Because no one reads the morning newspaper anymore, it will probably get overlooked that the Plain Dealer on Tuesday had two items about the Cleveland Browns coming down on both sides of the debate over head coach Eric Mangini's status. One of those items in particular was probably the surest sign yet the Mangini will be back next season with the Browns and I'm not talking about Mary Kay Cabot's interviews with players who came out in support of their coach. We'll get to that in a moment.

No, the item of note was Bill Livingston's column advocating for Mangini's dismissal. It's not that Livingston added anything particularly novel or insightful to the conversation. He usually doesn't. It's just that his m.o. is to try and see which way the wind is blowing and then ride that tide, to mix my metaphors as Livingston might. The problem? He is generally wrong, a Cleveland sports writing version of George Kostanza.

But let's not get all caught up in the Livingston tea leaves. The truth is that no one knows what club president Mike Holmgren is going to do because Holmgren isn't going to talk about it for at least another week. So it's all just a guess anyway.

There are some things we do know and one is that Holmgren isn't enamored with the offensive

scheme. How could he be? Another is he has an itch to coach again, mainly because that's what he's told us. Neither of those are good for Mangini. We also know that Holmgren doesn't think so little of the job that Mangini has done this season to fire him before season's end. Finally we also know the bevy of statistics that show that while the Browns' record isn't better the team is improving. Both of those things are good for Mangini.

That's all just a mixed bag of items that Holmgren has rolling around inside his head at the moment. But to actually predict what Holmgren might do is a fool's game. Even weighing in on it at this point is getting pretty old. It's just finding new ways to say the same things to back up the opinion you formed long ago.

But if there really is a new item to add to the mix it was Cabot's item (along with a similar item in the Akron Beacon Journal) about the number of players coming out strongly supporting their coach. That would seem like a good thing.

To throw a little cold water on this show of support, just know that this kind of thing isn't unusual, in the abstract. In any locker room there are going to be players who like their coach, either because the coach brought those players in and gave them a chance others didn't or because they just generally like the guy. For those players it's easy to talk on the record.

On the other side of the locker room are going to be players who feel wronged by that coach for their own self-serving reasons. Maybe they feel like they weren't given a fair chance to prove themselves. Maybe they just don't like the cut of the coach's jib. Those players usually don't talk on the record.

All that said, it's still meaningful that players would speak up so dramatically in support of Mangini. It's meaningful because the reason Mangini's tenure in New York ended so quickly is that the feeling about Mangini inside the Jets locker room was nearly unanimous—they couldn't stand him. The inmates should never run the asylum but it's antiquated thinking that if the players hate the coach then the coach must be doing something right. In truth, he was doing something wrong and Jets ownership and management was convinced that it wasn't going to change.

It took Mangini an additional year to learn what Jets management understood. Mangini changed

little in his first year with the Browns from his days with the Jets and it was nearly the reason he was fired before that season ended.

But Mangini seems to have learned and the fact that players like Sheldon Brown, Lawrence Vickers and Alex Mack, a pretty good cross section really of aging veterans from other teams, veterans on this team who have seen it all, and emerging younger players, are willing to come to their coach's defense speaks volumes, or at least it should.

It may all be for naught of course because if Holmgren wants to return to coaching and do it here in Cleveland then Mangini's fate is sealed and none of the positives will have any impact. And if that turns out to be the case, at least now Mangini should know that the changes he made will get him another shot somewhere, which is something that seemed ludicrous just 12 months ago.

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While Mangini's fate is the hot topic around town, the coach whose status isn't getting enough attention but should is Byron Scott's with the Cavaliers. After 30 games this team is 8-22 and seems as directionless and as poorly coached as any team in Cleveland history.

The argument of course is that Scott doesn't have much to work with but is it less than what Mangini has with the Browns? That is a stretch. In large measure the Cavs are nearly the same team as last season except without two key components, LeBron James and former head coach Mike Brown. The loss of James makes the team worse, of course, but would this same team under Brown but with James nursing an injury for the season's first 30 games really be 8-22?

It seems quaint now the thought that dumping Brown would be a major positive for this franchise, not enough to offset the loss of James but enough of a positive to keep the franchise going in the right direction. Instead the loss of Brown seems to be making every bit as much of a difference as the loss of James.

It's hard to quantify, of course, but the one thing that could be said about Brown that can't be said of Scott is that Brown hardly ever seemed in over his head. Ok, maybe Brown was in over his head when it came to the playoffs, particularly deep in the playoffs. But that's a high class problem. Right now this team would be better off with a coach who didn't seem, well, so clueless about what it takes to put a team together and play winning basketball.

When you listen to Scott in interviews, he sounds smart enough. He stands stoically and folds his arms a lot, too. And yet when you sift through it all you start to realize that he's mostly hot air and lost, irretrievably lost. He changes strategy and lineups so often that its understandable why the players look so confused out there.

Contrast that for a moment with Mangini. Whether or not you are a Mangini fan or detractor we can all agree that he has a way of going about his business and he doesn't waver from it. His process may not lead the Browns to the Super Bowl someday but he does have a system. Scott isn't even that fully realized.

When this historically bad Cavaliers season comes to a close, owner Dan Gilbert is going to find himself with an incredibly shrinking season ticket holder base. It would have shrunk anyway without James and the promise his game always brought but it will shrink even more because of Scott. Indeed, if Mangini survives with the Browns, then there's an even greater likelihood that he'll be around longer than Scott. Gilbert isn't the hair-trigger owner that he's often portrayed as being but he is decisive. As Bob Dylan once wrote, "when something's not right, it's wrong." And

once Gilbert lands on that fact with Scott, which will likely be sooner than later, Scott will be gone and the Cavs will reboot. It may be Gilbert's only chance to save the franchise from another two decades of futility.

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I'm pretty sure this is how Larry Bird rolled.

There was an item in Business Insider this past week that really put into perspective why James was never going to re-sign with Cleveland. The item is a PowerPoint presentation by SA Global Plus, a fledgling (to be incredibly generous) media company based in Miami that is putting on James' birthday celebration on December 30th at Coco de Ville, a hotel in Miami.

The presentation is an example of the kind of celebrity excess that is the world that James and his ilk live in, the kind of excess that James could never get in Cleveland.

The presentation is really a pitch to line up corporate sponsors for James' birthday party. (Here's a link to the presentation) For $10,000 the sponsors will get appropriate signage at the party and a chance to stuff their goods in celebrity goody bags, because what adult birthday party doesn't have goody bags? On its web site SAGP, as they like to call themselves, promises an "A" list roster of musicians, athletes and models. The presentation, which SAGP has since removed from its web site, also promises its major sponsors (defined as someone willing to pay $500,000), additional involvement in what they call the "LeBron James Dinner Party Tour." The

Tour started in New York two weeks ago and continues through February in several major cities (Cleveland is not included) and coincides obviously with the Miami Heat's schedule.

If all this sounds ridiculous it's because it is. But let's be fair to James. This isn't the first celebrity birthday party to be sponsored and it won't be the last. This kind of thing is actually pretty common these days among the slightly accomplished types like James, Lindsay Lohan, and Paris Hilton, to name a few that have likewise gone down this path.

How any of this ties into winning a NBA championship isn't exactly clear but maybe winning a championship really was never James' point. The birthday party and dinner tour that he has aligned himself with for whatever chump change it puts in his pocket is the antithesis to the dedication and commitment it takes to actually accomplishing something meaningful with your life. James lives and moves now in a world that values the cult of celebrity above all else. It is the antithesis of a family dynamic where instead of surrounding yourself with the kind of support system necessary to achieve your goals you instead put yourself in the middle of a vacuous world where your support system consists of celebrity friends who aren't friends at all but paid party goers designed to make you look more important than you'll really ever be.

Maybe James can eventually win a ring but that is never going to happen until he understands that the only real way to get to Carnegie Hall is practice, practice, practice and not simply to buy your way in.

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Back to the Browns. Here's a question to ponder: If Holmgren had fired Mangini after last season, would their current record be any better?