Here’s a little chestnut I guarantee not a single one of the shiny ex-jocks-turned-broadcasters had the nerve to utter during the 14 hours of pre- and post-game coverage of the conference championships on Sunday:

Winning in the NFL is easy.

Don’t believe the breathless glorification of the coaches and general managers or the unspoken gospel of the Ray Lewis Chunky Soup commercials. Anybody can do it.

It’s not like it’s hard to find guys who are talented and are driven to succeed – even if for nothing more than self-glorification. If you come to the end of a season that wasn’t as good as you thought it would be, you can analyze your needs and fill them via free agency. Plus, every April you can simultaneously increase your talent and build for the future by getting a clear shot at

selecting the best talent coming out of college.

It’s simple really. Everybody knows that. And anybody can be successful. Look at the Bears, for Christ’s sake. One of the least intelligent franchises in sports was on the brink of going to the Super Bowl for the second time in five years.

Bottom line, it doesn’t take much to be a champion in the NFL. It doesn’t take much more to be a dynasty. The NFL *wants* you to succeed and dares you not to.

Thus, to be a perennial loser, a Susan Lucci in shoulder pads, in a league that at its core is designed to prevent that from happening deserves and demands your respect.

To be so wrong so often, to watch your piss land outside the urinal time and again, deserves to be celebrated, or at least examined in amazement. Imagine a guy calling “tails” 700 times in a row and having the nickel turn up heads every single time. Next week on *Fringe*.

So while the “great” dynasties of NFL history receive their much-ballyhooed heyday time and again, it’s time we honored genuine achievement: finding defeat (and then repeated defeat) along the well-marked, easily traveled road to victory.

In that spirit of celebration, I present to you the 25 greatest “stynasties” in NFL history.

[sty (n.) - 1. any filthy place or abode. 2. a place of bestial debauchery.]

Each stretch of truly respectable ineptitude must last a minimum of 10 years, tally an overall winning percentage of less than .400, include at least three different head coaches, and be devoid of any single season ever described by anyone as “magical,” “impossible,” or “special.”

(And before you even start to scroll down, yes, our current Browns are in here.)

In the NFL, anybody can win. To lose takes real magic. And here’s to the magicians:

**25. Atlanta Falcons (1983-1997)**

No. of Seasons: 15

Overall Record: 86-152-1 (.362)

No. of Postseason Berths: 2

No. of Winning Records: 2

No. of Losing Records: 13

No. of Head Coaches: 5

High Point: In Jerry Glanville's second year at the helm in 1991, the Falcons notched their first winning record in nine years, then stunned division rival New Orleans in the playoffs.

Low Point: The 1987 team went 3-12, was dead last in the NFL in points scored and allowed, and was outscored by an average of 15 points per game.

**24. Detroit Lions (1981-1990)**

No. of Seasons: 10

Overall Record: 58-93-1 (.385)

No. of Postseason Berths: 2

No. of Winning Records: 1

No. of Losing Records: 8

No. of Head Coaches: 3

High Point: 1983 team won eight of last 11 games to capture first-ever NFC Central title, then nearly upset 49ers in divisional playoff.

Low Point: Starting five different quarterbacks, the Lions lost 33 games in a three-year period from 1986-1988.

**23. Chicago Bears (1969-1978)**

No. of Seasons: 10

Overall Record: 51-90-1 (.363)

No. of Postseason Berths: 1

No. of Winning Records: 1

No. of Losing Records: 8

No. of Head Coaches: 4

High Point: Won final six games in 1977 to capture division title and first postseason berth in 14 years.

Low Point: The ’69 Bears only won a single game and were held to single digits in six of their 14 contests.

**22. Buffalo Bills (2001-2010)**

No. of Seasons: 10

Overall Record: 62-98 (.388)

No. of Postseason Berths: 0

No. of Winning Records: 1

No. of Losing Records: 8

No. of Head Coaches: 4

High Point: The 2004 team rallied from an 0-4 start to win nine of its final 12 games.

Low Point: After starting 5-1 in 2008 and looking like a legitimate playoff contender, the Bills lost eight of their last 10.

**21. New York Jets (1970-1980)**

No. of Seasons: 11

Overall Record: 57-103 (.356)

No. of Postseason Berths: 0

No. of Winning Records: 0

No. of Losing Records: 6

No. of Head Coaches: 4

High Point: After a miserable start, the 1974 Jets won their final six games to finish at .500.

Low Point: From 1975-1977, the Jets posted three consecutive 3-11 records with five different men serving as either full-time or interim head coach.

**20. New York Jets (1987-1996)**

No. of Seasons: 10

Overall Record: 54-104-1 (.343)

No. of Postseason Berths: 1

No. of Winning Records: 1

No. of Losing Records: 7

No. of Head Coaches: 4

High Point: The 1991 Jets won a dramatic overtime game at Miami in the regular-season finale to secure their first playoff appearance in five years – albeit with an 8-8 record.

Low Point: The ’96 Jets were a train wreck, posting the worst record in franchise history at 1-15, completing a two-year stretch in which they won only four games.

**19. Kansas City Chiefs 1974-1985**

No. of Seasons: 12

Overall Record: 68-109 (.384)

No. of Postseason Berths: 0

No. of Winning Records: 1

No. of Losing Records: 9

No. of Head Coaches: 4

High Point: Between an 0-4 start to 1980 and a 3-5 finish to 1981, Chiefs won 14 of 20 games.

Low Point: The ’77 Chiefs went 2-12 and allowed more than 500 total yards in two different games.

**18. Los Angeles Rams 1956-1965**

No. of Seasons: 10

Overall Record: 43-83-4 (.346)

No. of Postseason Berths: 0

No. of Winning Records: 1

No. of Losing Records: 8

No. of Head Coaches: 3

High Point: 1958 Rams won six of last seven including a win over the eventual NFL champion Colts to finish 8-4.

Low Point: In a painful stretch over the 1961, 1962, and 1963 seasons, the Rams won only two of 24 games.

**17. New York Giants 1971-1983**

No. of Seasons: 13

Overall Record: 61-124-2 (.332)

No. of Postseason Berths: 1

No. of Winning Records: 2

No. of Losing Records: 11

No. of Head Coaches: 5

High Point: The 1981 Giants bounced back from a 4-12 mark the year before to finish 9-7, reach the postseason for the first time in 18 years, and upset Philadelphia in the Wild Card Game.

Low Point: In 1973 and 1974 the Giants won only four of 24 games and finished last in the NFC East in both seasons.

**16. Cleveland Browns 1995-2010**

No. of Seasons: 13

Overall Record: 69-139 (.332)

No. of Playoff Berths: 1

No. of Winning Records: 2

No. of Losing Records: 11

No. of Head Coaches: 5

High Point: Posted 9-7 record in 2002, qualified to playoffs as Wild Card, blew 17-point second-half lead to lose to Pittsburgh

Low Point: Ceasing to exist for three years; less than a year after posting a 10-6 mark and considering themselves Super Bowl contenders, Browns begin a stretch of 17 losses in 18 games – looking worse than they did as an expansion team in 1999.

**15. Boston/New England Patriots 1965-1975**

No. of Seasons: 11

Overall Record: 49-100-5 (.334)

No. of Postseason Berths: 0

No. of Winning Records: 1

No. of Losing Records: 9

No. of Head Coaches: 4

High Point: With tailback Jim Nance averaging more than 100 rushing yards per game, the ’66 Patriots went 8-4-2, in the AFL East race until the final week of the season.

Low Point: The Pats were given a rude introduction to the NFL in 1970, going 2-12 with the worst offense and defense in the NFL.

**14. Baltimore/Indianapolis Colts 1978-1987**

No. of Seasons: 10

Overall Record: 47-104-1 (.313)

No. of Postseason Berths: 1

No. of Winning Records: 1

No. of Losing Records: 9

No. of Head Coaches: 5

High Point: Benefited by the arrival of Eric Dickerson and a pair of divisional victories by its strike-replacement team, the 1987 Colts came from nowhere to win a weakened AFC East.

Low Point: In 1981 and 1982, the Colts won just two of 25 games, including an 0-8-1 mark in the shortened ’82 campaign - then selected John Elway in the ’83 draft but were forced to trade him away when he refused to sign.

**13. Green Bay Packers 1948-1958**

No. of Seasons: 11

Overall Record: 37-93-2 (.288)

No. of Postseason Berths: 0

No. of Winning Records: 0

No. of Losing Records: 9

No. of Head Coaches: 4

High Point: 1955 team started 3-1, including thrilling win over eventual Western Conference champion Rams, on way to 6-6 finish.

Low Point: 1958 team won only one game with worst offense and defense in league - leading to the hiring of Giants' offensive coordinator Vince Lombardi.

**12. Chicago Cardinals 1950-1959**

No. of Seasons: 10

Overall Record: 33-84-3 (.288)

No. of Postseason Berths: 0

No. of Winning Records: 1

No. of Losing Records: 9

No. of Head Coaches: 5

High Point: Their only winning record of this stretch was a modest 7-5 mark in 1956, a season that saw the Cards start 4-0 and pick up a win over the eventual NFL champion Giants.

Low Point: Not only did the 1958 and 1959 teams combine to win just four of 24 games, they averaged more than four turnovers per game over the course of the two seasons, tallying a stunning takeaway/giveaway differential of minus-43.

**11. St. Louis/Phoenix/Arizona Cardinals 1985-2006**

No. of Seasons: 22

Overall Record: 121-229-1 (.346)

No. of Playoff Berths: 1

No. of Winning Records: 1

No. of Losing Records: 20

No. of Head Coaches: 7

High Point: Posted first winning record in 14 years in 1998, qualifying for playoffs for first time in 16 seasons, then stunned Dallas in the first round.

Low Point: The 2003 team finished 4-12 and finished dead last in the NFL both in points scored and points allowed.

**10. Denver Broncos 1960-1972**

No. of Seasons: 13

Overall Record: 53-123-6 (.308)

No. of Postseason Berths: 0

No. of Winning Records: 0

No. of Losing Records: 12

No. of Head Coaches: 5

High Point: 1962 team started hot and stood at 7-2 in early November before dropping last five to finish .500.

Low Point: Five consecutive seasons of 10-plus losses between 1963-1967; gave up 600 yards in a single game on two different occasions.

**9. Pittsburgh Pirates/Steelers 1933-1945**

No. of Seasons: 13

Overall Record: 34-83-6 (.301)

No. of Postseason Berths: 0

No. of Winning Records: 1

No. of Losing Records: 9

No. of Head Coaches: 7

High Point: After having won just one of their previous 14 games, Steelers won seven of eight in 1942 to secure first winning season in franchise history.

Low Point: Won only six games over a four-year period from 1938-1941.

**8. Washington Redskins 1947-1965**

No. of Seasons: 19

Overall Record: 84-145-9 (.372)

No. of Postseason Berths: 0

No. of Winning Records: 3

No. of Losing Records: 15

No. of Head Coaches: 7

High Point: 1955 Redskins won five of last six to finish 8-4 and challenge the Browns for the Eastern Conference title.

Low Point: In an incredible stretch over the 1959-1962 seasons, the Redskins won only two of 30 games.

**7. Philadelphia Eagles 1962-1977**

No. of Seasons: 16

Overall Record: 73-142-9 (.346)

No. of Postseason Berths: 0

No. of Winning Records: 1

No. of Losing Records: 14

No. of Head Coaches: 6

High Point: The 1966 Eagles won five of last six to snag an appearance in the utterly meaningless Playoff Bowl, posting a 9-5 mark, their only winning record in the string.

Low Point: Started 1968 season with 11 straight losses.

**6. Chicago Cardinals 1932-1945**

No. of Seasons: 14

Overall Record: 34-108-10 (.257)

No. of Postseason Berths: 0

No. of Winning Records: 1

No. of Losing Records: 12

No. of Head Coaches: 7

High Point: The 1940 Cardinals only won two games, but one was a 21-7 win over their crosstown rival the Bears, who by season's end would be known as the Monsters of the Midway after capturing the NFL title.

Low Point: In a tumultuous period for pro football as a whole, between October of 1942 and October of 1945, the Cardinals lost 29 straight games, including two consecutive 0-10 seasons.

**5. Cincinnati Bengals 1991-2002**

No. of Seasons: 12

Overall Record: 55-137 (.287)

No. of Postseason Berths: 0

No. of Winning Records: 0

No. of Losing Records: 11

No. of Head Coaches: 4

High Point: Won seven of final nine games in 1996 to finish 8-8 and tally only non-losing record of the string.

Low Point: Their 2-14 mark in 2002 was the worst in franchise history and their fifth straight 10-plus loss season.

**4. Tampa Bay Buccaneers 1983-1996**

No. of Seasons: 14

Overall Record: 64-159 (.287)

No. of Postseason Berths: 0

No. of Winning Seasons: 0

No. of Losing Seasons: 14

No. of Head Coaches: 6

High Point: The 1995 Bucs started hot, winning five of their first seven, and were tied for first in the NFC Central before losing seven of their last nine.

Low Point: Between 1983 and 1986, the Bucs posted three 2-14 records in four seasons.

**3. Detroit Lions 2001-2010**

No. of Seasons: 10

Overall Record: 39-121 (.244)

No. of Postseason Berths: 0

No. of Winning Records: 0

No. of Losing Records: 10

No. of Head Coaches: 4

High Point: The 2007 team roared to a 6-2 start – though it lost seven of its final eight, it was the only season in the string that didn't result in double-digit loss tally.

Low Point: A year later, the Lions became the first team to ever run the table, going 0-16 in the midst of a 19-game losing streak.

**2. Philadelphia Eagles 1933-1942**

No. of Seasons: 10

Overall Record: 23-82-4 (.229)

No. of Postseason Berths: 0

No. of Winning Records: 0

No. of Losing Records: 10

No. of Head Coaches: 3

High Point: Parlaying a plus-14 giveaway/takeaway ratio, the ’38 Eagles won five of 11 games, the closest they’d come to a winning record in the string.

Low Point: The 1936 Eagles were shut out six times in a 12-game season, including four straight (for the season they averaged scoring just over four points per game) and lost 11 in a row after winning the opener.

**1. New Orleans Saints 1967-1986**

No. of Seasons: 20

Overall Record: 90-196-5 (.318)

No. of Postseason Berths: 0

No. of Winning Seasons: 0

No. of Losing Seasons: 20

No. of Head Coaches: 7

High Point: With three games to play in 1979, the Saints were tied for first in the NFC West and wound up with one of the only two non-losing records in the string.

Low Point: 1980 Saints came within one point of becoming the first team to go 0-16.