

## Turning The Corner

Written by {ga=jb}

Saturday, August 21 2010 2:00 PM - Last Updated Saturday, August 21 2010 4:42 PM

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So much like a jilted adolescent loser at home Saturday night, Master James is apparently keeping track of everyone who has done him wrong, or “disrespected LeBron” as he would say about himself. Perhaps he is even creating *LeBron’s-payback-for-dissing-LeBron-list*. I don’t know if there is a time table for this list that suggests a need for swift and terrible punishment, or maybe he’ll whip it out when he’s 40 and successful enough to buy a Trans Am with a screaming chicken decal on the hood and a poly-nose that fades in the sun and show up at the 20 year class reunion to snub the prom queen. I, errr Mansfield, obviously isn’t privy to the list, but perhaps it is inclusive of everyone from

*Enemy-of-the-LRMR-State*,

Dan Gilbert, to

[Dr. Laura](#)

, to the entire original

[Olympic NBA Dream Team](#)

, plus

[Adrian Woj](#)

and

[John Mayer](#)

, the Northeast Ohio White Pages, and maybe even

[baby Momma](#)

.

Maybe after this I make the list as well.

Whatever. And if you think I’m being too tough on this child-man with terminal cranial rectosis and his “management” team that makes [Master P](#) look like [Leigh Steinberg](#) , at least I didn’t drop a “social media/internet wagsta” gloss on him. Oops. I think I just did.

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He, oh I'm sorry, pronoun usage and correct grammar are forbidden when using BronBonics™, I mean "LeBron", is dead to me. And I'm sorry Mr. Gilbert. I'd love to be supportive and get my own comic sans hate on with you at Benjamin fifty for a decent ducat. But the entire Association is dead to me until you and enough gullible owners get together and do what is necessary before the game is completely ruined by these spoiled narcissistic morons who confuse the reality of what it takes to achieve athletic immortality with living the [Rump Shaker video](#) beyond the point where Major League Baseball says, "Duuuuude. Your competitive imbalance is whack. You need an intervention." And that would be to have a

[putsch](#)

to overthrow the so-out-of-touch figurehead that he makes

[Jopa](#)

look like

[Nick Saban](#)

, namely David Stern, and lock these idiots out until you all are back in control of your billion dollar investments. Or you could just watch these children flush it down the toilet while Stern talks about what's good for the game and fines you for breaking down the obvious.

God bless the National Football League.

In one king hell master FUBAR stroke, the stupidest idea on television (even in the era of "[Wipeout](#)")

) seismically re-shifted the center of the C-town sports' universe back to where Moses, Paul and God intended; to the Cleveland Ever-lovin' Browns. Given the unfortunate state of Cleveland sports, the franchise that was left for dead and facing a fans' non-revolution of terminal apathy merely nine months ago stands perfectly poised to regain the hearts and minds of The Cleveland Fan. It is now clear to me that this organization, from the top, um, visible

top down, is everything that any red-blooded northeast Ohioan (yes, you too Akron) could ever want, even as the W's may not yet be coming in double digits.

In Mike Holmgren, we obviously at long last have the credible, "been there, done that, have the boiler under my T-shirt" football man in the front office making sure everyone plays nice. Not only that, but cat knows what he's doing. Don't look now, but he is one of a handful of NFL-AAFC-AFL coaches to appear in three championship games. (<- Annual reminder to the Inbred the sport didn't start in 1974.) He has his hand-picked personnel guy doing actual personnel work, not blowing off the office doing Lord knows what. And now Eric Mangini, the best coach the fans never got to run out of town prematurely, has this team looking light years better than a year ago against a team they couldn't even compete with twice last season. You

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give this bunch two more seasons to get even more talent and gel and you will see something very special.

And can we have a word about Eric Mangini? I was up and down on this guy last season like the NASDAQ in the 90's. I went from wondering why Randy Lerner truncated any search for this guy who had just been fired after a melt-down season to embracing The Process, wanting to touch the process, to believing in the whole media-led Napoleonic complex set up, to really liking what I saw in the last few games. But the bottom line is that he pretty much said what he'd do, and he did what he said. He talked about giving this franchise mired in rudderless suck a cultural enema, and he did that. He KNEW he'd lose games when he traded [Braylon "drowning victim" Edwards](#) for two special teamers and a box of kicking tees. He did it anyway because it was the right thing to do. He refused to coddle idiots and have two sets of rules for a player just because he was talented. Taking notes, Mr. Gilbert? Can we finally give credit where due now and have some appreciation for the process rather than living one week at a time to sell fish wrap when any educated fan knows that this is a three year proposition? Can we finally appreciate his X's and O's acumen, at least on the defensive side of the ball? Can we understand that he knows how to establish a running game, and that we are the Cleveland Browns, WE RUN THE FOOTBALL!? Can we see the roster getting better from the 53

rd

to the 1 rather than the obsession with handful of top, overrated "talents" that Phil Savage rammed down the overwhelmed Romeo Crennel's throat?

Psst... The correct answer is "yes" to all.

But the most important thing has been the cultural change. Gone are the self-absorbed clowns, the lazy, and the inept. What is left will be 53 men who may not have the most talent on the league, nor even in the division, but who have the toughness, brains, and heart to show you the meaning of "overachieve" like we haven't seen in this town in decades. After all the non-sense and fall out from June, this will be like that first swig of ice cold [Vitamin Water Revive™](#) after a long bender of cheap beer, shooters, and original Camels at Yankee County in Geneva-on-the-Lake.

You want to talk to me about the modern day selfish pro athlete, meet [Scott Fujita](#), a thoughtful man who grew up without a silver Nike in his mouth who went from college walk on to champion, and then [donated his winnings](#) to a real cause he believed in rather than misuse a charity as a fig leaf for dooshbaggery, all

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without a prime-time announcement.

You want to talk to me about a kid who had to work hard for everything he has, and is well rounded? I'll show you [Marcus Bernard](#) . How many years have Browns' fans sat through the Radio Rahim Abdullahs, the Dwayne Rudds, the Chaun Thompsons and looked at division rivals' linebackers and said, "they find these good players on the scrap heap, why can't we every do that?" Newsflash long-suffering brethren: I think we may have done just that.

OK, sure. We have some defensive linemen who tend to be forgetful about their luggage. Who among us hasn't had to walk back through the metal detector since 2001? We still have a couple defensive backs with questionable judgment who might feel that Cleveland is "too small" for them. But we also [have Jake "Taylor" Delhomme](#) , of whom I am still skeptical but is clearly a guy who you want to succeed and played with precision not seen since Kelly Holcomb sold his soul in exchange for living out a fantasy for three games. By the way, that eternity is gonna be a bitty, Kel. Sunscreen, baby.

If Josh Cribbs returning kicks isn't the image of our franchise and town that you want, knock out your teeth with a ball peen hammer right now, move to Weirton, WVA and start mumbling "Here we go" to yourself like LeLo begging for a blanket in a jail cell. You're not worthy.

Joe Thomas. Joe Freakin' "I'm going fishing with Dad on draft day while all you 18 credits short of a communication degree idiots are preening in 16 button purple pinstripe suits with an entourage of 67 alleged cousins on stage before you play a down" Thomas. Yeah, him.

Atybah Rubin.

Alex Mack.

And even the remarkable improvement of the much maligned Brian Robiske.

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Tough men. Hard workers. And not one was ever accused of molesting and assaulting a woman, let alone twice.

I can go on and on, and so should you. Bottom line: if you can't find yourself wanting to root for this team after being a lifelong Cleveland Fan and having lived through the summer of He and yet another fire sale inspired 100 loss season, there's something wrong with you.

I don't know where this one is gonna go, folks. After the Green Bay exhibition game though, I'm seeing strong signs of overachieving, and here's why. There is no game planning in early exhibition games. It's just talent running plays in glorified scrimmage. But if you can run the ball and execute simple pass plays with precision this early, and if you can stop the run, that's a good foundation. If the weakness of your defense is youth in a thin secondary, and one of the top handful of passing offenses on Sunday exploits that, but you know the kids can only improve, you live with that deficiency coming off a 5 win season. You know that things can only get better, the talent is there on paper, and you will have a roller coaster ride while they go from rookies and a new group without game reps to a cohesive unit by season's end. When you also know that the entire defensive philosophy is completely based on the scheme of the front seven on any given Sunday and there is no real game planning until they count them for real, you mitigate even the brilliance of Aaron Rodgers and the Pack's juggernaut offense. How they perform against a very Policy-Era Browns: The Next Generation-esque franchise, the Rams, this weekend, will show us something important even in a meaningless game.

I don't do number of win predictions because given the ups and downs of an NFL season it is a fairly meaningless exercise. But I will predict the following. This team will be much better than we expect for just one year of progress, provided there is health. This team will overachieve and battle as it comes together this season. And most of all, win or lose, this is a team that has a group of players and a team-first culture that we can be proud of as Clevelanders and northeast Ohioans.

Pumpkins on the field, people. Our Team. Our Name. Our Colors. I'm now getting the feeling that all the wasted time we put into all of this up until now may be all worth it within a few years. Enjoy the ride.