For a fan base that has been tested and tortured for the better part of the last fifteen years, this weekend was just what the doctor ordered.

The Browns went out and made a huge and immediate splash in free agency, landing five new starters, and filling several gaping holes on the roster. The party started when the Browns shocked much of the football community by announcing the signing of LeCharles Bentley about twelve hours into the free agency signing period. Bentley, widely regarded as the top overall free agent, was rumored to be headed to Philadelphia.

The Bentley signing alone would have made for a good weekend. But the good news just kept on coming. The team also announced early Sarturday afternoon that they had also come to terms with former Falcon left tackle Kevin Shaffer. And a couple hours later, reports surfaced that the team had inked wide reciever Joe Jurevicius to a four year deal. All three players were introduced to the media at a 6:00 PM press conference on Saturday. The comments made by local products Bentley and Jurevicius almost brought a tear to this Browns fans eye, as they discussed their love of this team and area, and that they were making their dreams come true by signing here.

The fun continued on Sunday when the agent for veteran defensive tackle Ted Washington confirmed that he too was headed for Cleveland. Later that evening, the team also had upgraded the situation at punter, signing Dave Zastudil away from Baltimore.

Browns general manager Phil Savage is not done yet, and a couple of additional signings on the defensive side of the ball could come as soon as this evening. The second any concrete information is available, we will have it here at Swerbs Blurbs.

These signings don't guarantee anything, but they do inject some much needed life into a fan base that was teetering on the edge of revolt after being forced to suffer through just 36 wins against 76 defeats in the seven years since their return to the league. The Browns have added some quality players who are also quality individuals. And three of them were born and raised in the Cleveland area ... as Browns fans.

Here's some quick flash analysis on the five newest members of the Browns ...

LeCharles Bentley - Hands down, one of the top interior linemen in all of football. Bentley will provide an immediate upgrade to the Browns offensive line, which has been pushed around in short yardage situations for the last seven years, and registered just three rushing touchdowns a year ago. Was named Sports Illustrated's Offensive Rookie of the Year in 2002. Went to the Pro Bowl as a guard in 2003, and as a center in 2005. A Cleveland native that starred at St. Ignatius High School, and then at Ohio State, where he won the Rimington Award (nation's top center) and was a consensus All-American as a senior. Despite what we may be hearing now, Bentley will play center, hopefully for the next ten years. Jeff Faine will either be moved to guard or traded.

Kevin Shaffer - Shaffer has played the last four seasons with the Atlanta Falcons after being selected in the 7th round out of Tulsa. He has been their starting left tackle for the last three seasons, and is still just 26 years of age. Shaffer was generally regarded as the best free agent left tackle available in an overall weak crop. The Falcons have had one of the top rushing games in all of football the last three seasons, and Shaffer is hailed as a very good run blocker. Despite

playing left tackle, Shaffer has not been a blind side protector in Atlanta (Michael Vick is a lefty), and he has struggled in his pass protections against the league's more elite defensive ends. Shaffer still has good upside, and Phil Savage hailed his "work ethic, wingspan, and mean streak" as what appealed to him about Kevin.

Joe Jurevicius - Like fine wine, Jurevicius has gotten better with age in his NFL career. He's beeen to three Super Bowls with three different teams, and had a great season with the Seattle Seahawks in 2005, grabbing ten touchdowns. Jurevicius has great size (6'5), good hands, and deceptive speed. He brings the type of reliability at the reciever position that the team has lacked since the days of Slaughter and Brennan, and provides an intriguing contrast to young phenoms Braylon Edwards and Kellen Winslow Jr ... whom he will be asked to help mentor. The additions fo Jurevicius and LeCharles Bentley should have a significant impact on the teams red zone offense, which has been abysmal in recent seasons. Jurevicius is also a local product, playing his high school ball at Mentor Lake Catholic, and was born and raised a fan of the Cleveland Browns.

Dave Zastudil - Zastudil is another local product, having grown up in Bay Village, and then going on to attend Ohio University. Zastudil had a career season last year, averaging 43.5 yards a punt, and had just 7 touchbacks in 84 total kicks. He is a clear upgrade over current punter Kyle Richardson, whose 40.8 yard average was one of the worst in all of football last season.

Ted Washington - Washington immediately becomes

the teams starting nose tackle, and will be the man in the middle of the teams 3-4 defensive scheme. Ted is a veteran of 13 NFL seasons, having played with San Francisco, Denver, Buffalo, Chicago, New England, and Oakland. He's been to four Pro Bowls, and even at age 38 is still renowned as one of the top run stoppers in all of football. He's started all sixteen games each of the past two seasons with Oakland. At this point in his career, Washington can still be dominant in spurts, but is not the type of player that can take two thirds of the defensive snaps. Holdovers Jason Fisk (may likely be cut), Ethan Kelley, and Nick Eason will all compete to be the "other nose tackle" in the two DT rotation most teams that play a 3-4 employ.