

Browns Sign Jason Campbell, Securing Weeden's Starting Role

Written by {ga=tommoore}

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The Cleveland Browns [signed journeyman quarterback Jason Campbell](#) to a reported two-year contract late Tuesday night.

Campbell's arrival probably means the end of Colt McCoy's days in Brown and Orange and is most likely the final move to [solidify the Brandon Weeden in 2013 campaign](#) .

The nine-year veteran has moved around the league after being drafted by Washington in the first round of 2005. He played with the Redskins until 2010 when Mike Shanahan opted to trade Campbell to Oakland because Shanahan decided that a past-his-prime Donovan McNabb was a better option.

Campbell had 19 touchdowns passes and 12 interceptions in 19 games with the Raiders. He was injured six games into the 2011 season during a meeting against the Browns when he was sacked by Chris Gocong and Scott Fujita. The injury forced the Raiders to make a panic trade for a past-his-prime Carson Palmer.

Campbell spent last season in Chicago as Jay Cutler's backup; he made one start, a 32-7 loss against San Francisco where Campbell was 14-of-22 for 107 yards and two interceptions.

For his career, Campbell has thrown 76 touchdowns, 52 interceptions and posted an 82.5

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quarterback rating.

OK, let's get the coach speak out of the way.

"Jason is an established leader who has started a number of games in this league and has had success," Browns coach Rob Chudzinski said on the team's website. "He brings us a veteran presence and a good set of physical tools. He played in a similar system when he was in Oakland and that will help in his transition."

For what it is worth, Norv Turner's offense is probably the best fit for whatever skills Campbell still has and, with teams entering the bargain bin portion of free agency, Cleveland probably seemed as good a place as any.

"I just thought it is a good opportunity, and it's a young football team that's growing and ready to compete," [Campbell told the \(Chicago\) Sun-Times](#). "I like the things that they are doing here in trying to turn things around and get going in the right direction."

Campbell's signing will have a ripple effect with the Browns quarterback situation, [just not the one that some will assume](#), because, barring a complete collapse or an injury in the preseason, Weeden is going to be the starting quarterback when the 2013 season starts.

While Campbell's strong arm fits in the Browns offense, after nine years in the league he is not getting any better – and the Browns will be his fourth team in five years. At this point in his career he's the type of player that can come into a game if Weeden is hurt and (maybe) hold it together.

The best thing that Campbell can do is help Weeden learn how to be an NFL quarterback.

A few years ago, *Sports Illustrated* had a story on the struggles of quarterbacks drafted No. 1

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overall (we can't find a link to it; damn you Google!). One thing that stood out to us were comments from David Carr and Trent Dilfer, who talked about how, when they came into the league, they didn't know how to really study game film and prepare during the week for the game on Sunday.

It wasn't until later in their careers – after they had been beaten down by the league – that they were finally able to land in a situation where they had an older quarterback who could mentor them and teach them how to learn.

Hopefully that is a role that Campbell can fill for the Browns with Weeden, because if Campbell somehow becomes the Browns 19th starting quarterback since 1999, then the team is in far more trouble than anyone probably cares to admit.

The Campbell signing most likely means the end of the Colt McCoy era in Cleveland, which is probably the best for everyone involved. Just as Weeden was a poor fit for Pat Shurmur's version of the West Coast offense, McCoy doesn't have the arm strength to be successful in Turner's offense.

What the Browns do with McCoy now becomes the next question. McCoy will make \$2.51 million this season in the final year of his rookie contract, although if the Browns release him they will only owe him \$187,750 ([according to Dawgs By Nature](#)).

It's hard to know what kind of trade market there would be for McCoy, but we'd hate to see the Browns just release him and get nothing in return.

After all, there are people who reportedly believe that [New England could get a second-round pick for Ryan Mallett](#) who, like McCoy, was a third-round draft pick but, unlike McCoy, has only thrown four passes in his entire NFL career. If Mallett's value has gone up despite doing absolutely nothing, then the Browns should be able to get something for McCoy, yes?

Although, we suppose, a second-round pick for Mallett may only exist in a world where Mike

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Lombardi is the Browns general manager, and other teams do have tape on McCoy, so getting something for him may be harder than we imagine.

Overall, the Campbell signing is similar to the moves the Browns have made since signing Paul Kruger and Desmond Bryant to open free agency. Campbell adds short-term depth at the quarterback position and his signing isn't going to make or break the season.

(Photo by Getty Images)