

Is there such a thing as a moral victory or an acceptable loss? Brian McPeck says no, and explains himself in talking about the Browns Sunday's 23-20 OT loss to the Bengals at Browns Stadium. Peeks talks DA, he talks about Mohamed Massaquoi's coming out party, he touches on the merciful end to the Indians 2009 season, and hits on a solid Saturday of college football which saw the Buckeyes dominate another Big Ten foe and saw Michigan lose in overtime in East Lansing.



## **A Lesser Degree of Suck?**

Moral victories are for amateurs and losers. In the NFL there are no such things as moral victories and acceptable losses.

So before we talk all about what level of loss we're willing to accept let's just get that straight. More than ten years into this new iteration of the Browns we shouldn't be willing to settle for 'effort' and 'that was better' and 'at least they didn't quit'.

The Browns lost 23-20 in overtime to the Bengals on Sunday because they are a bad football team with a roster that's in flux.

Again.

They lost because Derek Anderson is Derek Anderson, especially inside the red zone, and they lost because Braylon Edwards had more penalties and drops than receptions.

Again.

They lost because they are not permitted to call an offensive play that entails an opponent having to punt to Josh Cribbs. And they lost because on the penultimate play of the game, a 15-yard run by Bengals' QB Carson on a 4<sup>th</sup> and 11, they had no one step up and make a big play.

So if you'd prefer to ignore all of that and concentrate on the fact that the Browns, at times, resembled an actual NFL-caliber team and use that fact to sleep easier for the next week, well, I can't really blame you given what we'd witnessed in the previous three games. But it just doesn't do much for my morale.

That's not an indictment on some of the individuals who capitalized on opportunities. Cribbs was a beast once again. He single-handedly lifted his team up and energized them on nearly every opportunity he had to do so. He had nearly 250 yards of all-purpose yardage including a ridiculous 20 yard average on six punt returns. The man is a monster. The best in the league in what he does and the Browns should pay him a

premium for doing it that well.

Mohamed Massaquoi announced his NFL presence with authority on Sunday as well. Eight catches for 148 yards, many of those catches spectacular, could go a long way in establishing Massaquoi as a legitimate threat in the Browns offense. He can flourish as an intermediate receiver with Anderson throwing those routes. Hopefully he can break a few of those receptions big because Anderson remains a fine between-the-twenties QBs in this league but buckles like a belt inside the red zone.

Brodney Pool also played a fine game Sunday. Pool had six tackles, four passes defended and an interception. Pool also was playing alongside a new defensive back in the Browns secondary. Wide receiver Mike Furrey not only had four catches for 37 yards but he also saw extensive action in the defensive backfield. And you know what? He was serviceable back there. Furrey played safety with St. Louis a couple years back so he's not new to the position, but he was effective Sunday on both sides of the football.

Shaun Rogers was also a force, especially on special teams where he blocked a field goal and a huge extra point attempt.

So yeah, there were some good things that happened on Sunday. But nowhere near enough to come off the field with a win or be satisfied with just the effort.

0-4 is 0-4 no matter how you try and spin it.

It's on to Buffalo next Sunday. A loss there might guarantee the Browns an 0-9 start. Try painting that picture in a positive light.

## **It's Over - It's Finally Freaking Over**

Duly inspired by former manager Eric Wedge's gutsy refusal to abandon his sinking ship, the Tribe went into Boston, took on a lot more water, and was swept in a four game series by the Red Sox over the weekend. For those keeping score at home the Indians finished the year at 65 wins and 97 losses. Fans in Baltimore, Washington D.C. and Pittsburgh, the only franchises to finish with fewer wins than the Indians, are hereby ordered to lower your head in shame. Your teams suck.

Not all was lost though. By going 1-4 on Sunday Andy Marte finished the season hitting above .230 (.232 for the record) and did enough for Marte supporters to demand that Mike Hargrove give him another 1,000 at-bats or so to see if he can figure out that challenging hitting thing. And yes, I said Mike Hargrove. Because it seems that the same people who support Andy Marte are the nostalgic people who'd like to see Hargrove back managing the Tribe.

This season was a disaster of epic proportions. There's no other way to say it. A team expected to challenge for the division crown instead loses nearly 100 games and in the process deals away its heart and soul (Victor Martinez) and its ace (Cliff Lee).

Now what?

Well, after the Red Sox postseason the Indians will likely beg, steal and borrow for an opportunity to coax John Farrell away from Boston to manage the Indians. Solid sources inside the organization have said that 'The

Cowboy' has no interest in leaving Boston to return to the organization he broke in with. But in sports, like in life, there are lies and there are damn lies.

Too early to say whether Farrell is sincere about not wanting to manage in Cleveland but time has a way of working these things out. And it could be that Farrell has far too much respect for his current organization to even hint at any interest in other jobs. Hopefully he fell asleep in the bottom of every inning this weekend while the Tribe pitchers were plying their trade. Because watching that collective pitching effort could scare anyone off from wanting any part of the Indians in 2010.

Tribe fans should be hopeful for 2010 though. And by that I mean Tribe fans should be hoping like crazy that the 2007 Fausto Carmona re-emerges, hoping that Jake Westbrook can come back healthy, hoping that Raffy Perez's 2008 was a horrible dream and hoping that the Justin Masterson who was dominant in his final start last week has seen the light and is that guy more often than not next season.

There's talent waiting to blossom in the everyday players. But like in every other season since they started playing baseball 150 years ago, the Indians will go only as far as their pitching takes them next year.

Vaya con Dios Mr. Wedge. You were a far better person than manager. Unfortunately that doesn't get you (or us) anything or anywhere where baseball is concerned.

## **Rolling Over the Daisies**

No weekend is a complete loss when Ohio State gets a conference win on the road and Michigan loses. So it was this past Saturday when the Buckeyes rolled up Indiana 33-14 in Bloomington and the Wolverines lost in OT to Michigan State in East Lansing.

The Buckeyes got out to an early 10-0 lead, were momentarily engaged at 10-7 and then ran off 23 straight points to put the Hoosiers to sleep. A final-play Hoosier TD aside, OSU was again dominant defensively and they

were effective offensively. Terrelle Pryor threw three TD passes and ran for another score himself as the Buckeyes rang up almost 400 yards in offense and had a nearly 2:1 edge in time of possession.

Ohio State moves to 4-1 on the season and 2-0 in the Big Ten. They get Wisconsin next Saturday at 330pm in the 'Shoe. If OSU doesn't fall down somewhere between now and the Penn State game on November 7<sup>th</sup> they'll have likely put enough wins and enough of the stink from the USC loss behind them to be in position for another BCS game if they can do the Nittany Lions in Happy Valley and win out.