

Great column this morning from Papa Cass that I could not agree more with. His take? The Cavs are getting unfairly criticized for what most fans see as a disappointing off-season. Cassano argues that the Cavs are the only team in this town doing things right, yet still struggle to garner the blind loyalty that the Browns and Indians receive from the fans.



Visit the Papa Cass weblog at <http://papacass.blogspot.com/>

I'll say it like I've said it dozens of times before: I'll never understand the forgiveness of Cleveland sports fans.

The Browns jump off a high bridge every fall, and we are right there with an air cushion and supportive pat on the back.

The Indians and Cavaliers scrimp and save with the best of intentions, and might even put the semblance of a competitive team on the playing surface, and the instant they do something short of landing a superstar, we are right there to chastise them and mock their management.

This year is no exception.

While the Browns prepare to bend over and take it hard in the posterior once again, the Cavaliers have quietly pieced together a solid offseason that should make this team noticeably improved over last year.

The Cavs reward? To have a myriad of journalists, bloggers and barroom pulpit bangers carry on about what a disaster their backcourt is.

Excuse me, what team was it that made it to the second round of the playoffs a year ago? I don't remember it being the Browns.

But the Cavs, just like their Gateway complex-mates, always have their shortcomings magnified and their successes contorted as questionable moves at best, outright failures at worst.

All this while the orange and brown clown car down on the lakefront is constantly genuflected

toward like some great symbol of Cleveland sports.

The same people who deride David Wesley as too old, Eric Snow as old and untalented, Damon Jones as a catch-and-shoot stiff, Shannon Brown as too young, Larry Hughes as too fragile, Drew Gooden as too airheaded, Zydrunas Ilgauskas as a big, white Euro-stiff and Anderson Varejao as all hair, no game are the same people who honestly, in their heart of hearts, believed that the signings of Joe Jurevicius, LeCharles Bentley and the drafting of Charlie Frye were going to signal a new era of Browns dominance.

My message to all Cleveland sports fans: get your heads out of your orange and brown butts and realize where your bread is buttered.

The Browns are nowheresville. They aren't going up the standings anytime soon. They have no star players. They have a coaching staff with very shaky game-planning skills. They have a roster of players who can't stay healthy. If you keep expecting them to win, you will go to bed most Sundays with a throbbing headache and wake up Monday morning with a hangover. That's a fact of life. You'd better start repeating it until you believe it.

The Cavs are the team with the superstar. The Cavs are the team that won a playoff series. The Cavs are the team that got their superstar inked to a contract extension this summer. The Cavs are the team that got their starting power forward wrapped up below market value last month. If any team in this town makes a move, the Cavs are the team that deserves to be lauded, not needed.

The Cavs have faults, sure. They don't have the perfect backcourt. But having a glut of guards is not a signal that Danny Ferry doesn't know what he's doing. On the contrary, with the contracts of Wesley, Sasha Pavlovic, Eddie Basden and Stephen Graham set to partially or totally expire within the next year, it's a sign Ferry is indeed doing things right.

Signing declining players like Jurevicius and Ted Washington to multiyear deals, now that's what deserves to be greeted with folded arms and a stern glare.