Few things in the sports world leave a fan with an emptier feeling than the end of a non-contending baseball season. In this season ending piece on the Indians, Papa Cass talks about how fun contending baseball is ... and how bad it sucks to your postseason hopes shattered in June. And how he already can't wait for the start of next season.

Visit the Papa Cass weblog at http://papacass.blogspot.com/

Few things in the sports world leave a fan with an emptier feeling than the end of a non-contending baseball season.

It's not just the sparse crowds, the losing or the apathy laid on heavier than an Autumn cloud deck. It's the fact that it's all reinforced on a daily basis. Every day, your team shows up to play games that mean nothing. They are forced to show up every day and play meaningless games until the schedule runs out.

For the Indians, they lost the marathon in Mile 9. The have been forced to run the remaining 17.2 miles because that's what they're paid to do. It's been nothing more than a forced march since the beginning of summer.

Sunday, the schedule finally ran out and we put this season to bed. The Indians won just 78 games, a 15-game backslide from a year ago. They will finish the season with the fewest saves in the majors.

You might be glad that this is the end of the road. But I can't think of this season's end being anything more than a melancholy event. It's not just the losing. It's the fact that we are happy that baseball is over for the year.

All winter, we wait for this. All winter, we want spring to come. We want baseball to start, to rescue us from snowstorms and wet socks and cars splattered with dry salt brine and let us look forward to summer.

And now, we're back in winter mode. Jacobs Field will go silent for yet another long, cold, dark spell, the hibernating neighbor we'll pass by on our way to Cavaliers games at The Q. Soon, our disgust with the season will be melted by longing for the days when we can once again enjoy a night out at the ballpark.

At some point, somewhere, you will be whisked back to the days when you rediscovered baseball in Cleveland. You'll remember the drama, the comeback victories, the playoff games, the park as a vortex of noise. And you'll want those days back. And you'll be sorry that you ever wished baseball away for the year.

That's the real heartbreak that surrounds a dead season like this, a season where bitterness outpaces a love for the game. A season where a fan base grows sick of baseball, sick of the team, sick of the losing, and just wants it to all go away.

At some point, you'll regret the way you felt. Not about the team, but about the game. At some point, you'll miss it again. But you'll have to wait.

You'll have to go through the long, harsh death and rebirth of winter to be reunited with the game you can't stand right now, to apologize and renew your vows.

This game, she might frustrate you. But she'll make you want her again. You might be able to live without her, but you'll have a void inside you. And that void lasts all winter.