Saturday night's Browns game, the first home pre-season game in the Mike Holmgren era, wasn't quite the coronation that some hopeful folks were expecting. There was no lead car with Holmgren, Eric Mangini and Jake Delhomme leading the parade through Public Square en route to Cleveland Browns Stadium to celebrate the return of respectability to the Browns after last week's win in Green Bay.

That's the funny thing about respectability: you only hear a lot about it when you've lost it.

What Saturday night was is a teaching tool for Mangini for the next 7 days. With as sloppy as the Browns played against a crummy St. Louis team in a rain that didn't stop all night, I wouldn't put it past Mangini to soak watermelons in Crisco and practice holding onto the football with the sprinklers going full blow.

That wasn't a young, inexperienced team having a tough time out there with the cadence and lining up in the right spot. Those were veteran players being really careless and reckless with the football. Delhomme, Jerome Harrison and Josh Cribbs, all key guys and guys who simply know the value of the football, put the ball on the ground far too often Saturday night.

Only because the Rams are the Rams were the Browns actually able to overcome those mistakes and play fairly well, with a lead, into the fourth quarter.

And that's still something.

Past Browns teams didn't have the talent nor the leadership to overcome mistakes against any team, even one as poor as the Rams. At the first sign of adversity Derek Andersen, the guy who is supposed to be the calm, workplace leader who ushers all the employees out of the building and into the parking lot, was screaming "FIRE" at the top of his lungs and looking for a window to leap out of.

Brady Quinn never heard the alarm and wasn't sure where the windows were. And even when he found them and attempted to throw a chair through them for access to the outside, he threw a 5-yard chair when the windows were 8-yards away.

But Jake Delhomme is beyond all that. He's won games from behind and he's had days (a few too many for the Carolina Panthers as a matter of fact) where nothing went right early on and it was incumbent upon him to restore order. Delhomme did that Saturday night and turned a self-inflicted 13-0 deficit early into a 13-10 halftime deficit.

That's big for the Browns. Their core group has seen nothing but crap as long as they've been here. Grandpa Phil Dawson can spin all the yarns he wants about "The" playoff season and Kelly Holcomb's magical five game stretch but Dawson was the only Brown here for that and many of the guys on this club were in Little League when that actually went down.

Delhomme's calm and ability to regroup is a characteristic this football team needed to see and experience, It's reassuring to know a mistake (or three) may not be fatal and the guy leading the club is actually capable of leading the club.

So yeah, the Browns looked sloppy and there were things that went wrong and things that are concerning. But you don't get the feeling that this team is going to panic and you don't get the feeling they're overwhelmed. It's been years since I could say even that. So on a night where there wasn't much else to hang my hat on, well, that's what I'm going with.

Admit it. You're Falling in Love…

You’re smitten with Peyton Hillis, aren't ya?

Why not? The guy is all you’ve ever wanted in a Cleveland Browns running back. He’s powerful, he’s got very good hands, he likes to hit people and he isn’t going down on initial contact. He’s a banger and he’s a grinder and he’s going to play a vital role for this football team for as long he’s a part of it.

I’ve always liked Hillis. He’s always been the guy behind the guy, even dating back to his days at Arkansas when he went from being a highly recruited running back to being an all-purpose back, receiver and tight end when Arkansas suddenly found themselves with Hillis, Darren McFadden and Felix Jones looking for touches in that offense.

Rather than bitch, cry and complain Hillis simply flourished wherever he lined up. He ended up playing fullback, halfback, wide receiver and tight end for the Razorbacks while returning punts and kicks. He flourished at each spot and became a brutal and physical blocker out of the fullback spot.

Verne Lundquist and Gary Danielson could have been brought up on stalking charges the way they talked about the kid and how much they loved his game. And if you know me and have read me for any length of time then you know guys like that, guys that do what ever is required to contribute , well, those are the guys I tend to respect and stick up for.

The versatility made him a 7th round Bronco pick in 2008. The man was the starting fullback by the time camp ended and then was the starting tailback after injuries just decimated Denver late in the year. All he did was run for 200+ yards and three TDs in three weeks before he went down injured himself.

Denver changed coaches in 2009 and Hillis pretty much rotted on the bench under Josh McDaniels. McDaniels brought in guys to fit his scheme and Hillis isn’t the quick-cutting type of back that Knowshon Moreno or Correll Buckhalter was in Denver. And maybe his fumble against the Browns early last season locked him in the doghouse for good, but whatever the

reason, McDaniels seemed to have no use for a very useful player.

It may turn out that one day Brady Quinn gets his act together and becomes a viable NFL quarterback. Many have their doubts. But his biggest value to the Browns may ultimately be that it was the trade of Quinn that brought Hillis to Cleveland.

Pay attention to this folks (and please turn down the volume if you have kids nearby because apparently you're not permitted to put up a YouTube video without using song lyrics that would make a longshoreman blush).

That is a kid (only 24 mind you) who is 6'2" tall and 250lbs. That's a big boy. Not only will he drag you like he did Kam Wimbley in the video, but he'll knock you straight back like the video shows on his goal line runs. And if he's not dragging you or knocking you on your ass he's displaying very good hands on passes out of the backfield.

Hillis is 6'2", 250lbs of head knocking versatility. And, I'll say it again; he's just 24 years old. Yeah, I liked the kid's story in college and I like the kid's game in the NFL. He's not a home run hitter but rather, to continue the baseball analogy, a line drive hitter with power.

He's one of the reasons I'm excited about this backfield when Montario Hardesty comes back. They're going to be really tough to game plan against when they have the ability to show multiple looks and the versatility to beat you any number of ways.

And sweet mother of mercy, I start to drool when I think of short yardage scenarios with Hillis and Lawrence Vickers lined up in the backfield. That's a headache and a busted lip waiting to happen for some defensive lineman or linebacker. If it happens to be a defensive back that gets there first there may be nothing left but dust when Vickers blows him up and Hillis runs over top.

God I love football season.

Enough Please

Dear Dan Gilbert:

Please stop with the Comic Sans references on Twitter. That shit was fine the night we were duped, dissed and dumped by LeBron James but its wearing really thin now.

I was really appreciative that you had the backs of Cleveland Cavaliers fans everywhere immediately after LeDebacle. You did what needed to be done and said what needed to be said even if we all knew it was spiteful and probably not good for the long term health of the organization. But we were okay with it.

But now it's just pissing me off. You're getting to be like the bar owner who cracked a chair over the head of the drunken a-hole who sucker punched me by the juke box. While I appreciate you doing that, I don't need to hear you talk about it every GD time I walk into the bar from now on. Okay?

Especially when it was you who served the drunken guy all the alcohol.

So please, I'm begging you, drop the petty bullshit and get back to fixing this basketball team. Because your freaking font of choice is not as comical as your current roster.

Thank in advance for your cooperation,

Me.

Seriously, What's Going On?

I don't mean to beat a dead horse week after week, but what the hell is going on in the Cleveland Cavaliers front office?

While I may not have always agreed with what Danny Ferry did with the roster, I never questioned Ferry's credentials in regard to how he got his job or the experience he had to do it.

But I can't say the same for new GM Chris Grant. I have no problems with guys who have lurked in the shadows for most of their careers getting a shot. But some guys belong in the shadows and aren't front men. Not sure if it will turn out that Grant is one of those guys but I still can't get past the fact that he has no Boss Hog experience on the resume and there's not exactly a wealth of experience or NBA credibility with those he's surrounded by.

I'm getting more than a little nervous that Comic Sans is going to be personally involved in the basketball operations side of the business as opposed to just writing checks. Maybe he realizes he was too much in the dark over the past few years and he wants this re-org of his staff to be far reaching and complete. But it doesn't make me feel real good today to be heading into training camp shortly with a stripped down basketball team and an inexperienced front office that's been put in charge of rebuilding it.

If anything, now is the time to get a bad-ass in that GM role and set the tone for the organization going forward. I know the Cavs just lost their San Antonio influence but is there any question who's in charge down there? There's no doubt that management and the coaches captain that ship.

As much as it hurts to say, Miami is another terrific example. You know (despite him being a backstabbing opportunist and shuffling coaches when it's convenient) that Pat Riley is the maestro down there. He gets things done one way or another.

I like that way. You know, getting things done by whatever means necessary. What's the Cavaliers way? Are we now looking more at the Mark Cuban-way? Because that hasn't really worked out tool well for the people of Dallas. Has it?

Just Shoot Them….or Me

Just don't make me watch any more Tribe baseball.

It was a week ago when I mentioned Michael Brantley really having a fine August. I mentioned that even in a lost season there were important at-bats to be had and important development from younger players that could take place.

I think it was three days ago that Brantley rolled his ankle after taking a swing and likely will end up missing a week (if we're lucky) and thereby screwing up the rhythm he was starting to develop at the plate.

Maybe he steps right back in and picks up where he left off. Maybe not. I know which way I'd lean if I was a betting man because this team just can't catch a break.

Yeah, they blow (horribly as a matter of fact).

But they can't even avoid bad luck when we're not even asking for good fortune to smile down on them. You know what I'm saying? I'm not asking to hit the lottery here. But does it have to rain frogs and locusts every damn time it rains?

Meanwhile, they've lost consecutive series to Baltimore, Seattle and Kansas City.

Which was before being swept in Detroit this weekend by a combined score of 19-3.

Yes. Shoot them please.

You can follow me on Twitter by going to: http://www.twitter.com/Peeker643