It's a universal truth that Cleveland has been Browns town since the team first joined the NFL for the 1950 season.

Through (long-ago) championships and (more-recent) crushing defeats, regime changes, coaching changes and more quarterbacks than we care to think about, Cleveland has always bled Orange and Brown. (And while it is cute that the Indians are trying to convince everyone, primarily themselves, that this is a Tribe Town , they need to come back when they draw more than 5,000 fans for weeknight games in April and May. Then we can talk.)

But we're starting to wonder if the Browns are losing their influence, however, following the announcement that the team will no longer charge a Personal Seat License to new season-ticket purchase.

“Our fans have exhibited tremendous loyalty over the years and we want to continue to reward that loyalty through affordability and by putting a team on the field of which they can be proud,” Browns CEO Joe Banner said on the team's website . “To maintain that affordability, it was important that we keep the status quo on ticket prices for the fifth consecutive year and also extend the sections of the stadium that do not require a PSL.”

While Banner has it right about fan loyalty, and dropping the PSL is the right thing to do, we can't help but think that this is a reaction by the team to a drop in attendance.

Last summer *The Wall Street Journal* had an article about declining attendance across the NFL and the fact that, in 2011, the Browns played to just 89 percent of capacity at the former Cleveland Browns Stadium - the seventh lowest figure in the NFL. That was not surprising, really, as even the most loyal fans can be beaten down by years of losing. And teams are continuing to battle the in-home experience, which with games in high-definition and a better selection of beer and food, can be hard top, although the Browns are trying to work on that as well.

The Browns received a boost last year with the sale of the team of Jimmy Haslam , but the new penny shine started to wear off Haslam with the decision to hire Mike Lombardi for a job he is not qualified to do , and was further eroded by Haslam's decision to return to his Aston Villa - Pilot Flying J - triggering the abandonment issues that many Browns fans have.

So while the move to can the PSL requirement will resonate with fans' wallets, we have to wonder how much of the move is an attempt to battle a tide of fewer fans wanting to spend money to watch their favorite team play.

Of course, winning cures everything and the Browns can remain in the town's good graces by having a productive session in free agency starting next week (and that doesn't mean they have to spend a ton of money; if they spend wisely it's all good) and a solid weekend when the NFL Draft rolls around in April.

Pull that off, and there is reason to be optimistic that the team can do that, and there is little question all eyes in Cleveland will be on the team when training camp opens near the end of July.

If not? Well, the team could probably get some marketing tips from the Tribe's PR department.

(Photo by ZumaPress.com)