In his latest, Gary Benz takes a look at the controversy surrounding Florida

It's tempting to write about the Browns improbable victory yesterday against a decent Kansas City team. But if we did so, we're afraid we'd find a way to cheapen the win by, for example, noting that Kansas City head coach Herm Edwards is at least a little nutty for not blitzing the rawest of rookie quarterbacks. Either that or note that the Browns defense is having an awful time getting off the field lately. In the last two games, the defense has been on the field for 9 very lengthy touchdown drives that look like this:

14 plays—69 yards

10 plays—82 yards

6 plays—56 yards

10 plays—70 yards

4 plays—25 yards (following turnover)

10 plays—85 yards

11 plays—80 yards

9 plays—77 yards

14 plays—99 yards

So we don't want to cheapen yesterday's win with any facts that might paint us as a cynic and instead we'll rejoice in the kind of victory beleaguered head coach Romeo Crennel has been waiting for since he took over this moribund franchise.

Instead we took a look around all the controversy surrounding Florida's selection to play in the BCS Championship game and ask: what's the big deal? You can take a tour around the internet at all manner of websites and find somebody playing the contrarian and complaining about how Michigan was robbed.

Exhibit A is Gene Wojciechowksi at ESPN.com. In an ill-considered piece (available here) Wojciechowski attempts to lay out the better case for Michigan playing in a rematch against Ohio State. He can't complaint about strength of schedule because, well, technically that favors Florida. So he whines that, basically, Michigan didn't get any worse in the last two weeks and yet teams were able to jump over them, first Southern Cal and then Florida.

But that logic, which you'll hear repeated from many sources, starts from a faulty premise: whatever happened after the OSU/Michigan game is irrelevant. If that was the case, why even play out the rest of the season?

As things stood two weeks ago, in the view of the voters (media and coaches) Michigan was the second best team even after being dispatched by the Buckeyes. But while the season may have been over for the Wolverines, it wasn't for the Trojans or the Gators and to judge their merits on a less than complete schedule seems pretty unfair as well. Each team still had signature games left on their schedule and thus had the opportunity to convince voters of their merits as the nation's second best team. And that's exactly what happened.

Southern Cal's handling of vastly overrated near-fraud Notre Dame essentially took the gloss off of Michigan's victory in South Bend earlier in the season. At that point, voters could rightly notice that Michigan has only one other decent victory to claim as its own—Wisconsin—and a relatively close loss to the Buckeyes. With Michigan thus exposed, it wasn't a surprise that Southern Cal overtook them following the Notre Dame Victory. Michigan no longer looked like the second best team to most voters. In other words, what happened that week wasn't irrelevant.

This past weekend was basically a replay, only with Florida in the starring role. We all know what happened to Southern Cal, of course, and Florida's impressive win in the SEC title game over a strong Arkansas team, one of several strong teams Florida played this season, convinced most that they, too, were better than Michigan.

That doesn't mean, of course, that Michigan got worse. It's just that two other teams, given the opportunity to actually complete their schedule, the same opportunity Michigan had, presented a body of work that was slightly more impressive. That hardly sounds unfair, let alone robbery.

Wojciechowski's other main theme is that no one wanted to see a rematch, particularly Buckeye coach Jim Tressel. But that is so much a red herring. As for Tressel, why wouldn't he want to see a rematch? He practically owns LLLLLoyd Carr at this point. If there is anyone who shouldn't want to see a rematch it would be Carr, not Tressel. But more to the point, Michigan had its opportunity and came up short. People may look at the final score and diminish the Buckeye's victory because it was only "three points." But only a poor interference call kept a late Wolverines drive alive and allowed them to score that final touchdown. There wasn't any

point in that game where the Buckeyes weren't in complete control.

We won't debate the merits of the BCS system. It certainly has its flaws. But save us the tears for Michigan. In our mind, their claim for the National Championship Game isn't even as good as the Louisville Cardinals. One could argue, for example, that but for an unfortunate offside penalty against Rutgers, the Louisville Cardinals would be undefeated and playing against the Buckeyes. In fact, we'd argue the point that this year the Big East was a tougher league than the Big Ten and Louisville nearly came through unscathed, save for that offside penalty that nullified a missed field goal by Rutgers. Given that reprieve Rutgers then made the kick sending Louisville to the most bitter of defeats for a team that has been pretty impressive itself.

The bottom line is that when Michigan had a chance to take matters into its own hands, it did not. Having thus put the decision to others, it seems disingenuous now to complain that the others blew it.