



We'll hit a little bit of everything in this week's edition of The Weekend Wrap. We'll start with Godzilla vs. Mothra and then work our way down to the Cavs, Tribe and Buckeyes. But the story that dominated the news last week was the NFL owners and the NFL players finally reaching an agreement..... an agreement to wait another week before really doing vicious battle over a \$10billion pot of gold.

It's hard to root for either the owners or the players in this disgusting and greedy battle over billions of dollars when I'm busy arranging car pools for my kids and considering siphoning gas from lawnmowers that the neighbors leave unattended.

I'm sick of the 'Billionaires vs. Millionaires' shit too. Like I need to be reminded of that as we head toward \$4/gallon for gas and \$3/gallon for milk.

No, you'd almost like to see each side embarrassed by a mediator that decides to have each side pick a contestant for a steel cage match to decide the matter. Unfortunately the players would have a decided advantage in a physical contest. Unless of course the mediator decides that the contestants have to be over 65 years old. If that's the case the owners will win by virtue of a forfeit given nearly all ex-players are dead before that age due to injuries they sustained and the squalid benefits they received for their time.

I get both sides. I feel for the players. Rather, I feel for the ex-players who didn't benefit from

\$10million signing bonuses or veteran minimums in the \$400k range.

But here's the thing for me (and it makes me feel really, really disgusting): I want the owners to prevail in this matter.

It's not because I have two nickels to rub together or because I light my \$20 cigar with a \$10 bill. That's not it at all. I want the owners to prevail because, perhaps mistakenly, I believe the NFL is the only league where a mid-market team in a city such as Cleveland is offered any realistic chance to compete for a championship.

Maybe I'm projecting and that's just bullshit too, but it seems like 5-11 to 10-6 and a playoff spot happens regularly in the NFL.

Major League Baseball has clearly forsaken the smaller markets. The Yankees pay guys like Carl Pavano tens of millions of dollars to not pitch for them. If they sign a guy like Pavano as they did a few years back and Pavano gets hurt and can't pitch, the Yankees just go out at the trade deadline and buy a different star. A team like the Indians can't afford one or two of those players and if they do sign one who gets hurt or whose performance falls off the table like a Bert Blyleven curveball the organization is screwed for as long as the contract lasts.



You need look no further than Travis Hafner than to see this in play for the Tribe. There is no margin for error in a small market. If you fail to draft and develop excellence that matures in the same two or three year window you can't compete.

The NBA is even worse. There will be a reckoning come next year when their collective bargain agreement expires and there will be blood. Every year there are maybe six teams with a legitimate chance to win the NBA title. And those six teams are increasingly spreading like

Mercury to towns on either the Atlantic or Pacific oceans. If you don't have a beach a ring's out of reach anymore in the NBA. You can call LeBron's move to Miami free will or you can, like I do, call it premeditated collusion that occurred well before last summer, but whatever you call it David Stern doesn't like it.

He understands that although you need anchors and dynasties on both oceans that the guys in the middle of the country have to have a fighting chance to compete. I have no doubt in my mind that LeBron and his generation are selfish enough to not give a shit what happens when they're gone. These guys grew up in a disposable society. Microwaves, clothing, electronics and lives are disposable to LeBron's generation. He and his buddies aren't going to care where the NBA is in 20 years while they're teaming up with Jay Z Jr. to produce records and films.

But David Stern damn well better be concerned. The owners paid huge dollars for their franchises. If the 'Me' generation led by LeBron and 'Melo continue to leave franchises like Cleveland and Denver wrecked in their wake Stern is going to have some really pissed off, powerful men at his throat who want an explanation why they're only getting dimes on their dollars as far as return on investment goes.

That's why I want the NFL owners to prevail. I can't stand to see them get rolled and bent over in these negotiations and have the NFL turned into the NBA or MLB. Not here in this town where our beachfront is uninhabitable for eight months a year and undeveloped the other four. There is no club scene in Cleveland and the movie industry here is slightly less prevalent than it is in L.A.

I don't care if the parity they're selling me is only a creation. I watched the team with the #1 pick in the draft play a game to go to the playoffs in the season finale this year. I've seen perennially bad teams in Atlanta and Tampa Bay resurrected because the system allows you to do so.

The only reason it hasn't happened here in Cleveland is because ownership and the front office haven't been able to get out of their own way. Clowns and snake oil salesman like Carmen Policy, Butch Davis, Phil Savage and George Kokinis have retarded the team, not the NFL's system.

By all means, take care of your wounded. Show some class and empathy and make sure the

guys that allowed your franchises and bank accounts to flourish are protected by a reasonable medical plan and that their legacies and memories aren't all we have left ten years after they retire. If you can't look at the Dave Duerson or Mike Webster situations and understand that you owe these guys at least that then I want no part of you or your product regardless of how much fairer I perceive it to be.

No man gets left behind used to mean something. Now all it means is LeBron will do his best to make sure he gets Zydrunas Ilgauskas down to Miami with whatever money he and his two BFF's leave for the other nine guys.

Fix that issue and then don't air your dirty laundry. It's shameful to watch guys interviewed in front of their private planes or garage full of Bentley's and bitch about anything much less money.

But make no mistake, when it's all said and done and the guys who played the game are taken care of for all eternity then I want to see the players destroyed. It's not like they'll be destitute and wandering the streets Katrina-style. They're well-paid now and they should have a useful pension and benefits going forward. But don't give them a damn thing more than that. The system works fine. The product is great. People love it and the guys that play benefit from that love.

That's good enough for anyone and far better than most of us have it.

### **Just a Few Words on the Cavs**

You know it's a bad year for the basketball you follow when you're literally shocked and stunned when your phone alarm tells you the team has beaten the Knicks.

That's how it was Friday night when I was partaking in the world's oldest profession: Making Beer.

