Quarterbacks, quarterbacks, quarterbacks. One of the most exhausting conversations you can get into when talking about the Cleveland Browns. Although many of us hoped that the Browns would find a way to draft RG3 and put the conversation on the back burner for a few years, it didn't happen and now some of the debates have turned back into heated hate sessions.

I understand both sides of the conversation when you talk about Colt McCoy vs. the talent around him, and honestly anyone who has watched football prior to this year shouldn't even argue against the fact that Cleveland had horrible play from the skill positions this past year. They were also the victims of inconsistent offensive line play.

On the other hand you also can't argue against the fact that Colt McCoy didn't do anything individually to elevate the offense and he also failed in some areas of his game that used to be a strength (accuracy) for the young signal caller. For the purpose of this draft segment and staying true to the theme of the offseason, which is to simply get better as a team, today I will talk about the QBs coming out in the 2012 NFL draft that may available when the Browns make their draft selections April 26th- 28th.

The good thing about evaluating the QBs this year that is different from last year is the fact we actually have gotten a chance to see the type of skills needed to be successful in this west coast offense. There are some definite skills needed to excel in this offense that are not needed as much in other offenses, and we also got a chance to see some of the traits that can be considered luxury items in this offense.

When operating from under center and to perform well in the short passing game that is required in this offense you need to have fast and light feet, you need a quick release, and you need a really accurate arm. Sure it is always nice to have a cannon for an arm but in this

offense that is a luxury used to push the ball down the field and put balls in tight windows when you make late decisions. It is much more important to have good feet and a quick release when you are talking about the critical timing of shorter routes.

From what we have seen so far from the Pat Shurmur offense, timing, touch, and accuracy play more into the success of the offense than simply the ability to drive the ball down the field. You always want to be able to stretch the field, so arm strength will always be important. What I am talking about is the order of importance.

If you take a look at the QBs currently on the Browns roster and figure out what they have in common, you will see that they all have excellent feet, which usually leads to good body positioning, and that good body position usually allows them to get the ball out of their hands quickly. Good body positioning also allows them to throw a more accurate ball. These fundamentals aren't special to the west coast offense, but the quicker routes put an emphasis on them.

Since I mentioned the QBs on the roster I might as well take a minute to make some notes on the position group before I get into previewing the players coming out in the draft. As I said in an early offseason article , I really do think Colt McCoy is going to be a much better QB in his second season in the system. With McCoy having a real offseason of work (although he didn't do anything during the 2011 season that cemented his status as the long term answer) I am not in full blown panic mode about the position.

Seneca Wallace performed well when he got a chance to play and I think more than anything it made people realize McCoy didn't play as bad as we may have first thought. Both QBs struggled to find explosive plays with a group of unimpressive skill players so the mediocre offense wasn't all on the QB position. As far as Wallace's future, I think it is up in the air at this point because he isn't needed anymore to help install the offense and his play on the field is just O.K.

I am actually a fan of the 3rd string QB Thadeus Lewis and I think he will put real pressure on Wallace for the backup position if he is given a fair shot. That would also save the Browns a few million dollars by getting rid of Seneca's $3million dollar salary.

When it comes to drafting a QB this year, you have to make sure you don't pass up a potential franchise player if you don't have one, so the organization needs to turn over every stone on the guys coming out in the draft.

Keep in mind when you are looking at my list that there are really only 15-18 QBs that even have draftable grades according to most experts, and over the last 7 years the average number of players drafted at the position is 12 so there aren't many to choose from.

If you factor in the fact that I only preview players that I think match in skill, need, and draft position, as well as the fact I am not even previewing the top two rated guys because we all know they are going to be off the board when Cleveland picks, the option list is even shorter.

There are also some solid QB prospects that are not fits for the type of offense the Browns run, so that narrows the list even more. If the Browns use all 13 picks in this year's draft there is no doubt they will draft a QB at some point, so here are the guys who I think could perform well in the type of offense Cleveland runs.

Early Rounds (1-2)

Ryan Tannehill Texas A&M **(6-4, 221lbs)**

Tannehill is first on the list for two reasons;first is he has the biggest upside of the two highest rated guys, and secondly he played in a similar offense that Cleveland runs (west coast offense) and was coached by a former NFL head coach and offensive coordinator.

Tannehill was a dual threat QB in high school who was switched to WR in college when he didn't win the starting job. He continued to go to the QB meetings once he switched positions so he stayed in tune with the mental side of the position after the switch. He eventually got to start

at QB mid way into the 2010 season and started the entire 2011 season at the position. Tannehill only has 19 career starts at the position so he is still in a learning stage of his QB career and will need some additional seasoning in the NFL, but he has plenty of talent to be developed.

From what I have seen of Tannehill the biggest pluses in his game are his athletic feet and his pocket mobility. He also has good arm strength when he is on balance and he is as accurate on the move as he is in the pocket. I also like his toughness and the fact that he went to QB meetings even after he was a starting WR makes me love his dedication to the game.

The A&M QB does have some issues that need cleaned up like his tendency to float deep balls and his habit of staring down WRs in the short passing game. He also needs to get a bit more familiar with reading defenses and this is the area he probably will struggle with the most if he comes to the AFC North and faces Blitzburgh and Baltimore. But the football junkie in him tells me he will put in the work needed in order to have success.

Brandon Weeden Oklahoma St. **(6-4, 221lbs)**

Like Tannehill, Brandon Weeden has taken an unconventional route to becoming an early round prospect in the NFL draft. He was drafted by the Yankees as a pitcher but later suffered a shoulder injury that would have required surgery to fix. Instead of getting the operation Weeden decided to pursue football because the throwing motion is different and the injury wasn't bothered by the football motion. Having said all that you probably understand that age is a factor with Weeden. Because of his time playing baseball he will turn 29 this year, and for NFL teams looking for a long term solution at the QB position having a rookie QB who is already 29 is a definite concern.

On the field Weeden has a great arm. He can really push the ball down the field and if you watch him play you will see plenty of NFL-caliber throws. He had a top flight WR in Justin Blackmon and you can see Weeden throwing balls in windows that will be similar to the type of throws he will need to complete in the NFL. His footwork is solid and he is a good athlete so performing in Cleveland's offense shouldn't be an issue when you look at pure skills.

When you examine problem areas for Weeden you can see he still needs some NFL coaching

because he can be found locking onto his go to WR way too much. He also had a bad habit of throwing the ball up to Blackmon when he was under extreme pressure and many of those throws resulted in interceptions. In general, Weeden has good pocket movement and he steps up at times but he can also be seen drifting into outside rushing lanes when pressure is coming from the opposite side.

In order for Weeden to get taken high in the draft a NFL team will have to think he is ready to play immediately, because if not it doesn't make sense to draft a 29 year old QB that isn't going to get to play right away.

Mid Rounds (3-5)

Kirk Cousins Mich St. **(6-3, 214lbs)**

I have mixed opinions from watching Kirk Cousins throughout his Big Ten career. When you look at his skill set he has all the tools to play in the west coast system. He has decent size, an arm that is good enough, and quick enough feet to run the 3 step passing game.

He has a reputation of being a good leader and a football junkie who puts time into his craft. He can be seen on film getting into good rhythm and getting the ball out of his hand on time and with accuracy. In general he seems to understand defenses and what they are trying to do against him.

My biggest issue isn't with Cousins from a physical standpoint, but rather mentally. Watching as much of Cousins as I have, it scares me that I have seen his will broken in games. I have seen him leave the game mentally and that is a huge issue in my book. There have been times defenses have won against him mentally and that is something that I can't look past when evaluating him as a potential starting QB in the NFL.

I think that Cousins has all the tools to be successful for a team that provides him with a solid running game and good defense, but when it comes to my overall opinion of him as a prospect at the position I personally can't get past what I perceive as a soft will….. so although he is on

my list because I have confidence in his physical ability to fit in a Pat Shurmur offense, I am not as high on him as some may be.

Russell Wilson Wisconsin **(5-11, 204lbs)**

Wilson is a really good QB who happens to be short. The easy comparison for him as a player is current Browns backup QB Seneca Wallace. If Wilson was a few inches taller he would be rated much higher because he can really sling the football. He has great natural instincts as a QB and a really good arm. His skill set as a whole is perfect for the short to intermediate passing game of the west coast offense and because of his arm strength he is no slouch when throwing the deep ball.

I know it may sound like a cop-out statement but other than his height Wilson doesn't have any gaping holes in his game. He is a great athlete, he is a great leader, he has a really strong arm, he is accurate with his throws, and he is said to be extremely smart and have a great work ethic.

Wilson may never get to be a starter in the league but there is no doubt in my mind he will be collecting a NFL paycheck for the next 8-10 years, and if he were taller you would probably hear his name much earlier in the NFL draft.

Late Rounds (6-7)

B.J. Coleman Tennessee Chattanooga **(6-3, 233lbs)**

Coleman is a small school QB with big school skills. He is a QB that earned a scholarship to a SEC school (Tennessee) but left when Lane Kiffin abandoned Tennessee, so talent wise he can compete with some of the QBs from the bigger schools.

Physically he is ready for the NFL game because of his solid frame and thick build. He has an

above average arm and is a good enough athlete to master the footwork needed in a timing based system. Coleman's biggest hurdle transitioning to the NFL game will be consistency with his fundamentals that will enable him to be as accurate as he can be. Coleman has the skill set to flourish with NFL coaching and he has the talent to eventually develop into a NFL QB.

Aaron Corp Richmond **(6-4, 215lbs)**

Corp is another QB who was a top recruit coming out of high school and he earned a scholarship to USC. When he got to USC he beat out the current USC QB Matt Barkley but broke his leg which allowed Barkley to start and lay claim to the position long term. Corp transferred to Richmond so he could play.

In my opinion, Corp is a talented QB suffering from a small school environment that has slowed his growth. He is a guy who can make all the NFL throws but has gotten himself caught up in some bad habits. He desperately needs some NFL coaching and time for his body to mature and gain some thickness so he is an ideal candidate for a team looking for a developmental QB with a really good upside.

Chandler Harnish Northern Illinois **(6-1, 219lbs)**

If Browns QB Colt McCoy had a football double it would probably be Chandler Harnish. He might have a slight edge in arm strength and McCoy is more accurate in general but their build, athleticism, and fiery attitude are really similar. Harnish has a reputation as a really good leader and he is also tough as nails. Harnish is talented but probably not talented enough to take a starting position from somebody in the NFL. He will get a chance to go to a NFL training camp, so for a kid who has taken everything he has gotten because people weren't inline to hand anything to him, you probably shouldn't underestimate him.

Darron Thomas Oregon **(6-3, 220lbs)**

Darron Thomas is an early entry candidate that should have stayed in college. He is on the list because he has good athletic ability and solid arm strength but he is really raw and truly a

developmental project. He is a player with good production in a spread offense and NFL teams will have to figure out if he can transition into a pro level offense. Thomas does have talent so he will get a chance to prove himself, and although he may ultimately end up playing in Canada, a guy like Cleveland President Mike Holmgren has a reputation of taking on projects that have talent, so Cleveland may be the ones who give him a shot.

Sleeper

G.J. Kinne Tulsa **(6-2, 234)**

Kinne is a son of a coach who plays the game hard and fast. He is another shorter QB with solid skills and isn't special in any one category so he will have an uphill battle to survive in the NFL. But after watching him more I realized he has a stronger arm than I thought and from what I saw he seemed to be a victim of not having any WRs with NFL caliber talent. Kinne has formed some bad habits like trying to force plays but if the talent around him improves he should start relaxing and working the system more. If I had to pick one developmental QB to go with it just might be Kinne, so I am anxious to see if one of the west coast offense teams give him a shot.

Projected pick

Unfortunately, since Cleveland failed in their attempts to get RG3, the answer to the projected picked question got a lot harder and bit more complicated for me. First of all, to reiterate a thought Brian McPeek had in one of his Weekend Wraps, there is a tremendous talent drop off between RG3 and Tannehill or Weeden that can't be argued. If Cleveland didn't think so they would not have offered so much and been so aggressive to get RG3.

Through my own observations I feel like Weeden is the better QB now and the only one of the two candidates that may be better than Colt McCoy right now, but I also feel that Tannehill has the potential to be a better NFL QB in the long run. The only guy I would have stood on the table for is RG3 and he isn't available so I am not predicting the Browns will go with either candidate. I am predicting they will draft a project later in the draft.

Aaron Corp is the guy I like the best when I look at the players who have a chance of developing into an NFL QB. He has all the physical talent needed and his formula for success in the future hinders on the type of development that is easily cured with time (such as his body strength and footwork flaws). He is a player I can see Cleveland taking with one of their 4 compensatory picks as a long term project.

For me personally, making the choice to go with a developmental player instead of Weeden or Tannehill stems from a belief that Colt McCoy in his second year is a better option for this team than either of the other two players. I also have to stay true to the mindset of formulating the best roster possible for this team's short term and long term future.

I don't think Tannehill or Weeden is special, so at the points when they will be available to draft I think there will be plenty of other players with more talent who are more capable of upgrading the roster as well as make impact plays.

Now, if Cleveland picks one of the 2 top QBs I won't be ready to jump from a building. And if they trade back and pick up additional early round picks in the process I would actually encourage them to take a chance on one of them….. but using the picks right now, as is, I don't think taking either one is the right path to take.

Alright Browns fans if you want more info and some film breakdown you can take a look here (Tannehill
or
Weeden
) at two of the first posts Brian and I put on our new website
http://www.greymattersports.com/
..... Until the next installment……Go Browns!