It's getting to the point where my head and body know exactly how to proceed when a great sports disappointment is visited upon them. It's like an automated 'Shut Down' mode goes into effect and takes over. And why not? They've been through any number of these disasters and the mind and body should have this down to a science by this point.

So you know what? I'll first be talking about the promise ahead (be that what it may) as opposed to the most recent disappointment involving the Buckeyes in the NCAA tournament. And there will be time to discuss the other grievous injury sustained by The Ohio State University on Friday as well when Jim Tressel's reputation took another shot on the chin.

Yeah, I'm thinking that March 25, 2011 will not go down in any future "Great Dates in Ohio State History" calendars that the book store sells.

But I'm not talking about that right now…..

Need You Now

Where do we stand right now as Cleveland sports fans? Well, we'll take what we know to be the empty promises of the spring as opposed to dealing with the reality that's been cast upon us. In all likelihood the Indians will be a 3rd or 4th place team in the AL Central in 2011 but there's always the chance something stupid and goofy happens and they'll compete at least through the summer months.

No one looked at the SF Giants last season and said, “This is their year”. Of course, there’s no Tim Lincecum (nor even a Matt Cain) on this Indians staff but there’s plenty of time for lamenting that fact.

Opening Day is Friday and that’s all that needs to be said. The current forecast for Friday is sunny and 51 degrees and if that’s what we get for what amounts to a holiday in Cleveland each year, well, we’ll be thrilled. Many of us sat through the ‘Snow Game’ a couple years back and as long as there’s not the need to light things on fire to stay warm Tribe fans will be fine.

What would be equally nice is the Indians getting off to a decent start. At the very least a start that doesn’t have them basically eliminated by April’s end would be encouraging. Most of us will be fine going month by month with this team in terms of where they stand in the AL Central. But if they’re buried when May starts, or soon after, a town that’s dealt with a pathetic Cavs team and an NFL work stoppage along with nothing but disappointment from Ohio State will simply tune out and stay away.

And that won’t help the collective mood around these parts.

Let’s just leave those likelihoods for May or June or, even if everything goes well, until September or October when disappointment will ultimately bend us over again when we do start to actually feel hopeful.

Today though I’m assuming we see the 2007 version of Fausto Carmona. While we’re at it we’re going to see the 2007 version of Travis Hafner and Grady Sizemore once Grady’s knee checks out perfectly fine and ahead of schedule.

This will also be the year that Matt LaPorta actually out-hits the man for whom he was traded. And yes, I’m aware he was traded for CC Sabathia but if you had to let me pick one today that would come up with a big hit I’d be hard-pressed not to go with CC. While LaPorta serves notice he’s a legit major league ballplayer Michael Brantley will be doing the same thing. He’s going to take control at the top of the lineup until Sizemore returns and set the tone for an Indians offense that will beat you with base hits and doubles as opposed to taking you out of the park all

night.

This team will steal a ton of bases with Brantley, Asdrubal Cabrera and Shin Soo Choo leading the way and Choo will continue to make All Star teams while putting up big numbers from his RF position. With Choo being mentioned in the MVP balloting he'll have help in the order from Carlos Santana who puts a chokehold on the AL catching all star spot for the next 5 years.

Travis Buck comes out of nowhere and stays healthy enough to fulfill some of the promise he came into the league with and he basically takes the place of Shelley Duncan on this year's roster. He'll spell you in the outfield, DH some and give you some decent innings at first base while putting up solid numbers at the dish.

Orlando Cabrera not only gives you legitimate major league at bats at the bottom of the order but he also solidifies the infield with his steady play and veteran leadership.

At third base you're stunned when….umm….okay…. even in this dream I can't find anything good to say about the third base spot other than Jack Hannahan probably won't kill anyone seated on the first base side of the field because that just rarely happens. But hey, maybe Jason Donald comes back off the DL and is serviceable at the spot. Hell, maybe Jason Donald becomes this decade's Casey Blake. That would make him a really good guy to have on the club and one the majority of fans will blame for everything that possibly goes wrong during a game, series, home stand or season.

That will save many of you the effort of looking for someone to hate if nothing else.

On the hill the Indians really need just a guy or two to step forth behind my 2007 Fausto and Carlos Carrasco looks to be the best shot at that. I agree with Paul Cousineau as it is and believe Carrasco could actually have a break out season in 2011.

Mitch Talbot, Justin Masterson and Josh Tomlin all win about as many as they lose which would be great and the bullpen doesn't go bi-polar on us and actually is the strength I believe it to be.

There you have it. That's not a lot to ask for is it?

What's that you say? It is?

Shut up.

Tressel's Troubles

Anyone outside of Columbus (given many folks down there still see this as no big thing) knows a bad situation just got worse this past Friday. It came to light that Jim Tressel, while not saying anything to his supervisors or the NCAA out of concern/courtesy (?) for a federal drug case, did take the time to mention to Terrelle Pryor's mentor/handler/guru/adviser/whatever that tpeezy2 was caught up in some serious shit.

Ostensibly Tressel did this out of concern for Pryor. The fact Pryor was Tressel's starting QB is just a side note I guess.

I still find it hard to believe that Tressel never mentioned this to anyone at OSU just like I was unwilling to believe a couple weeks ago that he never mentioned it to ***anyone***. Well, we see that wasn't the case. Tressel's problem now is his credibility is taking on water. A lot of water. Enough water that the next hole in his boat is going to sink him and Jim Tressel has a really big boat.

The SS Tress was nearly unsinkable two months ago. Now some are scrambling for life boats.

The time for dodging bullets in the hopes of skating out of this situation lightly is over. Because it's not going away and there is a lot of blood in the water. It was the Columbus Dispatch that uncovered the fact that Tressel had talked to Pryor's family friend and the media is never as

energetic as when they are tearing apart someone they helped build up previously. They're like the kids who will build a modern Parthenon over a couple days with their Lincoln Logs and then savagely knock it all down once it's finished.

And you better believe there are people with microscopes looking closely at the Buckeyes entire football program, if not the entire athletic department, now that this has grown more legs.

This can't help but get worse for Ohio State. If they keep Tressel they're no better than anyone else after years of claiming the moral higher ground after losses to SEC teams, and any indiscretion that's brought to light is another nail in credibility's coffin. If they let Tressel go they run the risk of him letting it be known exactly how Tattoo-Gate went down and exactly who he talked to about the situation.

At the end of the day I bet the Buckeyes choose to be like everybody else. They'll close ranks, cut this story down as much as they can and try and move on with a full complement of scholarships and as much dignity as they can.

They've publicly come out in support of Tressel. They have got to hope their containment policy is effective. Because losing Tressel for a year or so and maybe losing a couple scholarships going forward, while likely vacating some wins, is preferable to the alternative. Tressel can hang in the face of the NCAA 10.1 violations and he can return next season to start the Buckeyes and his personal rebuild.

But if Tressel did tell someone in the Buckeye athletic offices and they were complicit in keeping the extent of these potential issues out of sight of the NCAA, well, now you've gone from a couple dudes with tattoo issues to the words 'institutional control' starting to be thrown about.

One man lying is a shame and a shock considering who that man is and how he was perceived here in Ohio. Two men lying is a premeditated conspiracy to cover up known wrong doing.

Tpeezy2

Am I the only one who wishes that Terrelle Pryor had never said 'Yes' to the Buckeyes a few years back? Am I the only one who was sickened by the kid's lust for attention and his entitlement issues even when he was delaying his 'decision' on where to play college football multiple times in order to suck up more of the spotlight?

It drove me nuts and it was discussed then on these very pages.

I know I'm not the only one but it sure seems easy to look back at those days now and see where something like Tattoo-Gate could go down with Pryor. Kid has been coddled and taken care of for years. Friends of mine in the Columbus area all seem to have a Tpeezy2 "Do You Know Who I Am" story that illustrates what an immature prima donna he is.

I'm not a fan. I have no issues with his production. He's put up numbers. But I'm on the record many times over that I think he's a selfish, arrogant and presumptive kid who's nowhere near the leader other less talented QBs are and who will leave OSU as a disappointment. That may be hard to believe given his Rose Bowl and Sugar Bowl wins the past two years but there are no national titles on Pryor's resume' and he's not a popular figure in Ohio right now.

It's even worse that his selfishness and his arrogance have helped lead the Buckeyes to where they are now in terms of pending NCAA investigations. Add to that his suspension for five games next fall and you can understand why people have had their fill.

For me it's simple; he's unlikeable. Yeah, I realize he's just a 20 year old but I don't give a shit. There are 6-year olds acting up in the supermarket or in the mall you see that you turn to your wife or whoever and you say, "That kid needs his ass spanked or he's going to always be that way."

Well, Tpeezy2 needed to get smacked. Instead nobody ever told him 'no' or knocked his ass down a peg and now you've got what you've got in Columbus.

A noted Twitter user, what's Tpeezy2's take on all of this? Well, there's this:

Staying fresh iz how i live!!! Haterz try copying Swagg so laugh with it!!! Watered Down my swag iz Pure!!

That's exactly what I was thinking. His swag is pure and no one wants to walk around with impure swag.

That's funny but at least it's real. His painful Bible quotations and his stuff right off those inspirational posters make me laugh uncontrollably.

I honestly wish the kid would go away and never be heard from again. That's what will likely happen *after this season* given he still throws like a guy you'd see at a Carnival midway trying to win his chick a giant panda. But it'd be fine with me if his Buckeye career ended this past January with him using those human crutches and looking for someone to interview him.

It's not Pryor's fault that Tressel and the Buckeyes are in big trouble. But it is Pryor's fault that he's perceived by many to be a douche-bag. I guess you could put some of that on his parents too. He'd probably prefer that someone share the accountability because God knows it's never TPeezy2 who's to blame.

Painful to Watch

I told you we'd move from the good to the bad this week. Even if the good was a creation of the mind it's still better than talking about Tressel's fall from grace, Tpeezy2 and also the Buckeye basketball team.

The Kentucky game scared me from the minute the pairings were announced and the minute that UK squeaked past Princeton in their first tournament game. I saw the Wildcats play Notre Dame in Freedom Hall last December as part of the Big East- SEC match ups that ESPN was

running. Kentucky overcame a halftime deficit against Ben Hansbrough and Notre Dame by using their size and their athleticism to completely shut down what would be, at various times during the season, a Top 5 team in the Irish.

Ohio State is/was a much better and more balanced team than Notre Dame but they aren't nearly as big or as athletic as the Wildcats either. And that's what won out Friday night in Newark, NJ. The Buckeyes were simply "out-athleted" if you will. Kentucky blocked a dozen OSU shots and was able to keep Jared Sullinger in check without having to double team him. That led to a number of those 12 blocks being on the perimeter where the Wildcats length helped them turn Newark into William Buford's personal and ever-lasting hell.

Buford finished 2-16 from the floor Friday night and also missed the last shot of OSU's season that would have tied the game and sent it to overtime. Even a really rotten night from Buford, one in which he would have gone 3 or 4 of 16 from the floor likely moves the Buckeyes on to play North Carolina on Sunday. But it didn't go down, OSU was stunned and that was that.

Hind sight is always 20/20 but plenty of folks where I was watching were imploring Thad Matta to call a timeout as soon as Aaron Craft crossed half court with about four seconds remaining. I heard a radio interview with Matta about a week ago where he said that the numbers show teams score more often when they don't call a timeout in those end game situations than they do after a timeout.

Be that as it may, when you have a shooter like Jon Diebler on the floor (who had just hit a long and contested three-pointer to tie the game before UK's go ahead score with five seconds left) and when you have a slasher like David Lighty and a guy down low like Sullinger to work with, you have to call that time out. You have got to get a better look than a frantic off balance 20 foot shot from a guy who couldn't hit water if he fell out of a boat all night long in Buford.

They didn't and they're done. Far sooner than they we had hoped.

That's March.

I guess we can all take solace in the fact that not a single #1 seed is headed to Houston. Remember a week or so ago when we spoke of the parity in college hoops? Well, there's an 8-seed, an 11-seed, a #3 seed and a #4 seed playing for the title next weekend.

That's also March. And probably will be while a lot kids are in school for just a year enroute to the NBA.

The Cavs

Yep, they're still playing. Nothing to see here except a bunch of losses. I do implore each player on the team to either not exchange any bodily fluids with LeBron James when they fawn over him Tuesday night or to at least consider some personal protection.

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