As I watched Sunday's Cleveland-involved sporting competition, the concept kept nagging me the whole time that I had seen this somewhere before... But where? Where o where could that have been?

Oh, yes. Two weeks ago, in Oakland.

That was a carbon copy of the Raiders game. And very likely how next week's game against Houston will look as well.

Offense comes out and does nothing (or, in this case, does something BAD). Defense allows fairly easy score. Offense remains unimaginative and is hampered by injuries and poor QB play (the term "QB play" in this sense being a combination of O Line issues, questionable play calling, no running game, non-stellar receivers, and the performance of the actual QB). Team gets down big in 1st Half. Opponent gets conservative. Defense stiffens accordingly, playing just well enough to keep the game from becoming a blowout. Offense finally makes a couple plays near the end to make it interesting. Opponent wakes up long enough to put foot on throat - too little too late.

The Browns aren't a horrible team, but, man, are they boring to watch.

In both games, the optimist could argue that Cleveland hung around and toughed it out and dragged their sorry carcasses back into a winning position. The pessimist would counter that the early deficits were more indicative of the actual matchup and that any comeback was due to the opposition falling asleep because there were as bored as we were.

There's not really much to discuss when it comes to the game, although it could've gotten interesting in a hurry had D'Qwell Jackson not been called for that Facemask penalty while stopping Frank Gore on 3rd Down with about 5 minutes left. Colt McCoy would've been afforded a chance for a late game comeback - his 4th such opportunity of the year, in which he is 1-2 in the previous 3 (Cincy, Miami, and Oakland).

Whatever. McCoy probably would've blown it anyway (sorry, that's the pessimist speaking).

And since no one's reading this anyway, let's plod on.

Stats

Time of Possession: SF - 32:53, CLE - 27:07

Total Yards: SF - 348, CLE - 290

Yards Passing: CLE - 224, SF - 174

Yards Rushing: SF - 174, CLE - 66

First Downs: SF - 19, CLE - 18

Turnovers Forced: SF - 2, CLE – 0

Sacks: SF – 4, CLE - 1

Final Score: San Francisco 20, Cleveland 10

The statistical war wasn't a landslide win for San Fran by any means, but the yards rushing, sacks, and turnovers really tell the tale. These don't even show that the Browns fumbled 5 - yes, 5! - times, so only losing 1 was some kind of disgusting moral victory, like winning a lead paint-eating competition.

As the RB's fall to the side, it magnifies Cleveland's inability to give Colt any kind of relief with a running game, putting the full weight of offensive execution on the shoulders of a QB who's clearly not ready for it.

The Browns' Run D is their Achilles' heel - what looks to be a really solid squad does get exposed against teams with strong run games/RB's. There are some bad teams still on the horizon (Arizona, Jacksonville, St. Louis), but they all have quality Running Backs, so Cleveland needs to get this shored up or they'll struggle to reach even that 6-10 I predicted.

Game Balls

No One – DQ was the only real candidate, but that facemask drops him down.

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Honorable Mention

D'Qwell Jackson – Delayed the inevitable with his goal line stops in the 1st Half. 10 tackles. But basically ended the game with his facemask tackle on Gore on 3rd Down with about 5 minutes left. Facemask negates 3rd Down stop, drive continues, stick a fork in the slim hopes.

Chris Ogbonnaya – It's not like you were very good, but I've gotta give you props for carrying the load only like a week and a half since getting signed here.

Ahtyba Rubin – Just plain solid.

Josh Cribbs – For apparently talking Colt into actually throwing a deep ball.

Cribbs after the game: *I was asking for it all game. I told that the coverage they were playing, they were not getting wide enough on his cover 2. All game I told Colt, 'trust me!' And he said, 'if I throw it over, you better catch it.' It was really dramatic at that point. I said, 'if you throw it over there, I'm going to score!' And he did.*

Question... why was it so freakin' hard to convince Colt to throw that ball?

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Wall of Shame

Peyton Hillis – Has been more useless than an air freshener in a septic tank this season.

Montario Hardesty – Out for multiple games again, are ya? Faaaaaabulous.

Colt McCoy – Ever since the starting job became "his to lose", he's been trying to lose it. His best games as a pro all came when he went in there with zero expectations and played loose. He's playing anything but loose now. Why so jumpy? Afraid of getting hit? You're going to get hit regardless. Afraid of making a mistake? You're making them anyway. Just RELAX, dude. Think about it this way - you've probably already played yourself out of your job for 2012. Play like you have nothing to lose.

Tony Pashos – Watching your attempt at blocking on the 2nd offensive play of the game, I channeled Bill Murray from the beginning of Scrooged : *Oh my gosh. Did that suck!*

Regarding the Deep Ball

Generally, I like Terry Pluto's stuff, but I think he's missing the cruise liner with his take that poo-poos the importance of incorporating the long ball into the offense. Here's an excerpt :

3. McCoy was sacked four more times. He was hit and knocked down six other times. On the season, McCoy has been hit 43 times after he throws -- 29 in the last four games. He had only 14 hits in the first three games.

4. McCoy has been sacked 16 times, 14 in the last four games. Teams are blitzing more. Coach Pat Shurmur said the 49ers did nothing special, that the Browns had people there to block -- but not all the blocks were made.

5. Yes, there are times when McCoy holds the ball too long. Yes, Peyton Hillis' injuries have been huge, because he is one of the few Browns who keep defensive coordinators up at night. But just watch the games, the pressure is increasing -- and quarterbacks under pressure have a hard time throwing long.

But why is he under so much pressure, and why is that pressure increasing? It's a simple answer Terry - teams don't worry about the deep ball, so they can stack the line of scrimmage and blitz without fear of retribution. They can put 9 in the box and take away the run and the short passes.

All that pressure that you claim will prevent Colt McCoy from throwing long is a direct result of not trying to throw long.

There are only 2 real ways to execute a successful passing game against a stacked line: Run effectively and use play action, or pass over the top of it.

Do the Steelers have a great run game? No (unless you live in some kind of vacuum where the year is still 2005). And please don't tell me they have a great Offensive Line. What they DO do is heave the ball all over the field with abandon. Seems like they hit one or two bombs a game. THAT is how they keep their Offense effective despite its limitations.

Yes, I am aware that POS is a much better QB than Colt. Yes, I am aware that Pittsburgh has superior receiving deep threats. That doesn't mean you don't try it.

Obviously, you can't throw every pass only five yards. But to think that all the Browns have to do is start heaving 20- to 40-yard passes is ridiculous.

To my recollection, the Browns threw 2 real deep balls against SF. The first was tossed to a double-covered Greg Little and picked in the end zone. A lot of people have complained about Colt even trying that throw, but not me. Little is taller than those guys. He needs to make a better effort to go up and win that. And that's not to mention the high propensity of getting a Pass Interference call in today's pass-happy NFL.

The second was the TD to Cribbs. And he was wide open. Colt severely underthrew him and Josh had to wait on it... and he still turned it into 6 points.

I have been to 2 games this year - which has afforded me a bigger picture of the field - and have noticed Receivers open deep several times, so that debunks the theory that the WR's on this team are so incredibly awful that they can't get open deep. Either Colt doesn't see them or misses them, but that doesn't mean plays aren't there to be had.

I'd like to see the no-huddle offense given a real try, and some screen passes. But I also know that suddenly thinking the Browns can fire the ball downfield is not being realistic.

What's not realistic is thinking screens will work when no one is leaving the line of scrimmage.

Hey, I'm all for trying more no-huddle, and I'm not calling for bombs-away. Just give me 5 attempts at it a game, even if it's 20 yard TE routes up the middle (which Colt was so good at throwing last year), just enough to make them think about it for 3 seconds, maybe just enough

to loosen things up for the Dink-n-Dunk "attack" to be more effective.

Going 40 yards in one play is a lot easier than trying to pick it up 4 yards at a time.

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Regarding Drama Queens

I was listening briefly to the *Kiley and Booms* show on 92.3 on Monday morning. I don't normally listen to that show because they strike me as whiny and pandering to the vocal (I hope) minority of Browns fans that need to cry like someone stole their bike after every game (win or lose), not to mention that the one dude's voice is just a nasally disaster (I don't know which, I don't listen enough to know who's who).

Anyway, some guy called in and pronounced that he hoped that the Front Office was listening because he is a season ticket holder and he's supported the team his whole life blah blah blah and he's DONE. He can't take it any more, this 10 point loss on the road to a 6-1 team was apparently the final straw. He could hang in there during Mangini's 1-11 start a couple years ago, the disaster year where Butch quit, and Crennel's 4-12 swansong, but this 3-4 team is just the worst thing that ever happened to professional sports.

Oh, and to emphasize his point, he tells us how he feels bad for his 8 year old son, who loves going to the games and cries even when the Browns lose Preseason games but won't get to go anymore (I assume because he's giving up his season tix).

I'm sitting there shocked, just flabbergasted... this guy purposely went out of his way to call up a show (a day later!) and wait for God knows how long to sound this freakin' retarded.

I mean, anyone who makes the "*I'm Done*" proclamation is short-bussin' it in the first place. The message you're loudly sending is that " *I'm too*

much of a pussy to take it any more
." If you are indeed too frustrated to continue rooting for your team, then make and execute that decision quietly. We don't need to hear about it.

Especially since it's probably the 7th time you've made that claim.

And who's to blame for your poor 8 year old son being unable to go to games anymore? You may be "done", but it doesn't sound like he is. But you feel bad for him because he won't be able to go to games any more? That's like beating your son with a hammer then telling us that you feel bad he's covered with bruises.

People people people... we're all frustrated and impatient, and we're all prone to kneejerk emotional reactions. But for the love of Kim Kardashian, please have some self-respect.

Regarding Whatever

***Mr. Cribbs said after the game: *"I know Brownstown is really upset, but one thing they can be excited about is our effort. I hope back home they won't get into a frenzy like the world's going to end with this loss."*

Ha! Good try to head 'em off at the pass, Josh, but you know Brownstown waaaay better than that.

***By the way, Brownstown, any time you feel sorry for yourself, just look at Denver. *THAT* could be your team. And
THAT
could be your QB.

Of course, that would make you delusional enough to have been calling for him all season and probably making a rash of excuses on his behalf today, but you know what they say... fans are nothing if not stupid.

***Listening to a Pat Shurmur press conference is like having an auditory lobotomy.

***Shurmur has already gone on record saying he doesn't mind if Holmgren hires an Offensive Coordinator, but he hopes that he can retain the playcalling duties.

What happens if he doesn't?

I doubt it would happen, but we in Cleveland know perfectly well that a Coach can quit over something like that. Look no further back than 1989 for a tragic example.

***I feel a little better about Matt Barkley than I did before after watching that Stanford-USC game Saturday. He just needs to avoid playing against Andrew Luck, though. That won't be a favorable comparison for any college QB right now.

***Yes, I still believe Colt McCoy CAN be a good QB. Yes, I doubt he WILL be. Yes, I know that many great QB's went through a year or two of struggle before they blossomed. So did a ton of QB's that never amounted to shit.

He's still got 9 games left - plenty of time to show improvement. Better show it.

***I went to a Halloween party in Detroit last weekend with my college roommate who's in (that) town working on some kind of *Wizard of Oz* re-make. Costumes were requisite, so I went as a drunken warrior monk, because, well, that's like a dream of mine.

Anyway, the party was for the full cast and crew of what is apparently a pretty big movie, and it was crowded. In this crowd were a plethora of actors that are playing Munchkins and Winkies.

I'm sure you know the Munchkins are quite small, but the Winkies (they were the Wicked Witch's guards in the original) are apparently quite tall, so said crowd was packed with little people and people that were at least 6'8, all wearing all manner of elaborate costume.

The last time I was at a party like that, illicit substances were involved. And I was alone.

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Next Up

Houston Texans (5-3).

Sigh. This is like playing the 49ers all over again. First Place team, good on Defense (3rd overall, 6 rush, 5 pass), good at Cleveland's defensive kryptonite (#4 rush offense), decent pass attack (11), and Andre Johnson might be back. Blech.

Fast-forward to the Rams, please.

Texans 23, Browns 9.