

Frontrunners

Written by {ga=jb}

Saturday, May 10 2008 7:00 PM -

If you've been reading Mansfield Lucas here at TCF these last couple years, you know that fans don't come anymore diehard than this cat. And today, he gets loose on the frontrunning Clevelanders that show up at games to cheer against the home team, and for the flavor of the month teams that visit. The Yankees fans at The Prog, the chumps that we'll see in Garnett jerseys this weekend at The Q. You know the lot. Good stuff from Mansfield ...



You probably think that [DeShawn Stevenson](#) placed himself on the Mt. Rushmore of loathsome figures in Cleveland sports history with his recent antics. Nope, not even close.

Seeing the Cavs play the Celtics in the playoffs, as well as a recent experience I had otherwise enjoying a Tribe butt kicking of the Yankees got me to thinking. I respect the great ones who have done us, the MJ's, the Elways, the Pedros.... What can you do about that? Yeah, I despise the idiots like Joey Porter and whoever dropped the "marshmallow" gloss on the 90's Cavs. Sure, Stevenson and Brenda Haywood were annoying as the twin [Back Knights from Python](#). But there is no one I've ever seen that comes close to the biggest idiots in northeast Ohio when it comes to sports: front running free agent fans.

Seeing the Boston Celtics play the Cavs will always stir memories for me of the Richfield Coliseum being an away game for the home team. A couple times a year, the good guys would have to look up into a sea of green "33" jerseys. Now you know all those people didn't fly in for a few days of R & R in rural

northern Summit County. They were Clevelanders who had been "rooting for the Celtics their entire lives". It always seems like free agent front running fans have been rooting for the best teams "their entire lives". About the time Reggie Lewis passed, those people were still showing up in Richfield, only this time sporting red and black "23" jerseys professing their undying love of all things bovine, even though they couldn't tell you the difference between [Bob](#) and Courtney Love.

As annoying as those morons were in the day, there is only one experience that compares to the annual Yankees' spectacle, and we'll get to that later. But every summer, much like the Canadian soldiers AKA muffle heads returning to Joba Chamberlain's neck; you see the return of the Yankee fans. All around you you'll see the ubiquitous "NYY" and the pinstripes. Now, this spring I actually saw real live New Yorkers visiting to spend money. You know what? That's cool. Plus we're poor here in C-town. Following your home team on a roadie and flying your colors? I get that. [Now you might get run over](#), but hey, you went down swinging for the home team. But you know damn well that Dave from West Park is there rockin' his NYY cap like Mr. James from Akron. Why? Because they've "been Yankee fans their whole lives". Yeah, I suppose [26 World Series titles can have that effect](#)

. And the killer foamy head on the cool brewski is that frontrunners are dumb fans. They're duuuumb. They get excited at all the wrong times. They have zero knowledge of the game. They think Willie Randolph was the husband on [227](#)

. (I don't actually know if there was a husband on [227](#)

, I never watched sitcoms in that era.) But as irritating as Northeast Ohio Yankee Fan is, there are creatures that have a [special ring of Dante's hell reserved for them](#)

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[The Northeast Ohio Appalachian](#) s.

And this brings me to why I called. So I'm enjoying the Tribe game and cat behind me is female canining up a storm about Yankee fans at the stadium. I mean just

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going on and on until the break of dawn and yelling at 13 year old kids on a freaking youth group trip from New York sitting a few rows in front of us in the mezzanine at The Jake. He's running some pretty intense smack on [Pac Sun kids](#) so into the game they are trying to start a wave as if they are watching [NKOTB](#) and it's all 1989. And this results in the following exchange between us, and it goes a little something like this (hit it):

Inbred Tribe Guy: I hate Yankee front running fans. They have no loyalty to their home town.

Mansfield Lucas: Yeah, I know what you mean. Pretty easy picking a team out of a hat and being a "fan" because they win so often, especially recently. Can you even imagine what they could do with that payroll if Ca\$hman were any good?

ITG: Plus they're dumb. They don't know anything about baseball. I have season tickets and of all the fans they are the least knowledgeable. And that's because none are visiting. They are all from Cleveland.

ML: Yeah, the only fans that are [dumber are Steeler fans](#) .

Silence... pause...

ITG's heavy version of [Rich Rodriguez's wife](#) : He's a [Steeler fan](#) .

ML: Oh. Grow up in Pennsylvania? It's cool to have a fav team in each league. I had an NL team I followed as a kid.

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ITG: I've lived on the west side my whole life.

ML: Then what the hell are you b&^%\$#* about? [You're exactly the same as them.](#)

(Yeah, like I could keep my mouth shut and just enjoy Paul Byrd pitching a gem. Besides, I was 100% sure I could take him unless he was strapped and got through security.)

ITG: (sound of some stuttering and edge in the voice) Well, I'd root for the Browns if they were a real NFL team. They stink.

ML: Listen to Chris Mortenson lately? What were you saying about "dumb fans"?

ITG: They won't win 6 games this season. Gimme a break.

ML: So we won 10 games, have young players on the upswing, greatly improved the weakest area of the team, and we're going to regress by 5 wins. Got it. You are nicely proving my point.

ITG: They'll suck cause they always suck.

ML: Yeah, it has been a tough road. But [when you look at NFL history](#), we were great for almost three decades except for an off year or two when Paul lost his edge. Then in the mid 70's we had a down cycle and then contended a few years later under Sam, had another short down cycle and contended under Marty with a great team that had some bad luck. Then we were rebuilding again with that guy in Boston now who is a first-ballot HOF coach and Art moved the team only to have to sell it anyway. That's a pretty successful run overall, including four NFL championships, eight total titles and ten straight championship game

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appearances.

ITG: But you suck.

ML: Yeah, expansion got off to a horrible start. The NFL owners screwed us to get themselves about a dozen new stadiums and split millions and gave us no time to get started and wouldn't let Policy talk to anyone about a job. The self-made billionaire owner dies. His son is green. They give the wrong coach too much power and he screws the team into the ground, and it took three whole years to put together a playoff quality roster. [Still better than missing the playoffs for something like 37 of 38 straight years.](#)

ITG: Five super bowls. FIVE. FIVE!! You have no SUPER BOWLS! And you SUCK! (This is how it always ends when they shut off the tiny amount of functioning grey matter. They just don't know what else to do.)

ML: Isn't the "Super Bowl" just the late sixties marketing term for "League championship game" ?

ITG: But we have FIVE. You have none.

ML: That visiting team out there has 26 World Series titles. The Tribe hasn't sniffed one since 1948 and sucked for twenty-five years while you were probably a Reds' fan. Why don't you cheer for the Yankees if that's why you pick a team? Are you that dense, or just a hypocrite? (Meltdown coming in 3...2...1)

ITG: Shut up! Just shut up and watch the game, buddy.

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ML: No. Not yet. Every freaking year I have to go and see a game where a bunch of Art Modell fans who own season tickets but for some inexplicable reason hate Browns' football sell out to the highest bidder like the 40,000 Judases they are. They sell them to front running Ohioans who put their home team at a disadvantage, act like a bunch of arrogant bung holes, and if I say or do anything at all to shut them up they run for the security guards. They are ten times worse than any New Yawk wannabe front runner you have sat here b&^%\$&^% about for the last 40 minutes, and you're one of them. The only thing more annoying than a frontrunner is a hypocritical front runner.

At that point Inbred Tribe Fan Guy got up and left. He didn't come back for about two innings. Then we enjoyed a rare Tribe win that featured some offense.

I have absolutely nothing against fans from other teams. When they visit on a roadie and come correct, I've even stood up for them when some of our own who are a little overzealous start to abuse them. I like good give and take. I understand geographic transplants who won't switch teams. I dig loyalty. I understand regionalism crossing state lines. East Liverpool and below is basically West Virginia, West Virginia is Appalachia, so by the transitive property the Ohio valley "hill folk" should probably cheer for their own kin unless they want to be real Midwestern Ohioans and not hill jacks. I'll even go so far as to think about extending family dispensation if someone's parents were from an area originally and passed along their fanatic love of their former home team. Legacy is cool.

But there is no excuse for free agent fan front runners who root against their home team just to be dill weeds. They only serve two purposes, to be intentionally rude and irritating and support the leagues' pay-per-view efforts. Even mosquitoes serve three purposes. If you are a Yankee fan and never lived near New York, or you've always lived in northeast Ohio, have all your original teeth, and get in the faces of Browns fans with your ignorant and arrogant Appalachian garbage, this diss is for you. None of y'all have any soul at all. You'll never really know the thrill of following a team through it's ups and downs. You'll never know what it meant to see a solitary ping-pong ball change your life after listening to the Randy Wittman and John Lucas call in shows for years and watching Lamond Murray sleep walk through entire seasons. You'll never know how sweet it is to finally reach the

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Promised Land after such a long, long struggle, now officially longer than the biblical Israelites wandered the desert. Someday one of the trinity will deliver us.

I loathe you all. I really do. On a sports-being-the-toy-department-of-life-I-also-hate-brussell-spouts level. If you have to be an idiot, stay home. [Or go to your blank-backer's sports bar where your kind congregate.](#) Don't come to my game. Don't show up to hate on the home team and piss off the home fans. If you need attention that bad, finger paint yourself some day-glo color and run around butt naked in public somewhere. Or join Green Peace. Same thing. Better yet, go e-bay a ducat to a home game for your team you've "followed all your life" and make a pilgrimage to be with your people.

Just stay the hell out of me and my friends' house. You are not welcome here.