It was another white-knuckle Sunday afternoon for Browns fans, as the team almost overcame a slew of mistakes to come back and beat the Cardinals on the road. But for The Buckeye Nation? Ecstasy ... as West Virginia and Missouri both lost, and the Bucks landed a spot in the BCS Title Game, against the Louisiana State Tigers in The Superdome on January the 7th. As he does every Monday morning, Brian McPeek breaks down the weekend's events for us in "The Weekend Wrap".

Reality Check

Good teams can't often turn the football over 4 times and win.

Mediocre teams with a below average defense certainly can't afford to be that generous. But ‘Tis the season to be giving and the Browns gift-wrapped a 27-21 Arizona Cardinals victory Sunday in Phoenix.

Four turnovers and countless undisciplined penalties put the Browns behind the eight ball and they weren't bailed out on a last play/referee convention this past weekend.

You apologists, eternal optimists and ‘what-ifers' out there can talk until you're blue in the face about the last play of the game and whether Kellen Winslow Jr. was forced out of bounds. It simply should have never come down to that play.

An interception for a TD and a fumbled snap were direct Derek Anderson gifts that the Cardinals cashed in for two quick touchdowns to put the Browns in comeback mode. DA would mix in another INT as the ghost of Charlie Frye seemingly haunted the huddle and Josh Cribbs would muff a punt. The Cardinals also cashed in the latter of those two turnovers for another 7 points.

There could have been a couple more opportunities for the depleted Cardinals offense had the Browns kick team not recovered two more fumbles. But more annoying than the turnovers (and they were pretty damn annoying) were the countless penalties the Browns absorbed throughout the afternoon. Physical errors are going to occur. But the mental errors, the lack of composure and the sudden disappearance of any semblance of discipline just are not acceptable. Not in the twelfth game of the season and not when you have a chance to put some distance

between yourselves and the myriad of teams competing for a wildcard playoff spot in the AFC.

Brodney Pool's unsportsman-like conduct penalty was inexcusable. Leigh Bodden's delay-of-game penalty for kicking a ball after a play was ridiculous. Playoff teams and elite teams play hard between the white lines and the whistles and then regroup to the huddle or get off the field.

If you're going to hang your hats on anything, maybe it's the fact that, for as poorly as the Browns played, they still had a throw into the end zone to try and pull out a win. The team is young and dealing with a whole new set of issues and expectations now that they're no longer the dregs of the league. But they never panicked when they got down early and they kept chipping away to give themselves some opportunities to get back in the game. That quality is one that brings fans hope and gives fans pride in this club. It's just a lot easier to tolerate when the reason you're down and battling back is because of a difference in talent or the other squad making some plays.

What will grate and gnaw on Browns fans for at least a week is that they were clearly the more talented team on the field Sunday in Phoenix. They need to grow up and take advantage of that opportunity when it comes along.

Sometimes You Get What You Wish For

This was a college football season that simply left your head spinning after nearly every single Saturday. From week number one when Michigan fell to 1-AA Appalachian State all the way through the 1st of December when Missouri lost to Oklahoma and West Virginia showed themselves as the frauds they have been all year long by losing to 28-point underdog Pitt.

When the dust cleared from this past Saturday's action and upsets, that rebuilding team from Columbus, OH found itself back in a familiar place: Number one in the final BCS poll and

back in the national championship game.

The Ohio State Buckeyes are headed not to southern California to face USC in the Rose Bowl, but to New Orleans for a date with LSU on January 7th to fully and finally lay rest to the argument about who the best team in the country is for the 2007 season.

In a country that loves its football as much as it loves it arguments, the BCS got it right. Yes, Georgia, Florida, USC and Oklahoma all

deserve mention when you're talking about the best teams in the nation this season. But OSU and LSU spent the majority of the year in the number one spot in the polls. Once you put aside undefeated Hawaii, who played a schedule that Cincinnati St. Xavier and Cardinal Mooney would drool over, the top two teams in the country will meet near Bourbon Street to decide the national championship.

After just one season, the Buckeyes have the opportunity to erase last year's national championship nightmare. And it was a nightmare

that nearly lasted into this bowl season given the unfavorable, lasting impression that the waxing at the hands of Florida had on the media and on the pollsters. The Buckeyes needed a perfect storm of upsets and losses from teams ahead of them to climb back up the polls after their loss at home to Illinois. The fact that they needed those teams ahead of them to lose, and the fact those teams did lose, is less a reflection of the Buckeyes worthiness to play in the BCS Championship game than it is on the teams that couldn't get it done for two weeks after Ohio State had finished up their season with a win in Michigan.

If you can bank on anything come January 7th, 2008, you can bank on the fact Jim Tressel will have this Buckeye team ready to play. This will be a focused, disciplined football team that will be looking to send a message to the college football world. Most specifically, to the college football world that resides south of the Mason-Dixon line. The Ohio State program has taken non-stop heat from that region of the country. You can't talk to an SEC fan without hearing about the Florida debacle form a year ago or without hearing about how the SEC schedule is a meat grinder. That the SEC third place team is better than anything the

Big10 or most major conferences can offer up. All those SEC fans wanted their shot at the Buckeyes. Come January 7th they get their shot.

Put up or shut up for somebody.

Exposed

Anybody ignorant enough to complain about the role LeBron James plays in Cleveland's offense (that would ***be*** the offense, by the

way) should get up from whatever you're doing right now and hurl yourself off a cliff.

I've seen message board users here and elsewhere pick apart LBJ's game shot-by-shot and try and make an argument that he monopolizes the basketball and stagnates the offense around him.

Well, thank God he does.

The Cavs were giving the Pistons all they wanted last week in The Palace, trailing by 5 points at the half. One finger injury later and the Pistons are enjoying a 35-point laugher after outscoring the Cav (again, no ‘s' since there is only one Cavalier) 61-31 in the 2nd half.

Showing the 2nd half of the Pistons game was no fluke and that the lottery is just a major injury to LBJ away, the Cav got bounced by a Toronto team missing Chris Bosh on Friday and then put up 70 points in a loss to a disinterested Celtics team on Sunday. The starters on

Sunday shot less than 30% from the field. In fact, despite not playing the 2nd half of the Detroit game, James still led the Cav in scoring and assists. Hell, he may have led them in both categories on Friday and on Sunday, despite not playing, for all anyone knows.

I'll tell you how bad it was. I'm a huge sports fan. I'll watch just about any competitive event that some network is willing to show. Hawaii vs. Washington and an 11pm start? I'm in. Clippers and the Jazz on a Friday night at 1030pm? It's on.

But this past Friday, after two minutes of watching what the NBA was calling a match-up between two Eastern Conference contenders that was missing both Bosh and James, I turned on (and left on) ***Big Momma's House 2*** on HBO.

Terrible, horrific waste of film. Thoroughly unwatchable. Yet I watched every ridiculously bad minute of it rather than subject myself to Cav-Raptors. Watching the game would have probably provided more laughs. But that Cav team is unwatchable without James. More to the point, they are not even close to

being a competitive team without LBJ on the floor for 42 minutes per night.

When you get down to it, the Cavalier situation is not funny. This is a team facing luxury tax payments and they can't field a mediocre, let alone competitive team, without

James.

With James the Cavs are ‘Goodfellas'. Without him they're ‘Billy Bathgate'. Get well soon LeBron. There's a team here that needs you playing at an MVP-level just to sniff a 6th seed come April.