In another life, Cleveland and Detroit could have been the best of friends. They come from similar backgrounds, live a stone's throw from each other, and get by on the same brand of underdog perseverance. As downtrodden towns with some occasionally downtrodden sports teams, they have taken their turns serving as the punch lines of elitist jokes, always bouncing back from every hit with a blood-soaked smile. Through it all, you'd just assume that the Motor City and the Forest City would understand—maybe even admire—one another. But we know, of course, that this is not quite the case. And sports probably has as much to do with it as anything.

Though the rivalries between Cleveland and Detroit franchises have generally paled in comparison to the one between those Big Ten schools down the road, there have certainly been occasions when the Indians-Tigers, Browns-Lions, and Cavs-Pistons feuds have reached epic proportions. Sometimes, it's resulted in unforgettable championship game matchups. In other instances, it's just led to straight up fisticuffs. Historically speaking, the numbers suggest it's Detroit that usually gets the better of these battles: the Tigers hold a 1064-1033 all-time edge over the Indians; the Lions are an eye-popping 17-5 versus the Browns; and the Pistons have owned the Cavaliers by a 112-78 count. Still, when it's come to some of the marquee moments from a century's worth of pro sports confrontations between these Rust Belt metropolises, it looks like a pretty balanced scorecard. To judge for yourself, here's one reasonably even-handed Ohioan's take on 12 of the Greatest Showdowns in Cleveland vs. Detroit Sports History.

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