Enough

More than six hours before the Super Bowl between New Orleans and Indianapolis starts and I've already had my fill.

Between Dwight Freeney's ankle issues and the over-hyped story of how the Saints are playing against the Colts as well as a nearly five year old natural disaster nearly inspired me to turn off all the pre-game coverage and sleep until kickoff.

The only thing missing in the Freeney ankle saga is an actual interview with Freeney's ankle itself. And it wouldn't surprise me if the Colts PR department actually got that request. When we got word this week from the Colts medical staff that Freeney's ankle was ‘trending upward' I nearly spit the bit. You don't say, huh? Time and around-the-clock treatment seems to work on sprains and strains?

But the Hurricane Katrina theme is way worse.

Political discussion aside, I'm speaking from purely a sports perspective. And I'm not purposely

trying to be insensitive, though I'm sure I'll get a higher than normal amount of hate mail in regard to this opinion, but wasn't Katrina nearly five years ago? Is there a statute of limitations in terms of talking about Katrina and how some sporting event will help repair the wounds it caused? When a Cleveland team reaches the championship game or series can we still play on emotions and dedicate the effort to the memory of those devastated by the East Ohio Gas fire of 1944?

Again, the loss of life and the damages the storm caused were horrific and unsettling. But in many cases the loss of life was avoidable. With days of warning and the knowledge that you live below sea level I don't think it's unreasonable to gather up what you own and make for higher ground. Thousands did just that. And when you see cats, dogs and birds leaving the area for that higher ground you can't really say you were taken completely by surprise.

And I also understand that poverty issues played a role in Katrina. But again, in Banda Aceh and all throughout Indonesia people who were actually more impoverished than those who chose to stay in the path of Katrina headed for the hills to escape a direct hit of the tsunami on December 26, 2004.

Look, it was a terrible time in the city of New Orleans and all over the gulf coast. But much like I didn't become a Yankee fan after the September 11 attacks (did you?) I'm not a fan of the Saints because of Hurricane Katrina. I'm pulling for the Saints because I like the way they play the game and because they're an underdog in the game. I'm also hoping they get a win because they've been a perennially bad football team for decades and it provides hope for other fans of perennially bad teams that reside, well, closer to home.

It'd be nice to see the underdogs get over on Peyton Manning and the Colts. But it's got nothing to do with a natural disaster. And I guarantee that Dwight Freeney's ankle, if and when it finally talks, would say the same thing.

The Game

What a well-played football game. I mean Super Bowl-caliber play by both clubs. There were very few penalties, very few errors and, after a slow start to the scoring, the game took off and became what we thought it might be when the match up was determined two weeks ago.

Right up until the moment Peyton Manning committed the only turnover of the game and threw a ball intended for Reggie Wayne directly to Saints DB Tracy Porter instead. Porter took it back for a 31-17 lead with just three minutes remaining and delivered the city of New Orleans its first Super Bowl title.

The Saints looked overwhelmed by the moment at the outset. But they settled down and fought back from a 10-0 deficit to blitz the Colts with a 31-7 run. Drew Brees was fantastic all night. 32-39 for 288 yards, 2 TDs and no interceptions and never forced a bad ball into coverage. Brees and the Saints were looking to throw deep all night but the Colts took it away effectively. So instead Brees dinked, dunked and hit the intermediate routes like he was throwing darts.

The Saints played with a passion and a desperation that Manning and the Colts, for all their precision and efficiency, just never matched.

The scenes from Bourbon Street were epic. Truancy and absenteeism will rule the day tomorrow in New Orleans.

The Halftime Show

It can be summed up by http://www.theclevelandfan.com/ board member Cerebral_DownTime who said (and I paraphrase out of fear of the censors), "The Who?? If I wanted to see old people running around and screaming I'd set fire to a nursing home."

That pretty much sums it up.

Eleven and Counting

You really wish you could bottle whatever ingredients are involved in the Cavaliers 11 game winning streak. You'd love to capture it and unleash it all over again when the playoffs start. The Cavs are rolling up good teams and bad teams and are doing it on the road and at home. They're winning with defense one night and with an unrelenting offensive attack on other nights. Occasionally they're putting complete games together on both sides of the ball and just suffocating teams from the opening tip.

The Cavs are 41-11 overall. They're 22-3 at home and 19-8 on the road. They're seven games up on both Boston and Orlando for the best record in the Eastern conference and they have a two game lead over the Lakers (really three when you consider the Cavs swept the season series against L.A.) for the best record in the NBA which brings with it home court advantage throughout the playoffs.

Maybe you can bottle some of what has accounted for the Cavs recent run. The MVP-level play of LeBron James appears to be something you can count on continuing. Even playing out of position due to injuries to Delonte West and Mo Williams, James has been simply brilliant. Scoring at will, distributing the ball to open teammates and playing lock down defense, James, already the reigning NBA MVP, has elevated his game nearly every night this season. He's actually put distance between himself and every other top player in the league, widening the MVP gap.

Saturday night against New York LBJ was at his absolute brilliant best early on against the Knicks when he scored 24 straight Cavalier points to build an insurmountable Cavalier lead. The Cavs pushed the ‘insurmountable' part late in the game but James restored order and protected the lead with a couple key baskets in the fourth quarter.

It was one of the nights when LeBron was a threat to score the moment he received the inbound pass. In the last two minutes of the opening quarter James went 5-5 from the floor for 14 points. The shortest shot in the five was a 20-foot jumper. James also hit a 26-foot three, a 25-foot three and two 32-foot three pointers. Those 32-foot shots weren't heaves either. They were in rhythm and they were well within his range.

Just for good measure LeBron also hit the first four Cavaliers hoops to start the second quarter too. It was 20 minutes of breathtaking individual basketball that James has made commonplace this season.

James continues to make the absurd mundane. And in large part because of that the Cavs continue to make winning mundane. Again people, these are the salad days. Sit back and enjoy.

Why Dye?

There are multiple reports out there regarding the Indians interest in potentially bringing in Jermaine Dye for a year or so if the money is right.

Maybe I'm missing something here. Or maybe the money is Mike Redmond-like.

Is there a pennant race I'm not seeing at the end of this rainbow? Is the roster not bloated enough with guys who are overpriced and whose production has dropped? I do not understand the infatuation with Jermaine Dye.

There is no reason whatsoever not to go into and through this season with young guys and prospects. Adding anyone making a few million dollars who will take playing time away from the young kids is a mistake. Find out who can play and who can't at the MLB level and go forward from there. Jermaine Dye is not going to put the Indians in a position to win more games this season; at least not enough games to make any difference. He's also not going to put fans in Progressive Field. He wasn't a "Gotta See Him" guy when he was in his prime and he's not a draw as an aging, increasingly ineffective player either.

Bite the bullet and rebuild the right way. When you're likely to lose upward of a 100 games you can do that more cheaply and you can do it more efficiently if you commit to it full blow.

For God's sake, don't extend the misery with expensive band-aids like Jermaine Dye.