



## Stories Worth Telling

*What Cleveland can show the world besides a historic NFL Draft*

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## Addressing Social Justice in Sports: From the Reintegration of Professional Football to Today

### Story topic:

In 1946, a full year before Jackie Robinson would break Major League Baseball's color barrier, two Black players—Bill Willis and Marion Motley—took the field in Cleveland and ushered in a new era of professional football. Today, the Browns continue the fight for social justice through multiple efforts, and Draft attendees can explore the issue at the Cleveland Power of Sport Summit.

### Key points:

- The [reintegration of professional football began in 1946](#) when Browns coach Paul Brown signed two standout Black players, Bill Willis and Marion Motley. All three went on to Pro Football Hall of Fame careers, and Motley and Willis' appearance in Browns uniforms and their career successes were the first steps in the permanent integration of professional football.
- Today, Dee and Jimmy Haslam and the Browns organization continue to strive for racial and social equality in the Cleveland community, including through the league's [Inspire Change](#) initiative. Efforts focus on education and economic advancement, police and community relations and criminal justice reform.
- Browns players have used their platform to lobby for reform in the justice system. Through the Neighborhood Equality and UNITY Summit, players helped facilitate dialogue between public safety forces and Cleveland students. In October, staff and teammates [met with the Cleveland Police Department](#) to discuss how policies and strategies could be improved, including de-escalation tactics, legislation and hiring processes, to create a better relationship with the community.
- Following the death of George Floyd, as well as the tragedies involving Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and others victims representing the Black community, Browns EVP of Football Operations and General Manager Andrew Berry sent an email to his team and staff that would inspire the [Be The Solution](#) campaign. Berry announced a personal donation to the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and issued a challenge to staff and team members to educate, reflect and donate anything they can to a social activism cause. The result has been a powerful community outreach campaign encouraging donations and sparking conversations on issues including recidivism and policing. Within one week, more than \$185,000 was raised for 14 charities.
- Through the Browns Foundation's statewide ["Stay in the Game!" Network](#), the team engages school districts using attendance data and feedback from families to build a school-going culture, uncover and reduce common barriers to attendance and support engagement opportunities for students to thrive. In the 2020-21 school year, the "Stay in the Game!" Network partnered with 16 school districts benefitting nearly 110,000 students in Ohio.
- The Browns [recently announced](#) a partnership with ["Build the Bridge,"](#) which is designed to empower, develop and unify high school football teams through meaningful interactions between communities of different racial and/or socio-economic demographics. The program creates opportunities for all high school athletes to build relationships and mutual respect between diverse communities, regardless of their race, class or creed.
- In August 2020, the Browns [joined a sports alliance](#) with the Cleveland Cavaliers and Cleveland Indians to develop a sustainable and direct strategy to address social injustice facing the Cleveland region. The alliance draws from the community's emotional connection to the teams and utilizes each organization's platforms to be positive agents of change. The alliance focuses on improving the relationship between law enforcement and citizens, encouraging nonpartisan voting activities and increasing educational opportunities. Initial efforts concentrated on voting, voter education and nonpartisan voter registration. The alliance created a special Public Service Announcement featuring players and coaches, to



encourage fans to register and vote before the November 2020 elections. In February, the three teams also hosted “Conversations for Change” at Rocket Mortgage FieldHouse, where the groups held meaningful dialogue between local youth and Cleveland Division of Police, including Police Chief Calvin Williams.

- The Browns also regularly partner with the City of Cleveland Neighborhood Resource & Recreation Centers to support local youth and youth programs. In addition to supporting several onsite refurbishment projects, the team hosted a [“Uniting Neighbors”](#) event with Head Coach Kevin Stefanski and [“Home Team Holiday Cheer”](#) opportunity with Pro Bowl guard Joel Bitonio for the Recreation Centers during the past holiday season.
- As the Browns and nation celebrated Black History Month, the team launched [“Cleveland Huddle”](#) to assist Black-owned restaurants while also providing food relief to individuals in need. To start the program, the Browns partnered with three local restaurants – [GoodfellasBBQ](#), [Soul Fo’ Real](#) and [Sauce the City](#) – for meal distributions to local non-profit organizations, including Lutheran Metropolitan Ministries and The City Mission’s Men’s Crisis Shelter and Laura’s Home Women’s Crisis Center.
- To maximize the local impact of hosting major sporting events like the NFL Draft, the [Greater Cleveland Sports Commission](#) created the [Cleveland Power of Sport Summit](#), presented by KeyBank and The FirstEnergy Foundation. The Summit will be a celebration of diversity, equity and inclusion and demonstrate the power of sports to be a catalyst for change. With a speaker series curated by [The Female Quotient - Equality Lounge](#), a digital learning lounge and interactive workshops and more, the Summit will showcase local and national organizations that are addressing important topics, including adaptive sports, gender equity, LGBTQIA+ athletes, mental health and racial equity.
- As part of the Summit, the [Champions of Change](#) multi-sensory virtual exhibit will encourage sports fans to be leaders in their community for racial equity and inclusion. Created by the [Ross Initiative in Sports for Equality](#) (RISE), the exhibit takes visitors through the history of sports and social justice, a virtual locker room to walk in the shoes of athletes as they share their experiences with racism and a Rise to Action area where fans can make a pledge to end racism and encourage others to join their efforts. This exhibit will be available virtually on the Summit website and at the event.

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## Beyond the Gridiron: Football Fan “Must-See” Sites

- Story topic:** Cleveland’s on-field football history is well documented. Beyond the gridiron, visitors can find an abundance of historical sites – from the birthplace of John Heisman in the Ohio City neighborhood to the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton, the city where professional football began.
- Key points:**
- Fans can snap selfies with statues of NFL legends **Jim Brown** and **Otto Graham** – both located just outside FirstEnergy Stadium. Jim Brown led the NFL in rushing in eight of his nine seasons and led the league in touchdowns for five seasons. He was named Rookie of the Year in 1957 and enshrined in the Hall of Fame in 1971. Graham led the Browns to the championship game in each of his 10 seasons, winning four AAFC titles and three NFL championships, and was enshrined in the Hall of Fame in 1965.
  - In Cleveland, football fans can also visit the [birthplace of John Heisman](#), namesake of the coveted college football top honor. The historical marker located at 3928 Bridge Ave. in the Ohio City neighborhood (just minutes from FirstEnergy Stadium) honors the coach and game innovator as the father of the forward pass, center snap, double pass, dividing game into quarters, statistical score board and quarterback’s “hike” or “hep” to initiate plays.
  - The [Pro Football Hall of Fame](#) is on every football fan’s bucket list. Chronicled within the walls of the Hall of Fame are the stories and circumstances of play that bring to life the courage, dedication, vision, fair play, integrity and excellence associated with the game. It provides endless inspiration with exhibits and engaging experiences that pay tribute to the talents and triumphs of pro football’s greatest moments.
  - The [Black College Football Hall of Fame](#) is also housed at the Pro Football Hall of Fame. Founded in 2009 by pioneering players, quarterbacks James Harris and Doug Williams, the Black College Football Hall of Fame preserves the history and honor of the greatest football players, coaches and contributors from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Notable members include Jerry Rice and Walter Payton.
  - Also in Canton is [Centennial Plaza](#), which commemorates the creation of the NFL. As the story goes, the owner of the Canton Bulldogs football team, Ralph Hay, convened representatives from several other teams at his automobile dealership. The owners created the professional football league that would eventually become the NFL. In September 2020, the NFL unveiled eleven 100 Year Player Recognition Steles that honor all players who were on an active roster over the first 100 years of professional football.
- Photo & video assets:**
- [Photos available here.](#)
  - [Video: Cleveland Football Landmarks](#)
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## Making an Impact: Browns & NFL Partnerships Support Cleveland's Youth Organizations

**Story topic:** Standout examples in Cleveland illustrate how the NFL is making a positive impact on the next generation of players and fans.

- Key points:**
- Launched in 2014, the [First and Ten campaign](#) is a Cleveland Browns' community program that inspires fans to #give10 and help their communities by volunteering for 10 hours each year. Through First and Ten, the Browns are the ONLY NFL club to promote a long-term volunteering program that unifies the team and its fan base. To date, more than 2.75 million hours of volunteering have been pledged through First and Ten.
  - The Browns promote the importance of school attendance and help to end chronic absenteeism by supporting the statewide [Stay in the Game!" Network](#). The team engages local school districts and promotes quality education by using attendance data and feedback from families to build a school-going culture, uncover and reduce common barriers to attendance and support engagement opportunities for students to thrive. In the 2020-21 school year, the "Stay in the Game!" Network will partner with 16 school districts, benefitting nearly 110,000 students in Ohio.
  - Players [visit with classes](#) to promote the initiative, and students with improved attendance have even been awarded a [bowling party with Odell Beckham Jr.](#) In October 2020, the Browns and their players [donated \\$350,000 to East Cleveland City Schools](#) to help bridge the digital divide in a district where 46% of students are chronically absent.
  - Dee and Jimmy Haslam and the Browns organization have helped install nine synthetic turf fields in the past five years at schools and community organizations throughout the region. While each field is lined to allow frequent use by various sports groups, including football and soccer, they also provide "outdoor classrooms" where students can participate in extracurricular activities that support attendance, school engagement and overall personal growth. The site selection process prioritizes underserved communities, helping promote equal access to beneficial educational resources to everyone throughout the community, no matter their race, gender or economic status.
  - The Browns and Boys & Girls Club have also partnered to bring [Jr. Browns NEXT and Browns NFL Flag](#) to several of their locations in the area. Recently, [Baker Mayfield](#) donated Christmas gifts to every child served by Boys & Girls Clubs in Northeast Ohio, and [Myles Garrett](#) organized a toy drive. Both efforts help brighten the spirits of children in the community who need it most.
  - The Browns also regularly partner with the City of Cleveland Neighborhood Resource & Recreation Centers to support local youth and youth programs. In addition to supporting several onsite refurbishment projects, the team hosted a ["Uniting Neighbors"](#) event with Head Coach Kevin Stefanski and ["Home Team Holiday Cheer"](#) opportunity with Pro Bowl guard Joel Bitonio for the Recreation Centers during the past holiday season.
  - The Browns [recently announced](#) a partnership with ["Build the Bridge,"](#) which is designed to empower, develop and unify high school football teams through meaningful interactions between programs of different racial and/or socio-economic demographics. "Build the Bridge" creates a coalition of coaches, players, parents, school administration and community members to foster the success of student-athletes through social-emotional, educational and athletic advancement. The program creates opportunities for all team members to build relationships and mutual respect between diverse communities, regardless of their race, class or creed.

**Photo & video assets:** • [Browns Give Back Photos](#)

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## The Pick Is In: NFL, MLB, NBA & NCAA Select The Land as Event Host

- Story topic:** Having been selected to host the four largest sporting events the city can accommodate over a six-year period, Cleveland cements its reputation as a hub of sports spectacles and earns respect and renewed national prominence as a big event host.
- Key points:**
- Cleveland’s selection in May 2019 as the 2021 NFL Draft host capped the city’s successful pursuit of the four largest sporting events its infrastructure can accommodate: [2019 MLB All-Star Game](#), 2021 NFL Draft, [2022 NBA All-Star Game](#) and [2024 NCAA Women’s Final Four](#).
  - Public and private collaboration – combined with Midwestern work ethic – sets the city apart when bidding for events. Additionally, billions of dollars have been invested in visitor-related infrastructure over the past 10 years to enhance the visitor experience.
  - In 2019, [19.6 million visitors came to the region](#) – an increase of 32% since 2011. What’s happening on the ground that is encouraging people to get to know #TheLand?
  - Rights-holders and event planners consistently rank Cleveland as a world-class host city that goes beyond planners’ expectations to create memorable and well-attended events. Time and again, Cleveland’s passionate residents and distinctive attractions are noted as top reasons to host in Cleveland. The city is also well-known for its unmatched ability to provide Midwestern warmth and hospitality and for setting a new standard when hosting some of the world’s largest events.
  - In addition to hosting significant annual sporting events, Cleveland hosted the 2016 Republican National Convention in a year that also saw the city’s sports teams in the NBA Finals and MLB World Series.
  - As the event-hosting landscape has changed drastically since being awarded the NFL Draft, planning and preparations have evolved to prioritize health and safety guidelines. There’s no playbook for organizing a large-scale, in-person event during a global pandemic – but organizers are tackling the challenges.
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- [Available here.](#)
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## Tackling Appetites: Cleveland's Food & Beverage Scene

- Story topic:** Cleveland is a city of diehard sports fans – many of whom can be found with a beer and hot dog in hand on game day. For pre- and post-game eats and drinks, fans elevate their game plan with special brews that celebrate the Browns, loaded Polish Boy sandwiches and donuts infused with craft beer.
- Key points:**
- If there's one thing Clevelanders like more than their Browns, it might be their beer – and for good reason. The city has reinheitsgebot royalty at [Great Lakes Brewing Company](#), one of the famed "Class of '88" breweries and the first craft brewery in the state. The city now boasts more than 23 brewhouses and dozens of beer bars serving-up award-winning craft brews of all kinds.
  - Many Cleveland breweries show love for the Browns with special brews. [Platform Brewing's Muni Lot](#) beer celebrates the city's eponymous tailgating spot just outside FirstEnergy stadium. At Butcher and the Brewer, fans can sip some of Baker Mayfield's famous snark by ordering [Feeling Dangerous](#), a hazy IPA inspired by the [quarterback's noted comment](#). For those looking for lighter fare (at least for the beer), [Great Lakes' 73 Kolsch](#) celebrates All-Pro left tackle Joe Thomas. At [Brewnuts](#), those sudsy beverages end up inside donuts with hall of fame flavors that are Browns [striped, sprinkled](#) and [laced up](#) with flavor.
  - Cleveland's culinary scene blends influences from the more than 100 diverse ethnicities found throughout the city with traditional cooking techniques as well as modern twists. Foodies flock to the historic [West Side Market](#) to get a taste of local flavors from one of the numerous vendors, some of whom can trace their roots back to the inception of the market in 1912.
  - Cleveland native, James Beard Award-winner and super Browns fan [chef Michael Symon](#) brought Cleveland's food scene to the national spotlight and the recognition continues. [Larder Delicatessen and Bakery](#), a James Beard semi-finalist, serves [one of the best sandwiches in America](#). [Zhug](#), from acclaimed chef Doug Katz, was named one of Esquire's "[Best New Restaurants in America, 2020](#)." Chef Karen Small at [The Flying Fig](#) and chef Jill Vedaa from [Salt+](#) have also been recognized as James Beard semi-finalists in recent years.
  - We've even elevated football favorites like hot dogs by adding [special ingredients](#), including truffles, Spaghetti Os and chunky peanut butter. Another local favorite is the Polish Boy, which consists of a kielbasa link placed in a bun and covered with French fries, coleslaw and barbecue sauce or hot sauce. Visitors can stop by numerous spots around town to get a taste, including [Hot Sauce Williams](#), [Seti's Polish Boy](#) food truck, [Al & B's Barbecue](#), [Beckham's B&M Bar-B-Que](#) and [Banter Beer and Wine](#).
- Photo & video assets:**
- [Available here.](#)
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## Cleveland's Health Care Legacy: Driving Innovation & World-Class Care

**Story topic:** Cleveland's economic environment builds on the city's entrepreneurial heritage and its renowned health care community. The city now has one of the most concentrated area of hospitals and medical research centers in the nation. Led by three standout hospital systems, health care represents one of Cleveland's largest economic sectors, and these notable institutions continue to support the region's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Key points:**
- Celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, the [Cleveland Clinic](#) is a non-profit hospital system that includes locations in Nevada, Florida, Abu Dhabi, Toronto and soon-to-be London. It is consistently ranked as one of the top hospitals in the nation and the world and has obtained the top ranking from U.S. News for its cardiology program every year since 1995.
  - The Cleveland Clinic has been a leading force in the development of cardiac treatment, including the first coronary bypass surgery in 1967, and the first minimally invasive heart valve surgery in 1996. In July 2020, the Cleveland Clinic completed its [2000<sup>th</sup> heart transplant](#), the first program in the country to reach such a landmark. Today, the Clinic is pioneering cutting edge treatments for a range of diseases from [cancer](#) to the [COVID-19 pandemic](#).
  - [University Hospitals](#) serves the needs of patients through an integrated network of 18 hospitals, more than 40 outpatient health centers and 200 physician offices throughout northern Ohio. The health system's flagship academic medical center, University Hospitals Cleveland Medical Center, focuses on biomedical research through Harrington Discovery Institute at University Hospitals. UH Cleveland Medical Center is an affiliate of Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine.
  - University Hospitals is the official health care partner of the Cleveland Browns, providing a complete team of physician specialists covering every aspect of the team's health care needs. Leading-edge sports medicine physicians and specialists offer total body care for the Cleveland Browns team and their families, managing not only sports injuries but also health conditions such as cardiovascular issues, sleep disorders, skin issues or nutritional concerns to ensure the very best in health and medical care for athletes and their families.
  - Founded in 1837, [MetroHealth System](#) operates four hospitals, four emergency departments and more than 20 health centers throughout Cuyahoga County. MetroHealth is home to the county's most experienced Level I Adult Trauma Center and Ohio's only adult and pediatric trauma and burn center. As the region's safety-net health system, MetroHealth plays an essential role in the community, caring for anyone and everyone, regardless of ability to pay.
  - MetroHealth is redefining health care by going beyond medical treatment to improve the foundations of community health and well-being: affordable housing, a cleaner environment, economic opportunity and access to fresh food, convenient transportation, legal help and other services. The system strives to become as good at preventing disease as it is at treating it. The MetroHealth Glick Center, a new 11-floor hospital, is under construction and is scheduled to welcome its first patients in October 2022.

**Photo & video assets:** • [Cleveland Clinic](#) | [University Hospitals](#) | [MetroHealth](#)

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## Road Trip to Canton: The Center of Football History

- Story topic:** A mecca of football history lies a short drive away in Canton, Ohio, where America's favorite game and the National Football League were crafted. Iconic museums and public art proudly celebrate the region's football legacy.
- Key points:**
- The [Pro Football Hall of Fame](#) is home to the most comprehensive collection of football memorabilia in the U.S. A true pigskin pilgrimage, the Hall of Fame features the bronze busts of all 300+ (and counting!) players and coaches who have been enshrined since the charter members were inducted in 1963. A multi-sensory immersive theater experience features holographic representations of Hall of Fame legends Joe Namath, George Halas and Vince Lombardi sharing how the game of football also teaches lessons about life.
  - The myriad significant impacts of Paul Brown on the modern game of football are celebrated at [Paul Brown Museum in nearby Massillon, Ohio](#). The museum a permanent exhibition space dedicated to the original coach of the Cleveland Browns and later the owner of the Cincinnati Bengals.
  - [The Eleven](#) is a series of public art pieces that commemorate the greatest moments in the first 100 years of NFL history on display throughout the [Downtown Canton Arts District](#). The sculpture Birth of the NFL marks the location of the original meeting to create the American Professional Football Association. The Forgotten Four celebrates the reintegration of Pro Football in 1946 with a banner mural based on a painting by artist Paul Collins of trailblazing players Woody Strode and Kenny Washington (signed to the Los Angeles Rams) and Marion Motley and Bill Willis (signed to the Cleveland Browns). The NFL Draft in 1936, an idea from the owner/founder of the Philadelphia Eagles and later NFL Commissioner Bert Bell, is marked by a life-sized, bronze sculpture of Bell surrounded by his team.
  - The City of Canton opened [Centennial Plaza](#), a dedication to the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of the National Football League, in January 2021. The plaza features pylons with the names of every player from the NFL's first 100 years, listed by decade.
- Photo & video assets:**
- [Available here.](#)
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## Did You Know? Cleveland Facts & Firsts

**Story topic:** You know the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame is here. (Do you know why?) And of course, you know about our avid sports fans. But there's plenty to learn about the region that might just surprise you.

- Key points:**
- The Cleveland Browns hosted the New York Jets for the [first Monday Night Football](#) game on September 21, 1970.
  - The first U.S. college to admit students regardless of race, sex, creed or color was Oberlin College (1834). Cleveland was the first major city to elect an African American mayor, Carl B. Stokes (1967). And the oldest African American theater company (1915) is still producing plays today at the [Karamu House](#).
  - Cleveland DJ Alan Freed is credited with coining the term “rock ‘n’ roll” on his integrated radio show in 1951. The city is also credited with holding the country’s first official rock ‘n’ roll concert, the Moondog Coronation Ball in 1952.
  - Hand sanitizer was invented in Northeast Ohio. PURELL Hand Sanitizer, launched as a consumer product in 1997 by [GOJO](#) Industries in Akron, changed the way we clean our hands and is used nationwide to reduce the spread of infection.
  - Cleveland’s medical institutions have a legacy of innovation and pioneering procedures. The [first full-body X-ray](#) was developed in 1896 by Dayton Mille – a professor of physics at the Case School of Applied Science – using a machine he created. In 1906, George Washington Crile performed the [first surgery using a direct blood transfusion](#) at Cleveland’s St. Alexis Hospital, and the [first near-total face transplant](#) in the US was performed at the Cleveland Clinic in 2008.
  - [Life Savers](#) were created in 1912 by Cleveland candy maker Clarence Crane.
  - Superman may have been born on the planet Krypton, but he was created here in Cleveland. Co-creators Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster are from the city, and the story goes that Superman was created at Siegel’s house at 10622 Kimberly Ave. in the early 1930s.
  - The first successful use of an electric street light system was in 1879 on Cleveland’s Public Square, and the first electric traffic signal was on the corner of Euclid Ave. at East 105<sup>th</sup> Street (in Cleveland’s cultural center, University Circle). Credit goes to [Charles Brush](#) who developed arc lighting and Ohioan Thomas Edison who developed a usable light bulb.
  - The oldest continually-operating decorative metalwork company in the U.S. set up shop in Cleveland in 1904. [Rose Iron Works](#) still makes magnificent gates, wall ornaments, light fixtures and more. Founder Martin Rose, a Hungarian-immigrant who developed his craft in Budapest and Vienna, came to Cleveland because of the city’s reputation for steel making and metalworking.

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