Monday mornings suck. Especially when you have to roll into the office in this kind of weather. But they're a lot more tolerable after a Browns win. And for the ninth time this season, I get to wake up on Monday morning with a Browns win still fresh in my craw. Brian McPeek checks in once again with The Weekend Wrap, and was at the 8-0 blanking of the Bills yesterday. Shoot, the lead pic is from his camera. Brian hits on the win, his frozen extremities, wussies in the club level, and Rich Rodriguez taking the Michigan job in this week's piece.

They're Real....And They're Spectacular

I'm still thawing out. Seriously. It's hours after the game ended and there are parts of me still solidly frozen to other parts of me.

Parts I'm going to likely need again.

Perhaps the only time I've been as cold and seen as much snow at a sporting event was the Indians snowed-out home opener 8 months ago.

But unlike the disappointing end to that day, the Browns played through a literal blizzard and blanked the Buffalo Bills 8-0 on Sunday at Cleveland Browns Stadium. In doing so, and in how they did it, they announced to the rest of the league that they are a team to be reckoned with.

The snowflakes and the Browns defense kept the Bills on their heels for over 2 ½ hours Sunday. And while both let up with about a minute and a half left in the game, The Browns still made the big plays when they needed to on the Bills final drive to run their record to 9-5. That's good for a tie in the AFC Central with Pittsburgh courtesy of the Jaguars going into Heinz Field and handing the Steelers their lunch.

When the snow started falling an hour before the game started and you couldn't see the field from the concourse, you knew this was going to be a memorable day. And you also knew that Browns running back Jamal Lewis was going to figure prominently into the outcome of the ballgame. Lewis rushed 35 bruising times for 163 yards and was the rudder for the offense all day. It was an effort that will live for years in Browns lore. Lewis was *tha*

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kind of good.

Lewis put Derek Anderson and the entire offense on his broad shoulders and carried them to critical yards, critical first downs and critical field position all afternoon. And he did it with the powerful and punishing style Browns fans have watched him employ effectively all season long.

That's not to say Anderson or his receivers were completely ineffective. But the snow and the wind gusts of up to 40 MPH made throwing the football with any accuracy or sense of where it may end up nearly impossible. It became apparent early on that those receivers would need to concentrate on blocking in the running game and that Anderson would be charged with maintaining possessions and handing the ball to Lewis.

While Lewis was never able to crack the goal line, he did help put Phil Dawson in position to get the Browns some points. Dawson was magic again on Sunday. His first quarter 35 yard field goal was into the Dawg Pound end

of the field. Dawson started he ball about 10 yards to the right of the right upright and worked the ball through those uprights expertly. The kick would have easily been good from...well...about 38 yards.

Which is why fans were stunned when Head Coach Romeo Crennel sent Dawson out at the end of the first half to try a 49-yard field goal at the opposite end of the stadium. Inexplicably, improbably and damn near impossibly, Dawson's kick barely cleared the cross bar and hit the support stanchion on its way through for another huge three pointer. Unlike in Baltimore a few weeks back, the ball carried through and beyond after hitting the support bar and the Browns made their 8-0 halftime lead stand up (the other two points coming on a safety when Bills punter Brian Moorman watched the snap from center sail over his head and into the end-zone where he kicked it out of play).

The Browns can end the playoff suspense next week with a win in Cincinnati. No help from anyone else, no need to make the season ending match-up with the 49ers anything other than a love-fest between the fans and this team. Prior to the season, and immediately following the

Week 1 debacle against Pittsburgh, there was no way anyone could have expected this scenario.

But everyone other than a large number of the club suite fans stood from opening whistle to final gun Sunday. Those apple martini drinking, television watching frauds were nowhere to be seen for the most part on Sunday, preferring to watch the ballgame from the warmth and safety of the bar area inside the stadium. That's assuming they bothered to show up at all. Pull the Blue Tooth out of your ear, dress for the cold instead of for a cocktail party and be a part of the experience. Or give your seats to someone who will and stay home and lick a light socket. Either option is fine with Browns fans.

With or without them, the Browns played and won a game for the ages Sunday afternoon. And as much fun as that was on that day, the best may be yet to come for this squad. The attention of NFL fans, or at the very least the attention of the Pittsburgh area, is back on Cleveland for all the right reasons.

Also:

- Great to see the Baltimore Ravens step up on Sunday. Nice effort against the previously winless and hopeless Miami Dolphins. And Ray Lewis injures a finger to boot. Apparently this is a magical time of year when all one's hopes and dreams can come true. Even better, their nightmare lasts at least two more weeks. Show your colors boys. Mail in a couple more ‘efforts' to finish it off right.

- Touching moment in Foxboro Sunday. Bill Belichik and Eric Mangini meeting at midfield after the Pats 20-10 win, burying the hatchet and settling their differences.

"Great game. Awesome.", said Belichik before walking away with a grin. ‘The Hoodie' really knows how to set a mood and was obviously overcome with the Christmas spirit. I love that guy. He just does not care about what anyone else on earth thinks about him. Sure, he'll probably die a lonely and miserable death. But until that day inevitably comes he amuses me.

Mom Always Told Me

If you can't say anything nice about someone, then rip the living hell out of them via written word from a safe and secure location. Mom has a mouth on her but she's practical.

I could sit here for the umpteenth week in a row and just tear the Cavaliers apart for their pathetic effort in both the Philadelphia and New Jersey losses this past weekend, but I won't. They're simply not worth my time nor the effort.

Suffice it to say that this one bad basketball team right now and may be so for the foreseeable future. If you want a more in-depth deconstruction of the Cav level of suck, take a look at the articles of John

Hnat and Sam Amico on these pages. You'll get far more analysis and insight from these fine writers. I've simply run out of ways and reasons to tell you how pathetic this team is so I'll not waste your time going over it all again.

Tied to the Whipping Post

Perfect.

Rich Rodriguez is leaving his job as Head Coach of the West Virginia football team to take the University of Michigan head-coaching job.

This is a match made in heaven for Buckeye fans. The leader of an over-hyped, second class Big East team that was proven to be a fraud when they were 28-point favorites and lost a game that would have sent to them to the BCS Championship Game will now be at the helm in Ann Arbor. Buckeye fans could not be happier unless Lloyd Carr was hired to replace Lloyd Carr. Just like in the recruiting arena the Team Up North is settling for second and third options to fill

their roster of players and coaches.

I can think of no better way for Buckeye fans to ring in the new year than with Michigan taking the needle again in their bowl game, the Buckeyes wrecking the assumptions and arrogance of SEC supporters everywhere with a win over LSU on January 7th and then waking up on January 8th with a national championship trophy and the

knowledge that Rich Rodriguez is piloting the Michigan plane going forward.

The Season of Giving continues. Thank you U of M. You've already given us Ohio State fans so much. But we do appreciate your generosity both on and off the field.