

No Better Time To Be A Cleveland Fan

Written by {ga=consigliere}

Friday, October 26 2007 7:00 PM -

With the pain from the ALCS loss to the Red Sox now starting to subside, Tony Lastoria takes a step back and talks about how good it is to be a Cleveland sports fan right now. The Indians and the Cavs look poised to continue to compete through the turn of the decade, and the Browns that's right, the Browns are starting to generate some playoff talk themselves here on the North Coast. Add the #1 Buckeye football team to the mix, and things are better right now than they've ever been in this town.



Keep your chin up Cleveland.

As the dust starts to settle on the Indians collapse in the ALCS, and it moves more into the past and next season moves more into the present, some proper perspective is needed as fans look ahead to next year with the Indians and also turn their focus to the Browns and Cavaliers.

Whether you are A Cleveland Fan, or a site like us representing [The Cleveland Fan](#), there is no better time to be a fan of the sports teams in this town.

Sure, the Indians couldn't finish off the dreaded Red Sox, and it was very disappointing that they were unable to close the deal after being up 3-1 in the series. For a few days I took the loss pretty hard, not because of the collapse, but because of the realization of just how damn hard it is to get to the World Series in baseball, let alone to win it. Baseball is probably the most unpredictable of all the sports, so there are no guarantees the Indians get back to the postseason, no matter how promising the future looks.

That said, we have winning baseball back in this town again, and a likely playoff

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contender for the next few years. How the next few seasons play out, it's hard to say given all the luck and breaks that have to go your way in baseball. But, this team should go into each season for the next three to five years as a playoff favorite. They just have to play it out and see how things fall.

Then we have the Cavaliers.

The Cavaliers made a long playoff run last year that culminated in their first ever Eastern Conference Championship and trip to the NBA Finals. And, while they were swept by the San Antonio Spurs in the NBA Finals, they set a precedent that they will be a title contender for as long as LeBron James is healthy and a Cavalier. Yes, they have had a lackluster offseason where they have done almost nothing, and the two holdouts of young - but very important - role players Sasha Pavlovic and Anderson Varejao still looms large as the season gets ready to kick off in a few days.

Still, they are a favorite to once again win the East and take another shot at the Western Conference representative in the NBA Finals. Whether or not they learn from their experience last year, the loss of Pavlovic and Varejao hinders them this year, or if they regress and disappoint in the early rounds of the playoffs remains to be seen. Bottom line, like with our baseball team ... we have contending basketball in this town.

Finally, we have the Browns.

Believe it or not, they look to be turning the corner and no longer appear to be the doormat they have been since they returned in 1999. This year when the Browns drafted Joe Thomas and Brady Quinn in the first round of the NFL Draft, the Browns arguably had their best draft since 1978 when they drafted Clay Matthews and Ozzie Newsome in the first round that year. The Browns also finally have some Pro Bowl caliber players on the roster, an offensive line and good skill players, and an offense which looks like it could be one of the premier offenses in the football for the next few years.

While the defense is disappointing and getting pasted each week, the offense has stepped up and guided them to a 3-3 mark so far this season. The Browns are on the cusp of being a playoff contender, and given how young a lot of their key players are, barring injury, they could be a force in the division and conference next year, or even this year if things fall right. With a very favorable schedule the

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rest of this season, the word "playoffs" is starting to be bandied about. When was the last time there was Browns playoff talk this early in the season?

Yes, it is a good time to be A Cleveland Fan.

There has never been a time when all three teams in the city have had so much promise at the same time. Since the Cavaliers came along in 1970, we never have had all three teams - let alone two teams - on the same winning page.

During the Cavaliers short playoff run and "Miracle of Richfield" year in 1976, the Indians stunk and the Browns not very good. When the Browns were a Super Bowl contender in the mid to late 80s, the Indians and Cavaliers were doormats. By the time the Cavaliers burst on the scene in the 1988-1989 season, the Browns were at the end of their Super Bowl contending years and about to begin the near-20 years of rudderless suck we have come to know, and the Indians were still a cellar dweller.

By the time Michael Jordan put the final dagger in the Price-Daugherty-Nance Era Cavaliers in a four game sweep in the 1993 playoffs, the Indians were on the cusp of their playoff run in the 90s, and the Browns were stuck in the middle of the Belichick Years going nowhere. When the Indians finally emerged in 1994 as a title contender and went on their run, the Cavaliers were sliding and dying as a franchise, while the Browns were a year away from being moved by Art Modell. Finally, when the Indians playoff run in the 90s came to a close in 2001, we were left with three teams in complete disarray.

This is the first time since we have had three teams in this city that two teams are legit title contenders. And, even before the Cavaliers, except for a brief moment in the 50s, the Indians and Browns were never title contenders at the same time.

Some might say that [The Cleveland Experience \(TCE\)](#) died when the Cavaliers won the LeBron lottery in May 2003. It would be very hard to argue that, as since then the Cavaliers have gone from league doormat to league super power, the Indians have gone from tearing the team apart to tearing apart the league, and the Browns have gone from laughing stock to respectability. All of this has happened in the four years since the LeBron Lottery.

This year was really our first shot at a title since 1997, which may only be ten

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years ago but feels like a lifetime. With that, a whole new generation of fans faced the cold realities of what TCE is for the first time this year with the Indians and Cavaliers coming up just short of a title. These new fans have now been indoctrinated into why being A Cleveland Fan can scar you for life, and they now join the rest of their Cleveland Fan brethren who has lived through all the heartbreaks the last 40 years. Welcome aboard.

The Indians and Cavaliers can realistically win a title any year from this point forward for the next several years. In addition to that, the Browns finally have a heartbeat and appear on the verge of waking from their 18 year coma and becoming respectable again and a potential playoff team.

What we are seeing is hopefully the end of this city's drought of championships. With three teams now working together to end TCE once and for all, we no longer have a gun with a single bullet to kill off the ghosts of TCE. We have many.

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