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Yes, Cleveland fans, there are things you should be thankful for. If you're willing to look.

I'm thankful...

...That football in Northeast Ohio is an experience unlike any other.

For Massillon and St. Ignatius. For Baldwin-Wallace and John Carroll. For Scarlet and Gray and Brown and Orange. For the traditions of Friday nights and Saturday afternoons and Sundays on the lakefront, passed down through generations. For the soft grass and hard cement where uncounted pickup games have been played. For cold days and snow on muddy grass.

For that one time where, in your own dreams, you put that blank orange helmet on and sent John Elway home for the summer.

...That Cleveland baseball has one of the richest traditions in the country

For the Cleveland Forest Citys of 1869, who got it all started. For Cy Young and Addie Joss and Napoleon Lajoie's epic battles with Ty Cobb for the American League batting crown. For Ray Chapman, Bill Wambsganss and Tris Speaker. For 1920 and 1948. For all the big names: Feller, Rosen, Lemon, Boudreau, Doby, Averill and Harder. For stopping DiMaggio's hitting streak in 1941. For '54 and 111 wins.

For all the men who had a chance to move the Indians, but didn't. For all the players who got us through the dark years. For Eck and Large Lenny. For Jacobs Field. For the rebirth. For Grover, Carlos, Manny, Jimmy, El Presidente and Orel. For Albert Belle's glare that could melt a pitcher's resolve on contact. For 1995 and 1997. For five straight division titles. For Omar's

glove and Kenny on the wall.

For the new guys. For Grady and Pronk, for Victor and C.C. and Cliff Lee. For Jhonny with the misspelled name. For the hope of the future.

...For LeBron James

For flying, for dunking, for putting his team on his back in the fourth quarter. For giving us something to look forward to every time the Cavs take the floor. For giving us a source of regional pride. For being from Akron. For loving the fact that he's from Akron.

For being unstoppable when he storms to the hoop. For shining his bright spotlight on our little town. For being the guy who wants to break the title drought. For believing in his team.

...For all the stories we can tell.

For Jesse Owens making history that transcended sports. For Frank Robinson's first at-bat homer in '75 and the 300,000 who claimed to be at Lenny Barker's perfect game. For the battery that caromed off John Elway's helmet. For Turkey Jones planting Terry Bradshaw.

For wrong-way Ricky, Red Right 88 and the homer that bounced off Canseco's head. For the fight to get the Browns back, Dick Snyder's Miracle off the glass and the '86 Cleveland State Vikings.

...For all the people we know, and will never forget.

For Bill Veeck and Paul Brown. For Nick Miletich, Dick Jacobs and (yes) Arthur B. Modell. For Al Lerner and Al Lopez. For Gabe Paul and Frank Lane, John Hart and Wayne Embry, Jim Paxson and Mark Shapiro.

For Dan Gilbert and Dan Ferry. Jim Brown, Courtney Brown, Orlando Brown and Mike Brown. For the incomparable personality of Damon Jones, the dry wit of Zydrunas Ilgauskas and the toughness of Charlie Frye.

For Ernie Davis, Steve Olin and Tim Crews, who remind us how fragile life is. For Kevin Mackey, who fell from grace and then redeemed himself.

For all the lessons I learned, of heartbreak and triumph, patience and exhilaration, pregame rituals and superstitions, bonding after a win and isolation after a loss. Cleveland sports is just like life, when you get right down to it. And I'm thankful to be a part of it.