



On Friday night, February 11, 2011, complete strangers hugged, cats cuddled with dogs and Jews and Arabs shamelessly and willingly shared a handshake and a warm embrace . Outside there were car horns honking and throngs of people making their way to Gateway Plaza to share in the celebration. Mounted policemen could be seen atop their noble steeds keeping order in the chaos.

The three bars remaining in downtown Cleveland were hurriedly opened and were serving thirsty revelers.

The Cleveland Cavaliers had beaten the Los Angeles Clippers 126-119 in a game so good four quarters couldn't decide it. It was a tense overtime drama that ended in a win and touched off pandemonium in the streets.

Needless to say there will likely be countless children bearing the names Antawn, JJ, Samardo and Ramon 10 months from now and those children will serve to forever remind all of us here today as well as future generations of the glory of that memorable Friday night (although with those names they might try to revive the Miracles and rekindle the the age of Motown) .

And even though I witnessed it (if you'll pardon that particular expression) I still woke up the next morning, climbed over the empty champagne bottles, hookers and the wine and gold colored streamers, and checked the paper to make sure it was all true.

The headlines confirmed it: "Hallelujah!!", exalted one, "Cavs Get Win!!!", said another. "Boy Trapped in Fridge Eats Own Foot" another oddly proclaimed. But it was true. The Cavaliers did it. They ended a 26-game losing streak that was their identity and our burden. Save the

clippings.

Or just wait until next week when they start another double-digit losing streak that might threaten the one they just ended. They got off to a good start Sunday night with an impressive loss to the Washington Wizards. It was impressive because the Wizards hadn't won a road game all season and because the Cavs came out and played like they were disinterested and got run out of their own building in the most embarrassing and shameful loss in a season full of them. Thank God they won Friday and are no longer an embarrassment. Stiff upper lip though. Maybe they'll play the Lakers and Rockets really tough this week.

Dammit. Before Friday they were at least relevant. Now they just blow.



What the Cavs Have Driven Me To

At the risk of dodging hate mail and curious looks I admit that the Cavs run to infamy has had me scrambling for alternative sports programming to ensure I wasn't stumbling across too many episodes of SportsCenter or NBA Tonight.

I've found my salvation with the Fox Soccer Channel (and I will now duck...).

Hear me out now. It's not exactly what you may think. Having issues with insomnia and adjusting to new sleep patterns often has me up later than I'm accustomed. Fox Soccer is perfect in that they show either a recent Premier League match or a classic international match every night at 11pm. The beauty is not just the sport but the fact that the matches are run

commercial free and when I initially started watching it was a soothing way to fall asleep. There is plenty of passing and defense and it was easy to drift off to the match.

But a funny thing happened between turning on the match and sweet dreams. I find myself becoming more and more interested in what I previously considered dead time and in the unbelievable athletic talent these guys possess.

Now, to my consternation, I'm actually engrossed in the match and the result. It's gotten to the point where I saw that Manchester United was playing Manchester City live Saturday morning at 7am. Manchester U. vs. Manchester City is a lot like Browns-Steelers from what I can gather. It's a huge rivalry game that's been completely dominated by Man U over the past thousand years or so. Not able to see the game live I actually DVR'd it and watched it Sunday with my two youngest daughters and a bowl of Buffalo chicken dip.

It was outstanding. The two teams played a more wide-open style than I saw employed in many of the matches and, I kid you not, the game was decided on [this remarkable goal by Wayne Rooney](#) at about the 80 minute mark.

That's ridiculous athleticism and you can see the crowd go absolutely crazy not only at the resulting goal but at the play itself.

It was actually great fun sitting there and watching the match.

I also learned on Mike & Mike last Thursday morning that when the Yankees faced the Red Sox last summer that the two teams combined for approximately \$450million in salaries between them. That's staggering. But they mentioned that only because of the fact that when Manchester United met Manchester City Saturday that those two clubs put \$850million in salaries on the field. That is beyond staggering and was a complete shock to me. Rooney alone earns \$41million in salary.

Suck on that ARod.

Another aspect of the broadcasts is the commentators themselves. American broadcasters are loathe to actually criticize an athlete directly or forcefully. The soccer broadcasters don't hold back. It's tremendous hearing a man with a dignified British voice tell you that "That was simply a pathetic and inexcusable effort by..." or "Rooney has displayed the touch of a blacksmith all day but that makes his interest in this match seem almost professional".

It's not all cake and candy though. While there's tremendous speed, strength and stamina on display each night there is still the element of these guys acting like, well, actors. They're Wilson Brothers bad. Watching a guy take a brush to his chest and then fall down with his arms waving madly and clutching his ankle still makes me sick.

Worse yet, it reminds me of a typical LeBron James drive to the basket.

Dare I say though that I'm becoming a fan of professional soccer? My life is truly spiraling out of control.



If a Tree Falls on Shaun Rogers...

If the tree fell on the field of play it probably wouldn't hit Rogers. If it fell on the sideline or the team cafeteria however...

I'm just not going to miss Shaun Rogers or any of the players the Browns cut last week. I

appreciate the professionalism of Eric Barton and the memories that David Bowen's two interceptions against the Saints invoke but that's about it.

I'll miss Rogers about as much as I'll miss John St. Clair just for different reasons. I'll forever begrudge St. Clair for actually being on the field and in good enough shape and frame of mind to play. I'll not miss Rogers because of the very opposite reasons.

It's hard for me to get upset about a new regime not wanting to deal with a talented guy who never seemed to give a shit about anything other than him and collecting a check. And color me less than surprised that the team released an expensive, overweight malcontent who played about 35% of the snaps last season.

Production means more than talent/potential. Rogers never provided much of the former and the latter wasn't worth paying for as the player heads toward 32 years of age.

Empty Promises

I said last week I was going to give you my All-Time Buckeye Basketball starting five but I've reconsidered. That's a piece that's worthy of far more than a quick couple of paragraphs and I'm going to do that article as we head into March and the NCAA tourney.

I will say that I was actually relieved the Buckeyes lost Saturday. If there was ever a good time for a reality check Saturday in Wisconsin was it.

Losing to Wisconsin on the road, in a game where OSU led by as many as 13 points in the second half, is just the tonic for a team that may have started thinking they were invincible and that was getting caught up in their press clippings. The Buckeyes had pretty much waltzed to a 24-0 record with a couple of close games as exceptions but they got a lesson on what type of effort is going to be required in March. There are a lot of teams who can get past the Buckeyes if OSU is lackadaisical and their opponent is on their game. Wisconsin reminded Thad Matta's young team of this fact on national television and hopefully a lesson was learned in loss number one on the season.

In March a five minute period of laziness will send you home and the lessons there are learned a lot harder.

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