In his regular "Morning After" feature, Erik Cassano provides his thoughts on the Browns last contest, a stinker of a loss to the Bears this past Thursday night. Papa Cass was there live, and provides his thoughts on the game, and what it really means as we head into the season.

Visit the Papa Cass weblog at http://papacass.blogspot.com/

Bears 20, Browns 7
Final preseason record: 2-2

Things you don't want to hear in the men's room of a football stadium with less than two minutes to play in the game and the home team coasting to a loss:

"The Browns showed nothing on offense tonight."

"I think tonight the realities of some shortcomings have set in."

"They're building, but this could still be a very long year."

The Browns play-by-play tandem of Jim Donovan and Doug Dieken were echoing the dejection that most of the 10,000 or so that stayed to the final gun were feeling following the Browns' worst performance of the exhibition season by far.

Apparently, Donovan and Dieken never attended the Tom Hamilton school of homerism. Criticism of the home team should be peppered liberally with catty comments about how dirty the visiting team's city is, or diatribes about how our stadium might be open-air and next to a lake, but their stadium is in a crack whore red-light district and five miles from the nearest parking lot.**

Have some pride, man. If you're going down, take the other team with you.

But I digress. I hadn't even planned on going to Thursday's game, but my friend Marc had an extra ticket. It was a work night, but what the hey, I figured. The Browns were on a roll. This was the final regular-season tune-up. It should be a good game.

Um ... not so much.

When the Bears returned the first Dave Zastudil punt 54 yards, I knew their hearts weren't in the game. When Chicago promptly stuck the ball in the end zone, I questioned whether their heads were in it.

The Bears were up 7-0 before you could blink, 10-0 before you could finish a beer.

Is it time to sound the alarm on Charlie Frye just yet? Probably not, but keep in mind that he hasn't looked good since leading the Browns on an opening touchdown drive against Buffalo. Thursday, he was awful. In his two drives, the Browns netted minus-1 yards of offense by my count. Both drives ended with Zastudil punts after three scrimmage plays.

Frye's throws went over, under, to the left, to the right and everywhere else where his receivers couldn't get to the ball. No one among the trio of Dennis Northcutt, Braylon Edwards or Joe Jurevicius caught a pass.

On an incompletion during the second drive, Frye whacked his throwing hand on a defender's helmet and was seen shaking it repeatedly. Perhaps at that time, coach Romeo Crennel decided it was time to get his starter out of there.

The scene shifted to Derek Anderson, who was becoming hot property after leading the offense on a game-winning drive in Buffalo on Saturday.
Anyone who thinks the Browns will be fine with Anderson as Frye's primary backup needs to lay off the pipe. Anderson looked serviceable at times, leading the Browns on a short-field two-minute drill that culminated in a short touchdown to Frisman Jackson to end the first half, but was no better than Frye in most respects.

Anderson showed a granite touch on his throws, overshooting receivers, flinging the ball wide right and left, and tossing a couple the Bears' secondary should have been ashamed not to intercept.

He bobbled a couple of snaps and had a few more passes batted down at the line of scrimmage. All in all, Anderson would be a fine project player, but there is no way on Earth I want him a Frye concussion away from active duty.

Then there is the ongoing ballad of Ken Dorsey. If Anderson looked inconsistent and Frye looked bad, Dorsey looked like be should be on the fast track to taking Maurice Clarett's roster spot with the Mahoning Valley Hitmen.

He has the athleticism of Bernie Kosar minus the accurate throwing arm. In other words, exactly what does this guy bring to the table? Smarts? Stephen Hawking has smarts, too. I don't think he'd make a very good NFL quarterback, though.

The scary part is that Hawking's motorized wheelchair might actually increase Dorsey's mobility.

Dorsey awkwardly tossed a bevy of second-half incompletions. As Marc put it, "when he throws, he looks like he's heaving a shot put."

All in all, I walked away from the game very dissatisfied with the Browns' quarterback situation. Frye, for all his favored-son backing, is still an unproven youngster with limited physical skills. Anderson and Dorsey are downright unsettling as the backup guys. Crennel didn't mince words after the game, telling reporters that "we didn't have a good quarterback tonight."

Hopefully this spurs GM Phil Savage to find a veteran QB before the season starts.

Defense, as has been the trend all preseason, had a few more positives to report. Kamerion Wimbley continued a very impressive exhibition campaign and showed more evidence that he is becoming a dominant pass rusher. Backup nose tackle Baba Oshinowo managed a second-half sack and Willie McGinest looked fine in his second game of preseason action.

On the flip side, choosing between D'Qwell Jackson and Chaun Thompson to start opposite Andra Davis at inside linebacker looks like an Anderson/Dorsey proposition. Neither impressed, and Jackson was burned several times on big gains. Until he learns not to bite on play fakes and gets acquainted with the Browns' coverage schemes, he will be a weak spot other teams will constantly attack.

If there is any silver lining to be taken out of a dud of a game, it's the competition to survive the final roster cuts. Below are some players I think helped their chances this week, and a few with waning chances.

Thumbs up

DB Andrew Pace

At a weak position looking for warm bodies, Pace came in and played hard Thursday, seeing action in all four quarters. He's smallish and his speed is mostly linear, but I loved the effort he showed, especially when the team around him didn't seem to care as much.

RB Jason Wright

He did his best Jerome Harrison impersonation, ripping off a couple of longer gains in the second quarter. There's not going to be a lot of room at the inn for another running back, but his speed could be useful on special teams.

LB Nick Speegle

The Browns can't have enough linebackers, and Speegle seems willing to do the dirty work on special teams to prove himself to the coaches.

Thumbs down

WR Kendrick Mosley

Every dropped pass is suicide for a receiver trying to make a roster, and Mosley had one Thursday. As it is, the Browns seem set at receiver. Mosley was fighting a major uphill battle against Josh Cribbs and Frisman Jackson.

FB Corey McIntyre

The Browns have Lawrence Vickers and Terelle Smith, who have both proven their worth. McIntyre could be a special teamer, but I just can't see the Browns carrying three fullbacks.

RBs William Green and Lee Suggs

One of these guys won't be here a week and a half from now. My money is on Suggs. Curiously, Suggs saw little action Thursday and Green saw no action. I'd like to see the loser of this battle traded for at least a draft pick, but it is entirely possible he might simply be cut.

***Before some Chicagoan reads that comment and gets his or her dander up, I was using a random, hyperbole-laced and purely fictitious example. I realize Soldier Field is not in a crack whore red-light district and five miles from the nearest parking lot. It's no further than three miles if it's an inch.*

Up next: New Orleans, Sept. 10, 1 p.m. (season opener)