As I've discussed before , Browns fans can be a little bit… mental when it comes to the quarterback position. Despite watching more than a decade of generally awful quarterback play since the team came back in 1999, fans here tend to be a little gun-shy about making a strong move to shore up the position once and for all. So, for that matter, has the organization.

This off-season presents a unique opportunity to make that strong move. With the fourth overall pick, a second first-round pick and a couple of teams (St. Louis and Minnesota) ahead of them in the draft and presumably not shopping for a signal-caller, the Browns will have the chance to select Baylor Heisman winner Robert Griffin III. They'll likely have to move up a spot or two in order to do so, but they'll have more ammunition to do so than any other team. If they really want RGIII he's there for the taking, even if there is some sacrifice involved.

Already some Browns fans are talking themselves out of making that sacrifice. A handful of excuses to not move up- if need be- and select RGIII are out there on the message boards and radio airwaves. I've selected seven of the most common excuses- or reasons, or rationalizations, what have you- and broken them down in an effort to soothe whatever anxieties fans feel about making that strong move and finally securing that franchise quarterback we've been missing since Bernie Kosar's heyday.

Here goes:

"RGIII is not a good fit for the West Coast Offense." Why not- because he has great athleticism? Arguably the five most successful "West-Coast" quarterbacks ever are Joe Montana, Steve Young, Brett Favre, Donovan McNabb and Aaron Rodgers. Young and McNabb were gifted runners; Montana and Rodgers were and are excellent runners and Favre, who ran the option in high school, also had plus-mobility. The prototype of the modern West

Coast, Bill Walsh's Cincinnati offense, was designed to suit the skills of Virgil Carter, a quarterback best known for his intelligence and… mobility. Speed and athleticism are in no way hindrances in the West Coast.

(What's funny is that at this time last year fans were gushing about how Colt McCoy was a "perfect fit" for the West Coast. RGIII does everything Colt does only better, yet he's "not a good fit." Makes sense, right?)

I'm not guaranteeing RGIII *will* be a good fit for this offense. I'm just saying there is nothing on the surface to indicate he *won't* be. I don't think great athleticism and a cannon arm are liabilities in any system, actually- far from it.

"Shurmur and Childress won't change their offense to suit RGIII's skills." If you mean they won't scrap the WCO in favor of what Art Briles ran at Baylor, you're right. But keep in mind that Pat Shurmur and Brad Childress have coached quarterbacks with superficially similar attributes as RGII. Both men coached Donovan McNabb in Philadelphia and Childress coached Tavaris Jackson in Minnesota. So it isn't as if they're novices in terms of quarterbacks with plus-athleticism.

Look, I've been as critical of this front office and coaching staff as anyone. But I find it extremely hard to believe that the Browns would trade up for RGIII and then pretend like he's a black Colt McCoy. I have to believe they're smarter than that.

"We don't know what we have in Colt." Well, maybe *you* don't. Look, I understand the spunky little Texan wasn't exactly surrounded by the '81 Chargers in terms of skill players. But we still have eyes and with those eyes, the ability to look at the quarterback himself and discern his strengths and weaknesses. I look at Colt McCoy and see:

- A lack of size

- A lack of arm

- A lack of pocket presence (a good example being the James Harrison hit . Colt had plenty of time on the play; when pressured on the backside he got happy feet, left the pocket and basically ran smack into Harrison's helmet.)

The skittishness in the pocket could be addressed; but more "weapons" aren't going to make Colt taller or make his arm stronger. He was the 85th overall pick for a reason. How much rope do we give a guy whose ceiling is Chad Pennington?

And could we please cool it with the Drew Brees comparisons? Brees has always had superior physical skills to McCoy and was a far more highly touted prospect coming out of college; he went 53 spots higher in the 2001 Draft than McCoy went in 2010. Just because McCoy is also short, also white, also grew up in Texas and also played lousy his first few years doesn't make him "just like Drew Brees," or "similar to Drew Brees" or "anything like Drew Brees."

"If Colt fails, we'll go after Matt Barkley next off-season." The only way to guarantee a shot at every player in the Draft is to own the top overall pick. As bad as the Browns have been, they haven't owned the top overall pick since 2000. It's easy to be bad. Getting that top pick not only requires bad football, it requires an element of luck. St. Louis went 2-14 in 2011- awful, awful football- and still didn't get the top pick.

And if you don't have that top pick- if you're fourth or fifth, say- and there's a team in front of you looking for a quarterback, you're behind the eight-ball. You probably won't even have a chance to take Matt Barkley- assuming he's still all that and a can of Pringles at this time next year. All it takes is one other team with more means and opportunity. As for trading up, we have no way of knowing whether or not we'll have either the means or the opportunity to do so.

This is the year, if any, to make a strong move upward due to the combination of high pick, extra first-rounder and teams ahead in the Draft not necessarily looking for quarterback help. The circumstances are right. Counting on the circumstances to be right next year is the kind of thing that gets front offices fired.

Also, it's somewhat amazing how casually a lot of Browns fans simply accept throwing away entire seasons. Because staying the course with McCoy and going and going after Matt Barkley next year essentially amounts to throwing away 2012. It's one thing to advocate sticking with McCoy if you believe he can be the guy- but if you're talking about Matt Barkley in the next breath you're basically admitting that he won't be.

"If RGIII is a bust it'll set the franchise back __ years." Set back to *what*, exactly? We're already the bottom-feeder of the AFC North on a yearly basis. We've gone 3-21 in the division since 2008. The only way we could be 'set back' any further is if the league relegates the Browns to the MAC.

"We're trying to build through the draft and we can't afford to give up picks." At the end of the day a trade- any trade- is only as good as the players you get. The reason people still remember the Herschel Walker trade is because it helped springboard the Cowboys to three World Championships. Hell, the Browns gave up two first-round picks for the rights to Bernie Kosar, and I don't remember people saying,
"Man, we got fleeced. We gave up way too much for this guy"
when Bernie was leading Cleveland to the brink of the Super Bowl.

If the Browns trade #4 and #22 for RGIII (and maybe a couple of second-and-third-day picks down the line) and he turns out to be a true franchise player, no one will remember or care what it took to get him. Besides, we're not talking about a Ditka deal here. Even if they trade the extra first-rounder and move up they will still have seven more 2012 selections and a full complement of 2013 selections to play with.

Now, they'll probably have to trade more than #4 and #22. And I'm fine with that. Personally I'd be okay with giving up #4, #22 and any 2013 pick outside the first round. Obtaining a potential franchise quarterback is worth that output. I'm not going to worry about missing out on the next Phil Taylor or Monterio Hardesty when RGIII is a Cleveland Brown.

"Build the rest of the team, then get the quarterback." Look, everyone wants the Browns to have a great defense, great offensive line and great skill players
in addition to
the quarterback. Problem is, there's no way to guarantee that guy is going to be there when

you've built the rest of the team and you're ready to get the quarterback. NFL history is littered with outstanding teams that couldn't get over the hump because they didn't have the quarterback. The Rams of the '70s and the Steelers of the '90s are good examples.

To me, when the quarterback is there you go get him, regardless of the construct of the rest of the team. The Colts didn't go into the 1998 Draft saying, *"Gee, we're not ready to take a quarterback; let's give Paul Justin another year, trade down and grab Andre Wadsworth instead."* The Steelers weren't a finished product when they took Terry Bradshaw; neither were the Giants when they traded up for Eli Manning, for that matter.

Besides, it doesn't have to be either-or when it comes to the quarterback and the rest of the team. Believe it or not, you can draft a franchise-type quarterback *and build the rest of the team at the same time.* It's true. Even with a trade-down the Browns will still have seven draft picks and free agency with which to bring in more talent. There's no reason to believe, short of a Ditka deal, that the Browns will be putting their entire building process on hiatus just because they traded an extra draft pick for the rights to RGIII.

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To me there are only two legitimate reasons for not wanting to go after RGIII this season:

1.) You think Colt McCoy can be a championship-caliber quarterback, and

2.) You don't think RGIII can be a championship-caliber quarterback.

That's it. Everything else, as they say, is commentary.