Monday may be the opening of the 2007 baseball season but there is other, more pressing business that needs to be taken care of first. The Buckeyes gchance to make good on The Disaster In The Desert, once again facing the Florida Gators for a major national championship. In his latest, Gary gives us his thoughts on the game ... and also hits on the maddening inconsistencies displayed by the pro hoops team we live and die with. et a

Monday may be the opening of the 2007 baseball season but there is other, more pressing business that needs to be taken care of first.

The Ohio State Buckeyes play in another national championship game against another team from Florida. The Buckeyes beat the Miami Hurricanes for the 2002-03 football national championship and were humbled by the Florida Gators in the 2006-07 football national championship. Tonight the Buckeyes take on the Gators for the 2007 basketball championship. Apparently there are two centers of the college sporting universe: Columbus, OH and the state of Florida.

The differences between George W. Bush and the rest of the country pale in comparison to the differences in attitude of Buckeye fans today versus the their attitude heading into the BCS Championship game just a few months ago. Then, the Buckeyes and their fans were borderline arrogant, dismissing any chance that the Gators might have of crashing the planned victory parties. Now, the fans, if not the players, are apoplectic at the thought of losing again to Florida,

giving the Buckeyes precious little chance to prevail.

Not being prone to predictions, the only thing that bears mentioning is that the Buckeyes have been an incredibly resilient team during this year's NCAA tournament much to the consternation of most NCAA pool participants and media geniuses.

Somehow the Buckeyes found a way to come back from the dead against both Xavier and Tennessee. This only convinced most to predict their demise against Memphis. Of course, Ohio State responded by playing one of their best games of the season.

The intelligentsia responded to this odd turn by favoring the lower-seeded Georgetown Hoyas in Saturday's semi-final game. The Buckeyes were so intimidated that they took control early in that game and basically never relented, despite Greg Oden's foul trouble in the first half.

Naturally, this only resulted in the experts, in near unison, giving the Buckeyes no chance in tonight's game. It tends to remind one of Urban Meyer and the Florida Gators last season and how they finished the football season. Each time they survived, and there were significant scares, it just gave others reasons to pick against them, as if finding a way to get the job done is a negative. Florida carried that chip on its shoulder into the national championship game and never looked back.

Florida is a very good basketball team. They have a national championship-winning coach who, once again, has them peaking at the right time. They way they handled the Buckeyes earlier in the season and UCLA on Saturday night, who many believed to be the second best team in the country, makes it difficult to pick against them. It tends to remind one of the Jim Tressel and the Buckeyes and how they finished the football season by handling Michigan. Of course, the success and the ensuing accolades only made the Buckeyes fat and happy, believing that victory against Florida was inevitable.

Florida hasn't had to sit on ice for 50 days like the Buckeyes did at the end of the football season so they've not had to listen to how great they are for all that long. Still, there is enough talk of a dynasty and the supposedly feel-good story of players who decided to remain in college to make them at least consider the possibility that the Buckeyes probably don't deserve to be on the same court. If nothing else, it makes for interesting theatre, assuming you like yours of the Greek Tragedy variety.

It would be nice if the theatre surrounding the Cleveland Cavaliers was that interesting. Instead, it plays out like a bad high school musical. The victory against the Chicago Bulls on Saturday could have been season-defining if they didn't go out and pretty much undo most of the good they accomplished by then losing to the hapless Boston Celtics the next night. This is the difference between good and great teams and good and great coaches.

If one considers just the last few weeks of the Cavaliers season, it pretty much tells you anything you need to know about their flaws. On March 7th, they beat the Detroit Pistons in Detroit. But on March 20th they lost to Charlotte. They drilled the New York Knicks a few nights later but then lost, handily, to a very average Denver Nuggets two nights later, at home. They beat the Indiana Pacers but then somehow lost to those same, pathetic New York Knicks the next night. This was followed by the alpha and omega of this past weekend with Chicago and Boston.

Head coach Mike Brown will tell you that the Cavs seemed to have lost their defensive edge somewhere along the scenic path. He has vowed to return to the basics in any upcoming practices, assuming he can fit them in considering their current schedule. But it does beg the question and make one wonder why the Cavs have lost their ability to defend at the time of year they need it most and ponder who, exactly, is responsible for it.

The Cavs are in the midst of what should have been their easiest five-game road trip in recent memory, one in which they could solidify a much easier playoff path. Winning all five games was very realistic, particularly if the Cavs are to be an elite team. Instead, they are 2-2 headed into their game with Minnesota on Tuesday. It's hardly the scenario that most envisioned or one that serves them well with the playoffs just around the corner.

Still, like the Buckeyes, the Cavs are in the mix. The fact that the discussion is debating how elite of a team either is only underscores the otherwordly nature of the discussion overall. It's not as if fans are arguing about when either team is going to be competitive as they do with the Browns or whether success will be defined by spare parts and retreads as they do with the Indians. Both are solid teams with true superstars and while neither may have enough to get over the top this year, you have to like the trends. And for Cleveland fans, that is something we haven't been able to say very often, ever.