For a franchise that has known little else but embarrassment since it came back into the NFL 12 years ago, you'd think at some point the Cleveland Browns would finally reach rock bottom. Apparently there is no bottom.

Mike, the Big No Show, Holmgren finally made a media appearance on Tuesday to say in rather clinical if also defensive fashion that the franchise he now oversees did almost nothing right to protect the health of the quarterback that Holmgren believes is the future.

It was Holmgren's first press conference in months and came, not coincidentally, the day that Bud Shaw of the Plain Dealer called out Holmgren for leaving Pat Shurmur to fend for himself on what was clearly a team issue that should have been addressed by Holmgren. (An aside. I thought Shaw's column was excellent. That said, it was similar to what I wrote a few weeks ago about the mysterious no show by the team's leaders to explain just what the hell is going on with the team this time. Oh well.)

But before anyone gets the idea that Holmgren came out to offer some sort of mea culpa or other overt act of leadership at another of the 650 million critical points in this franchise's recent history, think again. Instead Holmgren came out mostly to defend the team's complete bungling of Colt McCoy's head injury last Sunday against the Pittsburgh Steelers and then do his level best to convince the unconvinced that this team is not operating like every other incompetent regime that came before him.

But in trying to make the "this is not business as usual" case Holmgren actually did the opposite by devoting the first few minutes of the press conference to explaining why it's taken this long for anyone higher then Shurmur to address the McCoy concussion issue. In short, it was because he wanted to get his story straight with the NFL and the players' union before having to

address the media. Given the passage of time, you'd have thought Holmgren could have done a better job. Put it this way, Gene Smith thinks Holmgren gave a lousy performance.

As to the concussion issue, which dominated the conference, Holmgren took the Phil Savage approach. He came out swinging and defensive, blamed others, accepted no blame himself for anything and essentially mocked anyone with the audacity to think differently.

In a startling but hardly unbelievable fashion Holmgren claimed that McCoy wasn't administered any sort of concussion test before sending him back into the game against Pittsburgh, not even as a precautionary measure, for two reasons. First, the patient seemed lucid. Second, the medical staff was too busy attending to other injured players to see exactly how McCoy got assaulted by the biggest thug in the NFL, James Harrison

McCoy, who claims to not remember a damn thing about the hit or what happened immediately after, appeared coherent enough to the Browns' crack medical staff to such an extent that a precautionary test for a concussion wasn't necessary? Who exactly is leading that staff, Dr. Bombay or Dr. Vinnie Boom Botz? The guy from the Sprint commercials? Maybe there isn't anyone with a medical degree at all but someone who happened to stay at a Holiday Inn Express the night before.

In defending the medical staff's approach to McCoy, Holmgren was quick to emphasize foremost not how important the health of the players is but how impressive the medical staff is, calling it's the best in the business. But by offering the reasons behind the rather perfunctory exam of McCoy on the sidelines in essence Holmgren just signaled to every player on the team, not to mention any player who might potentially play for the team, that the Browns' medical staff is a bunch of incompetent boobs that can't be trusted enough to make even the most obvious of exams. That's got to be comforting not to mention a real selling point when trying to lure free agents. Makes one wonder how Holmgren sees this as different from the past, unless he meant it's now worse, or what the medical staff would have looked at if McCoy had come to the sidelines with his femur poking through his skin.

But let's assume that the staff was too busy with all the other walking wounded on this team. It strikes me that Shurmur had a pretty good view of what was going on during the game. So too did many if not all his coaches, including those sitting in the press box with the luxury of replay. They all saw Harrison attempt to ram his skull through McCoy's. Shouldn't it have occurred to Shurmur or anyone else at any point to run over to that overwrought, overworked medical staff

and say something like "make sure you check McCoy for a concussion. He nearly had his head decapitated"?

A particularly rich exchange occurred when Holmgren offered up that the outcome of his meetings with the league and the union was that the league will likely tweak its concussion procedures going forward, which was a not so subtle suggestion that it was the league's policies that failed McCoy and not the Browns.

The truth is that the Browns, from Holmgrem to Heckert to Shurmur to every member of Shurmur's staff, failed McCoy. But that in itself isn't unusual because McCoy is just another in a long line of players that have been mostly abandoned by this team in one form or another. It isn't just all the medical issues that they've had, two of which have resulted in lawsuits by former players LeCharles Bentley and Joe Jurevicius. It's all the other little ways that that this team fails the very players and fans it claims to value.

If Holmgen was the leader we thought he was, he would have taken the charge, made an apology and laid out exactly how things would be different going forward instead of claiming that things already are different. Instead he came across as weak by merely offering excuses, defending the bumbling antics of his medical staff and then refusoing, when asked, to back McCoy by acknowledging that they haven't given McCoy even a reasonable opportunity to be fairly evaluated.

But why focus on just McCoy. You can start with Tim Couch and wind your way through nearly every player that has strapped on a Browns' uniform in the last decade and come to the conclusion that Cleveland has been a miserable place to earn a living as a football player because of rampant incompetency at every level of management, from the owner on down to every coach and front office goof that has been given a title and a paycheck.

What seemed to really bother Holmgren most during the entire press conference was the growing perception that Holmgren as a leader isn't any better or different from those who came before him and that it really is business as usual for the Browns. He should have saved the sanctimony.

I'm not ready to write off this current regime just yet but if Holmgren really doesn't think this

team is operating in a "business as usual" format then he did very little due diligence before taking the job. The Browns' reaction to the McCoy hit was exactly how every other regime that's had the keys to Berea would have handled it, which is to say poorly.

Holmgren implored the fans to trust him that this will all get fixed. That would be a whole lot easier if every visible sign this season, from the questionable signings to the bad fundamentals to the boring product on the field to the constant bungling of personnel and medical issues, didn't suggest that it's beyond his ability to fix.