



Our long civic nightmare is over.

Well, the teams still stink and there's a question as to whether the next coach of the Browns will know his arse from a facemask, but at least a guy we KNOW doesn't know his arse from a facemask is soon to be the ex-coach of the Cleveland Browns.

And what's nice is that we all are familiar with what comes next. There will be ridiculous, media-driven, far-fetched speculation about Bill Cowher and Jon Gruden and Chip Kelly and any number of potential coaches. Someone will advise that their butcher's best friend's barber heard that all of them bought houses in Strongsville and then we'll end up with 49ers offensive coordinator Greg Roman as head coach.

No one knows regime changes like Browns fans!! It's the Weekend Wrap!

Don't Let the Door Hit You in the Ass, Pat

It's been four minutes since the clock hit 0:00 in the Browns 24-10 loss to the Steelers and I'm wondering if Pat Shurmur has been fired yet. (Checks watch....)

How about now? (Checks watch....)

Why is this taking so long!?!

Screw it. If you want a recap read the crappy Plain Dealer. Check ESPN for the box score. I'm going right to a few thoughts I have and then on to an epic Scott Rabb Twitter burst that tickled me to no end.

~ For better or worse (it's definitely for the worse) there is really no difference between Thad Lewis and Brandon Weeden. Neither guy is the answer, although I think Lewis played with more poise than Weeden showed pretty much all year. Yes, he made some bad throws, missed some reads and failed to connect with some open guys. But it's not like we didn't see that all season.

Now, how much of that general QB incompetence was the system and the play calling? If you're a Weeden fan you better hope that was the biggest part of the problem. It will not be long at all before Weeden himself and various media folks start to pass the word that this was the case. That's called selling papers and passing the buck. It's a time-honored tradition once a coach has been sacrificed and if you fall for it hook, line and sinker you're not the brightest bulb in the lamp.

But there is no question that playing for a buffoon in an archaic system will negatively affect any QB, much less a rookie. As I've said before, Weeden is the guy in 2013 unless the new coach is like me and just can't stand the thought of trying to build his career with that guy under center. That's far less an endorsement of Weeden than it is an indictment of what else is out there.

So put the old man in a system that actually supports and benefits what talents he does have and then do what needs to be done after next season.

~ Who's the coach? No idea. Andy Reid is out since he and Joe Banner appear to be oil and water personified. I personally want no part of Chip Kelly with the offensive personnel he'd have to work with here (although it'd be high comedy to see Weeden running a zone read or pistol offense). And if Kelly is the guy I shudder at the thought of Mike Vick in an orange helmet running Kelly's offense.

The issue with a coaching change is you're always either getting an 'experienced' head coach who has either quit or been fired somewhere else or you're getting a college coach/NFL coordinator who's never been the guy in terms of running an NFL team. Which one you want?

~ Farewell Josh Cribbs. As I said last week, been a pleasure watching a football player go out there week after week and play football hard. Oh... and stay off Twitter for a couple days.

~ It'll be a shame if Dick Jauron is the baby thrown out with the bath water because that defense never quit. They were under manned and lacking play makers, but those guys played hard and were sound. That said, Jauron's system of not taking risks, not blitzing and generally being conservative isn't necessarily the best way to go with a young team. Last week in Denver was an excellent example of why, when the Browns didn't touch Peyton Manning and he systematically tore them apart. Sometimes with less talent and experience you have to force the issue. I think Jauron will be a DC next season but that it won't be here.

~ No idea what the status is on Josh Gordon's injury but you have to love that supplemental pick. The Browns gave up the 2nd round pick next April for Gordon. So they basically have a potential game-breaking WR with a year of NFL experience as that 2

nd round pick. I'll take that. Great move from a dead regime so 'Thank You' for that, if for nothing else.

I also was pleased with the development of Greg Little from halfway through the season on. I thought he grew up and I think a big part of that was Gordon's alleviating some of the pressure on Little. Little may not have the capacity to ever be 'the guy' but he's a solid WR and he matured during the season. Do not give up on that kid. He had a weird career at North Carolina, going from RB to WR and then sitting out a full year before being drafted, and he was raised in a dysfunctional football environment lorded over by Pat Shurmur. He's going to be a good football player and he and Gordon will complement each other well.

~ I'll be nice and say that Travis Benjamin is "contact averse". Talk about a guy who always knows where the sideline is and avoids contact...good Lord.

~ Anyone else like me wondering how the hell Brandon Jackson was inactive for 13 games this

year? All that money for a guy who can run a bit, catches the ball out of the backfield and picks up the blitz and Shurmur can't find a roster spot for that guy?

~ Did they fire Pat Shurmur yet?

Scott Raab Couldn't Be Righter

I am an unapologetic fan of Scott Raab. As most of you are aware, Raab wrote "The Whore of Akron" about the life and defection of LeBron James and about Raab's own, personal demons. Raab is unequivocally Cleveland despite the fact that he doesn't permanently reside here. He grew up here, came of age here, began a life of crime here and experienced all that Cleveland sports has had to offer both from here and from afar.

If you want a sugar-coated version of what Cleveland sports is today then by all means just read Terry Pluto or the countless other fan sites devoted to pipe dreams and better tomorrows. Raab isn't for you. But what he is is right in regard to his most recent comments on Twitter.

Raab went off recently on the lollipops and rainbows crowd when he posted the following thoughts:

[Scott Raab](#) @ScottRaab64

Watching 'The Band That Wouldn't Die' to mark the 48th anniversary of Cleveland's last title. I doubt that any living fan will see another.

Two generations of loss have produced a fan base that thinks Heckert and Jauron are savants, not utter mediocrities. Open your eyes.

Think Weeden & Tristan will ever be more than ciphers, or that Kyrie isn't already gone, or that Byron Scott gives a shit? Open your eyes.

Why would Kyrie Irving, already beloved around the NBA, stay with a franchise that thinks losing will be its path to glory? He won't.

As for MLB, its economics don't excuse the Dolans or Shapiro for their failure. 'What If?' What if you shoved your Thome statue up your ass?

17 unfollows so far. Good riddance. Better you should read about how Weeden & Tristan just need time to grow & CLE fans should be patient.

How have 'stability' & 'continuity' worked for the Tribe? Front offices that judge & develop young talent deserve respect. These guys? Feh.

I'd also like younger CLe fans to think harder about what they see, hear, & read. A rocket-armed QB is a must in the AFC North? Bullshit.

The Tribe couldn't locate cheap replacement-level talent at 1B, or RH bats, due to MLB economics? Bullshit.

Nowhere else but Cleveland would fans hear a team president tell them NOT to come to the ballpark if they're too focused on winning.

Nowhere but Cleveland would towel-snappers like Chris Perez and Josh Cribbs publicly piss on the people who pay to see them play.

I'll end my 48th Anniversary party thus: The 3 Cleveland teams are an ongoing disgrace to their

fans. The won-loss record speaks for itself.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year everyone!!!!

But seriously, someone with some credibility and journalistic integrity had to say this and I'm thrilled Raab did. I'm with him 100% on this rant because he's pierced through all the hometown pride crap to lay out exactly where our three major teams are and what's wrong with all of them.

So of course he was vilified. People absolutely crushed him with their Twitter responses. Many of them are the same people thrilled with Nick Swisher coming to town for more money and more years than anyone else would give him and who have conveniently focused on Swisher playing right field while spots one through five in the starting rotation are in shambles.

Understand this much: there is nothing wrong with supporting your town's teams. There is nothing wrong with paying good money to watch Major League Baseball if that's your passion. There's nothing wrong with loving how Kyrie Irving plays the game and taking pride that he's doing it in your town's uniform. That's fine. That's commendable. But why does it have to be just a matter of time and some adjustments before the TEAM is competitive? Why do we believe that it HAS to get better? Why do we assume that enough losing seasons and the NBA draft will restock the Cavs with enough talent to get back to where they were with LeBron? And why do we criticize anyone not willing to accept that guys like Brandon Weeden and Tristan Thompson are the answers just because they may be a small bit better than the last bust out they replaced?

And above all else, why are we so damn resolute that there has to be a day in the future when all of this will be better? There doesn't. I've been as big a Cleveland sports fan as anyone in NE Ohio for going on 40 years. Aside from a few assorted years it's never been 'better'. Aside from the Indians run in the mid 90's and LeBron's time here earlier this decade there's never been a sustained run of excellence for any of these franchises.

Then throw in the fact that MLB and the NBA are set up to have half or more of their franchises "fail" (from a competitive and not financial standpoint) and what exactly are we hoping for? That Cleveland will suddenly become a destination spot for NBA free agents in their prime? That the Dolans and Mark Shapiro will suddenly discover the magic elixir that turns the Indians into the

St. Louis Cardinals?

We keep waiting for Lucy not to be a conniving bitch and actually let Charlie Brown kick the damn ball. We keep convincing ourselves that guys like LeBron and Kyrie are “different” and will be the torch bearers here for years to come. It didn’t work out with LeBron (who was born in our backyard) and it’s ridiculous to think Kyrie will be any different. Jesus, LeBron gave this place seven years to get it right and they couldn’t do it. There was still no free agent in their prime who wanted to come and play alongside the best player on the planet and a solid supporting cast. You think Kyrie has more sway or that doing it with Tristan Thompson and Dion Waiters is going to get it done?

I’ve come to the point where I’m tired of banging my head against the wall with these teams. I’ve come to the point where I’m actually more entertained by the eternal optimists and fan bois who often masquerade as unofficial beat reporters than I am by the product on the field. We all seek our own levels of enjoyment and I’ve come to the conclusion that waiting on the franchises to fulfill me is likely a losing lottery ticket.

Scott Raab had a lot to say in those few tweets but what was left unsaid was that you can still enjoy watching nightly or weekly or whatever the case may be depending on the team(s) you’re following. I can love watching Kyrie play without the expectation that the team will win now or in the future or that Thompson, Tyler Zeller and Waiters will develop into premier players or that another lottery pick will make a big difference.

I can enjoy watching the Indians every night because the skill level in general is off the charts and my kids enjoy the game and we connect with each other given the pace of play allows for it. I can enjoy watching the Browns because of the comedic value and because my youngest loves football. In fact, it’s really because of my daughters that I’ve reached this point. Their lives and their enjoyment of the game and the players isn’t based on wins and losses. They just love the game and some of the players and hanging out with family watching it, whether it’s at the game or in the living room.

And you know what? That’s good enough for me. I’m not deluding myself any longer into thinking these teams can win after 40 years or so of them going out of their way to prove otherwise. It is what is. They’re terrible and we watch. They’re terrible and we still go. They’re terrible and we still pay what they ask for the privilege of wearing the jersey of the one guy on the roster who doesn’t completely blow goats.

Quit killing the messenger. It's not Scott Raab who's crazier than a shithouse rat. It's everyone who doesn't see it with his clarity and perspective.

Recognize.

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