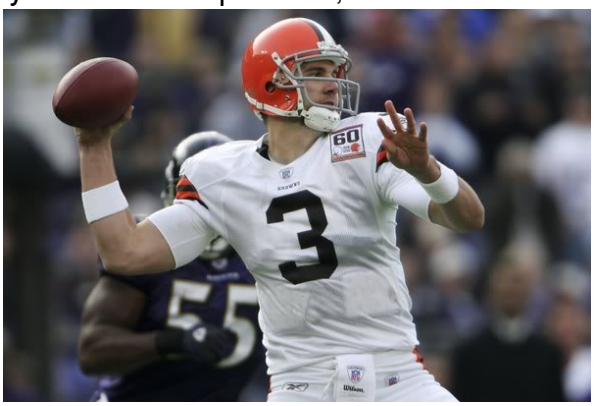
The Rhino gets loose today, scoffing at the notion that the Browns have another QB controversy on their hands. He says this isn't a controversy, it's just the latest sideshow to distract fans from the real problem that's confronted the team for the past eight seasons--the lack of a legitimate offensive line. Until they address that problem, the outcome of this latest tempest in a teapot won't matter a damn.



According to many (and I mean many) media reports, the Cleveland Browns find themselves in the midst of another QB controversy. All I can say about this seemingly annual event is, are you kidding me
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The Cleveland Browns are 4-10. The team's offense has spent most of the year looking like a bad junior varsity team, and their coach is so dumbfounded by the incompetence on display each week that all he can think to do is pace the sidelines and absentmindedly throw his challenge flag at random plays. So, in the midst of this mess, we're supposed to have a "controversy" over whether the team should go with the NFL's 25th rated passer or a guy who's gone 0-2 in the games he's started? If you ask me, the only guy in the print media who has it right is Jeff Schudel of the
News Herald
, who pretty much sums up the situation in
his column
today, when he says that the Browns may have a dilemma at the QB position, but there isn't much to choose from.

The Browns seem to generate an uncanny number of quarterback controversies. First they had the Couch and Holcomb soap opera, then Garcia and "please, God, anybody but Garcia," then Dilfer and Frye, and now Frye and Anderson. Now, while the Browns' brain trust has spent the better part of four seasons agonizing about who deserved to be first in line to place his hands underneath another man's crotch, the team's managed to compile a record of 19 wins and 43 losses.

That record tells you all you need to know about this--and every other--QB controversy that's been ginned up in this town over the past decade. When a team has gaping holes at multiple positions, the identity of the team's quarterback just doesn't matter that much in terms of wins and losses. Sure, it's interesting in the abstract to speculate about who might be a better player, but until the Browns get an offensive line that can keep the defense from sacking him six times (like the Ravens did on Sunday), whoever they choose as their starter isn't going to get a whole lot done.

Right now, for what it's worth, I think the offensive line's incompetence plays into Anderson's strengths, which are a strong arm and the ability to make quick decisions. If the Browns call a three step drop, you can bet that if Anderson's back there, he'll select a receiver and get into his throwing motion as soon as he plants that third step. Charlie Frye doesn't seem to be able to do that, perhaps because he doesn't have the cannon that Anderson has, and so isn't willing to try to rifle the ball to a receiver who is only going to be open for a step. When you couple this with Frye's injured wrist, it seems to be a no brainer to go with Anderson this week and probably next week as well.

Still, I wouldn't call what the Browns have going on a "QB controversy." I would reserve that description for situations involving proven players who unquestionably bring a high level of skill to the position. To my way of thinking, Joe Montana v. Steve Young, Phil Simms v. Jeff Hostetler, Roger Staubach v. Craig Morton, and Billy Kilmer v. Sonny Jurgensen all involved bona fide QB controversies. What the Browns have going on simply doesn't rise to that level.

This isn't a controversy, it's just the latest sideshow to distract fans from the real problem that's confronted the team for the past eight seasons--the lack of a legitimate offensive line. Until they address that problem, the outcome of this latest tempest in a teapot won't matter a damn.