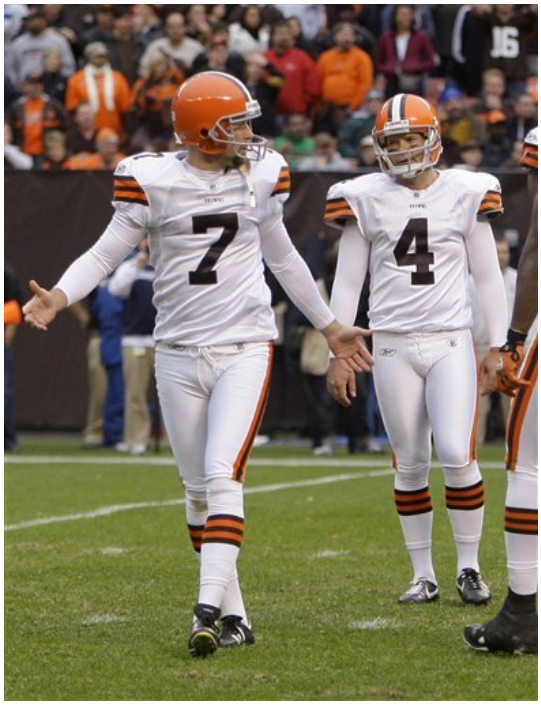

I am normally a mild manner person but today I am fired up and can't seem to control myself. I am worked up and need to get this off of my chest before I implode. Of course I am talking about Cleveland Browns Head Coach Pat Shurmur's coaching strategy that blew up in his face Sunday. I need to vent my frustration and explain why I am so disappointed in the first year head coach's performance.

First of all, for those of you who don't know, I actually wrote a few articles on what I thought coach Shurmur would be and do for this team. I spent countless hours studying his offenses with the Rams and came away pretty impressed with the execution and rhythm of the offense, and I thought he would bring these attributes and more to the Browns.

So far the offense has been anything but in rhythm and certainly has struggled to execute. The game plans aren't up to par which has led to horrible starts to games and a constant game of catch-up.

Sunday coach Shurmur added to my frustration and took his failures to a new level by electing a strategy that featured a mindset which shares roots with tucking away your manhood and lying on the ground in an attempt to sneak up on victory.

The Browns have a young team and can't afford for a coach to play with the throttle. You can't play red light/green light with a young, inexperienced team and expect good things.

The Browns clearly were struggling on Sunday to score points so on a drive that started out with plenty of steam and momentum, Pat Shurmur decided to slam on the breaks and that ultimately caused a serious case of whiplash for the young Browns and earned them their sixth loss in nine tries.

They started that game defining drive in the 4th quarter down by one point, and in 3 plays, aided by a St. Louis penalty, were already down to the Rams 19 yard line with 6 minutes still left on the game clock. At that point coach Shurmur decided that time was more important than points or achievement and decided to eat as much clock as possible, while being content with a FG.

Instead of recognizing the opportunity and capitalizing on the momentum, while aggressively seeking points that would have given the Browns a bigger lead, the decision that was focused on coming away with a FG backfired when the FG was botched.

I have two sides of issues with how that sequence of events was handled. One side of my problems stem from the mindset of a young team and the other is about football.

The mindset of the young Browns team can't be tainted with thoughts of confusion or hesitation. As a head coach, a big part of your job is leadership and guidance, especially to a junior team.

NFL players are not dummies or children, they are grown men who actually can and do think for themselves. Athletes pick up on fear, especially good ones, and it is part of what makes them elite. They smell weakness and fear which often times fuels them to attack and conquer inferior opponents. When they smell fear and weakness from their coach it can only lead to seeds of doubt that can help them grow into a group of malcontents.

I am not saying anything crazy like he is losing the locker room already, but as a coach you always want to maintain the respect and trust of your players. But if coach Shurmur is actually preaching to the players the same garbage he is spewing at the press conferences, I know the

players are already questioning him.

For example, at the press conference he told reporters that he told his players that losses like that are what happens when you don't execute, which as a general statement is true, but at no point during the conference did he even suggest that him burying his head in the sand had anything to do with the outcome. He even actually said the reporters were "nitpicking" and everything over the course of the game can be second-guessed if you wanted to nitpick.

To me that whole statement is nonsense. Of course there are critical points in games where a coach's input and decision is key to the outcome of a game. They get paid a king's ransom to make those decisions and dictate strategy, so for him not to recognize that his choice to pack it in was a huge factor in the FG even being attempted is dead wrong.

The players were there. They saw it and were actually victims of his decision to protect a lead that didn't yet exist. Sure, the long snapper and Phil Dawson didn't execute, but the players certainly saw the philosophy he took and they surely saw that it didn't work.

If coach Shurmur doesn't understand the message he was sending to his team he simply shouldn't be a head coach in the NFL. The message was clear and everyone understood it, including his players, and unfortunately the long snapper and kicker forgot to take their head out of the sand in time to do their jobs.

In his Monday press conference the first year coach continued the scam he started at the post game press conference by saying "you can score running just like you can score passing". No shit, Sherlock, but not this team.

The 2011 Cleveland Browns have 2 rushing TDs all year, both by a player watching the game in street clothes. Peyton Hillis hasn't suited up in over a month and the Browns have zero rushing TDs during that time and, by the way….the Browns active RBs for Sunday have ZERO TDs rushing not just this year but for their careers. So don't try and sell me some BS about how we had just as good of a chance running for a TD as we did passing. Just save the air in your lungs if that is what you have to say.

The biggest issue I have with the lame message coach Shurmur was sending his team stems from the fact that I thought when Eric Mangini was canned and Pat Shurmur was hired the Browns were done playing scared, passive football.

I figured the defensive mentality I hated was leaving with the coach who had a defensive background, but clearly I was wrong. The Browns play in a division jam packed with alpha male stacked teams and I understand that as long as we have a team temperament that is timid and scared to lose we will continue to be on the outside looking in.

I was convinced based on my film study that Pat Shurmur was an attacking style coach because he did a very good job of attacking defenses while serving as offensive coordinator of the Rams, but so far in his tenure he has proven to be anything but aggressive and far from what I would consider assertive.

The Browns will continue to get steam-rolled until they get a coach who actually instills aggressive play and doesn't just talk about it in the off season. He sent a clear message of fear and timid play on Sunday. Oh yeah, and he said he would choose to bury his head in the sand if he had to do it all over again. Fabulous. This is what we have to look forward to.

The football side of why I hated the strategy on Sunday is simple; This is a young team that doesn't have experience in too many of those types of games and it was a great opportunity to get game reps that challenge them to come away with points in an attempt to win.

Remember, the Browns didn't have a lead that they were protecting at all. They were trying to score and take the lead. Also remember that they had the ball on the opponents 19 yard line with 6 minutes left so it wasn't a scenario where they were setting up a true game winning FG attempt. They were trying to take the lead, and regardless of how much time they tried to run off the clock, Rams were getting that ball with over 2 minutes left …..and don't forget that they were on the 19 yard line with 6 minutes left. They could only get one first down, so of course the Rams would have plenty of time left to get into FG range…why not try and score a TD?

Back to the football side of my frustration, the Browns actually have the potential to have some great red zone threats but they are all young and need game reps. You can run red zone in practice all day but everyone knows practice is far from duplicating live game conditions.

Evan Moore proved early in the season he can be a factor in the red zone. I understand he was doubled on the play before half where he committed a face mask penalty, but the fact that they double him meant somebody was in a one-on-one, and that player is who Colt McCoy would have needed to identify making it great growth opportunity.

The Browns have two rookies that have the potential to be really good red zone players also. TE Jordan Cameron is a basketball player turned football player who stands over 6-5 in socks with a 37.5 inch vertical leap. You mean you can't run a "big" package on the 8-yard line and use Evan Moore as a decoy and throw it up to the rookie so you can see if he can make a play?

What about starting WR Greg Little who is almost 6-3 and possesses a vertical that is over 40 inches? Do you think your lead WR can get a chance or what? We all know that RB Chris Ogbonnaya won't even be on the roster next year. Can't we use valuable experiences like that against more evenly matched competition to develop the young players before we have to play the Steelers and Ravens four times over the next two months?

From a strictly football standpoint there is so much that could have been gained instead we ended up on the bad end of a team meltdown started and led by the head coach.

They should have played the game to win and protect the lead once they got it. You can't protect something you don't have.

I am not even going to harp on the fact that coach Shurmur initially had no clue his starting FB was not in the game, and then failed to fix the situation once he found out about it, because I do acknowledge the stupid in that snafu. Especially once I found out he knew he called a FB dive with no FB in the game and did not think it was important enough to fix.

I actually would rather focus on how in the hell he thought a FB run from the 9 yard line was an adequate call at all.

In case the coach forgot for a second that this is actually Cleveland, Ohio let me remind him it is in fact…..Cleveland, OH and not some town where football is a fad or hip thing to do. This is a football community that knows, loves and lives the game every day of the weekend during the fall and thinks it nonstop during the rest of the seasons.

You can't just feed us a few company lines and ridiculous explanations because we understand the game. Maybe the average fan doesn't know the difference between two deep and quarters coverage but they sure enough understand concepts, tempo, attitude, and execution so you can't feed us chopped steak and call it filet.

We all saw at what point he decided the clock was more important than trying to score a TD because it was clear. It was plain as day what he was doing and what he thought about his passing game, so don't feed us some bogus lines like "I was not *not* trying to score a TD", it was clear you already decided on the fact that kicking a FG was all you needed to steal a win.

I spend hours after games watching film and critiquing players' performances so I am not going to treat the coach any differently. I surely didn't need to watch game tape again when it was clear what his plan was the minute he handed the ball to a LB…oh I am sorry I mean FB, the first time. Unfortunately for the entire Browns nation it failed and Shurmur failed miserably to show this young team how to grab a victory when it was dangling right in front of them.

If that is what we can expect from coach Shurmur, and if that is the type of football he is bringing to Cleveland, then he can just save the energy. We have seen that lame game from the last few head coaches Mr. Lerner has paid for and that version is old and played out.

That timid style has done nothing for us but let the Steelers walk all over us and have the Ravens using us as playoff warm-ups….and now the Bengals are younger and better than us. This is the big leagues, step up or step out but please don't play the same limp football we have seen for years now.

In closing I want to say that I am not calling for his head already and I understand his book is just getting started but I want to make it clear….I don't like anything about the decision he made at the end of that game on Sunday and I have a zero tolerance policy when it comes to playing passive football.

I also want Pat Shurmur to know that he was wrong for the way he attacked the media after he was the one who created the epic failure. The media is in there doing their job which is to get the story. The story on Sunday was about a young team failing to snatch a win that was right in front of them because they couldn't execute and because their coach set them up for failure.

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