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In a season where new lows were reached with nearly every single defeat, it's really hard to say that a final loss by the Browns in a meaningless game on the last day of the season was any more humiliating than any number of indignities suffered along the way. Still, the sight of an embattled Houston quarterback David Carr taking a knee on the final two plays of the game inside Cleveland's 5-yard line to seal a victory for a franchise in nearly as much trouble has to rank as a low point that will be hard to replicate.

The popular thought was that yesterday's loss symbolized the entire season. Dropped passes, poor blocking, turnovers, missed tackles, uninspired play and the like. Even head coach Romeo Crennel embraced that thought, saying "it was a microcosm of the season." But that's too general of a summary. If you really want to capture the futility that was the Cleveland Browns in 2006 (and, thanks to great scheduling, every single game was confined to 2006) look no further than the last Browns series of the game.

To set the stage, remember that the Browns were down 14-3 when they faced a fourth and 5 at the Houston 19 with a little over 7 minutes left. Showing the kind of decision making he's made famous throughout the year, Crennel wisely decides to kick a field goal, apparently thinking that a Browns team that couldn't stop anyone all year would suddenly find its sea legs, hold the Texans to a 3-out, score a touchdown and get the two-point conversion to send the game into overtime. (Why, exactly, anyone would have wanted to extend the season that much further begs a different set of questions.)

After the Phil Dawson field goal, Houston takes over with 7 minutes left and proceeds to hold on to the ball for just over 5 minutes before finally relinquishing it with 1:50 left following a punt to the Cleveland 6 yard line.

What followed nearly perfectly captured the Browns season. From literally the first day of practice when LeCharles Bentley went down with a season-ending injury, the Browns were playing on a very extended field with little chance of being successful. So it was no surprise that the game came down to whether an injured (but courageous) Charlie Frye could take the team 94 yards.

To say the Browns failed doesn't quite do that series justice. A first down pass to tight end Kellen Winslow was memorable only for the fact that it allowed Winslow to tie the team record for receptions in a season. But on second down, the Browns gave the modest 8-yard gain back when Frye was flagged for intentional grounding after the offensive line was unable to contain Houston's ferocious 3-man rush. A pass to team malcontent Braylon Edwards was incomplete as was Frye's final throw, a wobbly, under thrown ball at Edwards feet on fourth down. That set up Carr's victory pose at the Cleveland two and a merciful end to one of the worst seasons in Browns history. The only thing that would have made that final series even more perfect would have been a Frye interception. I guess you can't have everything.

Still, there were some significant items of notes in the game. As mentioned, Winslow tied the Browns season reception record by catching 11 passes. True, every one was of the underneath variety because of Frye's injury-weakened arm, but he still had to make the catches. In fact, while Winslow has been fairly criticized much of the season for his overactive mouth and his outsized ego, credit goes where credit's due. Winslow answered the bell for all 16 games on a severely sore knee. The injury may have been self-inflicted, but he worked hard to get back to the field and turned in a record-setting performance. His blocking may not be all that at this point, but you have to think that will come.

And speaking of Frye, it's amazing he is still standing at the end of this season. He clearly scored in the leadership department by playing yesterday, even if his arm gave the Browns virtually no chance of completing anything more than a 10-yard pass. In fact, his line on the day was one of the strangest you're likely to ever see. He completed a remarkable 25 passes (out of 34 attempts) but for only 187 yards. We're going to have to go back to the

record books to figure out when a quarterback completed that many passes for so few yards.

But perhaps the most positive developments came after the game. The Browns for once didn't squander draft status by winning their last game of the season. In fact, the Browns secured the third slot in the draft over Tampa Bay which was as good as could be expected given the fact that the Raiders and the Lions still play in the league. Contrast this, in fact, with the luck of the wretched Lions. By beating Dallas they lose the Brady Quinn stakes to Oakland and are relegated to drafting still another receiver.

You also had to like the developments in Cincinnati. The Bengals, chock full of more miscreants than a state prison, lost again. In doing so, they find themselves, like the Steelers and the Browns, on the outside looking in while others play for the big money. In fact, having both Pittsburgh and Cincinnati miss the playoffs this year at least puts a partial bounce back in the step. And what of the Denver Browns Broncos? They, too, missed the playoffs. Maybe having all those ex-Browns on the roster wasn't such a good thing after all. Like the smell in Jerry Seinfeld's car, sometimes it's just best to abandon all hope of rehabilitation and start anew.

All in all, it really wasn't such a bad day.