

As exhilarating as Saturday's win was, Sunday's loss to the Steelers was just that disheartening. The Browns continue to find ways to lose close games, and that's a culture that's tough to overcome says Papa Cass in "The Morning After".



Visit the Papa Cass weblog at <http://papacass.blogspot.com/>

**Steelers 24, Browns 20**

**Record: 3-7**

**Divisional record: 0-3**

This is the first time I've felt sorry for the Browns in a long while.

Normally, after a Browns loss, I'm somewhere between frustrated and numb, or as has been the case lately, basically indifferent.

But I saw the Browns trying out there Sunday, really trying. They were trying to re-assert themselves against their divisional rivals after last December's 41-0 drubbing. They were trying to play for pride. They were playing like a team that wanted to be confident, wanted to believe in their abilities, wanted to take everything their coaches had been saying all week to heart.

But in the end, they just weren't good enough. Not yet.

The Browns and the Steelers entered the game with identical 3-6 records. The difference is the Steelers are a good team going through a bad stretch. The Browns are a bad team trying to get good.

It showed at the end of the game, when the Browns finally broke and Pittsburgh's veteran poise took over. As Ben Roethlisberger drove a 77-yard stake straight into Cleveland's gut on the winning drive, the CBS cameras repeatedly flashed to the Browns sidelines, showing the likes of Kellen Winslow and Charlie Frye, helmets on, heads down, hiding their dread.

It gets so a team expects to lose, expects a negative outcome. The culture of losing is the biggest hurdle to overcome when trying to turn around a longtime losing club. We have seen it with the Cavs. It took numerous trades, free agent signings, a new coach, new GM and even a new owner to completely eradicate the sorry Cavs of Ricky Davis and Darius Miles, and place a solid veteran team around LeBron James, a team that expects to win.

I'm not saying the Browns need such an overhaul. I'm saying the Browns are also seeing how it takes years of trial and error before you finally get it right.

Granted, I wouldn't be writing this if Braylon Edwards had hauled in either of the half-ending passes from Frye, either of which would have been good for a touchdown. But, once again, the Browns aren't at the point where we're necessarily worrying about a ball bouncing this way or that. For the Browns, it's about developing a winning team, both in the locker room and on the field.

After the game, Steelers linebacker Joey Porter, never one to shy from a microphone, decided to give this latest knife in Cleveland's back a couple of good, hard twists.

"If you talk and lose, you're still losers," he told reporters. "(The Browns) talk like a different team, but in reality they are not. They had all the breaks, all the bounces. But when it was nail-biting time and you've got to make plays, who made them?"

It's about fielding a team that, one day, can shut guys like Porter up.

**Up next: Cincinnati, Sunday, 1 p.m. at Cleveland Browns Stadium**