One of our favorite past times as Clevelanders and as Browns fans is debating the quarterback position. As I watch Colin Kaepernick take on the Ravens in the Super Bowl I can't help but get drawn into that very debate myself and wonder whether the guy Kaepernick replaced, Alex Smith, wouldn't look really good in the brown and orange.

Are You Kidding Me?

I take a lot of crap from stats guys.

It's far worse in baseball where the pseudo-intellectuals who don't watch a ton of baseball have to try and justify what their eyes can't tell them with numbers and advanced calculus.

(Waiting for heads to explode in 3..2..1)

Okay, that's kind of broad and unfair as a lot of people who do understand the game also enjoy the statistical side of things, but you get my point. I'm a guy that relies more on my eyes than the box score or the Excel Spreadsheet and I typically loathe statistical analysis. I've hated math since I can remember.

So being the worldly and wise man that I am (stop laughing), when I hear people in Cleveland complaining about potentially seeing a quarterback like Alex Smith with the Browns, I feel the need to vomit all over my shoes and then I feel sad that so many who support this team with time and hard-earned dollars simply fail to understand the simple concept of improvement.

But I'm nothing if not magnanimous, lovable, handsome and adaptable (stop laughing). So what I'll do here is not just talk about how anyone with functioning eyes is crazy if they think Alex Smith isn't a better QB or option for the Browns than Brandon Weeden. And I will also show them in numbers as to why that's the case.

For those of you who might also be Sports M.D.'s like me, we're going to lay this out in SOAP form like real doctors do.

SOAP stands for: Subjective, Objective, Assessment & Plan.

Doctors ask a patient how they feel (subjective), then they test them with thermometers and MRIs and instruments (objective) in order to diagnose the issues (assessment) before they treat the problem they find (plan).

So how about it?

Brandon Weeden vs. Alex Smith?

Subjective- Smith v. Weeden

It's pretty clear what I think of Brandon Weeden. In fact, since the second they drafted him and I dropped my beer at the Wright Place and started sobbing front of the other TCF Draft Party attendees, it's been pretty clear what I thought of the Weeden pick .

So understand that this isn't based on hindsight a year after Weeden started the season by getting trapped under a giant US flag and throwing more interceptions than TD passes and having half the field removed from his reads after week one. Well, actually it is based on a lot of that.

The season confirmed what my subjective thoughts on Weeden were long before he proved them to be true. He's un-athletic, he has a big arm, he doesn't appear to be the brightest bulb in the lamp and he's not Blood & Guts Patton out there in terms of leadership abilities.

Subjectively, I believe that to win in the NFL in this day and age your quarterback has GOT TO HAVE two of the three following qualities at a minimum:

1. Good Arm
2. Brains
3. Ridiculous Athleticism

You can look at those each as sliding scales. A guy like Mike Vick has a terrific arm and ridiculous athleticism and isn't Einstein. You can win to a certain extent with Mike Vick. A guy like Drew Brees has an adequate arm, is above average in athleticism and is very smart and able to run that offense, progress through his reads and lead his team. You can win the whole burrito with Brees.

Guys like Colin Kaepernick and RG3 excite people because they have all three criteria. They have cannons, they are athletic freaks AND they're freaking smart. Both those guys also appear to have leadership tendencies that Weeden didn't exhibit. Weeden has a big arm. That's a plus. But he's also a statue and he exhibited very little fire or leadership ability on the field last year.

Brandon Weeden will be 30 in Week 2 of the upcoming season and smarts and leadership ability (while aided by experience and comfort in a system) don't typically grow exponentially and we don't have a ton of time to wait. Not to mention the system is changing and the 30-year old Weeden will be as uncomfortable learning this one as he was learning the last one.

Alex Smith is younger, smarter, far more athletic, much quicker, much more experienced and, to put it simply, a better football player than Weeden. If you can get the guy here and make your team better without it costing draft picks and with it costing only money, why wouldn't you do that?

If you were okay with Weeden because he was better than Colt McCoy, why wouldn't you be okay with Alex Smith?

I don't think it's even a contest. I really don't. You watch some of Smith's highlights and tell me the escapability, athleticism, touch, ball placement and, yes, even the arm strength to stick balls into receivers on those slants and outs, isn't something that excites you.

The guy was a Kyle Williams fumbled punt (or two) away from starting in the Super Bowl last season and he may have been a headache (or two) away from starting it again this year. He's grown up and learned from his failures and he also experienced a huge growth year the season he played under Norv Turner as his Offensive Coordinator in San Francisco. Growth is great and Smith has been "growing" for about 8 seasons now since being the very first pick in the NFL draft in 2005.

I doubt Brandon Weeden ever grows into the game. And if it takes him as long as it took Smith then Weeden might be the first guy to earn a Super Bowl check and a social security check in the same year. Which is why you don't overdraft a 29 year old rookie who never played under center, isn't a rocket scientist and can't outrun a tree, but I digress….

Smith is better today than Weeden. The idea is to make your team better. Smith is not only better, he's younger, he's taller, he's faster, he's quicker, he's more experienced, he's smarter and he's demonstrated he can win.

Objectively Speaking- Smith vs. Weeden

Brandon Weeden is 6'3", 220lbs per his ESPN bio. Alex Smith is 6'4", 217lbs. Height isn't an issue for either guy as both have the prototypical size you look for so that they might see over tops of linemen.

At the NFL Combine before he was drafted, Smith ran a 4.71 40-yard dash, his vertical leap was 32", broad jump was 113", he benched 335lbs (this was before reps of 225lbs were the norm, I assume) and he ran the shuttle and 3-cone drills in 3.97 seconds and 6.82 seconds respectively, the latter of which was one of the fastest times measured.

Smith also tested out with a 40 score on his Wonderlic, a test that measures the aptitude for learning and problem solving. 50 is the best score you can get, and 0 is the worst (although Frank Gore's 6 tested just above cabbage on the spectrum).

Weeden ran a 4.89/40, his vertical leap was 32", his broad jump was 102", and he ran the shuttle in 4.45 seconds and the 3-cone in 7.36 seconds. He didn't bench at the Combine and his Wonderlic score was 24.

The Combine and the drills aren't the end/all-be all but they are a good indication of athleticism and explosiveness. None of it has anything to do with throwing a ball through NFL windows to NFL receivers but it's really clear from the numbers and from the videos that Smith is more athletic, faster, bigger, stronger, etc.

Further, beginning four seasons ago, Smith put up QB ratings of 81.5, 82.1, 90.7 and 104.1 this season. The Niners, in those four years, were 8-8, 6-10, 13-3 and 11-4-1.

Brandon Weeden had a QB rating that ranked 29th in the league (Smith's was 3rd best in the league for players with over 200 attempts) and his team was 5-11.

Smith has thrown 30 TD passes and 10 INTs over the past 26 games. Weeden threw just 13 TD passes and 17 INTs in 15 games last season. Going back even to '09, Smith hasn't had a season where he threw more INTs than TDs.

Weeden in 2012 was 297/517 for a 57.4% CMP%, 3,385yards, 6.55AVG, 14TDs, 17INTs, 3FUM, 72.6 rating.

Smith in 2012 was 153/218 for 70.2%CMP, 1737yards, 7.97AVG, 13TDs, 5INTs, 3FUM, 104.1 rating.

There are your objectives. They indicate Smith is more efficient, more effective, more productive overall and per play, less prone to mistakes, more able to distribute the ball effectively and, simply, better than Brandon Weeden from a statistical standpoint. And Smith hasn't demonstrated this ability or put up these numbers just over the past two seasons, but rather over the past four seasons. The objective confirms the subjective.

Assessment- Weeden vs. Smith

So here's where the Brandon Weeden fans or the Alex Smith detractors have an issue. Some folks, depending on their side of the argument, will tell you your eyes can lie. Those same folks, when the numbers don't favor their argument, will tell you numbers lie.

Now, when the eyes and the numbers pretty much punch them in the face, they'll go to great extremes to build straw men as their last resort. And the one they'll use for the Weeden v Smith argument is that Smith's arm isn't as strong.

And this is most certainly true. Smith's arm is not as strong as Weeden's or Aaron Rodgers' arm or Colin Kaepernick's arm. Get that through the old noggin. It's the truth.

But do not let these people convince you that Smith's arm is weak or that he's suddenly Colt McCoy in terms of having a wet noodle attached to his right shoulder. These folks are some of the same people who were happy to have Weeden because he wasn't Colt. They actually had no issue with the pick to begin with and they argued in the name of 'getting better'.

Smith is better.

I'll say it again: Alex Smith is, was and will be a better quarterback last season, this coming season and in future seasons than Brandon Weeden.

Repeat the mantra: Smith is younger, faster, quicker, more experienced, more accurate, smarter and better at the position than the guy we have playing it here now. You can't watch the tape or look at the numbers and come away with any other outcome unless you have an agenda.

I have an agenda. I want better players than the guys we have. I said it the day they drafted Weeden and I'll say it until he's gone. That was a dumb, panicked pick and it will cost this team until they correct the mistake.

Alex Smith lost his job this season. That is also the indisputable truth. He lost it to a guy who may well turn out to be the most dynamic QB any of us have ever watched. I don't see a hell of a lot of shame in that for Smith.

The guy has enough arm to make throws. He excelled under Norv Turner. He is smart, he is athletic and he may be available.

The Plan

Go buy Alex Smith if all it costs is money. I'll even pay the money and a mid-round pick if it comes to it.

You don't have to promise yourself to Smith forever. You don't have to marry him. But he's a better catch than your current love and you can keep looking while he's here too.

If the idea is to get better, he's better. Fix that position with a guy whose proven he can effectively play it. Fix it with a guy who, at the very least, can win a lot of games with talent around him and doesn't lose a lot of games by being careless with the ball.

Get that guy and then go spend the rest of your fun money on getting that defense up to snuff. This shit ain't rocket science.

Some think Smith isn't an upgrade over Weeden. These are the people who will pay for $9 beers regardless of how bad the team is. They'd test in the Frank Gore range on a Wonderlic. There are those who don't necessarily want Smith because he's a marginal upgrade over Weeden. These are some of the same people who wanted Weeden in the first place because he had the "potential" to be better than McCoy (and whether he is or not IS arguable in and of itself). These are folks with an agenda but they'll be fine with Smith if he plays well.

There are also those, like me, who think Smith is a quantum leap above Weeden (though not nearly 'elite') because Smith at the very least is adequate and because Weeden isn't and won't ever be. I'm not willing to sit back for years while Weeden starts and plays and proves that to all of us. Let's go get someone my eyes and the evidence tell me is better, and we can laugh together while drinking what will by then be $12 beers at First Energy Stadium about Weeden being either out of the league or a career backup in four years.

It's a simple situation really: is Alex Smith a better QB than Brandon Weeden. And no matter what criteria you use to answer the question, the answer is resoundingly, "Yes".

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