Beggars Can't be Choosers

Awww... are some of you complaining about the less than artful Browns win in Miami on Sunday? If you are, well, welcome to competitive NFL football.

It ain't always pretty but when one ends up in the left hand side of the ledger you shut up and take it.

I don't understand Browns fans at all. They cry and whine and bitch and moan about blown draft picks and shitty football for ten years. They bemoan the losses that mount up each year and look forward to the day when they field a competitive football team. Then they get a competitive football team and cry, whine, bitch and moan about the run-pass mix and how ugly the 13-10 win on the road against a team with a winning record was.

Shut up. You make me sick.

That's right, I'm back after a relaxing week in the woods killing shit and I'm ready to roll.

And while we're at it, enough with the Jake Delhomme trashing. The guy is 2-0 in the last two

weeks. Yeah, it's been an ugly grind but Trent Dilfer never has to buy another beer in Baltimore going about his business the same way.

Would I rather Jake be on the sideline watching Colt McCoy and ready to greet him with a reassuring pat on the head every time the rookie comes off the field? HELL YES I WOULD. For that matter, I'd love aesthetically pleasing, dominant ass-kickings of opponents. And yeah, me and my buddies who know the game have some serious head-scratching moments while watching it. But aesthetically pleasing and dominating just is not where we are right now and Eric Mangini believes Delhomme gives the Browns the best chance to win right now and over the past two weeks. Coincidentally, can someone tell me what Delhomme's record is over those two weeks? Hint: I mentioned it above.

I've said this repeatedly and it bears saying it again: Jake Delhomme was paid a princely sum to play a few football games and to hopefully tutor the Browns heir to the quarterbacking throne. In fact, he's clearly overpaid for his contributions on the field. But if Delhomme does for McCoy (or whoever ultimately is the man under center for the Browns) what Gary Danielson did for Bernie Kosar 25 years ago then he will have been worth every single dollar. I do not know exactly how tight Delhomme and McCoy are. I have heard they are inseparable. I also can bear first hand witness to the fact that Danielson and Kosar were so close that if Danielson stopped suddenly in the hallway he risked having Bernie run right up his back.

I can't emphasize enough how critical it is for McCoy to have that aging vet to lean on as opposed to having some petulant, immature tool like DA trying to cut his legs out from under him at every opportunity.

Think about what a bargain Colt McCoy is as a 3rd round pick. Now add Jake's salary to Colt's and tell me that you still have trouble understanding what's going on in Berea. You see no value to McCoy watching a guy with failing mobility and arm strength beat an AFC playoff contender? You see no value in McCoy watching how a guy with diminishing physical skills think his way through reads and situations in order to grind out a really tough win on the road?

If you don't, well, that's fine, stop reading. This column and many of the others here on this site are wasted on you. If you prefer to bitch about the run-pass mix and you can't see the shortcomings of the Browns skill position players (most notably the wide receivers) then, again, you're beyond convincing.

You guys can complain to hear yourselves complain and because it's what you're accustomed to. I'll just continue to focus on the fact that it looks like we have competent, young quarterback who has latched onto a veteran mentor like he's supposed to. I'll focus on a young running back whose grinding out the tough yards when everyone in the building knows he's being called upon to do so. I'll watch two high draft picks in the defensive backfield continue to make plays, create turnovers and tackle effectively and I'll watch a team with no reason to play hard play really hard every damn week.

Y'all can jump on the bandwagon when it rides down Main Street. I got on when the bus left the garage.

5-7 never looked so good to these tired eyes.

Cavs Have Lost Even the Intensity Needed to Give Up

Quitting implies that at one point you actually gave a shit. You have to 'show up' before you can 'give up'. I think the Cavs are beyond that point right now. At least they have been since last Saturday when they somehow squeezed past the Memphis Grizzlies.

But they haven't won since and we all know what happened this past week.

The Cavs got their asses kicked by Boston, then shat themselves in an embarrassing loss to the Miami Heat in front of the one national television audience they'll play in front of this season. I guess maybe you could see that coming. Boston actually was involved in the game last Tuesday and the Cavs aren't beating the Celtics if Boston shows up.

Miami is just a matchup nightmare for the Cavs who don't have the front line size and strength to take advantage of the fact the Heat is softer than whale crap.

But what should give everyone pause here in Cleveland and serve notice that the early portion of the schedule that helped the Cavs to a respectable start is done and over is the fact the Cavs, off of that national embarrassment of a Heat loss, went to Minnesota and got bitch-slapped by 40 damn points. And the Wolves entered the game at 4-15 on the season.

The Cavs have lost their last three games by totals of 19, 28 and 34 points. That's some impressive losing going there. 27 point losses by average over their past three games. Somewhere the Philadelphia 76ers are sitting around today and looking forward to their future 38 point win over Cleveland.

The issue is pretty simple: the Cavaliers blow from a talent perspective and they're not going to get by on emotion either. Every once in a while they'll sneak someone or catch someone on the second night of a back-to-back. And every great once in a while they'll run into a team that is worse off than they are (but those birds are becomingly increasingly rare). But all you have to do is look at the starting five for the Minnesota game and notice that both Jawad Williams and Leon Powe were in that lineup to understand just why the Cavaliers are where they are.

A couple years back Jawad Williams was the 12th guy on the Cavalier bench. He was the guy you'd cheer wildly for to get a put back or knock down a shot in garbage time to reward him for practicing hard. Now he's one of your starting forwards. His partner down low, Leon Powe, is a guy with one functioning knee (at best) who couldn't jog at this time last season and who was brought here to be a 10-12 minute per game guy.

Read that again: Leon Powe and Jawad Williams were your starting forwards Saturday night. Apparently JJ Hickson was out with a stomach virus which is ironic when I consider just how sick it makes me that JJ is the standout performer on this club. He was the guy with the potential and who would be unshackled and turned loose now that LeDick is in Miami.

That's not really going so well.

Neither is this Cavaliers season. And it's going to get worse here before it gets better. That's hard to imagine after the past week but mark it down and take notes. I said this was a 25 win team this season and people scoffed while throwing up numbers like 45 wins, 50 wins and 8th seed. Now I'm wondering just where in the hell those 25 wins will come from and whether 7,500

people will actually be there on average to see a rare win as the season moves on.

Meanwhile I'll await the arrival of JJ Hickson as a bona fide NBA star.

The Columbus Zoo Guy??

That's what my man Mike 'Lead Pipe' Piper asked regarding the Indians signing of former Tiger, A's and Mariner utility guy Jack Hannahan. "Is that the same guy who brought the dopey animals out onto the set of the David Letterman Show for a few laughs?"

Nope. Not the same guy Mike. That was Jack Hanna. And he was way more entertaining and quite possibly a better player than the guy the Indians signed.

The good news is that Hannahan plays a lot of different positions poorly. The bad news is he doesn't hit especially well while playing any of them.

For even worse news consider the fact that the Indians are reportedly looking to sign former Twin Nick Punto as well. I'm not sure whether they want him to play second base or dress as an elf for their 'Snow Days' promotion. Punto is Jamey Carroll without the 'pop' in his bat. And yeah, I realize Carroll has 12 career HRs, 197 career RBI and a career OPS of .703.

Punto has 13 career HRs, 198 career RBI and a career OPS of .644. So Punto has one more HR and one more RBI than Carroll. But he's also played one more season. So when looking at yearly averages Carroll has more 'pop'.

And yes, this is what the Indians have reduced us to: making Jack Hanna jokes and comparing Jamey Carroll and Nick Punto.

Thank God for the fact the Indians have at least given me a place where I can spend $150* for my family to ice skate and sled down some bleachers.

(* Does not include cost of parking, hot chocolate, food, or equipment rental- so there's that)

Buckeyes Get Shot at SEC Redemption

The BCS has spoken and the Buckeyes are headed to New Orleans to face the Arkansas Razorbacks on Tuesday, January 4th in the Nokia Sugar Bowl.

Arkansas finished their regular season in the SEC West at 10-2 overall. Their two losses came to undefeated (at the time) Alabama and to an Auburn team that went undefeated and will be playing in the national championship game.

The bad news for OSU is that Arkansas is a very good SEC team and the Buckeyes have, well, to put it nicely, had their issues with SEC teams historically. The good news is that Arkansas doesn't threaten you with a mobile quarterback who can pull the ball down and beat you with his legs.

Ryan Mallet is big, strong and talented, but he'll never be confused with Tim Tebow (or Chris Leak for that matter) in regard to his running ability. The Buckeyes will be able to find Mallet in the traditional pocket and should be able to do him and the Razorbacks some damage if they can meet the 6'7" 240lber back there. Keep in mind people have been looking for Mallet back there all season and the former Michigan recruit has still thrown for more than 3,000 yards and 30TDs.

The Buckeyes will also have to account for sophomore running back Knile Davis who's rushed for over 1100 yards and 13 TDS on the season.

But when it's all said and done this is a good chance for the Buckeyes to at least partially get

the SEC honks off their back. There will be plenty of big play opportunities for Terrelle Pryor (and remember the progress Pryor made during bowl practices last year) and the Buckeye offense and I think the Buckeye defense will acquit itself well.

Well Done

The St. Edward's Eagles sure have a flair for the dramatic.

Winning the school's first ever state football title wasn't enough. Neither was doing it against Huber Heights Wayne's Ohio State-bound quarterback Braxton Miller. Coming from behind? That still was not enough.

What the Eagles did was win their first title against Miller while coming from behind in the final minute and a half of a game played entirely in a driving snow.

And did I mention the kid that outdid the OSU recruit, Ed's QB Kevin Burke, is 5'9" tall and weighs 165lbs if you include his helmet and pads?

Burke and running back Terrell Bates supplied the offensive thrills while the Ed's defense did just enough to thwart Miller's final drive to escape with an exciting 35-28 win.

Congrats also goes out to the kids and coaches at Maple Heights High School who also took down a state title when their diminutive QB, Shaq Washington, rushed for four TDs and threw for three more. That kid is a gifted and talented football player and the play of both Washington and Burke should hearten the hopes and dreams of any kids told they're too small to succeed at the quarterback position.

Good to see a couple of high school football championship trophies making their way to the North Coast.