The allegation on ProFootballTalk.com that some unnamed NFL teams are talking with some unnamed and undrafted free agents should hardly come as a surprise. If there is one thing that seems to be universal when it comes to the NFL's labor situation, it's that no one is overly thrilled with it and would do anything to just have the whole thing behind them.

But labor disputes have a cycle of their own and so too will this one. At its flashpoint, both sides of the dispute are galvanized in their disdain for the opposition. Both promise solidarity among their ranks and, generally, talk a good game.

But as the cycle keeps on turning and the labor dispute lingers on, signs of wear and tear do emerge. In this case it may just be those unnamed teams covertly pursuing free agents in violation of the rules of the lockout. It may also be in the occasional frustration that boils over, usually via Twitter these days, from a player or two with too much time on his hands.

Perhaps the most honest reaction from a member of upper management in the NFL was from the Cleveland Browns' own president, Mike Holmgren. It was Holmgren who was nearly over-the-moon giddy with the news that Judge Susan Richard Nelson had granted the players an injunction to prevent the lockout and said so publicly.

It was almost as if Holmgren forgot that he's no longer a coach lamenting the fact that he's

currently without players to coach. But it would be best for him to remember that a far more entrenched member of management these days, even if he's not quite an owner. As Randy Lerner's de facto representative of all things Browns, Holmgren would more be expected to unconditionally support the lockout, at least publicly.

This isn't to complain about Holmgren's reaction so much as it is to underscore that management, at least that sliver of it that doesn't pay the bills out of its pockets, isn't any happier about the lockout then the players. It also underscores the one thing that ultimately tends to break a labor dispute: unrest.

Cracks in the management ranks are usually harder to discern. Players, like any other group of employees, are usually the first to fall apart, generally under the weight of all the overhead they take on by virtue of the salaries they earn. Plenty, probably too many, players are working on their second or third marriage already. There are kids to support and goods to purchase. Those multiple cars sitting in the garage aren't just going to pay for themselves, you know.

Beyond just the occasional snipping from players who just want a deal done and say so publicly, the other way the frustration in the players is starting to show is their increasing willingness to publicly criticize NFL commissioner Roger Goodell for not being smart enough, strong enough, or something enough, to just get the owners to capitulate in this struggle. He's an easy target and at the moment isn't so much a person anyway but a symbol.

It's a measure of their frustration that they would take on the owners so overtly but ultimately harmlessly. It's also a measure of their lack of understanding of the issues in dispute.

Browns' linebacker Scott Fujita, a member of the National Football League Players Association, has somewhat been the "go to" guy when a comment is needed to keep the pot simmering at a low boil. Follow the trail of what he's talking about and you can get the sense that sooner or later his loose affiliation will collapse under the weight of its own naïveté.

When Goodell visited Browns' training camp last August, Fujita wasn't impressed and wasn't hesitant to say so, according to an article in the Elyria Chronicle-Telegram at the time.

Fujita said that no matter what questions the players asked, Goodell didn't have the answers. In truth, Goodell had answers, it just wasn't ones that Fujita and hence the union wanted to hear. The biggest gripe then as it seems to be now, is that the owners won't open their books to the unions' band of forensic accountants, as if this was the Holy Grail to unlocking the labor dispute.

Fujita, articulating the sound bite given to him from DeMaurice Smith, the overmatched head of the NFLPA, at the time negotiations first broke off said that the players need to know what the owners are making before they'd be willing to give back any of the revenue pie they get. The fallacy of course is that as long as even one owner is making one dollar that will be more than enough for the union to claim that changes in the owners seek in the league's financial structure aren't needed. That's why it's a ridiculous and distracting issue in the first place.

Then came Fujita's blasting of Dallas Cowboys' owner Jerry Jones who told 60 Minutes that a NFL lockout wouldn't be the financial doomsday that may believe it would be. He called Jones' comments the most irresponsible thing he had heard throughout this process.

Now I'm all for hyperbole, especially for hyberbole's sake. But Jones' comments aren't even the most irresponsible thing I've heard today about the impact of the lockout.

Not content to sit on the sidelines and let her husband look foolish all by himself, Jacyln Fujita weighed in of her own accord in a lengthy editorial that appeared in The Nation. Essentially her view is that her husband, indeed all professional football players, are being exploited by billionaire owners who don't really have the players' best interests at heart. Yes, I know, professional athletes are our most exploited underclass.

Mrs. Fujita writes about the physical toll a NFL player takes, something that can't be disputed. But she uses this as a platform to make vague complaints about how the owners aren't really looking after the players' health, forgetting all of the significant steps that Goodell, for instance, implemented even last season to reduce the number of concussions or other injuries. She doesn't mention, by the way, how much resistance Goodell has met from the exploited players on these efforts because if James Harrison isn't allowed to cheap shot two Browns' players in one game without drawing a fine then the players might as well just go bowling.

While I certainly don't begrudge a wife doing what she can to protect her husband, the last

paragraph of her editorial seems particularly misguided in light of recent real-life events outside the bubble of the professional playground that's given her the luxury to live better then she probably could have ever imagined:

That is my wish for tomorrow's boys, men, mothers, fathers and wives who will build their lives around this American pastime. They will have something when their money runs out. And when their aches and pains become unbearable, they will have the comfort of knowing that their blood, sweat and tears will carry them for the rest of their lives. They did not sacrifice their health and well-being for nothing. They will not be forgotten.

Like our boys in Afghanistan or even Valley Forge.

It's just inconceivable that her position is literally that anybody that suits up in a professional football game deserves to be set for life, but I guess you have to start somewhere. Oh well, there's a reason it's called rhetoric.

Finally, this past week, Mr. Fujita weighed in again, laying blame for all the labor woes at the feet of Goodell, evidence that the near final stage of the players' frustration toward a dispute that won't be resolved soon.

Fujita is now officially disappointed in Goodell because he's not the man he thought he was, not the man who Fujita thought could bring the owners together for a deal. If Fujita's being fair, he should similarly look at his own union leader and make the same assessment.

The issue isn't Goodell or a lack of consensus among the owners. It boils down to the simple fact that players like Fujita are interested in short term answers when the owners are posing long term questions.

But this divide, too, will eventually get bridged. If Fujita is really the barometer, the players are but a few months away from cracking completely.