Just because a game is close doesn't necessarily make it enjoyable, and the Browns and Bills proved that theory beyond rebuttal last Sunday at Ralph Wilson Stadium. Windy weather combined with two lousy offenses to create one of the worst NFL games in recent memory. Sometimes the games that are the hardest to watch are the funnest to read about afterwards, and Nick proves that theory as well with his always entertaining Ten Points on last week's trainwreck.

1. Who wants it less?

Just because a game is close doesn't necessarily make it enjoyable, and the Browns and Bills proved that theory beyond rebuttal last Sunday at Ralph Wilson Stadium. Windy weather combined with two lousy offenses to create one of the worst NFL games in recent memory. (I've actively repressed all memories of the 2008 Browns' month of December.) There were just 48 pass attempts (just 18 completions) against 76 rushes; a ratio that would make Woody Hayes smile.

Special teams was the difference for the Browns, as Dave Zastudil pinned the Bills inside their own 20 yard line no less than 7 times. A crucial Roscoe Parrish fumble gave the Browns the ball at Buffalo's 16 yard line, setting up Billy Cundiff to mercifully break the late fourth quarter tie and spare us from having to endure overtime.

Early on, it became clear that Eric Mangini wasn't going to let a crucial mistake

beat the Browns, so the offense became a run-heavy shell as the Browns waited for a Buffalo error. Mangini was playing not to lose, and for at least one week, it worked.

2. 11.8%

That was the completion percentage that Derek Anderson earned with his 2-for-17 gem. Anderson also added an interception.

To be fair, there were probably three or four legitimate drops, and the windy conditions were making it tough for either team to complete passes. That said, you should be able to go 2-for-17 left-handed and blindfolded. Anderson doesn't seem to understand that 5 yard passes to running backs should not be fastballs. Touch passes have never been Anderson's forte, but that doesn't make it any less frustrating.

Anderson really needs to be wary of patting the ball before he throws. Tim Couch was doing that for awhile too, and when a quarterback pats the ball it cues the defense as to when he's going to throw. That helps the coverage guys, but it also really helps the defensive line know when to jump and try to tip the ball. Anderson had a handful of passes tipped in Buffalo, and his new habit might be the reason.

The conservative nature of this particular game plus the elements' effect on the long ball probably would have made this a better game for Brady Quinn than for Anderson. But for whatever reason, Eric Mangini seems to be giving Anderson a much longer leash than he ever granted Quinn. Sure, the Browns won, but they had to drag Anderson to victory, which isn't the way it's supposed to work.

On a quick side note, I'd like to dispel the notion of a "winning" quarterback with lousy numbers. Wins and losses alone are not a good metric for evaluating quarterback play. Vince Young was labeled a "winner" in spite of the fact that he threw more interceptions than touchdowns during both of his seasons as a starter and never posted a rating higher than 71.1. Arguments about "clutch" play are something else entirely, but if you want to argue that Eli Manning was an elite quarterback because the Giants won the Super Bowl in 2007-08, you're incorrect.

3. Ground game.

The Browns ran the ball 41 times for 171 yards and a 4.2 yard average. We need to keep that in the context of playing the mediocre Bills defense, but it's still a good start.

Jamal Lewis was back and had a spring in his step. Lewis carried 31 times for 117 yards, and hasn't looked that good since 2007.

I liked seeing the Browns use more pitches with Lewis to help him build a head of steam. Even though Lewis has lost that quick first step (which has made him far less effective inside), he's still tough to bring down once he accelerates to top speed. It would have been nice to see a little more of Jerome Harrison, and hopefully the Browns are moving towards a Lewis/Harrison backfield tandem.

Alex Mack showed some signs of life, too. Brian Daboll was pulling Mack out to lead block for Lewis on some of the aforementioned pitches, and Mack was blowing up Buffalo defenders downfield. Maybe Mack's finally starting to get his sea legs.

4. Super Dave.

If there's one thing the Browns have done since 1999, it's showcase their punters, and Sunday was no exception as Eric Mangini called Dave Zastudil's number 9 times. Zastudil had a career game, pinning the Bills inside their own 20 yard line 7 (!) times. Obviously, some of that was attributable where Zastudil was punting from, but it's still pretty impressive.

Zastudil put three punts inside the Buffalo five yard line, including two punts that he parked on the one. Credit the rest of the coverage unit for getting in position to down those punts, particularly Mike Adams and Josh Cribbs.

5. Barton up the middle.

Eric Barton has been as mediocre as advertised. Barton's a decent player, but he's not going to turn any heads at inside linebacker. Plus, he's made a habit of flying through the line when he's free on blitzes, but apparently he's not very good at changing directions, because he flies right past the quarterback.

It's great to see Barton pressuring the quarterback, but he's largely wasted if the quarterback can just slide left or right to avoid him. Plus, Trent Edwards isn't

exactly Mr. Mobility. If Barton can't wrap up Edwards, he's really going to have trouble with Ben Roethlisberger this week.

6. Robert Royal and his hands of stone.

I was talking football with my buddy Sean (an avid Bills fan) over the summer, and in passing I mentioned the Browns' signing of Robert Royal. When I asked him his opinion of Royal, he wasn't very complimentary. After watching the guy for just five games, I can see why.

Royal might be a sound blocker, but Brian Daboll is using him way too much as a receiver. Royal simply can't catch. In fact, Derek Anderson's best pass of the day went into the books as an incompletion because it ricocheted off of Royal's palms.

I know that Eric Mangini wants tight ends who can block first, but in this day and age it's somewhat of an antiquated notion. Of course you want tight ends who are competent blockers, but if that prevents you from picking up a hybrid receiving tight end in the mold of a Tony Gonzalez, you're probably doing your offense a disservice.

In the contemporary NFL, tight ends are big receivers who can block, too. You'd think a guy who drafted Dustin Keller would understand the role of the tight end in today's game.

7. No love lost?

There might be a little rivalry budding between the Browns and the Bills, who have now played each other three years running. The players were getting pretty chippy with each other, especially early. It probably didn't hurt that half of the Browns defense used to play the Bills twice every year when they wore Jets uniforms.

I'd be happy to add a new rival, especially one the Browns are capable of beating. It's only about a three hour drive from Cleveland to Buffalo, so fans can go behind enemy lines for each game. As long as the Browns and Bills can hold down their spots in the cellar, it's a rivalry we can look forward to for at least one more year.

8. Phil Savage, vindicated?

The defensive line appears to have really gelled over the last couple games, and it's about time. The line has been the most talented part of the defense for the last two years, and maybe those guys are finally starting to play like it.

Plenty of people gave Phil Savage some guff for focusing solely on the defensive line during the 2008 off-season, and there's no doubt that the linebackers needed fixing, too. But now that Corey Williams is healthy he looks like a pretty solid player, even if he's grossly overpaid. The Shaun Williams trade has been a huge success, even if that hasn't been reflected in wins and losses. In retrospect, Savage's defensive line experiment probably has probably been more successful than we thought.

9. Romeo Crennel, vindicated?

Nobody was a bigger Crennel critic than me. Crennel was one of the worst NFL coaches I've ever seen; he was totally overmatched by the job. But one of my biggest issues with Crennel was his treatment of Brady Quinn and the apparent favoritism he showed to Derek Anderson.

Crennel was always a coach who favored the vets, but it didn't make sense that he wouldn't give Quinn a shot even when Anderson struggled mightily in 2008. The front office had to twist Crennel's arm into eventually naming Quinn the starter late last season. Whether it was a matter of Quinn having a permanent spot in Crennel's doghouse because of his contact holdout, or Crennel's veteran bias, it looked like Crennel was giving Quinn a raw deal.

Eric Mangini doesn't seem to have treated Brady Quinn fairly, either. After such a grueling quarterback competition, pulling the plug on Quinn after less than three games seemed premature, to say the least. But it seems unlikely that two head coaches would have irrational biases against Quinn.

Maybe Quinn rubs people the wrong way in the locker room or has an air of entitlement, but there's never been even a whiff of that in his interviews. Granted, some people know how to present themselves to the public, but it seems unlikely that Quinn wouldn't have ever shown at least some shadow of his dark side, if he had one.

The simplest answer tends to be the right one, and the more I think about it, I wonder if Brady Quinn just isn't that good? That certainly makes more sense than

a massive conspiracy to keep him from starting, which involves two completely different regimes.

The big news for the Browns this week was that Brady Quinn put his house on the market. Mangini and Quinn both denied that a trade was in the works, and Quinn cited not needing a house because he's a bachelor, and also stated that his house in Avon Lake is simply too long of a commute to the practice facility.

Both excuses seem pretty weak, and you don't need a magnifying glass to read the writing on the wall. Brady Quinn is either going to be shipped out before the October 20th trade deadline, or he's going to be moved in the off-season. The real victims here are the fans who bought Brady Quinn jerseys, and hopefully those folks will wise up this time around and just buy a jersey with a retired Browns great on the back. That's clearly the safest investment in the most volatile of markets: the Cleveland Browns roster.

10. Up next: at Pittsburgh Steelers, Ketchup Field, 1:00

It's nice that the Browns got off the schnide last Sunday, because the next three weeks feature Pittsburgh, Green Bay, and Chicago. Thanks, Roscoe Parrish, because you might have saved us the agony of heading into the bye at 0-8.

It will definitely be an uphill battle for the Browns when they face off against the 3-2 Steelers. Sans Polamalu, opponents have moved the ball more effectively against the Steelers defense, but the Steelers have put some big numbers on the scoreboard the last two weeks. Ben Roethlisberger is averaging nearly 300 yards per game through the air, and Rashard Mendenhall has filled in admirably for the injured Willie Parker over the last 2 weeks.

Some pundits are discounting the Steelers because they're 3-2, but their two losses were both very close, and they probably win both of those games if Polamalu's healthy. As the Ravens have come back to earth during the last two weeks, my money's on the Steelers to win the division once again. The Bengals have looked frisky, but it's going to take a few more solid wins before I trust them.

For the Browns to have a chance, Derek Anderson needs to have one of his "hot" games. The Browns won't be able to run the ball consistently against the Steelers, so they'll have to sign up for throwing early and often if they want at shot at scoring.

As always, the key to stopping Pittsburgh on offense is to limit Ben Roethlisberger's big plays and hope he makes his standard mistakes. Roethlisberger is far more dangerous when the play breaks down and he leaves the pocket, so it's almost worth just committing to spying him with a linebacker on passing downs.

The Steelers have beaten the Browns in an astounding 11 straight games. The last time the Browns beat the Steelers, I was a 16-year old junior in high school and I'd just got my driver's license. *School of Rock* was in theaters. Come on guys, we're due.

Prediction: Steelers 27, Browns 10

(Objectively, I can't in good faith pick the Browns. You understand.)