFL head coach has ever done before, winning Super Bowl titles with two different NFL franchises.

The ability for Belichick to reinvigorate himself in a new environment in a football crazy city thirsting for a winner.

For the Browns, an organization in desperate need of credibility, is there another head coach who can immediately inject legitimacy into their operation the way that Belichick could?

However, as much as I'd love to see this happen, and maybe even for Browns fans themselves who would be keen on such an idea, there are some questions and hurdles to think about.

Namely, would the Browns want to explore this and how much would it cost them to bring such an idea to fruition, as well as whether or not Belichick would be interested in such a plan, pivoting to a new franchise and leaving New England for a fresh start, and would he like to inherit a blank slate in Cleveland?

Could he work for an owner like Jimmy Haslem? All of these things would need answers.

In addition, to the best of my knowledge, Belichick and current Browns general manager John Dorsey have never worked with one another. Would they be able to mesh? Would Dorsey welcome an opportunity to work with Belichick, and would Belichick want to work with Dorsey?

Belichick is the singular kingpin of football operations in New England and has been ever since he walked in the door there, would Belichick want to partner with another football executive at this juncture, does he have the ability to co-exist with someone else on football matters, player acquisition issues, running the draft, coordinating an organizational philosophy?

On the flip side of the equation, perhaps at this point in his long coaching career, Belichick would welcome someone else working in tandem with him, taking some of the load off of his shoulders and being agreeable to finding the best route to success with some help from someone like John Dorsey.

The Patriots just might be ready to move on from Belichick when you think about it. It has been believed that Josh McDaniels has been given assurances that he will succeed Belichick as the Patriots coach when Belichick's tenure has run its course, and perhaps depending on what happens as this current season plays out, New England and Belichick might be ready to look at different options.

What would it cost? Who knows. Certainly, you would have to think that the Patriots hold the upper hand in any talks involving a trade for their head coach if they were willing to consider a scenario where they would be willing to trade him for assets. But what kind of assets — and how many?

The Browns have their own number one pick in the 2019 NFL Draft, and as a starting point, you would have to think that that pick would most assuredly need to be sacrificed in a situation where they traded for Belichick.

The Browns will finish this season with another losing record and depending on how many losses they wind up with, the Browns number one pick next year could be anywhere from the number 1 pick in the draft, to, perhaps at worst, the number 3 or 4 pick in the draft.

Let me ask you this –if you're a Browns fan and the cost to snatch Belichick out of New England was your teams first pick in next year's draft would you do it?

How about this trade proposal:

Cleveland sends their number one pick in the 2019 draft to the Patriots for Bill Belichick and the Patriots number 2 pick in the 2019 draft.

So, Cleveland gets Belichick, surrenders their first pick next year, but adds another second-round selection, while the Patriots trade their second round pick next year but wind up with two first round picks, sending Belichick to the Browns and installing Josh McDaniels as their new head coach which would probably bring a smile to the face of Tom Brady as he plays out the final years of his career with a new coach who he has a good rapport with.

Another thing to consider when it comes to Belichick is this; what else can he do with the Patriots that he hasn't already done?

Belichick, next year at the age of 67, under my hypothetical, could begin the challenge of turning the Browns around, and could cap off his incredible career with an opportunity to have his name revered in two NFL outposts before all is said and done.

Phil Jackson did it in the NBA, as did Pat Riley, and, if you want to include Alex Hannum, who did it in the stone ages of NBA history, these are the coaches who have won world titles with two different franchises.

Tommy Gordon did it the NHL with two different clubs, and Scotty Bowman won the Stanley Cup with three different franchises.

Tony LaRussa and Sparky Anderson are the only two managers to turn the trick in baseball by winning World championships with two different clubs...but in the NFL it has never happened.

Let's give it a chance, let's bring Bill Belichick back to Cleveland, history just might be made.