Another week, another loss and another Josh Cribbs flare up. Sensing a pattern, like a Ryan Pontbriand bad snap?

There is coming a point, perhaps quickly, perhaps not, where Cribbs is going to wear out his welcome with Pat Shurmur and the rest of the coaching staff. This is at least the fourth time this season where Cribbs has gone through his whole passive-aggressive approach to using the media post game under the guise of his passion for winning to bitch about not getting the damn ball.

By this point there are some very clear patterns to Cribbs and unfortunately they aren't on the field in his role as a receiver. Cribbs views himself as one of the team's few playmakers and gets aggravated when it doesn't seem to be acknowledged in that week's game plan.

The problem though is that while Cribbs is a playmaker of sorts, he's not nearly as awesome as he believes and that's just a fact. I'll give him his due as a good open field runner. I'll give him his due as the kind of player that doesn't take a play off. When he's in he gives you everything he's got.

But let's look a bit deeper.

The whole "good open field runner" thing? Almost any skill player in the NFL should be a good open field runner because it means that he isn't wading through a phalanx of tacklers in order to grind out yards. So, yea, when Cribbs gets the ball in space he can perform like about 80 other players in the league. That alone doesn't qualify him as a playmaker.

The real problem for Cribbs is that while he's skilled as a return man, he's not very skilled as a receiver nor is he a viable threat in the backfield. He has good but not great speed. He's made some good catches this season but the real bread and butter of the position lies in the ability to run good, consistent patterns and fend off defensive backs. Cribbs is just average, at best, at those key skills and while he may get better, he'll never get good enough to be anything more than the third receiver on a team that lacks depth at receiver.

Cribbs likewise doesn't possess the requisite skills to run out of the backfield. Eric Mangini's occasional dalliances with the wildcat formation more than showed that Cribbs isn't that viable of a running threat. He doesn't have a running back's sixth sense to see an opening before it fully appears. His approach is more bull-in-a-china-shop then scat back, despite his size, mainly because he doesn't seem to have been trained any other way.

This is all to say that Cribbs may be the kind of player you want on the team, he's not the kind of player around which a coordinator designs an offense. At this juncture I'm not sure he understands that fundamental fact.

It's actually getting tiring listening to Cribbs talk constantly about his passion for winning while believing its only path runs through his legs and desire. I understand that most professional athletes tend to be self-centered, but frankly Cribbs' act is wearing thin.

The Browns certainly are better off with Cribbs on the team then not, but the more he complains the more he begins to tilt the balance of that equation in the wrong direction. Publicly Shurmur may be giving Cribbs a pass by saying that he wants a team full of players that want to win as badly as Cribbs, but privately Shurmur is probably seething.

When you're trying to put together a winning culture, the first thing that has to be eradicated is the me-first attitude that players on losing teams tend to develop. Cribbs may not be there yet but he's well down that road. Unless he decides to take another path, that road will eventually lead to an exit ramp out of Cleveland. Count on it.

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If you're still surprised that the Cleveland Browns cut long snapper Ryan Pontbriand on Tuesday, like so many of his former teammates seem to be, you shouldn't. Pontbriand sealed his fate when he admitted he was in a snapping slump, whatever that means.

Pontbriand dribbling the ball to holder Brad Maynard last Sunday on a crucial field goal attempt against the Cincinnati Bengals was the last straw, of course. But even before that he had seemingly lost the ability to accurately do the one and only task for which he was being paid: snap the friggin' ball.

In baseball they call this either Chuck Knoblauch's Disease or Steve Sax Syndrome. In football it may very well become known as Pontbriand Panic. And irrespective of whatever accomplishments may have preceded the onset of the affliction, once you develop the yips you'd have an easier time convincing Child Services that Dina Lohan or Kris Jenner are mother of the year candidates then in correcting the problem.

When Johnny Miller and Ian-Baker Finch lost the ability to make 3 foot putts, they went to the broadcasting booth. It mattered little that their tee to green game was still solid. The money is won on the greens and Miller and Finch were so overcome by technique issues as they tried to work through the problem that it was literally painful to watch either putt.

It's almost that way with Pontbriand, which is why he's gone. A coach holding his breath just hoping the ball makes it back to its intended spot on a straight line isn't a good sign and that's exactly where Shurmur found himself with Pontbriand.

Pontbriand said that when he botched a snap earlier this season that helped contribute to another brutal Browns' loss he went home and made 150 snaps just to get the bad feel off his hands. But those are the easy snaps to make. There's no stout defensive lineman breathing down his neck; there's no game on the line.

That Pontbriand did his job well for a number of years is actually pretty irrelevant. Professional sports has always been a what-have-you-done-for-me-lately business and by that measure, when it came to Pontbriand, the answer was "not much."

It's probably difficult for most fans to remember that while long snapping has always required special expertise it wasn't always a specialty job. It used to be that almost anyone else on the team fulfilled the role of the person responsible for getting the ball to the punter or the holder. Sometimes it was a defensive player. Other times it was a back up lineman. Teams simply didn't take up a roster spot for this one specialized skill and it all seemed to work out just fine for every great punter and place kicker in the history of the sport for quite a long time. But apparently there was room for improvement and thus begat the age of the long snapper as a commodity separate and distinct from any other position on the field.

According to Wikipedia, a source nearly as reputable as TMZ, Pontbriand held the distinction of being the highest drafted long snapper in the history of the NFL when he was picked by the Browns in the 5th round. Pontrbriand played in two Pro Bowls so it's hard to say that it was a wasted pick and yet why is it hard to imagine, especially given the awful draft history of the re-born Browns that using any pick on a long snapper was simply a waste of time? Maybe the answer lies in the fact that it's still hard to imagine, even in this day and age, that the Browns, particularly these Browns, a team that needs more and not less draft choices, would blow a choice on any long snapper when their needs have always been far more vast. Ah, another column for another day.

If you want to truly understand why the Browns cut Pontbriand rather then allow him to work through whatever mental block he was experiencing, you can point to two things.

First, even though this Browns squad never had any playoff aspirations, winning still is rather important to the overall psyche of the team and its fans. Pontbriand cost the team at least one win and probably two. In the grand scheme it doesn't mean much but on a micro level both losses were incredibly deflating.

Second, the Browns are simply a team that can't afford any mistakes if it ever has a hope of winning again. One bad snap can happen. Two raise a few eyebrows. Three is a trend and Pontbriand had entered trend territory at least three games ago.

So goodbye, Ryan Pontbriand. I'm sure you'll find work again. Unfortunately, and sadly, I'm sure you'll botch snaps again. Once the yips get in your blood, the only long term cure is to take up another sport.

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So it looks like there will be a NBA season after all. That certainly was a very short nuclear winter.

Actually it's not a surprise that the NBA and its players figured out a settlement to what ailed them. It's exactly how collective bargaining is supposed to work. The beauty is that economic factors eventually come to bear on all the parties and it forces them to get more realistic.

NBA owners or most of them anyway have debt that needs serviced. It's tough to do that without the income flowing that the debt was based on in the first place. NBA players or most of them anyway have their own type of debt to service as well which can be particularly difficult without an outsized paycheck coming their way.

And that, kids, is the real lesson of labor law. Disputes over new collective bargaining agreements, especially ones where the owner is trying to cut back on the largesse of the previous version, are common and difficult. But eventually they do get solved.

There's a school of thought that suggests that the players' lawsuits was the impetus. Perhaps but not because there was any legal merit to them. All that litigation promised was paydays for the lawyers and interminable delays to the resolution of the ultimate issues. Staring down the barrel of a gun being held by lawyers and judges tends to make parties skittish and so it was that the owners and the players finally found common ground.

Good for them.

Meanwhile and well under the radar, major league baseball owners and players entered into a new agreement without all the saber rattling that usually attends these things.

In each case, baseball and basketball, the issues the parties solved are important to them and mostly irrelevant to the average fan, with one exception—economic disparity.

On that front, it appears as though the NBA owners made a bit more headway in giving its smaller market teams the opportunity to compete on a level playing field than did baseball owners. For reasons that both confound and mystify, baseball owners continue to delude

themselves into thinking that there economic structure is fundamentally sound. As if.

In basketball, the owners didn't do as much to put in a hard salary cap as they could have given the leverage they had, but they have made it far more expensive for big market teams to spend freely at the expense of their partners in smaller markets. The real question is whether or not it works.

Statistics consistently bear it out that when a team loses its superstar, like Cleveland and LeBron James, like Chicago and Michael Jordan, it's a 10 year death march back to respectability. There are several reasons that conspired to create that situation but it is a serious, serious problem.

The reason Dan Gilbert was such a vocal proponent of making a fundamental sea change in NBA economics was that he well understood all the impediments to his ability to get a good competitive team on the court in a short period of time. The question now is whether any inroads were made toward that goal with the new agreement. We won't know that answer for at least a few more years or, stated differently, about 90-100 more losses by the Cavs.

Still, for fans of all sports, we now have that rare moment where there aren't any dark clouds of labor unrest hanging over any major sport. Baseball, football and basketball are now in the midst of very long-term deals and hockey, well, let's just say that there won't be any problems any time soon there either. It will be a long while before the players feel chippy again having lost an entire season a few years ago.

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Ohio State's hiring of Urban Meyer with the expectation that it will turn things around immediately leads to this week's question to ponder: If the Browns had hired Urban Meyer, would Browns' fans have those same expectations? Bonus question: if they did, would they be justified?