What a difference a month makes. A month ago the Browns were in the middle of a seven-game losing streak with no end in sight, Mike Holmgren appeared disinterested in Cleveland, and Eric Mangini seemed as good as gone. A month later, the Browns have closed the season with a four-game winning streak that included a signature win over the Steelers, Mike Holmgren is in town to guide the organization as an all-powerful president, and Eric Mangini will at least have an opportunity to plead his case to the newly crowned king of Cleveland football. The most shocking thing about this run though? Nick Allburn says it has been the drastic reversal of fan morale, particularly as it pertains to Mangini.

What a difference a month makes. A month ago the Browns were in the middle of a seven-game losing streak with no end in sight, Mike Holmgren appeared disinterested in Cleveland, and Eric Mangini seemed as good as gone. A month later, the Browns have closed the season with a four-game winning streak (only the Chargers have a longer active streak) that included a signature win over the Steelers, Mike Holmgren is in town to guide the organization as an all-powerful president, and Eric Mangini will at least have an opportunity to plead his case to the newly crowned king of Cleveland football.

The most shocking thing about the last month has been drastic reversal of fan morale, particularly as it pertains to Mangini. A month ago, it would've been tough to find a Browns fan with a pulse that supported the beleaguered coach. Anyone who claimed to support Mangini had little reasoning beyond "you can't fire a coach after just one season." Now it looks like the majority of the fan base is behind Mangini, although some are certainly more passionate in their support than others.

Eric Mangini will carry that momentum into his meeting with Mike Holmgren, which will take place sometime Tuesday. Holmgren is in a tough situation, as either firing or retaining Mangini leaves him open to legitimate criticisms. His hiring was incredibly popular and he has political capital to burn, but Holmgren is facing a bit of a catch-22.

A great deal of emphasis is being placed on this meeting, but other than determining whether the two men can coexist in the same room for several hours, it's tough to see what it can really accomplish. Eric Mangini and Mike Holmgren hail from drastically different football backgrounds; Holmgren is a West Coast offensive coach, while Mangini is a somewhat conservative defensive coach, who would probably love to play Tresselball if he had the appropriate personnel. No meeting is going to alter those foundations.

Eric Mangini will probably be willing to make numerous concessions in order to keep his job. He might not be thrilled about it, but there are only 32 NFL head coaching jobs, and Mangini can't be sure that he'll ever get another shot. I'm guessing that Mangini will be receptive to changing the offense to a true West Coast scheme, but may put up more of a fight to maintain the 3-4 defense. The offensive system will be a definite deal breaker for Holmgren. However, Holmgren, who prefers a 4-3 defense, might be more flexible with the defensive scheme.

The problem probably won't be schematic discussions, as Mangini will likely be willing to accept almost any condition that Holmgren lays out, including working under a new team president (Holmgren) and general manager (TBA). The problem is whether or not Holmgren can believe anything coming out of Mangini's mouth. Let's face it -, just about anything Mangini says will be said in the interest of self-preservation, and he will save any organizational battles for down the road. That's where the problem lies for Mangini, who in league circles simply lacks credibility and to some degree, integrity.

I've weighed Mangini's fate over the last few weeks, and the team's recent success has moved the incumbent coach's destiny solidly into the grey area. In spite of Mangini's schematic and on-the-field strengths and weaknesses, a dead horse which I won't continue to beat, I keep coming back to his teamwork issues, namely one George Kokinis.

In one of the most bizarre hiring processes I can recall, Eric Mangini chose his own "boss," former general manager George Kokinis. In the interest of full disclosure, I liked the Mangini hiring. He was a young coach who had won before, had head coaching experience, and seemed to get a raw deal in New York. Honestly, what coach gets fired after finishing 9-7 and almost making the playoffs? Mangini was coaching the New York Jets, not the Florida Marlins! Hiring Mangini before creating a management structure was suspect, but I rationalized it by looking at the Belichick-Pioli relationship. I'm sure I wasn't alone in doing so, because as fans, it's not very much fun to treat a new regime as doomed from day one. We often hope for the best even when we fear the worst.

But back to Kokinis - how can we expect Mangini to answer to not one, but two superiors, when he couldn't even handle one "superior" (make no mistake - Mangini was wearing the pants in that relationship) whom he hand-picked? Not only did that marriage end in divorce, it only lasted eight games. Mangini might be able to say the right things and try to convince Holmgren that he can tolerate authority, but given Mangini's history with Kokinis, the odds would be overwhelmingly stacked against smooth sailing.

This isn't an isolated incident, either. One of the most disconcerting things about Mangini is not only his desire for complete control, but the way he deals with those close to him. Kokinis was a good friend and Mangini couldn't share power with him, but consider Mangini's departure from the Patriots, also.

When the Jets wanted to interview Mangini for their vacant head coaching

position in 2006, Bill Belichick asked Mangini to wait one more year. Belichick knew that Mangini eventually getting a head coaching gig was a slam dunk, and he also knew that their friendship probably couldn't survive if Mangini left to coach a division rival. Belichick was Mangini's mentor and friend, and Mangini owed much of his career success to Belichick. Instead of being patient, Mangini went to New York anyway. On top of that, he blew the whistle on Belichick in the now infamous "Spygate" incident, which was probably the final nail in the coffin containing their friendship. (And for the record, everyone steals defensive signals. They might not tape them, but they do steal them, and the Patriots probably weren't the only team to tape them.)

After losing to the Detroit Lions earlier this season, Mangini accused the Lions of faking injuries to slow down the Browns' no-huddle offense. Who coaches the Detroit Lions? Jim Schwartz, another former Belichick assistant with whom Mangini is familiar.

On their own, these incidents can be explained away and rationalized, but together they form a pattern. Eric Mangini has no loyalty to his colleagues with whom he's worked closely and befriended, or even to Belichick, the man most responsible for his rise through the coaching ranks. As much as Mangini preaches teamwork on the field, he doesn't seem to practice his own philosophy off the field or in the front office.

We've all met people like this. The most gifted student I met in business school had trouble functioning on a team. She constantly went over everyone else's head and complained to the professor about any group decision with which she didn't totally agree. She was a crazy-smart, industrious accounting student who nailed every test, but when it came to working as part of a team in a strategy class, she couldn't do it. I see parallels with Mangini, who is obviously an intelligent fellow and works very diligently, but for whatever reason is unable to play nice.

There are multiple reports that Mangini is going to be fired. Nothing has been confirmed by a major newspaper or sports media outlet, and some are also reporting that there's a 50-50 chance that Mangini will be back. There's a good chance that by the time you're reading this, Mangini's fate has been sealed, one way or another. But if Mangini is fired, it will not only be for philosophical differences with Holmgren, but also because his reputation and inability to maintain professional relationships has finally caught up with him.

If he's fired, Mangini will catch on as an assistant somewhere. That's a given. But it's not a given that he will get another shot at a top job. If that is indeed the case, Mangini may find himself looking back and wondering whether or not he should have treated people differently throughout his career. It's tough to be successful personally or professionally when all you do is burn bridge after bridge.

Maybe Mangini can learn something from his mistakes. Maybe we can, too.