

Not a good weekend to be a sports fan here in northeast Ohio, to say the least. The Buckeyes once again let a big game slip away late, falling 18-15 on Saturday night to USC after allowing freshman QB Matt Barkley to lead the Trojans on a seven minute long, back breaking, game winning TD drive. Then, on Sunday, the Browns were dominated in the second half by the Vikings, falling 34-20 to drop their 10th opener in the last 11 years. Peeks takes us through his weekend of misery in this Monday's Weekend Wrap.



So I started out the weekend looking forward to fishing in the Lake County Perch Fest on Saturday, watching the Buckeyes on Saturday night and then finishing things off with the Browns season opener on Sunday. Want to know how that worked out?

Saturday Morning

I laid out all my gear in preparation of a 5am alarm. I had perch rods and spreaders ready for the water, a backpack loaded with extra gear, rain gear, trail mix, knives and anything else you could possibly need for a day of fishing or dealing with the unlikely event that the boat you're on capsizes in Lake Erie and you wash up on a deserted island. I could have survived a good two to three weeks out there with the crap I had packed. I even had a couple beers in the cooler to celebrate our Perch Fest tournament victory or the arrival of a rescue vessel.

And the forecast for the open waters of Lake Erie was for 1-3 foot waves when I woke up. Everything was working just swell.

The alarm goes off on time and I'm out the door at 5:20am with plans to get to the Geneva Marina bait shop to load up with minnows before the onslaught of other Perch Fest contestants arrive. I arrive at the marina at approximately 5:35am and find only darkness and some damn dock dog that wouldn't leave me alone. The bait shop kid takes pity on me and lets me in at 5:45am and fills my bucket with nine dozen minnows for the day. There is no frenzied line of fishermen anxiously waiting behind me and I leave the boat shop for the launch ramp accompanied by just the sound of crickets and that frigging dog following me.

My fishing partner arrives at 6am and we expertly offload the boat from the trailer. Captain Bob parks the truck while I anticipate what I'll wear in the photo they take of the tournament victors. At just about 7am we leave the dock. I snap a few photos of a gorgeous sunrise as we head past the outer break wall into open Lake Erie waters. As noted previously, the forecast called for 1-3 foot waves and maybe a shower. At this hour the lake is calm and there are few clouds to be found.

By 7:45am we're where we need to be. The boat is now anchored about seven or eight miles out in 68 feet of water or so. However, with each mile we traveled it seemed the wind picked up a few miles per hour and the waves gained a foot or so. By the time we're anchored we're fishing in water that the 'Deadliest Catch' guys would avoid. We catch a few small perch though. And by small I mean the half gallon "aquarium" we have at home that houses a half-dollar sized turtle would seem expansive to these fish we caught. You can't even find the steadiness to put a minnow on the hook without enduring some

odd type of acupuncture-therapy. Things are grim.

By 9am Captain Bob, the sole voice of reason on this 19-foot fish killing boat, decides enough is enough. You can't find the bottom of the lake with your gear and apparently a small craft advisory has been issued. This is where the real fun begins since there's an anchor in the water that got there by human hands and needs to be retrieved the same way.

No dice. After a number of crafty maneuvers that don't bring us any closer to bringing the anchor into the boat Captain Bob decides that the anchor isn't worth the effort and he cuts it after retrieving as much line as possible. Unfortunately, that's not before I de-gloved three fingers while attempting to get the damn thing back on board. My hand is numb and I'm bleeding from three fingers as we begin to make our way in. One blood-drenched bandana and five guppy-sized perch later we safely make it back to terra firma. I grab a bottle of Purell and then scream like a girl at a Jonas Brothers concert when the solution hits open (and I do mean open) skin.

Then Things Got Painful

But neither rain nor sleet nor fingers that looked at this point like bratwurst were going to keep me from watching Ohio State and USC.

And what did I see?

I saw an OSU team get out-athleted again, that's what I saw.

Look, I know people want to string up Jim Tressel and his offensive coordinator for their conservative approach and their inability to get Terrelle Pryor more involved in the running game.

I hear you. And I agree wholeheartedly there were some head-scratching coaching calls and decisions that puzzled me and my Advil-addled mind.

But a leopard isn't going to change its spots. Tressel is going to take sure points when they're available and he's going to baby young players. It's just the way it goes. Hell, he babied a senior on his way to a national title so babying Pryor shouldn't be a surprise. But USC didn't win with bravado, ingenuity or aggressive play calling either. USC won by exploiting mismatches they created with Joe McKnight and Anthony McCoy on OSU linebacker Ross Homan in their fourth quarter drive that led to the winning points.

McKnight and McCoy are simply faster and more athletic than Homan and each made a big play in leading the Trojans past the Buckeyes 18-15 in Columbus. Ohio State, aside from Pryor, doesn't have the athletes needed to create such mismatches and therein was the difference. Pryor had another sub par game under the microscope and bright lights and the Buckeye defense, superb all night, wilted under the stress of having to keep USC contained in the final seven minutes.

It's that simple in my eyes.

While Jim Tressel has a national championship and two other title game appearances under his belt his team this year and his teams of recent years past simply don't have the speed and talent to be considered elite college football teams. Tressel has it in his power to change all of that via the recruiting net he's able to cast. Whether he does or doesn't will determine whether he leaves OSU at retirement age or before.

So on Sunday...

I was faced with relying on the Browns to beat a Super Bowl-contending Minnesota team to salvage the

weekend. This is what gamblers would call a negative expected value proposition

(-EV), especially since I predicted a 34-13 Viking victory.

With fresh bandages on still seeping wounds I loaded up the cooler and the steaks and headed down to CBS to see what I could see.

Unfortunately what I saw was almost exactly what I expected to see. But for an 'Oh, by the way' TD at the end of the game the Vikings stomped the Browns in the second half 34-20 and I narrowly missed calling the final score.

I don't know what to tell you about the Browns game. Until Brady Quinn shows that he can make teams pay for stacking the line of scrimmage that's all he and the Browns running backs are going to see.

The team did look like they had tackled and blocked before, despite what the fourth quarter may have indicated. They were in the game and leading at the half (courtesy of Josh Cribbs who remains their one, valid offensive threat from the kick returner position) and then the Vikings came out and took their lunch money.

Yes, the Browns looked collectively like they had played the game before. But what plagues the Browns is similar to what plagues the Buckeyes; they lack talent in important places.

Etcetera

- The Indian played this weekend. Rumor has it that they were able to steal one game in a weekend series against the vaunted Kansas City Royals. That is all.

- Andy Marte is back down to a sub .240 batting average. That is all.

- Never try to bring in an anchor in 3-5 foot waves

without gloves. That is all.