



Super Bowls are nice. Playoffs are nice too. Consistency with the coaching staff and an unspoken, honorable trust in the front office goes a long way with fans.

So, maybe I've been told as much, but I'm basically guessing on all of this; after all, this is the Cleveland Browns we're talking about.

Often times, we hear some nonsense about being on the right track and respecting the process, but it's all just talk.

That's one thing we like to do is talk. It's the hardest thing about being away from home, the part where I can't just talk about the Browns. People get fed up, people wonder what's wrong with me, and there's the obvious bottom line that people just don't care.

I wear blinders and cover my ears as much as I can to avoid reality; it's not just the reality of everything related to the Browns in the present tense, but my own private reality, where I will soon have existed longer outside of Cleveland than I ever did as a local.

"It's not like it was back home," I'm reminded. Only, I don't need to be reminded; I found out right away. They don't care about their own thing, let alone my thing. I don't expect them to jump on board with me, but I expect them to understand and relate to where I am when it's miserable and in those rare moments when it's wonderful.

They don't know either place.

Two of my closest friends, expats from the north coast like me, are in South Florida and San Diego, towns not unlike Phoenix, full of transplants and a general feeling of apathy towards the local teams.



I've talked about how [they don't care in San Diego](#) ; if they did, they'd be a lot more like us. Two modern-day World Series losses, Ryan Leaf, franchise emigration in a major sport, and zero Super Bowl wins, it all sounds familiar if you substitute a Tim Couch or Courtney Brown into Ryan Leaf's place.

Their last league championship of any sort came in 1963, a full year before the Browns upset the Colts, but both occurred before the merger, or "in the days of leather helmets", the way a Steelers fan would incorrectly describe those times.

San Diego is never mentioned in the same breath as Cleveland, though there are obvious parallels after you're done preaching about the weather.

Not like it is back home, right?

Florida, specifically South Florida, brought home an NBA title in 2006, but you'd never know it from the water cooler discussions the next day. There's nothing to see here, please disperse. Marlins win two World Championships in seven years, which draws a big old yawn from Key West to Orlando, save a few households.

Maybe the Dolphins, the one local team with a local following that does not necessarily directly correlate to the team's recent success, could get people off the beach if they ever did anything significant in the days since Marino.

It's not like back home, Jeff, I'm constantly reminded.

This is where the bar has been set. There's a little part of all us that believe Sipe's pass sailed into the lake because Ozzie wasn't open. We believe Elway didn't actually have 98 yards in him, or that Byner followed Slaughter's vicious run-block and walked into the endzone untouched.

We believe the '96, '97, and '98 Browns made us all proud, and that the Dawg Pound never stopped barking and maintains its character to this day.

That's the "back home" that we pretend exists. If you're not an expatriate, and bless you for sticking it out, maybe it's "back in the day" that makes you feel better about the Browns in the present tense. If you don't have the days of old to look back on, asking the youth not to jump ship can be a tall order.

They have nothing.

If you were born in 1986, maybe you got to enjoy a few years of Metcalf and Eric Turner.

If you were born in 1992, you don't have anything; you don't really even have the word "if", because there's no one single "if" that makes any installment of the rebooted Browns a good thing.

From the top to the bottom, there's nothing to hitch your wagon to, not an owner, not an executive or coach, or even a player that still wears the orange and brown. The days are still rewarding for them, even without the victories, though some level of emptiness may exist if it turns out the grass isn't greener on the other side, where the world isn't seen in single shades orange and brown.



of the strategic partnership with the... of energy...



in Cleveland... of the... of the... of the...



of the... of the... of the... of the...

