DA stinking up the Pro Bowl. The Cavs brutal rash of injuries and how it has affected the team. And the start of spring training, suddenly right around the corner. These are the topics of Brian McPeek's "Weekend Wrap" as we continue to navigate through the dog days of the Cleveland pro sports calendar. Four days till pitchers and catchers report!

Circling the Wagons

You have to imagine that even though it's only February, the Cavs have probably reached their annual HMO deductible already. And even if they won' say it individually, each player has to be praying for the quick returns of Daniel Gibson, Anderson Varejao, Sasha Pavlovic and Drew Gooden.

Over the weekend the Cavs were able to keep their heads above water by beating the Hawks in Atlanta before losing to the Nuggets on Sunday night. Until they get those healthy bodies back, .500 may be the best you can hope for. Maybe even optimistic when you consider they have games with Orlando and San Antonio on the immediate horizon. To

make matters just a bit more interesting (depressing), Damon Jones left Sunday night's game with a sprained ankle and did not return.

You have to give credit where it's due though. Despite the consistent brilliance of LeBron James, the Cavs are out-talented right now nearly every single time they take the court. Rather than folding when the situation would certainly seem ripe for it the Cavs have put their noses to the grindstone and plowed their way to a few wins that only tested teams would be able to gut through. That's a result of having their mettle tested in the playoffs a season ago and it also bodes well for them when they get healthy again. Nothing develops chemistry and togetherness like successfully facing down some serious adversity.

They're going to need it to hold onto or improve their current playoff position.

There Was One?

Does anyone have any idea why the NFL even bothers with playing the Pro-Bowl?

This sham of a game is easily the worst of the major sports leagues' all-star games. In fact, it's the equivalent of watching the NFL's other colossal waste of time, the 4th pre-season game.

Many of the game's stars simply beg out. They'll cite any injury, real or otherwise, to not play in Honolulu. The players that do show up want no part of actual physical contact. The rules of the Pro Bowl preclude defense from blitzing in most situations and defensive backs can't even play press coverage on receivers unless they are within their own 5-yd line.

This would be akin to the Major League Baseball All-Star game with rosters lacking Albert Pujols and Alex Rodriguez as well as having MLB institute a rule that pitchers can't throw any off-speed pitches.

Why bother?

The guess is that very few football fans spent much time watching this game Sunday. Not because they're not huge football fans. Conversely, they couldn't watch it because they *are* huge football fans. Personally, I tuned in briefly only to watch back-to-back NFC penalties for coverage and blitz infractions. The defense was penalized for trying to do what they do all season.

I immediately switched over to "Band of Brothers" on the History Channel.

Let's be honest. Most of the players selected care about the selection because it either triggers a bonus in their contract or it gives them a week in Hawaii on someone else's dime. That's fine. But charging people to watch the product is close to criminal. Let the bonuses hinge on an All-Pro selection and provide those All-Pro players with a week in Hawaii as a reward for their fine season.

True football fans don't want to watch back-up selections nursing Mai-Tai hangovers avoid high speed collisions in a bastardized version of the sport.

Oh yeah, the NFC beat the AFC 42-30 and you were closer to winning the MVP award than Derek Anderson was.

The Waiting is the Hardest Part

We're just days away from the start of pitchers fielding bunts and infielders taking

hundreds of ground balls every day.

It may not sound exciting to many people but what it really means is that quite soon the winds whistling outside and the snow and ice piled up on the sidewalks will be quieted and gone and

lazy nights of watching the Tribe battle for the Central Division crown will be upon us. Just the thought of that warms up a 10 degree February night.

And making it even better is STO is going out of their way this summer to make Tribe games a communal experience. They are introducing a web-based contest and in-game chat and discussions for each of

the Indians' 162 games. You'll be able to log in from all over the world and participate in a daily contest that will award daily, monthly and season ending prizes. Those of you in Thailand, Tempe or Twinsburg will be able to play each day and to take your best guess as to questions such as "Indians Player with First Hit", "Indians Player with First RBI', etc. There will be 10 selections to make every day and the scores are added up to determine the winners. The in-game features will be monitored and administered by TCF writers. You're going to love this feature and you can learn more by visiting the TCF Message Boards.

Etcetera

- Great to see Larry Hughes answer the bell on Sunday night after leaving Friday night with the game in the balance because of a stubbed toe. Hughes showed the heart and determination of a lion in overcoming the injury to assist the Cavs against the Nuggets. Courageous and heroic just doesn't begin to describe it.

- Solid effort from Derek Anderson Sunday in the Pro Bowl. By ‘solid' I mean abysmal. DA was 10-26 for 104 yards, no TDs and an interception. His supporters will tell

you it was just an exhibition game. And literally speaking they are correct. What DA's critics will tell you is that DA is apparently overmatched in the pre-season exhibition games (he couldn't beat out Seattle's current 3rd string QB here this past pre-season), in the post-season exhibition games and in critical, late season games against bad opponents (Cincinnati, Arizona).