Uglier than the Weather

It's a good thing I have no interest in wins and losses for what remains of the Browns 2010 season. Otherwise Sunday's game in Buffalo would have had me ranting, raving and swearing up and down.

As I've mentioned on these pages before, this season is about development. It's the first year of watching Tom Heckert draft and Eric Mangini do nothing but coach while Mike Holmgren oversees both. It's about confirming the fact Peyton Hillis is a legit NFL running back as well as the fact that Brian Robiskie and his receiving brethren are NOT NFL quality.

It's about Colt McCoy being tutored in the finer points of Sunday play by a guy with over 100 NFL starts (and yes, unfortunately that means that part of that tutelage is for Jake Delhomme to actually play).

I find myself having to keep repeating all of that in light of Sunday's 13-6 loss to Buffalo in rainy, cold and empty Rich Stadium.

Because that game was dog crap to watch.

13-6 or 13-10 wins are one thing. You can talk all day about the positive developments we've been witness to and still also refer to a win like we did last week against Miami, regardless how ugly it may have been. But to lose a game to the Bills like the Browns won against the Dolphins last week just leaves one empty inside and doubting himself.

The game plan was one a Canton Bulldog may have appreciated and the Browns didn't help themselves in executing the plan with five fumbles and an interception. The good news is that the game ended in about 2 ½ hours so at least the horror was short lived.

As often as I've mentioned what's left of this season is not about wins and losses I've also said that the time is fast approaching when nothing other than wins and losses will matter. Next

September starts that clock.

No qualms with how the defense performed Sunday. They had a couple lapses that killed them but the offense did them no favors and they did limit the Bills to just 13 points on the day. I do think you can see safety TJ Ward hitting the rookie wall because he's been getting progressively later with his reads and with actually showing up in coverage but, on the other hand, Joe Haden keeps getting better and better with each passing week.

The talent level is low but the motors run hot on the Browns defense. You'd like them to make some impact plays and get off the field more regularly on 3rd down but, again, there's not a whole lot of game-changing talent out there. Rather, the defense is a function of game planning and coaching and you have to be happy with how that unit continues to perform.

The offense on the other hand….

It's tough to watch a guy with nothing left under center and it's tough to watch him have to throw to guys who will be selling stocks, bonds and annuities in three years (if they were smart enough to attend a few classes in college). Hillis needs to be nearly perfect in regard to hitting holes and holding onto the ball and he just wasn't that on Sunday. He's developing a bad habit of putting the ball on the ground and many an NFL running back's career has been derailed for that weakness.

Buffalo did what everyone does against the Browns. They stacked the line and forced Hillis to run through nine or ten guys every carry. We lament the fact the Browns can't keep teams at bay with the threat of a passing game but Hillis himself will benefit from a few wide receivers who can actually play with a QB that can get them the ball because there won't be so damn many hats on the football when he's carrying it.

This is the way for an up and coming football team. They'll win games they shouldn't and they'll also lose games they shouldn't. It will not shock me if the Browns drop a game next week in Cincinnati and then perform admirably against both the Steelers and the Ravens. It's just how it works right now.

Sorry if you don't want to hear about it. It's just the way it is. There's a decomposing QB playing behind a rotten right side of the line and he's throwing to future UPS managers. The fact they've won five games, established an identity and are another draft and free agency period from legitimately competing for a playoff spot next season overrules all feelings of anger and disappointment over a bad loss.

Your mileage may vary.

Shut Up and Coach

“It's always a good day when you wake up and you're not in Cleveland.”

- Miami Heat Head Coach Erik Spoelstra

It’s very possible that the only non-asshole in the entire Heat organization is Dwyane Wade. And I’m not convinced that his ex-wife or the two kids he never sees would agree with that, but from my personal tolerability standpoint he’s about the one guy I’d piss on if he was on fire in my driveway. That might not be a ringing endorsement for Wade but it’s more than I can say for The Whore of Akron or Eddie House.

Wade aside, Coach ‘Spo really should be more concerned about his coach-killing new point forward who’s never been accountable for a single thing in 26 years on earth. Because now that ‘Bron is in town one of two things is going to happen when Miami fails to win a title:

1. LeBron will suddenly become accountable and will bear the burden of the team’s failures showing a maturity and responsibility that he’s never shown before; or
2. LeBron will blame Coach ‘Spo who will be sent packing and who will find he has a lot

more time for immature Twitter bursts.

I know where my money is going.

And if Coach ‘Spo is hit by a truck carrying bricks and acid, well, life is funny like that.

Regarding the Home Town Hoopsters

It’s hard for me to believe that Ryan Hollins doesn’t appear to be the type of leader who can grab this Cavaliers team by their collective throat and shake some sense into them.

Who could have seen this group as a talentless, rudderless and leaderless group that’s prone to six and seven game losing streaks?

To tell the truth I haven't watched much since their Thursday night 'Kiss & Cry' display against the Heat a week or two ago.

Why bother?

This team has nothing to play for and no one compelling enough to watch. You could make the argument that there's not a GM in the NBA that would trade his roster for the Cavaliers roster today. Yes, there are some bad teams out there like Minnesota and New Jersey. But even the Timberwolves and Nets wouldn't deal you the Cavs roster for rosters that have Brook Lopez and Derrick Favors or Michael Beasley, Kevin Love and Jonny Flynn. Hell, even the Clippers wouldn't take the Cavaliers roster for only Blake Griffin and Eric Bledsoe.

The good news is the Cavaliers don't appear to have to make any moves in order to 'blow it up' and set their sights squarely on a top-5 pick in the NBA Draft next summer. Nope, they can keep things as they are, continue to lose and flounder and look solely at dumping salaries to clear the decks of the human flotsam and jetsam they've acquired.

You Have Options

Care to watch a really good basketball team that relies on defense, teamwork and getting things done the right way?

Cleveland State is 12-0 on the season and Gary Waters has his Vikings playing well. Led by Norris Cole the Vikings head into a matchup with West Virginia as one of only a couple unbeatens remaining in the country (with Ohio State another).

Tickets are reasonably priced and they are, sadly, always available. Check out the Vikings as they make their bid to knock Butler out of the top spot in the Horizon League and gain an NCAA bid.

All Quiet at the Big Toboggan Hill

No earth-shattering news out of the Indians this week unlike last week when they rocked us all with the signing of Jack Hannahan.

Nope, the Tribe this week is keeping a low profile for a while apparently they concentrate on vacuuming every available dollar out of the pockets of people heading to Snow Days at Progressive Field. This is also known as the 'Walt Disney Business Model'. They'll make sure they get their $6 for coffee and hot chocolate before continuing talks with Nick Punto after the first of the year.

Apparently Punto isn't a really hot item right now so the Indians can afford to focus on skate rentals and sled hill waivers before the talks really heat up.

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