There will come a point where it won't be too early to make judgments about the Cleveland Browns and even if that's not now that day is coming soon enough.

Two games into a season that didn't offer anything more than false hope, the Browns don't just look stuck in a rut, they look like most any other Browns team in the last 11 years and that's not a compliment. The politically correct view is to counsel patience and let's see if that continues. That's fine for now, but that doesn't mean anyone should accede to the requests of the apologists among us and essentially bury our heads in the sand, either.

Seneca Wallace, starting for one of the few times in his 8 year career, may have been brought in to merely manage the game, just like Jake Delhomme was brought in to merely manage the game. But their approach hasn't resulted in anything substantially different from what fans have seen before—critical mistakes at critical moments that turn winnable games in the wrong direction.

If you take it as a given, which I think you should, that the Browns work on the little things in practice under head coach Eric Mangini, ask yourself why hasn't all that emphasis taken hold yet this season?

Maybe there's only so many ways you can say the same thing. If that's the case, I can understand the view as I have to write about these guys week in and week out and have to fight the building desire to simply slap a headline above the words "See last week" or "Ditto" after each game and move on to other, less painful pursuits such as having a tooth extracted by drilling through my arm pit. Maybe the players are all on AT&T's network and Mangini's using

Verizon. Who knows?

But if part of Mangini's job is to find out why his players aren't listening, part of my job is to find out why Mangini isn't succeeding at his job, so I press on.

At its root, this is fundamentally a bad team. On offense there are exactly two players that could start on a good NFL team: Lawrence Vickers and Joe Thomas. There are a few others that would see lots of playing time on good NFL teams but probably wouldn't start. Eric Steinbach and Peyton Hillis come to mind. I think a few teams might like Mohammad Massaquoi and a few others might like Evan Moore.

That doesn't mean that if the Browns disbanded tomorrow that others on that unit wouldn't get picked up. They probably would but it would largely depend on their contract status. At best they would be spare parts on several but not all teams.

Walk through the defense and it's much the same story. I'm sure most teams would like to have Joe Haden and T.J. Ward, though right now neither would probably start for good NFL teams. Ahtyba Rubin would find himself starting for other teams, maybe Shaun Rogers, though he's currently on the Brett Favre plan when it comes to preseason. But the rest of the starters are like their offensive brethren, glad that the Browns actually didn't fold when Art Modell moved the team. Otherwise, they'd struggle to find a job in the NFL.

Josh Cribbs would start for nearly every other NFL team, but solely on special teams. No team outside of Cleveland would make him a starting receiver.

That's just the obvious stuff but it's important to note nonetheless because it's not as if Mangini is working with the 2007 New England Patriots here.

But the inability to make a tackle or cover a receiver or hold a block or run through a hole should be separate and distinct from the ability to stay onsides, move with the snap count, block without holding, not interfere with a receiver or avoid hitting a player after the whistle blows. In other words, it's not a good enough argument to say that a lack of talent is why the Browns

continue to make mistakes.

Ok, a lack of talent is not completely divorced from making mistakes. A defensive back that consistently gets burned by a receiver is more likely to grab him or make illegal contact downfield in order to slow him up. An offensive lineman is far more likely to hold a player he can't otherwise block. A quarterback desperate to impress is more prone to take unreasonable risks. But what about the false starts and the late hits? What's the excuse there? Exactly, there isn't one.

Reading the post game comments of a number of players they were consistent in saying that Mangini emphasizes eliminating mistakes and turnovers. Mangini himself talked about it to the point of frustration in his post game press conference.

And yet none of this emphasis really has taken hold just yet. Either the players have long since tuned out Mangini or never were really on the same wavelength with him. Whichever, the net result is that the Browns were a team almost deliberately undisciplined under former head coach Romeo Crennel and despite improvement last season have regressed this season.

Does this mean Mangini's job is in trouble? Well, probably no more now than when the season started. But if club president Mike Holmgren ever does decide to let him go, you can bet your next pension check that a lack of disciplined play will be one of the key reasons and the sense is that Mangini is well aware of that fact. You can read it on his face.

No one is suggesting that the Browns should play mistake-free week in and week out. It's a goal, of course, but it's more aspirational than achievable.

But for the Browns, the problem is that a lack of discipline coupled with a lack of talent is as deadly combination as there exists in football. It's tough enough going against the opponent across the field when you already know they're a better. Lopping on top of it idiotic penalties and mental lapses makes it nearly impossible to win, particularly when you can't then rely on your team's underlying talent to overcome those problems.

It's a bit of apples and pineapples comparison to be sure, but the Ohio State Buckeyes on Saturday played an entire game without one penalty. No one stresses playing disciplined and mistake-free more than Buckeyes head coach Jim Tressel and over time you can certainly see how that emphasis has manifested itself on the field.

If anything, it should be harder to get a group of 18-22 year olds to play in a disciplined fashion than a group of seasoned professionals. And yet the Browns thus far have literally thrown away two games against equally mediocre teams because they can't seem to apply the lessons that a group of college kids 120 miles south seem to understand.

Mangini was brought here in part because he was much more of a disciplinarian than Crennel. The statistics certainly bear this out. In the two years prior to Mangini's arrival, the Browns committed 195 and 194 penalties. At the same time, Mangini's Jets teams committed 170 and 156. Last season, the Browns committed 178 penalties, similar to where the Jets were under Mangini.

Through two games this season the Browns have committed 24 penalties, 14 on offense and 10 on defense. That's an astounding pace by any standard and certainly won't continue. Does that mean these two games were a fluke? Partially, but there always comes a point when a fluke becomes a trend. Four games in is usually the point where you start drawing real conclusions and where you'll really see Mangini start to sweat if things don't change.

The other thing about this team, beyond the myriad of mistakes, is the stilted nature of the offense. But we're not here to solve every problem at once. Let's stick with the small stuff for now and tomorrow or the next address whether anyone outside of Mangini thinks Brian Daboll is qualified to be a NFL offensive coordinator.