So much about the way the Cleveland Browns game against the Baltimore Ravens played out on Sunday seemed inevitable. Whether it was the inability to stop a good running attack, the inability to put points on the board, the untimely interception or even the early injury to quarterback Colt McCoy, it all seemed so predestined.

And the 24-10 final score in favor of the Ravens? Yea, that was inevitable, too.

There would be no surprises this week. No chance of the Ravens taking the Browns too lightly. No early Ravens turnovers to give the Browns unexpectedly good field position and a few quick scores. Instead, inevitably, just another butt kicking at the hands of team on a far different trajectory. At least the loss gave the Browns the rather dubious bragging rights of having been dominated by both Harbaugh brothers in one season. So there is that.

The game certainly carried the whiff of nearly every other loss that preceded it, right down to the deceiving final score.

Helping early on to keep the score closer than the game was a couple of factors. There was the rain, which kept the Ravens from throwing too much. Then there was Ravens head coach John Harbaugh eschewing a field goal early for an unsuccessful fourth down attempt and then Ravens kicker Billy Cundiff missing two short field goals late in the second quarter. Had the Ravens piled on the points then, the score and the game being witnessed would have been perfectly in sync. That would come.

But before we get ahead of ourselves, let's focus for a moment on the things we knew were coming before the coin was even tossed.

First was Ravens running back Ray Rice, channeling a young Jamal Lewis and running through the Browns' defense like a deer darting cars on a country two-lane. On his first 6 carries he averaged 10 yards per. He couldn't keep up that pace but the pace he maintained was brisk enough. He was well over 100 yards rushing in the first half and only the presence of Ricky Williams, who took some carries from him, and slightly better play by the defensive line kept Rice from running for 300 yards.

That untimely interception? It came late in the first half, during a two-minute drill of sorts and followed two previous passes from McCoy that could have been intercepted. But more to the point it was then followed by what else, an inevitable pass interference call near the goal line. But in something that is becoming inevitable but on the good side is a successful goal line stand by the Browns' defense. That makes four in two games.

Still, after the defense held Cundiff made it a bit of an adventure but did finally convert a short field goal and gave the Ravens a 10-0 halftime lead.

So while the that score looked perfectly manageable, it really wasn't. It might as well have been 30-0, which it could have been considering how the Ravens otherwise seemed to be dominating the game, if you define dominating in terms of plays run (17 more than the Browns), time of possession (7 and a half minutes more), yards gained (170 more), you know, that sort of thing.

It was the kind of trends that tend to eventually pay dividends at just about the time you start to get heady and think you are really in the game.

And yet, there the Browns found themselves, midway through the third quarter and still within the same sort of striking distance and breathing anew. When Jabaal Sheard stripped Joe Flacco on a great individual effort and the ball was recovered by Jayme Mitchell, suddenly the Browns found themselves at midfield. The unexpected turnover!

It all looked so inevitable in the no-good-deed-goes-unpunished sort of way when McCoy took a sack on first down. But on second down, Peyton Hillis found himself all alone downfield and in the midst of a Ravens blown assignment on defense. McCoy saw it, hit Hillis and the play covered 51 yards down to the Ravens' 3 yard line.

But inevitability once again reared its ugly head as the offense couldn't find a way to put it over the goal line, a Hillis run stuffed at the line and two incomplete passes. In fairness to McCoy, though, tight end Evan Moore dropped a well thrown pass in the end zone and Greg Little looked to be interfered with on a third down pass. Phil Dawson converted the 21 yard field goal without incident and the Browns were back to within 7.

Now remember those things that tend to come back and haunt you? They did, just that quickly.

On the Ravens next play, Rice scampered for 67 yards, giving him 187 on the day with plenty of game still to play, and Ricky Williams cleaned up two plays later to push the lead to 17-3 and just like that it was back to reality. That meant lots more of Rice, lots more time of possession for the Ravens and the inevitable march to the inevitable Josh Cribbs post-game crabbing about his role, which was non-existent on this particular day.

Indeed, the fourth quarter more or less resembled a pre season intra squad scrimmage. Neither team looked to be doing anything more then trying to hone some new formations, keep the clock moving and get the hell out of the rain. But Ravens' punt returner Lardarius Webb threw a bit of a monkey wrench into that when he returned a Brad Maynard punt 68 yards that pushed the lead to 24-7.

As I said, inevitably the score and the game being witnessed would come back into sync.

That forced the Browns to do what they inevitably do in late games that are out of reach. Score a meaningless touchdown. This one was from McCoy to a wide open Moore, who held on this time probably because it mattered so little. I guess it showed that McCoy doesn't give up even when the game is over but maybe it just shows that by that point in the game the other team is just bored.

On a macro level, and irrespective how they got there, really there was nothing particularly knew or different here that gave you a sense that much had been learned by this Browns team from the several other iterations of this game that fans have already seen this year. But that's not a surprise. Lacking talent in most areas and also banged up pretty good, there's no reason to have expected anything different. That's why it all seemed so inevitable in the first place.

But let's not completely let that spoil the party. Let's go micro, briefly.

Here's one thing I am starting to like: Jordan Norwood. He can get open and catch. He only had 3 catches on the day for 29 yards, but he's one of the few players you can actually point to and say that there's been real progress this year.

Here's another thing I'm liking better each week: the play of Jabaal Sheard. It's hard to single out anyone on the defensive line on a day when Rice had 200+ yards rushing, but the play Sheard made in stripping the ball from Flacco was a thing of beauty. He was getting pressure but Flacco stepped up in the pocket. Sheard didn't give up on the play, closed quickly and knocked the ball loose from Flacco just as he was beginning his throwing motion.

On the other hand, here's something I'm really starting to hate: that play where McCoy takes a 5-step drop, pirouettes, takes three more steps back and then throws a screen pass to a running back with a linebacker draped on him like an oversized suit. The next time it's successful will be the first.

And here's something else I'm really starting to hate: the numbing sameness of each and every game. It matters little who the running back is, who the receivers are or even who is or isn't playing on defense. It matters little, really, who the opponent is.

Now the Browns find themselves on a short week having to face the Pittsburgh Steelers on Thursday night. Chances are it will go exactly the way you think it will so there's probably no reason for you to look so tired come Friday morning. You can be fast asleep by 10 knowing full well how it all turns out.