There were two, maybe three developments this week that should give Cleveland Browns fans pause to rethink their impatience with quarterback Colt McCoy. First was the Minnesota Vikings' decision to start Christian Ponder instead of an increasingly ineffective and indifferent Donovan McNabb. Next came the Miami Dolphins putting Sage Rosenfels on the reserved, non-football injury list and signing J.P. Losman as their new starting quarterback. Then came the Indianapolis Colts putting Kerry Collins on injured reserve list where he joins Peyton Manning.

You could also take it another step when the Oakland Raiders, out of sheer desperation, giving away high draft picks like they're growing off the vines in the Sonoma Valley, for Carson Palmer once Jason Campbell went down with an injury. Or what about the Seattle Seahawks turning over the quarterbacking duties to Charlie Whitehurst once Tavaris Jackson went down with an injury.

That's five teams right there that are in far worse shape then the Browns at the moment when it comes to having a credible starting quarterback. Still local fans seem to grow frustrated by the moment with McCoy as if the Browns are just teeming with all sorts of alternatives.

There are plenty of statistics, from the now traditional quarterback rating system to the goofy new ESPN quarterback rating system to any number of metrics in between to make the case that McCoy isn't playing at a particularly high level at the moment and many have used them to further an argument not worth making.

There also are all sorts of ways to counter all of these statistics to put it into the kind of context that no one much wants to hear about as they contemplate a future of Seneca Wallace and whoever is worse than J.P. Losman.

But since that's what should be talked about, it's what we will talk about.

Maybe it's easy for most people to dismiss the massive overhaul in offensive scheme that took place in an offseason that didn't exist for McCoy, but I doubt McCoy is as dismissive. Not having access to his head coach and getting precious little offseason training in the new scheme has had an effect. Wish it away if you'd like but facts are facts.

Interestingly, that might be the least of the problems.

Why, for example, dwell on schemes when there are even more obvious reasons for McCoy's tepid play. For instance, the Browns' number one target for McCoy, Mohamed Massaquoi, would not be a number one receiver on any other team until someone can prove otherwise. He has decent hands, runs decent routes, but lacks the true speed and elusiveness to ever be a number one threat. Even Massaquoi seems to recognize as much. He doesn't demand the ball because he knows he doesn't deserve it over anyone else.

Maybe Eric Mangini had hopes against hopes that his drafting of Massaquoi in the second round was a stroke of genius that would pay great dividends, but the consensus of every other personnel guy in the NFL was to the contrary. And guess what? They were right and Mangini was wrong. Massaquoi never was and never will be any team's legitimate number one receiver.

That alone is a strong enough case to make for the difficulties McCoy and by proxy offensive coordinator/head coach Pat Shurmur have in stretching defenses and getting the ball downfield in a hurry. But why stop there?

The number two receiver (who will sooner rather than later ascend to the number one role) is Greg Little, a rookie who didn't even play college ball last year. Forget about missing the offseason, which he did as well. Little missed nearly two years before finally suiting up and starting a game and when last he did play it was in a far different scheme then the West Coast offense that Shurmur employs. Little has good speed, good hands and a big body but he's still too raw to be immediately effective. His future looks bright and as he develops so will the offense and by proxy McCoy but that's at least another season away and certainly isn't helping

McCoy much right now.

The number three receiver is Josh Cribbs, a valuable and passionate player but not a credible receiver. I think Cribbs works hard and wants to be good but he is never going to be more than a third receiver on a team with lousy receivers. If Cribbs isn't acting as the third receiver, then that slot falls to Brian Robiskie, a far more credible and professional receiver, if in name only, with virtually no ability to get open against NFL-caliber defensive backs.

Take all the time you need to devise an appropriate offense around that mess and let's see how well anyone short of Aaron Rodgers or Tom Brady does in it.

While McCoy doesn't have much to throw to downfield, what he does have at his disposal are several tight ends that can catch the ball. What none of them can do though is get open deep, which again limits the ability to go deep. So what you get is what you'd expect. Lots of short stuff that can occasionally sustain drives that ultimately tend to result in field goals and not touchdowns.

But heck, we already knew going into the season that this receiving corps wasn't very good. General manager Tom Heckert has steadfastly refused to upgrade it through free agency, believing there's enough talent to develop that would otherwise be inhibited by a stop-gap free agent pickup. The logic is sound but I'm not sure the assessment is. Does anyone, including Heckert, think that there is still unrealized upside to Massaquoi, Cribbs or Robiskie?

The fact that this was the team's most pressing offensive need going into the season and remains that way 6 games into the season should help frame the debate about McCoy, but it hasn't. Fans see balls overthrown, underthrown, intercepted or simply off target and assume, wrongly, that it all falls on McCoy. I'm certainly not suggesting that McCoy doesn't need to improve. He does. But it will be remarkable how much better he'll look when he has an actual receiving corps to throw to.

Why focus though just on the receivers? It's not as if the Browns have once established a credible running game this season that would take pressure off a clearly deficient passing game.

There's been enough drama around Peyton Hillis to last two seasons so there's no use rehashing that for now. But his absence is equivalent to trying to run an engine without motor oil. We know, too, that Montario Hardesty is merely a nice running back at this point, not a game breaker. I wouldn't reach any conclusions on Hardesty just yet since he's only 6 games into his pro career. But running backs, unlike many receivers, tend to develop quickly or not at all. Hardesty could certainly become a feature back but for now he's far more Jerome Harrison then Jamal Lewis.

But let's not forget in all of this the rather crappy play of a patchwork offensive line that's missing one of its stalwarts, Eric Steinbach. Hillis for example benefit greatly by having Joe Thomas, Alex Mack and Steinbach all healthy last year. With Steinbach out, the right side of the line, from where virtually all the penetration seems to come, is below average. Holes aren't being opened for the running game and blocks aren't being made to give McCoy time to breath.

In other words, a bushel basket full of McCoy's problems has nothing to do with him and everything to do with the state of the other key components of the offense.

It's actually hard to get a good assessment of McCoy at the moment but that hasn't stopped so many from trying to do just that. About the only thing we really do know is that McCoy can take a pounding and still come back for more.

But there will come a point, soon perhaps, when that physical abuse being thrust on him by an offense that's deficient on every other level will take its toll and he'll be sent to the sideline with an injury. And just as Indianapolis, Miami, Seattle, and Oakland has discovered when their starters went down, that's when fans here may begin to appreciate McCoy just a little bit more.