In the wake of Sunday's disappointing loss to the Raiders, Gary Benz noticed a couple things in the days that followed that really amused him. Browns head coach Romeo Crennel's threat to overhaul the defense and Braylon Edwards admission that the Browns may have taken the Oakland Raiders a tad too lightly last Sunday. Gary looks at both situations, and in both cases, feels that they are serious indictments on this team's coaching staff.

It’s hard to gauge what was more amusing in the last few days: Browns head coach Romeo Crennel’s threat to overhaul the defense or Braylon Edwards admission that the Browns may have taken the Oakland Raiders a tad too lightly last Sunday. Let’s consider the candidates in more depth.

In this near corner is the notion that the Cleveland Browns, a team that had won only 11 games and lost 23 just since Crennel arrived, could take anyone too lightly. True, it was the Oakland Raiders, a team that is 6-28 in the same time frame. But on the other hand, isn’t the Browns looking down their noses at another team a little like Charlie Brown dissing Ziggy?

Lest the players forget, the victory against Cincinnati wasn’t so much earned as survived. The offense played unexpectedly well while the defense played awful for the second straight game. Showing no ability to analyze what every Rick from Brunswick could plainly see, Edwards and the rest of his teammates apparently figured that the best that lightweights like Josh McCown and Daunte Culpepper could do was score, maybe, half the number of points that a legitimate

quarterback like Carson Palmer did, which in their strained calculus would be enough considering the scary talent the Browns have on the offensive side of the ball. And had they been right, they would have won the game. The problem was that close doesn't count in math, even if you show your work. When you're off by a few, which they were, you're still wrong. The other problem was that one game does not an offensive juggernaut make. As a result, the Browns scored a bit less than half as many as they did the week before and that just wasn't enough.

Edwards and the rest of the offense may think that putting up 51 against the only defense fighting the Browns for worst in the league puts them on par with teams like the Indianapolis Colts, but last time I looked, Derek Anderson wasn't Peyton Manning and Edwards wasn't Marvin Harrison. Heck, at this point in his career Jamal Lewis is barely even Joseph Addai.

Thus, even the most casual of fan had to be amused when Edwards admitted that "we let the win [against Cincinnati] linger on. We underestimated [the Raiders]. They stunned us the first half." The incongruity of it all notwithstanding, the subtext of the statement is the team wasn't properly prepared, a common failing under Crennel.

On this score, Crennel has proven to be about as adept at getting his team ready to play a big game as was John Cooper at Ohio State. Though Cleveland vs. Oakland doesn't exactly resonate the way an Ohio State vs. Michigan game does, make no mistake that last Sunday was a big game for this franchise at this time. In that context, and past being the prologue it always seem to be around here, the fact that the Browns were flat in the first half hardly surprises.

In fairness to Crennel, he did mention to the media early last week that he would be telling his team not to get too giddy over the Cincinnati victory. But as we've discovered over these last few years, for all the professed respect Browns players

say they have for their head coach, they don't seem to spend much time actually listening to him which, ultimately, is what will do him in.

But the point for today is that Crennel let his team walk onto the field in Oakland not just expecting to win, but assuming they would. And until he can find a way to properly communicate the difference between these two concepts, the cluelessness of the team, which mirrors that of its head coach, will amuse even as it continues to inflict pain.

But let us not forget what's sitting in the far corner. In his weekly Monday press conference, Crennel threatened to overhaul the defense. You can almost write your own punch line to that one if you'd like but as you consider how best to construct the joke and the payoff, take into account the following…

About the only real selling point for hiring Crennel in the first place was his supposed credentials as a defensive specialist. Fans were basically promised that he'd bring a New England Patriots-like edge and toughness to the Browns. Hardly. At this point most would probably agree that the Browns would be further ahead if they had just gotten a few of the Patriots players instead, like a Mike Vrabel or a Ty Law for instance.

As it stands, Crennel, who spends most of his time with the defense, has a defensive unit that currently is yielding the most points per game in the entire league and doing so in near-record fashion, has been on the field for more plays than any team in the league, and is yielding the second most yards per game. And that's the first string and the major defensive categories. Feel free to pick virtually any statistic that is kept for defense and Crennel's charges will be at or near the bottom, neck and neck with the Bengals, another team coached by a defensive genius.

While such ignominy certainly calls for an overhaul, the problem is that the Browns inventory of spare parts is a little thin at the moment. Discredit for that goes to GM Phil Savage who would probably be the first to admit that given so many holes and so little time, rebuilding the offense was a greater priority this last offseason. He'd be right but that neglect now threatens to undermine the somewhat positive surprises on the offensive side of the ball

Maybe the fact that there are so many holes in the defense is why Crennel was very nonspecific in just how this overhaul might actually take place. Even as he was discussing it he began a bit of retreat once he realized that while it might be nice to sit defensive back Eric Wright for, say, the rest of the season, that's hardly practical. Wright is better than what sits behind him, apparently, assuming you trust Crennel's personnel judgments in the first place. The same goes for the defensive line. Ted Washington may be almost 400 pounds at this point, but even a lousy offensive line like Oakland's didn't seem to have much problem moving that pile of goo.

So feel free, Romeo, to overhaul what took you all of camp and the first three games to create. After all, how can he miss making midweek adjustments leading up to a game against a hated divisional rival? But if he does fail, how would we know anyway? When you're at the bottom, there's no place further to drop.

As for what is most amusing, picking a winner is hardly necessary. Enjoy them both. Given what we know of this team by now, this is likely to be the only fun Browns fans will get to have this season. And don't worry about it getting too old too quickly. With the Indians entering the playoffs there's a real chance that the bridge to the Cavs season will be better and shorter than any of us actually anticipated anyway.