Winless in the division. For the first time ever. Weren't we supposed to be a little further along by this point? In "The Morning After", Papa Cass takes a closer look at the Crennel/Savage regimes 1-11 record in division, and also finds that the team is actually 9-9 outside the division over the same stretch. Just two more games left before we can all concentrate on what we know: talking NFL Draft.

Ravens 27, Browns 17
Record: 4-10
Final divisional record: 0-6

Last season, in their last divisional matchup against these same Baltimore Ravens, the Browns were able to save themselves from going winless in divisional play for the first time in franchise history.

But that was a Ravens team destined to finish tied with the Browns for last place. This season, with the Ravens on the doorstep of the playoffs, no such luck.

Sunday's loss dropped the Romeo Crennel-Phil Savage Browns to 1-11 within the AFC North. Winter, spring and most of summer will pass before the Browns get another chance to improve that record.

Of all the indictments you can have of Crennel and Savage in their two short seasons running the team, that AFC North record is the most damning.

Think about it. Think about all the terrible Browns teams that have existed throughout history, particularly the past 16 years. There was the Bud Carson-Jim Shofner 3-13 debacle of 1990. There was the 5-11 1995 Browns on the doorstep of moving. There was the 2-14 expansion Browns of 1999 and the 3-13 Browns of a year later.

Not once, not ever, did they manage to go winless in the division. Not once had the Browns managed just one divisional win in span of two years. Now, the streak is over.

Part of it is the landscape of the AFC North. It might not be the best division in the NFL, as

was the popular opinion prior to the season, but you sure won't find a more competitive division.

With the resurgence of the Bengals, the Browns are now the only dreg in a division full of competitive teams. Imagine if the old AFC Central were still intact and the Browns also had to play the Jaguars and Titans twice a year. I think that's what the authors of the Bill of Rights had in mind when they outlawed cruel and unusual punishment.

Crennel and Savage get something of a mulligan for having to endure the vicious defenses of the Steelers and Ravens and the high-octane Bengals offense twice a year. But it's still no excuse for 1-11.

It's not just the losses. It's how they've lost. In three of six division games this year, the Browns were manhandled. They struggled to even put up a fight in two embarrassing losses to the Bengals and last week's drubbing in Pittsburgh.

It's hard to tell whether jitters or apathy is more to blame, whether the Browns are psyched out by their division rivals or try too hard to treat those six games like any others. What is apparent is they aren't approaching the all-important division schedule with the right mindset.

The irony is, take away the divisional record, and the Savage-Crennel Browns are actually mediocre -- a flat-level .500 record, no less.

In the past two seasons, the Browns are 9-9 outside the AFC North. It says the talent level on this team isn't as bad as we think it is, and the divisional struggles have their roots between the Browns' collective ears.

Another long, cold, dark offseason will provide the Browns' brass with ample opportunities to figure out how to solve the AFC North riddle. They need to. It's the only way this team will be able to start posting wins on a regular basis. It's also the only way Crennel and Savage will be able to keep their jobs in the long run.

Up next: Tampa Bay, Sunday, 1 p.m. at Cleveland Browns Stadium.