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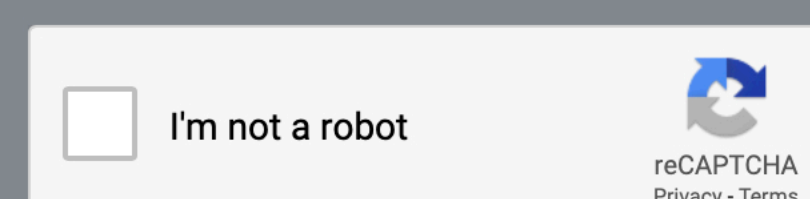


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# Meltdown falls on Browns' shoulders



**Jarrett Bell**  
Columnist  
USA TODAY

CLEVELAND – They can't pin this one on the refs.

No, Cleveland Browns, look in the mirror and see the egg on your face for what it is.

You blew it.

Sure, there were way too many head-scratching calls that went against Cleveland in the 32-28 setback that left the Browns (2-4) still in search of their first home victory of the season.

But there were even more cases of Browns' blunders – in strategy and execution – that left much to the imagination of what might have been.

In the aftermath, though, Baker Mayfield was willing to make a charitable donation in order to get it on record that he thought the Browns were big-time victims of shabby officiating.

"I'll probably get fined for saying this, but it was pretty bad today," he said.

He grumbled about the illegal blind-side block penalty on Jarvis Landry that wiped out a dazzling, cross-field catch-and-run by Nick Chubb that would have moved the chains. He whined about the officials missing a face-mask penalty the Seahawks apparently committed against Chubb during a goal-line pileup. And like his coach, Freddie Kitchens, he thought Landry crossed the plane of the end zone on the fumble that wasn't reversed by instant replay.

Tough breaks. Mayfield, who also maintained, "the refs are never an excuse," had some legitimate beefs as referee Adrian Hill's crew dropped 19 flags on the two teams to underscore some of the general sloppiness on display.

Just don't believe the Browns were robbed – unless they burglarized themselves.

Quick, Roger Goodell, pass a new rule: Teams that commit five or more turnovers can't complain about officials ... even when the calls and replays don't always match up.

No, this loss falls at the feet of the undisciplined team that committed five turnovers, had a punt blocked, blew a



**Browns quarterback Baker Mayfield congratulated Seahawks counterpart Russell Wilson after Seattle hung on for a 32-28 victory.** SCOTT GALVIN/USA TODAY SPORTS

20-6 lead and inexplicably kept tempting fate with some questionable play-calling near the goal line.

Before that Landry fumble early in the fourth quarter, the Browns, trailing 25-20, had two cracks from the Seahawks' 1-yard line. Yet rather than try pounding it in with Chubb, who finished with 122 rushing yards, Kitchens put it on Mayfield's arm. And the third-down fade pass to Odell Beckham Jr. didn't come close to being completed. On fourth down, Kitchens called a play that had Mayfield in a shotgun with an empty backfield. Mayfield threw a quick pass to Landry that resulted in the fumble.

The Browns dodged that episode as the Seahawks were penalized for having 12 men on the field. After Chubb was stuffed on the ensuing fourth down, the Browns forced a punt and started the next drive with prime field position that led to the TD. Yet with the lost challenge, they also lost a timeout that could have come in handy at crunchtime.

Ah, crunchtime. Mayfield's last pass of the day, a fling to the flat for running back Dontrell Hilliard, was behind the target. So much for a game-winning

drive, which the Browns were clearly thinking when they took over with 3:30 remaining. Instead, Mayfield's errant throw resulted in a too-easy interception for K.J. Wright. Ballgame.

On the season, that was interception No. 11 for Mayfield (who has thrown for five TDs). That's no way to win.

Look at Russell Wilson, having an MVP season for the Seahawks. He passed for 295 yards with two TDs and didn't commit a turnover. Composure was his ticket. When his team trailed by 14 points early, he didn't flinch. When the radio receiver in his helmet malfunctioned, he stayed cool and started calling his own plays in up-tempo fashion as if it were no sweat. He ran his number of fourth-quarter game-winning victory drives to 30, more than anyone else since he entered the NFL in 2012.

Sure, the Seahawks have been through a lot over the years, with a handful of veterans still in tow from the Legion of Boom glory run. They know not to panic.

Then again, if Mayfield hadn't thrown a pick just before halftime, maybe there would have been no need for

last-minute drama. The Browns were set up beautifully, leading 20-12 with second down from the Seahawks' 10-yard line inside the two-minute warning. But Mayfield's throw for Landry in the end zone was a bit behind the target, and Shaquill Griffin deflected it into the arms of Tedric Thompson – a turnover that Wilson's Seahawks converted into an 88-yard TD drive that was pretty much a 14-point swing.

So as much as the Browns were vexed by the officials, their frustrations shouldn't come anywhere close to the disdain they should have for their own blunders.

There were several cases when Mayfield was on the mark but his targets muffed or outright dropped the passes. There were first downs negated by holding penalties. Missed tackles. Busted coverages. A lot of teaching moments on video, with a bye week to use for corrections.

Kitchens praised his team for the effort and was encouraged by the efficiency early in the game – which ultimately was undone by the turnovers. Sugar-coating the bottom line won't cut it. And tight calls or not, the coach admitted that some of the penalties (nine for 83 yards) were disturbing because they reflected a lack of concentration.

"Sometimes, it is playing with emotion instead of passion," he said, alluding to the roughing-the-passer and late hit calls. "During the play, it's technique, being lazy or not doing your job. There are several things. We do not ever practice penalties."

Maybe that's not a bad idea, because whatever the Browns are practicing, they just can't seem to get it right with enough consistency.

Still, it's a long season. Being 2-4 is not a death sentence. This team that entered the season with so many expectations, so much hype and, yes, so much swagger, has time to rally to make a playoff push, especially with a schedule that seemingly becomes less grueling down the stretch.

But to live up to their hope, the Browns surely need to learn to not beat themselves.

These might be the growing pains, but at the moment they reflect a reality.

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# Tiger starts slow in return to play

Steve DiMeglio  
Golfweek | USA TODAY Sports

CHIBA, Japan – After his much bally-hooded arrival in this country, Tiger Woods spent Sunday in Tokyo playing a variety of games with kids – including rock, paper, scissors – in an event staged by Nike.

On Monday, he started facing the big boys again on the PGA Tour.

Some two months after having arthroscopic surgery on his left knee to repair minor cartilage damage – the fifth surgical procedure on his knee – Woods prepped for his return to the PGA Tour with a skins game against world No. 2 Rory McIlroy, Jason Day and Japanese star Hideki Matsuyama.

His knee isn't 100%, but it's getting there. His excitement to get back in the game, on the other hand, is beyond the century-percentage mark and he's very much looking forward to Thursday's start in the Zozo Championship at Narashino Country Club, the first official PGA Tour event in Japan.

"I'm right on schedule," Woods said. He didn't appear to have any trouble with his knee during the skins game, which was held Monday afternoon (Sunday overnight ET), but he did have to deal with rust.

Distance control hampered him throughout and his short game was a tad off at times. He hit few fairways with driver in hand but length was not a problem. His swing looked sound, and he just has to get his feels back.

"I did not play well at the beginning," Woods said. "I hit a lot of bad shots and did not putt well. Once I got into the flow of competing and feeling the round, it just got exciting. We were competitive, the banter was great, the back and forth. And I hit some good shots toward the end."

He won some skins along the way, too. He won two with a par on the fifth hole for \$20,000 and won three skins with a 10-foot birdie on the eighth for \$40,000.

But for the seventh time in his career, Woods did not win the skins game. After going 0-for-6 in the original Skins Game in the USA, Woods was denied victory by Day, who won the first skin of the match and the last five.

Day birdied the third from 10 feet for \$30,000 and won four skins with a par from 12 feet on the 17th for \$80,000. On the final hole, worth \$100,000, Day tapped in for birdie and then watched as Woods missed a putt from 10 feet that would have extended the match.

Day won \$210,000, while Woods and McIlroy each tallied \$60,000. Matsuyama won \$20,000.

Before the match, Woods revealed his left knee bothered him throughout



Jason Day won \$210,000 in the skins game Monday, while Tiger Woods and Rory McIlroy each tallied \$60,000.

RICHARD HEATHCOTE/GETTY IMAGES

last season. He originally intended to have the surgery in December 2018, but his victory in the Tour Championship three months prior altered those plans.

Woods didn't think he'd have enough time to rehab to get ready for the 2019 Farmers Insurance Open, so he delayed the surgery. And he was playing well.

"I figured I would keep rolling with it," Woods said.

He rolled all right, right down Magnolia Lane en route to winning the Masters for his 15th major triumph. But after winning his fifth green jacket, Woods' game took a precipitous drop as his knee gradually worsened, to the point he was in pain when kneeling to read putts. The injury also started to bother his back and affect his walking.

After failing to qualify for the Tour Championship, Woods had surgery Aug. 20. He started chipping and putting in mid-September. Two weeks later he was hitting full shots and has been playing rounds of golf the past two weeks.

"Unfortunately, I've been down this road before. I understand what it takes to get through it," Woods said. "I've been kind of battling through this the entire year and trying to piece it together. It's nice to finally get over the hump and feeling good again and to go full speed. It's nice to be able to squat down and read putts."

"I'm excited for the year-end run. I feel much more fit."

Woods, No. 10 in the world, is scheduled to play the Hero World Challenge in the Bahamas in December. The following week, he could be playing in the Presidents Cup in Australia. As captain, he'd have to pick himself as one of the four discretionary selections to play in the Cup.

# Jimenez wins Cup playoff opener

Hank Kurz Jr.  
The Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. – Miguel Angel Jimenez turned a day off for torrential rain into an advantage in the final round of the Dominion Energy Charity Classic.

Jimenez repeatedly hit the ball close to the pins on greens softened by rain Sunday and tied the course record with a 9-under 63 Monday to win the opening event of the PGA Tour Champions' three-tournament Charles Schwab Cup playoffs by two shots over second-round co-leader Tommy Tolles.

"Everything," Jimenez said when asked what was working for him. "Even if I missed some fairways on the edge of the fairways. ... My irons are amazing to the flag."

Jimenez made nine birdies in a bogey-free trip over the Country Club of Virginia's James River course to tie the record set by Kevin Sutherland in 2016 and matched by Bernhard Langer and Vijay Singh in 2017. The victory, his second this season, moved him from 22nd and 10th in the playoff standings.



Miguel Angel Jiménez won the Dominion Energy Charity Classic by two shots. STAN BADZ/PGA TOUR VIA GETTY IMAGES

His first birdie came on the par-3 fourth hole, and "then I feel good the whole way on the golf course," he said.

Tolles remained winless in three years on the tour for players 50 and older but made an eagle on the par-5 last hole to finish at 4 under and beat Colin Montgomerie by one shot. The performance moved Tolles from 59th to 37th, guaranteeing him a spot in the Invesco QQQ Championship. Only the top 54 players qualify for the second playoff event.

## USA TODAY SPORTS NETWORK HEISMAN SURVEY

# LSU QB new leader

Eddie Timanus  
USA TODAY

The college football season is half over, and the race for the sport's top individual honor is far from decided.

There is a new leader this week in the USA TODAY Network Heisman survey as LSU quarterback Joe Burrow edged ahead of Oklahoma signal caller Jalen Hurts by a single point. Those two are quite close on the stat sheet as well, but there are enough huge games ahead in November for another challenger to gather momentum.

In our weekly survey of 21 official Heisman electors who work for USA TODAY Network properties, Burrow received 48 total points with nine first-place mentions. Hurts actually had

one more No. 1 vote but three fewer seconds. Hurts concluded the weekend in second place nationally in total offense, with an average of 397 yards per game, augmented by his 705 rushing yards. Burrow ranks just behind in third place nationally, putting up 368.3 yards per game. Burrow has 29 touchdown passes with two more on the ground, while Hurts has accounted for 20 scores by air and 10 more by land.

Alabama quarterback Tua Tagovailoa has slipped to third place for now, and he'll be sidelined for a game as he rehabilitates an ankle injury that cut short his most recent outing against Tennessee. But he was still listed first by two voters, and he could be back on top in a heartbeat if he's able to return and perform well against LSU on Nov. 9.

## USA TODAY Sports Network Heisman survey

| Player, school, position, year       | 1st | 2nd | 3rd | Total |
|--------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| Joe Burrow, LSU, QB, Sr.             | 9   | 10  | 1   | 48    |
| Jalen Hurts, Oklahoma, QB, Sr.       | 10  | 7   | 3   | 47    |
| Tua Tagovailoa, Alabama, QB, Jr.     | 2   | 3   | 11  | 23    |
| Justin Fields, Ohio State, QB, Soph. | 0   | 1   | 4   | 6     |
| Jonathan Taylor, Wisconsin, RB, Jr.  | 0   | 0   | 1   | 1     |
| Chase Young, Ohio State, DE, Jr.     | 0   | 0   | 1   | 1     |

A first-place vote is worth 3 points, second 2, third 1.

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For more information about the request for bids, visit [www.peppm.org](http://www.peppm.org) or contact Jared Lehman at 570-246-5963.

Installation of certain products purchased under the contracts may be subject to applicable prevailing wage laws and rates. Reference is made to the prevailing minimum wage rates applicable to such installation.

No bidder may withdraw its bid for 120 days after the bid opening date.

The CSIU reserves the right to reject all bids, and/or to waive any informality or irregularity in a bid.

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**Notice to Bidders**

Region 14 ESC (the "Lead Agency"), on behalf of National Cooperative Purchasing Alliance (NCPA) and public agencies in all 50 states, that elect to access the Master Agreement is soliciting proposals to enter into Master Agreements for:

- Automotive Parts #26-19
- Campus ID Credential Transaction Solutions #27-19
- Cloud Administrative Solutions #25-19
- Dust Suppressants, Stabilizing Solutions and Related Services #33-19
- Electrical Equipment, Bulbs and Ballasts and Related Services- Supplemental #30-19
- HVAC Equipment, Installation, Service, & Related Products - Supplemental #29-19
- Natural Sport Surfaces, Installation and Related Materials #31-19
- Payroll and Related Services #35-19
- Roofing Products and Services #28-19
- Security System Solutions Product and Services, High Tech Electronics, & Digital Media #24-19
- Self-Enforcing Parking Meters #34-19
- Underground Water, Sewer and Storm Utility Product #32-19

Due Tuesday, November 19, 2019 at 2:00 pm CST

Sealed responses are due and will be publicly opened in the Region 14 ESC offices located at 1850 Highway 351, Abilene, TX 79601.

**NCPA** To request a copy of specifications, please visit NCPA's website [www.ncpa.us](http://www.ncpa.us).

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