Before I wrote this, I swore that if the HERO (Hutchison Exuberant Ranking Officialness) System still ranked Houston ahead of the Patriots, I would enact an exception called The Human Element (T.H.E., ironically also the title of a science fiction story I wrote about humans having moved the entirety of their brains to microchips and able to switch from metal robotic bodies to brainless human bodies - shells - at will, and the degradation of the concept of morals or emotions that ensued, but I digress) that would fix that flaw since there's no way on Shiva's Fair Earth that the Texans could be ranked ahead of New England after THAT beatdown.

Fortunately, the corresponding number change allowed for NE to jump the Houstons, so life as we know it can still make sense.

The playoff-bound Cleveland Browns made yet another step up the ladder this week to #19. They are an impressive 9th in points allowed, and only a -13 in seasonal point differential (Points Scored minus Points Allowed), which ain't bad for a 5-8 team.

In comparison, the 9-4 Colts are a -37. For a team with only 4 losses to be -37, they had to win all their games by the hair on their chinny chin chin and get blown the F out in all their losses. Generally, this is an indication of a "Paper Tiger", which I can easily buy that Indy is.

The Broncos took over #1 in the rankings this week after their 23rd win in a row while the Chiefs "recaptured" #32 from the Jags after getting beaten like a teenage boy's... well, never mind... in Cleveland on Sunday.

So back to the Browns. If they can win out (a daunting task), they stand a decent shot at sneaking into that 6th AFC Playoff spot. Yes, like Cincy, they've gotten fat as of late on cream puffs and will have to elevate their game to defeat the likes of Washington, Denver, and a Porky Ben-led Pittsburgh. But that just means that the next 3 games are de facto playoff games for Cleveland, and if they win all 3 of these they get to go to the real Playoffs (maybe).

Don't underestimate how much this game means to the 14th ranked Redskins either. It's not quite as must-have as for the Browns (who would be eliminated with any loss), but it's up there as the competition for an NFC playoff spot is fierce.

And if the Browns clear this first hurdle - RG3 or no RG3 - they get the reward of traveling to Denver and playing the #1 ranked Broncos.

Holy Feces, wouldn't that one be fun if it were close in the 4th Quarter?

| Team | Wins | Losses | Ties |
|---|---|---|---|
| Denver | 10 | 3 | 0 |
| New England | 10 | 3 | 0 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Houston | 11 | 2 | 0 |
| San Francisco | 9 | 3 | 1 |
| Atlanta | 11 | 2 | 0 |
| N.Y. Giants | 8 | 5 | 0 |
| Seattle | 8 | 5 | 0 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Chicago | 8 | 5 | 0 |
| Baltimore | 9 | 4 | 0 |
| Green Bay | 9 | 4 | 0 |
| Cincinnati | 7 | 6 | 0 |
| Tampa Bay | 6 | 7 | 0 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pittsburgh | 7 | 6 | 0 |
| Washington | 7 | 6 | 0 |
| Minnesota | 7 | 6 | 0 |
| Indianapolis | 9 | 4 | 0 |
| Dallas | 7 | 6 | 0 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| San Diego | 5 | 8 | 0 |
| Cleveland | 5 | 8 | 0 |
| New Orleans | 5 | 8 | 0 |
| Miami | 5 | 8 | 0 |
| St. Louis | 6 | 6 | 1 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Detroit | 4 | 9 | 0 |
| N.Y. Jets | 6 | 7 | 0 |
| Buffalo | 5 | 8 | 0 |
| Carolina | 4 | 9 | 0 |
| Arizona | 4 | 9 | 0 |
| Philadelphia | 4 | 9 | 0 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Tennessee | 4 | 9 | 0 |
| Oakland | 3 | 10 | 0 |
| Jacksonville | 2 | 11 | 0 |
| Kansas City | 2 | 11 | 0 |

**Key:** WP = Winning Percentage, Avg_PF = Average Points Scored per game, Avg_PA = Average Points Allowed per game, Diff = Points Scored minus Points Allowed (season), Rank_PF = NFL Rank in Points Scored, Rank_PA = NFL Rank in Points Allowed