The Browns and the Bills may have been statistical cousins in all but record entering the game, but they corrected that flaw on Sunday as the Browns claimed their first victory under the Eric Mangini regime, beating a hapless Bills team, 6-3. It wasn't pretty, in fact it was mostly pratfalls and missteps on both sides of the ball but it's a win nonetheless. Gary discusses it in his latest.

Entering Sunday's game, the Cleveland Browns and the Buffalo Bills were the football equivalents of Patty and Cathy Lane, one pair of matching bookends, but hardly different as night and day. Statistical twins in all but record entering the game, they exited it with that flaw corrected as the Browns beat the Bills 6-3, in a game that set football back to at least the time when The Patty Duke Show was a primetime staple.

History will show that the Browns won it on an 18-yard field Billy Cundiff field goal with just 26 seconds remaining in the game. How they got there was the story of the entire game.

With the game tied 3-3 and just over 7 minutes remaining in the fourth quarter, the Browns Dave Zastudil had his 7th punt of the day downed by defensive back Mike Adams at the Bills' 4-yard line. It was Zastudil's 3rd punt of the

day downed inside the 5-yard line.

The Browns' defense looked to have forced a punt three plays later but defensive lineman Corey Williams was flagged on a very iffy roughing call on Bills' quarterback Trent Edwards.

That gave the Bills an automatic first down.

The Bills were eventually forced to punt but were no longer backed up. Brian Moorman's punt sailed into the end zone and the Browns took over at their own 20.

Three plays later Zastudil was punting again.

But the break of the day came when returner Roscoe Parrish tried to field the ball as he was backing up.

He fumbled, just as the Bills had done all day, and Blake Costanzo jumped on it at the Bills' 16-yard line with three minutes left.

With the Bills out of timeouts, the Browns were content to milk the clock, getting the ball down to the Bills' 1-yard line before the Cundiff game winning kick.

All the missteps and misadventures of that sequence was a microcosm of what was truly a miserable game.

Going in, the Browns figured to run given that their receiving corps was in great flux, the Jamal Lewis was returning to the starting lineup, and

the Bills have a very suspect defensive line. It's exactly what they did, repeatedly running Lewis into the line series after series.

What it didn't yield in points it did at least yield in yards for Lewis. He had 31 carries for 117 yards, the second straight week a Browns' running back went over the 100-yard mark.

Jerome Harrison retreated into his previous role as change-of-pack back and had 8 carries for 21 yards.

But the Browns, counter to theory all year, couldn't use the run to set up the pass. Derek Anderson had about as bad a game as a quarterback can have and probably sent head coach Eric Mangini into the film room immediately after the game trying to figure out whether to start Brett Ratliff next week.

When Anderson wasn't overthrowing his receivers, he was under throwing them. On the few occasions where he got the ball where it was supposed to be the receivers dropped it. Beneath the wreckage read a line that was as ugly as a last second prom date: 2-17, 23 yards and 1 interception and a rating of 15.074.

On the Bills side of the ball, sporting much the same game plan for much the same reasons, almost nothing went right. They didn't run particularly well and when forced to pass quarterback Edwards didn't do that very well, either.

Marshawn Lynch had 17 carries for 69 yards and Freddie Jackson

added 30 yards on 13 carries. Edwards was 16-31 for 136 yards, 1 interception and a rating of 49.933.

It was hardly enough to make Browns' defensive coordinator Rob Ryan eat his words.

Though each team had some success on the ground, that was hardly the story of the game.

From almost the opening kick to the final play, the game featured enough pratfalls and missteps to make another ‘60s staple, Lucy Ricardo, proud.

The Browns' first drive was illustrative of most of the game. Lewis ran up the middle on the first four plays.

On 3rd and 5, in a 4 wide receiver set, Anderson went, where else, but to his tight end, Robert Royal.

The pass was low and the Browns punted.

It was a pattern that was repeated, often.

The Bills, playing Cathy Lane in this sitcom, did much the same thing. On their first drive they too came out running up the

middle with Lynch. But a procedure penalty, a sack and a short pass on 3rd and 14 by quarterback Edwards came up short.

Throw in a personal foul on center Geoff Hangartner after the play was over and the Bills punted.

And that's pretty much how it went, at least until the Parrish fumble that cost the Bills the game.

It would be too haughty to suggest that a game this insignificant was a chess match. With offensive ineptitude the order of the day, Mangini and his counterpart, Dick Jauron, played the field position game like two old timers playing a strategic game of checkers outside of Floyd's barbershop.

On this count, the Browns were the first to advance across the board and get their queen, in the form of a 24-yard Cundiff field goal in the first half. The back story to this field goal unfolded like the 7,683rd repeat of that Lucy episode with the conveyor belt.

After a mind-numbing array of punt exchanges, Adams downed a Zastudil punt at the Bills' 1-yard line. The Bills' offense went into immediate false start mode, their third of the half and costing them all of 6 inches. This led to an Edwards' quarterback sneak on first down, thus leading to speculation that Brian Daboll, the Browns' offensive coordinator, was calling plays for both teams. A short run on second and a short pass to the tight end on third forced the Bills to punt again and this time the Browns really did have good field position, or so it would seem.

With Moorman punting from deep in his own end zone, Cribbs was able to field the ball at the Bills' 42-yard line. But a holding penalty pushed the ball back on the Cleveland side of the field.

The comedy of errors and ineptitude continued unabated.

The Browns would have blown the field position if not for an untimely offside penalty by the Bills defense on a third down sack of Anderson. It gave the Browns another chance and Cribbs took the handoff from Anderson and sprinted down the left sideline 31 yards.

But two short runs and another missed pass forced a 24-yard Cundiff field goal giving Cleveland a 3-0 lead.

The Bills then took over and put together their best drive. It still wasn't good enough. After driving down to the Cleveland 11-yard line the Bills had two penalties and a loss on a run, pushing them back to the Cleveland 31-yard line. On 4th and 24, Edwards was flushed out of the pocket and through deep toward Owens and into at least double coverage.

The ball was batted down by Brodney Pool and Cleveland held on to its 3-0 lead as the half ended.

The Bills finally got on the scoreboard with a field goal of their own, a 36-yarder by Rian Lindell, to open the second half. But true to the Bills' roots, it was a drive of one distraction after another getting there.

Beyond the obligatory false start penalty, their 833rd of the day, the drive almost died until Lynch took a short pass on 3rd and 9 and turned it into a 35-yard gain aided greatly by some very poor tackling.

The drive eventually did die, as expected, a few plays later forcing the Lindell field goal attempt.

With the score tied 3-3, it looked to be a return of the infamous Snow Bowl, except it

was a bright, sunny day in Buffalo and the game was being played by two teams with rosters full of players that will be out of the league before either team makes the playoffs again.

The Browns did their part in acting like it was the elements, yea the elements, by continuing to mostly run Lewis. On Anderson's best pass of the day, he had tight end Royal down the left side with a step on the defender but the ball clanged off the gloves Royal apparently was willed by Braylon Edwards before he left town. Steve Heiden was then called for an illegal crack back block Anderson threw poorly to Harrison who, had he caught it, would have been well short of the first down anyway.

About the only other excitement of the second half came on the Browns' next possession, when Anderson, already just 2-12 for 23 yards, threw his perfunctory interception. Looking for Massaquoi running deep, Anderson misfired and safety Jarius Byrd laid out for the interception. He would have been down right there except that Massaquoi, the nearest Browns player, was busy complaining about something.

Byrd got up and ran it back 14 yards.

No matter as Edwards bailed his counterpart out a few plays later. Edwards, scrambling as he was most of the day, looked for Owens down the left side line but found Eric Wright instead.

But three run plays later and now officially fearful that Anderson would throw another interception, the Browns opted for the punt.

Fielding the ball at the Bills 40 yard line, Parrish proceeded to run 15 yards backwards.

It was the game's signature play.

The Bills then went about making matters worse. On 3rd and 3, Edwards threw what could charitably be described as a screen of sorts to Lynch who was tackled immediately and short of the first down. L ynch, crashing into the Browns' sidelines, got up and gesticulated furiously.

The referees apparently didn't know what to

make of it all and flagged Lynch for unnecessary roughness.

It was their 11th penalty of the day.

The subsequent punt by Moorman, into the wind, gave the Browns the ball at their own 47-yard line.

Yes, it was early in the 4th quarter, but this had the feel of the Browns' best chance to break the tie and keep this game from inflicting further pain on its patrons by going into overtime.

It wasn't and but for the Parrish fumble a

few minutes later the game might still be going on.

There was nothing about the Browns' performance, outside of Zastudil, that signaled anything other than it was a week full of upheaval and distraction. But again running counter to theory, all of the ineptitude and retreat resulted in Mangini's first win as head coach of the Browns.

Go figure.

He'll probably celebrate, but just barely.

As for the Bills, it's hard to know what excuse they'll use. Outside of an inability to block on offense, tackle on defense, line-up onside or listen to a snap count, they were a study in discipline and precision. If Jauron survives the season, then there ought to be a Congressional investigation.

With the win, the Browns now head to Pittsburgh. The Steelers are struggling a bit out of the gate this season but, unlike the Bills, they'll know how to pile on the points if the Browns and Anderson have another day like they had on Sunday.