As the Browns celebrate a solid victory over the Green Bay Packers in week 2 of the preseason, I spend this K&B on some game notes. But first I want to spend a few minutes talking about our rookie QB Brandon Weeden.

I was at the front of the line for people who didn't think it made sense for this team to invest a high draft pick for Brandon Weeden, and I'll admit most of my concerns stemmed from his age, but the pick is made, he is a Cleveland Brown……and therefore I am in his corner.

It won't do any good to moan and groan about the pick, and if he fails that only means more misery for me and plenty of other Browns fans, so here's hoping that Weeden in Brady-esque. And although the reality is he will probably not be Tom Brady, I am just hoping he is not Derek Anderson either.

Here are a few key issues that will determine of Weeden succeeds or fails: mechanics, mental makeup, and injury.

The mechanics part of the conversation is probably the easiest to explain because it is probably the easiest for a fan to see. Whenever you are asked to do something that you really aren't used to doing there will be a learning curve and, for Weeden, operating in an NFL style offense and taking snaps from under center will be the first big adjustment he will have to make in the NFL.

I do have some confidence that he is a good learner and hard worker based on the

improvement in footwork I saw from him during his senior year compared to his junior year.

When you look back at Brandon Weeden's junior year he was really sloppy and loose with his footwork. He was basically muscling the ball the all over the field. During his senior year he showed dramatic improvement in that area. He had a much stronger base and in turn he played better and he was also much more consistent.

Seeing that type of growth and improvement in his mechanics really boosts my confidence he will be able to make the necessary adjustments to be successful in the NFL but it doesn't totally eliminate my concern, because being able to make one adjustment doesn't automatically mean a player can be successful at making other adjustments.

Taking the snap from under center and dropping back to pass is something you can practice all day, but the reality of doing it under game conditions is much different. It is something Colt McCoy had to adjust to and you could see him struggle early in the 2011 season, but by the end of the year he looked much more comfortable.

That same type of progression throughout the year is something we will need to see from Weeden if he is going to be successful during his rookie year. I do think he is capable of cleaning up his mechanics throughout the year, but if not it could definitely lead to his failure.

In the first two preseason games you can tell that Weeden looks more comfortable taking snaps from the shotgun. So far if I had to pinpoint one aspect he could improve while taking snaps from under center it would be the speed and depth in which he is getting to the top of his drop.

At times he is a bit slow and not as deep as he could be and that could affect his ability to get through his progressions quickly enough once the regular season starts and the speed of the game picks up. So if you want one mechanic to watch for improvement watch Weeden's drops, and if you need an example I would recommend watching Drew Brees. Brees explodes out from center and gets great depth. For Brees it is extremely important for him to get depth because of his size and he is a great example to watch as a reference.

When it comes to the mental makeup aspect of my concerns, they come from two angles. The first is born from my concern over whatever mental hurdle Weeden couldn't overcome in baseball that made him quit the sport and enroll in college as a QB.

Sure he could have made a wrong choice all together when he originally picked baseball over playing football, but there could also be a programming issue with him that wouldn't allow him to make the necessary adjustments that would allow him to succeed.

Although it is two different sports and the topic itself may blur the line of mechanical issues and mental issues, I don't think you can just throw the fact out that he failed at baseball.

He failed because he couldn't get his mind and body on the same page and therefore couldn't locate his 97mph fastball at the knees instead of belt high. I am not going to go crazy because I am sure I don't know all the specifics but it still troubles me a bit.

The other aspect of the mental makeup topic that bothers me comes from studying him play during college. I thought he had issues handling pressure on a regular basis, and if you read any of my opinions on him before the draft you know I am not just saying that in hindsight.

At times he drifted into rushing lanes and other times when teams provided a regular, steady pass rush against him you could see him get happy feet and lose some of his mechanics. He also locked onto Justin Blackmon when under duress and threw some interceptions because of it.

Only time will tell if he can handle the mental side of playing QB in the NFL but in my own mind I can't help but to wonder if he can handle the position at this level of football

The last reason in my mind he could fail is pretty straight forward and easy to explain and that is injury. I understand the right side of Cleveland's offensive line had pass blocking issues last year and we also had two starting guards that were starting for the first time in their NFL careers, but after watching the season back a few times it was clear that Colt McCoy took a beating.

No matter how you shake it, as you get older it takes your body much longer to recover from injuries and stress, so in my mind the fact that Weeden will be 29 in October makes me a bit more concerned from a health perspective.

Plus, at Weeden's age, how many season ending injuries can his career survive through and still be given a chance to be a starting QB in the NFL? I really feel like if he was to get hurt early in his rookie or second year it would be extremely hard for this team or any team to put their future on hold and wait for him to heal because he is already so much older than normal rookies.

The more I think about it, a season ending injury in year one or two of his NFL career would be death sentence for his starting career in the NFL…….. especially to a QB-starved franchise with a new owner who watched a franchise QB up close and in person while in Pittsburgh.

The very first question new owner Jimmy Haslam III asked any of the football people when he came to Cleveland was "Can Brandon Weeden play?", so he is well aware of the importance of the position. If Weeden gets hurt badly I don't think Mr. Haslam will stick around waiting to see if he is the future or not, and I personally couldn't blame him.

What will make Weeden successful? Simple: arm strength, the talent around him, and the quality of the defense.

The first time you get to see Brandon Weeden you will see right away that he throws the ball with ease and force. He can make all the throws that Derek Anderson could except he doesn't have the windup that Anderson had and he is 3 times more accurate than Anderson was.

As long as Weeden is healthy, physical ability won't be an issue for him, and from a schematic standpoint the Browns offense will have opportunities they didn't have before. Having a strong, accurate arm like Weeden possesses opens up windows and portions of the field that were previously closed to Cleveland's offense.

You may not see 100% of his arm strength early because he may struggle with confidence but once he is comfortable with the scheme and speed of the NFL game you should see Weeden pump some balls into really tight windows and we should also see him attacking the deeper routes on a regular basis.

Weeden should also benefit immensely from an infusion of young talent on offense. Over the last two years Cleveland has rebuilt an offensive line, upgraded the RB talent, and they have also drafted two 2nd round WRs with talent and athleticism that is off the charts.

If you add in the legitimate 4.3 speed of rookie Travis Benjamin with the freakish size and athleticism of WRs Greg Little and Josh Gordon, it is pretty easy to see that Cleveland's offense is by far the most talented group to walk the shores of Lake Erie in a long time.

If you look at the offense as a whole…….you have an offensive line with high picks at LT,C,RT.....you have a RB who was the 3rd pick in the draft…..the TE group is led by a Super Bowl champion who still gets open and plays at a high level, and the WR group consists of two players with super talent and a ton of room to grow, plus a rookie with blazing speed.

This group is talented and hungry so Weeden has been surrounded by a cast unlike any Cleveland QB in recent memory. The Browns also have an offensive minded head coach who has hired an ex-head coach as offensive coordinator.

In my football mind, Weeden has all the tools he needs to succeed other than a veteran WR. And although that may be a big void, a really good running game to play-action off can go a long way in covering up that void.

The last thing that sticks out in my mind when it comes to Weeden having success ties right into the talent around him because you can't mention the talent around him if you don't mention the defense.

Cleveland finished 10th in total yards given up a game and if you actually watched the games last year you could clearly see that the defense usually kept them competitive throughout the

contest. Cleveland's defense had a really good season as a unit and they did it with an offense which was ranked in the bottom three in virtually every offensive category.

Having a defense that can get stops will allow the young QB to play within himself as well as cover up for some of the mistakes he will make. The offense as a group can't be much worse than they were last year, so if they are at least able to get somewhere in the middle of the pack statistically (especially in scoring) the defense should be even better in 2012.

Having an offense that can score points will have opponents playing catch up which will help make them more predictable and it will also allow the young DL to impose its will as well as force teams to throw the ball at Cleveland's best football player Joe Haden.

Based on personnel and scheme, I think the defense will continue to do their part, and if Weeden and the offense starts to carry their share of the load the entire team will benefit…….but none moreso than the starting QB.

Game Notes

I am not going to get really in depth like I would for a regular season game, but there are a few game notes from this past week that I want to point out.

** It was nice to see Montario Hardesty starting to gain some confidence. He played quicker and stronger than I have seen him as a Brown and he bounced back well from an early fumble that could have derailed his confidence.

** The offensive line played much, much better in game two than they did in game one. The tackles did a good job of keeping the 3-4 OLBs at bay and the inside players really moved some people out of the way in the running game. The biggest negative for the lineman in my eyes probably was the timing of the screen plays but that is more of a team thing than solely their issue.

** Rookie DT Billy Wynn was a step away from big plays throughout the first half. If he can take his intensity up a notch he can earn a lot of playing time this year and early indications are that he was a steal as a 6th round pick.

** Weeden was up and down as you should probably expect from a rookie QB. He made some nice reads and throws but he also left a few wide open WRs out there and he failed to recognize a few blitzes. Weeden isn't the athlete that Colt McCoy is so he will need to get much better at figuring out where the pressure is coming from and beating it before it arrives.

** Greg Little showed a glimpse of his run after the catch ability on his 24 yard reception. He did drop a pass but he still looks much more comfortable as a NFL WR.

** All in all the young LBs did an excellent job with the first team defense. L.J. Fort has great instincts in the running game and James Michael-Johnson showed that natural ability in the passing game I have talked about before.

** Joe Haden got smoked on the play before the TD but the ball was overthrown. I was much more disgruntled about that than I was the TD. That TD was just a tremendous play by Jordy Nelson and outstanding offense usually beats good defense.

** Still way too many penalties. The Browns need to clean up their play…..they can't afford to beat themselves with the type of division we play in.

** Safety David Sims seems like a ball magnet and he is having the type of preseason showing that earns roster spots especially if you play special teams as a well as he does.

** Jordan Norwood is a keeper and personally I would just go ahead and cut Mohamed Massaquoi once he is healthy enough to be cut. His injury history has far outweighed his talent. I would much rather keep an extra TE and call it a day.

** Not going to get into a Colt McCoy conversation but he looks good…….but did anyone expect anything else in his second year running this offense?

** The last thing I want to note is the Brad Childress affect. I think the beginning of this game showed more of the difference between a Childress offense and a strictly Shurmur offense.

This year you will see the Browns stretch the field vertically and as the games progress you should notice the difference more and more. From studying Brad Childress's past offenses I can see that he believes in pushing the secondary back then coming underneath as opposed to pulling them up and then going over the top.

Now when I say that I am referring to the passes attempted and not necessarily the overall play of the offense because I am not factoring in the running game which Brad Childress and every offensive coordinator will try to use in order to draw the safeties up. I am referring to the passing game specifically.

Childress takes a much more aggressive mindset and for my football preference, I like that philosophy much better. As the 2012 season continues, I think Cleveland fans will grow to appreciate the way Brad Childress sees offense because he puts some much needed teeth into the horizontal passing game of the west coast offense……..something we all have been waiting for for quite a long time.

I understand many will simply chalk up the downfield passing game to having the strong armed Weeden as QB but there is more to it than that. No matter if it was A.J. Feeley or Jeff Garcia QBing for Childress he always found ways to push the ball down the field vertically and I look forward to the more aggressive mindset I expect this year.

That's all for now Browns fans so until next time……Go Browns!