

Good For What Ails Yah

Written by {ga=jb}

Sunday, November 18 2007 7:00 PM -

Mansfield Lucas checks back in with us, and in his latest, uses some analogies from his youth to make the point that this Browns team has been good for what's ailed him. Mansfield urges Browns fans to enjoy this. And to savor what is right about this group of true players who leave nothing on the field for themselves and us as fans. And to worry about what's wrong with this team in the off season when the miracles run out.



While it is neither the thing I'm most proud of nor most embarrassed about, I am a third generation [Euclidean](#). The west side relatives are Irish, and since I grew up in the heyday of [Big Chuck and Little John](#) and had an aversion to being identified with any of their "ertain ethnic" jokes, and my surname had no "ski" on it, I was all about *Erin Go Braugh*

. But I can't escape my dark, east side true roots anymore than I can deny my old addictions to a Euclid Race soda or

[Papa Joe's sub](#)

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I had this four foot tall grandmother who I think was Polish, depending upon who won the last war; Germany or Russia. I'm not sure. Actually, I think she was from New Jersey originally, but was smart enough to stop in Ohio while the rest of the family went onto Michigan. Ah, fate. But since she lived near the lake I would be down there almost every day in the summer spending the day swimming in 1970's Lake Erie with floating sheep head, algae clumps bigger than 'nessie, and Lord-Knows-What chemicals and heavy metals dumped in there back when Euclid

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used to make things and people had jobs. That explains a lot about me.

Anyway, we'd come back up for lunch and it'd be the same thing every day. She'd be piling on pounds of Velveeta™ on plain white toast and yelling back at Gary Dee or Merle Polis on the radio like it was a two-way conversation. People power indeed. Usually, this meal would be accompanied by something like ox tail soup or cabbage soup or again, God-Knows-What, and there was no way my ass was gonna touch that stuff with a 30 foot pole. Every freaking day she'd try to make me eat that stuff, I'd say no, she'd keep pushing that ethnic concoction on my 16 more times and she'd always say *"It's good for what ails yah."*

I had no idea what the hell she was talking about and I'd get on my bike and ride to Carroll's on E 222

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for some bootleg McDonald's food back in the day before Euclid had a McDonald's or Wendy's.

That's how I felt about the immaculate bounce this past Sunday. It was good for what ailed me. Let's face it; after the way we lost to Pittsburgh in almost the identical fashion, to have had that scenario repeat itself against the Ratbirds would have been nothing short of devastating. I'll be honest. I was so crushed about losing to the Appalachians again I couldn't function. I didn't want to write about the loss. Beating Baltimore was cathartic, especially breaking all their fans' black, hypocritical, rationalizing little hearts. I bet they'd wished they built a library. It was good for what ailed me.

In my mind, we deserved to lose that game. That wasn't [Ben Toothlessberger](#)

rallying a quality team back from a deficit; it was

[Kyle Krappy Boller](#)

, the most embarrassing buried footnote on Phil Savage's career vita.

The near loss was the direct result of playing with a lack of poise, putting the refs in a position to beat us, and DA showing that maddening inconsistency that will keep the embers of a future quarterback controversy glowing.

Still, you gotta look for trouble to not be positively stupid silly at the prospects of the following: 6 - 4 at Thanksgiving and one game off wildcard pace, sweeping the Ratbirds who were alleged contenders in August, and having a winning record in the division when it looked like Romeo couldn't get it done in the AFC North. This has been an amazing season, partly due to the parity scheduling finally working in our favor, and the scrappy play of a team we can actually rally behind as fans that makes us proud. I'm not a huge fan of the stupid football I saw at times Sunday, but all you have to do is watch Josh Cribbs to just forget about it. The marketing machine foresaw Brady Quinn as the face of the Browns? Hell naw. It's Josh Cribbs. It's the man no one gave a chance who has no pedigree playing as hard as he can lighting up the NFL. It's the kind of "refuse-to-lose" effort made on one of the last plays in regulation where DA shook off the defender like he was a fly and Braylon Edwards went up for his leaping "didja-see-that" grab in double coverage. It's Joe J, the ultimate possession receiver at this stage in his career whether anyone wants to admit that given the un-PC connotations or not, running like a madman getting every yard possible. It's the Souljah hurdling defenders trying to make the end zone in an effort play from an impossible distance. This is our team now, folks. They are scrappers, they are fighters, and more often than not this season, they are winners. Not Qunicy Morgan dropping easily catchable balls to help incite a near riot and an organization making excuses. Not a concussed quarterback crying that his backup was warmly welcomed by fans hoping for the rally that then occurred convinced that the world revolved around him, and an organization making excuses. Not Robert Griffin and Earl Little being run over by Jamal Lewis and an organization making excuses.

And speaking of Jamal, I haven't seen that kind of effort and intensity and production of tough yards by a Browns' rusher since Kevin Mack was in his prime. Think he was sending a message? And while the Rats' made adjustments and the real Browns' defense showed up in the second half, there was a pass rush there that's been missing for whole seasons. You have to wonder what would have happened with that scheme against the Sucklers' last week.

But that's all picking knits, as are the mountains of reasons as to why we should have lost Sunday, and why we shouldn't take continued success in 2008 for granted anymore than the fans in San Diego or New Orleans should have expected winners this season. There's lots of work left for this team to be a contender. But they've accomplished one goal for sure in my mind by sweeping the hated Ratbirds, an organization that shouldn't even exist were there any divine justice in the world, or adequate law enforcement for that matter. This group has brought back the passion between a city and its fans and re-instilled what it means to be legitimately proud as a Browns' fan, not just die hard, loyal, refuse-to-leave-the-bandwagon sort of way. Enjoy it. It's been too long, too damn long. Savor what is right about this group of true players who leave nothing on the field for themselves and us as fans. And let's worry about what's wrong with this team in the off season when the miracles run out.