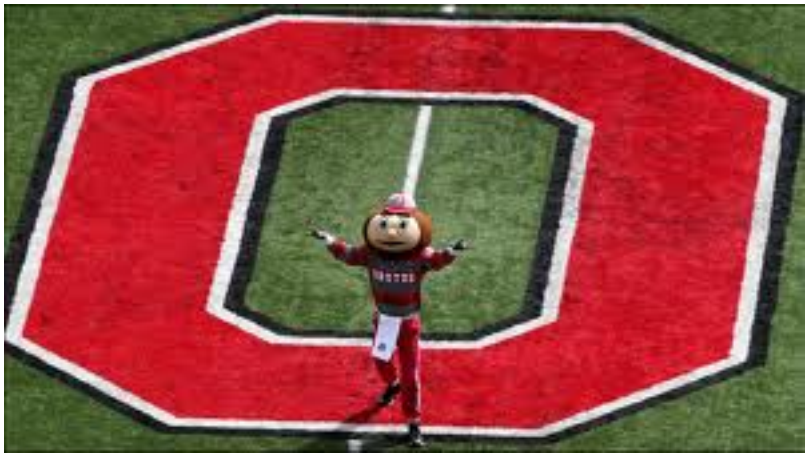

My life, and it's syncopation around sports, breaks down into two halves. The first half is spent mostly committed to Cleveland sports. The other half is spent with the Buckeyes, of Ohio State. Ever since the day I first began rooting for sports, the two halves of my life were destined to intersect. It's a constant mental struggle. We're talking like, Tom Hanks in *Cast Away* type-of-struggle. Jim Carey in *The Truman Show* type-of-struggle. You're about to read an account of it. I welcome...

The Anatomy of a Fragile Sports Fan

As you probably know, the Buckeyes are on the brink of finishing undefeated—a perfect 12-0 record, a feat they haven't accomplished in a decade and one that would be quite thee accomplishment given their recent, troubled past. Entering the season, there was a weird swell of energy surrounding this team. No one wanted to admit it, but the retroaction of the NCAA sanctions instilled fans with a "us against the world NCAA" mentality. Ohio State's "ceiling" was pretty simple: play the role of ultimate spoiler. Yep, with the one year Bowl-ban, that's as good as it was going to get, so we had to find value in the little things, like running-up scores, stuffing stat sheets, knocking off conference foes, and doing all of the above in "screw-you, we're not even going to a Bowl" fashion. But did we actually think all of this would happen? That we would put up fifty-plus points on a fairly routine basis? That Braxton Miller would ingratiate himself so quickly? That we would win the conference, and do so handedly?

Perhaps some did.

Did we think this team would actually run the table and go a perfect 12-0? Admittedly, I didn't.

I'm happy for this team and its Seniors, and I'm glad for the fans. As for me though, let's just say that I have some serious issues. Issues with the idea that this team could potentially run the table.

Anytime you can go undefeated it's a rare accomplishment. Sacred, to a degree. It's something you typically cherish. Something you forever remember. And here's the problem: I don't want to remember this season. I don't want to play the hypothetical game, the one where we ask ourselves whether the Buckeyes would have squared off against Notre Dame in Pasadena. Or whether this team could have potentially met Oregon in the Championship. Or whether or not Buck City would have won? There's nothing sacred about it. Becoming the first ever Bowl ineligible team to go undefeated isn't any type of honor. It isn't by any means a disgrace, either. Really, it's just burdening. Burdening on my Buckeye soul. That's why all along I sorta, kinda wanted to see them slip up and lose a game. Or two.

Is this wrong? I don't know. (Reminder: I'm a Cleveland sports fan)

Let's use a cross sport comparison: Pretend that Jimmy Haslam (owner of the Cleveland Browns) had an agreement in place to move the Browns to Tennessee for one year and return the team back to Cleveland the very next year, where they would forever remain. During this one year stint, the name stays the same, the colors remain unaltered, nothing changes other than the location of the Browns 8 home games—Oh, and the fact that the Browns, in their lone year in Tennessee, end up winning the Super Bowl!

If you're a Cleveland Browns fan, how do you feel? I mean, they're your team. And clearly a good one, as evidenced by their Super Bowl victory. You know that they're coming back to Cleveland the very next year, and who knows, they might just win it again.

That's how I view this 12-0 situation.

For Ohio State fans, going undefeated is about pride—something I clearly lack. It's about bragging rights—and *bragging rights* have essentially become the lifeblood of college football.

But screw the bragging rights. I'd much rather have the karma. (Reminder: I'm a Cleveland sports fan)

Expectations frighten me. Sorry, they just do. They have the ability to kill. And Ohio State's football program is no exception to this universally known reality. Since 2002, we can all agree they've experienced their share of egregiously tough luck. And guess what, this season has followed that script: I mean, wouldn't it be *just our luck* if—in the one year when there was zero payoff—this team went undefeated?

Ironically, if this happens it will be because everything broke the Buckeyes way. And so far, everything has. (How they won that Purdue game, I will never know.) Naturally, they won't be so fortunate next year, right? (

This team is only going to get better, it's only year 1 of the Urbanian Era. Does year 2 or 3 translate into another year like the one they're about to have? I don't know, we can't say; with these things, you just never know. Teams will gun for the Buckeyes; harder than they ever have. Wisconsin and Michigan will get better. Michigan State isn't as bad as they've appeared. Purdue and Northwestern are becoming legit (sorta). Penn State will recover. (just kidding) The fact of the matter is that it's incredibly tough to run the table in the FBS, regardless of the perceived mediocrity of your conference foes. What this team is doing is pretty remarkable. It scares me to think that this might be—and I put this in quotes—"The Bucks Year." This makes me incredibly uneasy and I really don't even know why. That's why I'm kinda hoping they can manage a loss at Wisconsin this Saturday. Yes, in part because it will give me less anxiety; but mostly because it will eviscerate the whole "*Urban Meyer has never lost a game"* talk, which is good because next year I don't want that sort of stuff hanging over this teams head.

Wait, what did I just say? Screw it...

Go Bucks!

Wisconsin, meet the smell of asshole.

Michigan, have fun suckin' it.

Notre Dame, you have no hot chicks.

Oregon, I would let Chip Kelly's thigh coach the Browns.

Kansas State: No comment.

Alabama, you're the only team that could beat Ohio State.