Whether it is the side effects of winning, or the inevitability of all things Cleveland, Gary says that the Browns seemingly idyllic "season of dreams" is quickly turning into a series of rocks headed for the windshield this off-season. Gary talks about the hike to ticket prices, the DA/Brady Quinn soap opera, the Winslow renegotiation request, and the Browns other potential off-season headaches in his latest.

Whether it is the side effects of winning, as Erik Cassano underscores in his excellent column , or the inevitability of all things Cleveland, the Browns seemingly idyllic "season of dreams" is quickly turning into a series of rocks headed for the windshield this off-season.

One of the first was the announcement last month that ticket prices were going up. The Browns press release was a model of ridiculous understatement and an example of the journalistic sin of burying the lead. It begins by noting that 20% of the "ticketed areas" will not experience an increase, leaving to the to translate that to the fact that 80% will, to the tune of $5 to $10 per seat. It's the Browns first increase in three seasons, as they would readily tell you, leaving it the average fan to complete the punchline that it's also the first time in that same period at least that any sort of increase was even justified.

This is not, however, to tweak the Browns about their spin control or fly speck their balance sheet. Most fans intuitively understand that prices increase, more often after a good season than a bad one. The bigger point is that irrespective of how they feel about it, fans will have to dig a little deeper. Whether the product will be worth it may depend on whether the rest of the rocks headed for that windshield actually connect and if so, how much damage they might do.

Entering into the 2007 season, Browns fans were legitimately excited about the possibility, at some point, that Brady Quinn would be ready to take over and eventually be the long-term solution to the quarterback situation that has lingered for as long as the Browns, Part 2 have been in existence. The debate centered on when he should be thrown into the mix, not if, with a bit of time spent on who best could fit the role of third-string quarterback, Ken Dorsey or Derek Anderson

All at once and out of nowhere at the same time, Anderson put together one of the best single seasons of any quarterback in Browns history. He completed 298-527 passes for 3,787 yards and 29 touchdowns. Only four other times has any Cleveland quarterback attempted more passes. Only five other times has any Cleveland quarterback completed more passes. Anderson's touchdown total has only been equaled or exceeded twice. Just three times has a Cleveland quarterback thrown for more yardage.

The timing of these achievements couldn't have been better or worse. On the one hand, it creates what folks like to call a "good problem." On the other hand, it is still a problem.

But Anderson's season, combined with his impending status as a restricted free agent, lays open a variety of options that, frankly, the Browns haven't had in years.

For example, Anderson's successfully completed season gives the Browns a highly tradable commodity, its first in years. So desperate are so many teams for a quarterback of any accomplishment that it's likely the Browns can turn Anderson into a number one pick, at a minimum, and possibly much more via a trade.

But trading Anderson requires a leap of faith that Quinn can be at least as good, if not better, in the long term. It's a leap the Browns have taken several times previously, starting with Tim Couch and ending with Charlie Frye, and have been wrong every time.

The NFL rolls are filled with players who were one or two season wonders. They're also filled with players who came into the league without much of a pedigree and achieved great success anyway. Right now Anderson fits into the first category and is only a candidate for the second.

The Browns, typically, are trying to hedge their bets as to which is which by offering Anderson a contract that reportedly would span three years and pay around $15-20 million. That won't get it done mainly because to this point Anderson's agents think he is more deserving of the kind of contract and money that Tony Romo and Matt Schaub signed for last season. That translates to about $3-5 million more per year and for a few additional seasons than the Browns have currently offered.

It's quite possible, actually, that the Browns really are letting Anderson and his agents make the decision for them through what most fans would agree are unreasonable demands. By voluntarily painting themselves into this corner, the Browns would then tender Anderson a one-year contract worth around $2.5 million in order to preserve their right to receive compensation, in the form of a first and third round pick, from a team just desperate enough to pay Anderson as if he were Romo or Schaub. It's probably as much as they could get in a trade anyway.

If that doesn't occur, then the Browns buy another season to make a decision. If it does occur, then Quinn gets the job by default and Browns and their fans are back where they were entering last season, hoping that Quinn is the real deal. But this time, they'll have one eye on whatever team Anderson is with, lamenting each touchdown pass and cheering each interception. For a team coming off a 10-6 record and hoping for more, it introduces a new level of uncertainty that no one was anticipating.

The other option is that Browns general manager Phil Savage becomes quickly convinced that Anderson is no one-hit wonder and does give him a longer term deal. That decision would essentially put Quinn on the trading block, although

whether the Browns could squeeze both a first and third round pick for him may be a stretch. Still, it's a decent option, even if not the more preferable of the two.

While the damage may be significant, the quarterback situation has a relatively efficient manner of resolving itself. The same can't necessarily be said about the case of Kellen Winslow. On the heels of getting into his first Pro Bowl, Winslow let it be known that he'd like his contract renegotiated. Who wouldn't?

The fact that Winslow would go down this road likely was not much of a surprise to Savage. When Winslow fired his previous loudmouth agents, the Poston brothers, for an even bigger loudmouth, Drew Rosenhaus, a demand for a renegotiation with the subtext of a holdout was as inevitable as a Cavaliers loss to the Denver Nuggets. Rosenhaus has taken virtually every one of his clients down this road, the most notable of which was Dallas Cowboys wide receiver, Terrell Owens. In the process, Rosenhaus almost ruined Owens' career.

Winslow has built up a great deal of good will with the fans over the past two years by racking up impressive numbers while minimizing his verbal outbursts. He's not wrong when he notes that his performance over this span has established him as one of the elite tight ends in the league.

But the fans and the internet have a long memory and that doesn't necessarily help his cause. Winslow didn't endear himself to anyone when he crashed his motorcycle and missed an entire season and jeopardized his career. In fact, despite his performance over the last two years, he's still suffering from the effects of that accident and by how much that might shorten an otherwise bright career is a significant unknown.

The fans stood behind Winslow with moral support. The Browns stood behind him with big bucks. But the way in which they did so actually gives Winslow more than a little opening for a self-promoter like Rosenhaus to stake out the higher ground, which is why this situation is so tricky.

The Browns used the hammer of Winslow's blatant contract violation to wrangle through a contract renegotiation because of the significantly changed circumstances of his injury. Having now recovered sufficiently to perform at Pro Bowl level, the circumstances have again changed, this time in Winslow's favor. It's not unfair, even for an abject jerk like Rosenhaus, to suggest that what was once good for the Browns is now good for Winslow. Truthfully, it would be disingenuous in this case for the Browns to take the posture that contracts are meant to be honored, not renegotiated. We may not see Winslow holding out and conducting a press conference while doing sit-ups in his driveway, like Owens, but this could get ugly. The only questions now are when this rock will hit the windshield and how much damage will it do.

The only saving grace in all of this for the Browns is that having chosen to raise ticket prices, they now can use the extra money to buy plenty of insurance. With all the potential cracks coming to their windshield, it looks like they're going to need it.