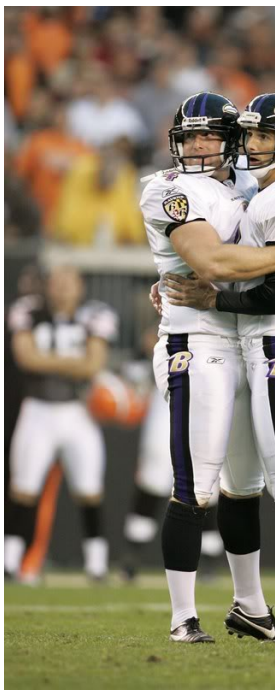
Now, THESE are the Browns we've come to know and love. Heart-pounding razor-close games. Critical mistakes at the worst possible times. The opposing team driving an 80-yard stake into your heart. Waiting for the inevitable score that would lose the game. Papa Cass is here to review the latest dagger in the hearts of Browns fans in "The Morning After".



Ravens 15, Browns 14
Record: 0-3
Divisional record: 0-2

Now, THESE are the Browns I've come to know and love. These are the Browns of my youth.

Heart-pounding razor-close games. Critical mistakes at the worst possible times. The opposing team driving an 80-yard stake into your heart. Waiting for the inevitable score that would lose the game.

These are my Browns. I feel so at home now.

In a game most people (including myself) thought the Browns had zero chance of competing in, let alone winning, the Browns' offense and defense suddenly sprang to life in a glorious stretch that last most of the second and third quarters.

Charlie Frye found Braylon Edwards for a 58-yard touchdown pass to put the Browns up 7-3. The offense used the two-minute drill to near-perfection to put up a convincing 14-3 halftime lead.

For the first time all season, the Browns actually looked like they had their shit together. The defense provided fairly consistent pressure on Steve McNair for most of the game. The run defense stepped way up from Weeks 1 and 2, stifling Jamal Lewis.

But as has been the case pretty much since the Browns re-entered the league, they lost the experience battle, and it cost them the game.

After an uprising in the second quarter, the offense went dormant again in the second half. Baltimore, loaded with veterans, knew that if they could chip away at the lead, they had a chance to win. The Browns, who needed nary more than a field goal to seal the game, couldn't even muster that.

You could hear Baltimore's footsteps growing louder as late afternoon turned to dusk. A touchdown to pull to within 14-9. D'Qwell Jackson made a great play to avert a two-point conversion.

But the Ravens kept chipping away. A fourth-quarter field goal put them right on Cleveland's doorstep at 14-12.

Then came the play that decided the game. Second and goal, inside of four minutes to play. Browns youth versus Ravens experience. Cleveland, which had managed to stay in the driver's seat most of the game, were finally overmatched when it mattered most.

Charlie Frye, going for the gusto, forced a pass up top to Braylon Edwards six yards deep in the end zone. If Edwards catches it, the game is essentially over. But he didn't. He didn't have a chance.

Instead, savvy cornerback Chris McAllister gambled, committing to the ball. It paid off. McAllister plucked the ball away from Edwards, setting up the Ravens drive that would result in Matt Stover's game-winning field goal.

All throughout the second half, the Ravens' veteran poise was the story. McNair keeping drives alive with clutch third-down completions. Matt Stover calmly nailing a pair of fourth quarter field goals like he's been doing for more than 15 years. McAllister's well-timed gamble in the end zone.

They kept chipping, chipping, chipping, like miners looking for a vein of gold. It wasn't pretty, but they found it and escaped from Cleveland with the win that kept them tied with Cincinnati atop the AFC North.

Anyone who wants to place this loss solely at the feet of Frye is missing the point. Much like Bill Buckner's immortal fielding gaffe, it was simply the last domino to fall in a series. Truth be told, the Ravens won this game, in a geological sense, over the past 10 years, amassing a cache of impressive veteran talent, making draft picks that panned out, building a roster that has needed very little turnover.

Those teams are the teams that tend to win the close games. Those are the teams that can take the pinhole of an end-zone interception and turn it into the daylight of a win.

That's the type of team we can only hope the Browns are going to have in five years.

Up next: at Oakland, Sunday, 4 p.m.