



If you're looking for a Jim Thome reaction article, there are ten-to-fifteen others on the TCF main page for your viewing pleasure. At least one or two of them are sure to have echoed my feelings toward Jim Thome and letting bygones be bygones. No reason to belabor that point in this week's VftP, though I will acknowledge that I am pleased to have him back and hope that he does in fact decide to retire an Indian, be it this year or at the end of next year.

At this point in the season, like clockwork, football becomes the most important sport in Cleveland. High school seasons began last night and the Browns had their dress rehearsal for the regular season on Thursday night. Any question as to if this is a football town or not can be answered by the fact that for most of the night on Twitter, Phil Taylor was trending in Cleveland while Jim Thome was not.

I'm not going to sit here and badmouth the Browns. That's not what being a sports fan in a city about, supporting all the teams. I could easily be one of those people who sit here and criticize the fans of Cleveland for getting all optimistic about the Browns and start pumping rainbows into each other's asses because the team might be just good enough to go 8-8, finishing at least two full games back of the AFC North Division champion, but more likely four back.

I won't do that with a team I think will go 6-10 because they have major depth deficiencies on defense, new schemes on offense and defense, and serious questions on special teams which had really been their claim to fame the last two seasons. All of my criticism is constructive, instead of moaning and whining about how people always get fired up for the orange and brown and not the Chief.

I will, however, point out how unfair it is to the Indians that they become the back page of the sports section for most people while the Browns play a total of FOUR games while the Indians are still playing, unless the Indians make the playoffs in a given year. I don't pretend to ignore that Cleveland is a football town and always will be.

Here's why I think this is the case. With a schedule as tenuous as Major League Baseball's, the Indians have the chance to disappoint their fans every single night whereas the Browns can only be a disappointment once a week. In Cleveland, where our sports troubles have been well-documented, being a fan is exhausting. It's slightly less exhausting when the losses have more coping time in between.



Had the Indians played Thursday night, I would venture to say that at least eight-to-ten times more Clevelanders would have watched a preseason game rather than a late August baseball game with the team still in the hunt. Such is life. It's amazing what the impact of Jim Thome had on Friday night with a sellout despite high school football's week one. In terms of the Indians playoff chances, it's probably more of a splash from a skinny girl's high dive than a fat kid's cannonball, but it momentarily got the fans excited.

As I watched the Browns-Eagles game on Thursday night, I couldn't help but think of the people who say that they don't watch baseball because it's boring. Are people really that entertained by replays of things they just saw? Except for the rare no-huddle in a hurry-up offense, there is at least 45 seconds between each play of a football game. I found myself checking Twitter between every play. Not because I am addicted to Twitter, but because there was nothing to watch between plays except what I just saw.

Every football game lasts a minimum of two hours and 50 minutes. Baseball game times vary, but generally not that much longer than a football game, and sometimes much shorter. But football on TV isn't boring? Somebody will have to explain this to me. I am a big football fan, much more the college game than the NFL, but I find baseball to hold my attention far better.

Then, there's the critique that the baseball season is too long. The baseball season lasts between 178-183 days and then the playoffs. Football's regular season lasts roughly 119 days (17 weeks). Is this difference really that big? Given that baseball is played in the summer, and especially in Cleveland, played in much better weather, where's the complaint to be made there?

I guess fantasy football plays a pretty big role since it's incredibly tedious to maintain a daily fantasy baseball team over a once-a-week fantasy football team. So many people play fantasy football. Gamblers are another group far more in favor of football season than baseball season, but the vast majority of people are not sports bettors.

Basically, over this last handful of paragraphs, the point to be gathered from this is that the Indians should remain relevant in the Cleveland sports landscape until at least September 28. The Browns should merely serve as a distraction from the Indians. They play 29 games in September. To reiterate from above, your Cleveland Browns play four. The Indians overlap the Browns for a total of 25% of the Browns regular season. If we're lucky, they'll overlap the Browns for more than that, but in a general sense, the majority of Browns season is there for your full attention once Cleveland baseball has concluded.



Again, none of this is to bash the Browns. I enjoy spending my fall and early winter Sundays with a Coors Light and a Browns game. It's simply a plea to give the Indians the respect that they deserve. There was a time in this city when we didn't have the Browns and the Indians were in their heyday and lifted the spirits of a place that desperately needed it. As they rebuilt and fell in to the black hole of BS that is MLB's economics, the team fell by the wayside, even being passed by the Cavs on the Cleveland sports hierarchy.

With the team now 6.5 back and playing some of its worst baseball of the season, plenty of

observers have thrown in the towel and written off the year. Remember the 2009 Detroit Tigers? They held a seven-game lead over the Minnesota Twins on September 6. They went 3-4 in their final seven-game homestand to allow the Twins to tie them and win the playoff game in the Metrodome on October 6.

Anything can happen. While the odds are stacked against the Indians as their disabled list starts to look more like the Opening Day 25-man roster, they have done enough, both on the field and in the front office, to continue getting our respect until the final knockout punch is delivered.