



We would have thought having grown up a Cleveland Browns fan and having worked as an assistant coach with the team previously that Rob Chudzinski would have known what he was getting himself into when he accepted the head coaching position.

If he didn't know before, he does know as the team's latest quarterback situation has become Chudzinski's "welcome to Cleveland" moment.

With former starting quarterbacks Jason Campbell and Brandon Weeden both still in the NFL-mandated concussion protocol system and not yet cleared to play, the Browns very well could turn to Alex Tanney, signed last week off of Dallas' practice squad, or Caleb Hanie, signed as a street free agent on Tuesday, when they take the field on Sunday against New England.

"As far as our quarterback situation goes, it's a very fluid situation, unique, one that I haven't necessarily been around," [Chudzinski said on Wednesday](#) . "Obviously, we'll tailor the package to whichever guy ends up being the starter and to what they can do and to what is going to be effective, hopefully, versus New England."

Cleveland: where the unique is a common occurrence.

The good thing is it really doesn't matter which quarterback the Browns start. The only play Tanney or Hanie really need to know is the one that directs them to throw the ball to wide receiver Josh Gordon, the team's lone offensive weapon.

As for Campbell and Weeden, the Browns are not winning anything with them at quarterback, so what is the rush to get either of them back on the field? They may as well give Tanney a shot and see if he can show the team enough that they would consider bringing him back next season as the third quarterback.

While they probably would not do it, it wouldn't come as a surprise if early next week the Browns announce that they are placing Weeden on injured reserve, ending his tenure in Cleveland a couple of weeks early. There seems to be little to no chance Weeden will be on the roster next season, and even less of a reason for the Browns to put him back on the field. They may as well just let him quietly fade away.

The lone positive in the entire Weeden mess is, because they drafted him after the new collective bargaining agreement went into place, the Browns will not be on the hook for an exorbitant amount of money if they were to release the former first-round selection.

About that quarterback rich draft in 2014

The plan all along, even if CEO Joe Banner and general manager Mike Lombardi would not publicly admit it, has always appeared to be that the Browns would stockpile assets and draft in a quarterback in the first round of the 2014 NFL Draft – one that was expected to be deep with quarterback talent.

Well, like most things in Cleveland, that plan is becoming more difficult.

On Tuesday, Oregon's Marcus Mariota decided to return to the Ducks for another season. And it is starting to sound like UCLA's Brett Hundley is going to follow Mariota's lead and stay in school for another year.

LSU senior Zach Mettenberger suffered a torn ACL in the Tigers win against Arkansas, the same injury that befell Georgia senior quarterback Aaron Murray a couple of weeks ago.

That leaves teams looking for a quarterback with a list that will include Louisville's Teddy Bridgewater, Fresno State's Derek Carr, Clemson's Tajh Boyd and San Jose State's David Fales – and possibly Texas A&M's Johnny Manziel, if he decides to come out for the draft.

Not as inspiring of a first-round list of prospects and it could have been.

Complicating matters is the fact that the Browns are not the only team that will be looking for a quarterback in next spring's draft.

As of right now, there are eight teams ahead of the Browns in the draft queue. Of those teams, Minnesota, Jacksonville, Houston and Tampa Bay should all be looking to draft a quarterback. Oakland is a possibility and there is an outside chance that St. Louis, which holds Washington's top pick thanks to the RG3 trade, could also be in the market. (The Rams are less likely, though, as they still have Sam Bradford under contract for two more years. Bradford is a mediocre quarterback at best, but with cap hits of more than \$17 million in 2014 and more than \$16 million in 2015, he's not going anywhere.)

We heard some talk on Twitter that the Browns could grab the No. 1 overall pick in the draft if they lose out and finish the season at 4-12, but history is not on their side.

Since the AFL/NFL merger in 1970, only nine teams have earned the No. 1 overall pick in season where they won more than three games – Dallas in 1974, Houston in '78, Buffalo in '79, New England in '84, Indianapolis in '90, Dallas in '91, St. Louis in '97, Atlanta in '01 and San Diego in '04. Eight of those teams gained the top pick because of a trade, leaving just one, San Diego in '04, that had the draft's first selection after finishing with more than three wins.

One time in 44 years – what are the odds that the Browns of all teams will buck that trend?

So if the Browns can't earn the spot on their own, they may have to explore a trade if there is a quarterback they want to move up to select. They have the assets as they hold two first-round picks, so if there is a team in front of them who will definitely not be taking a quarterback the Browns may have enough in their pocket to pull off a deal.

The team to watch for here is Atlanta. The Falcons have Matt Ryan, so they won't be selecting a quarterback, and as Grantland's Bill Barnwell pointed out this week, [the Falcons roster is hurting thanks to the trade they made with the Browns for Julio Jones](#)

The Falcons need draft picks, the Browns need a quarterback. Sounds like a potential deal to us.

The defense takes a hit

Surprising news this week as the Browns announced that defensive lineman Desmond Bryant and corner back Chris Owens are done for the season.

Owens was placed on injured reserve with a knee injury suffered against Jacksonville, while Bryant is on the reserve/non-football illness list after suffering from an irregular heartbeat.

[According to The Plain Dealer](#), Bryant is expected to have a heart procedure (that doesn't sound good) later this week after experiencing a rapid heartbeat on Monday. It is the third time in the past two years, and the second time this season, that Bryant has had trouble with his heart.

Bryant finishes the season with 45 tackles and 3.5 sacks in his first year with the Browns, who signed him as a free agent in the off-season to a five-year, \$34 million contract.

As for Owens, he made three starts, finishing the season with 54 tackles and 2.5 sacks.

The loss of Owens will most likely mean more playing time for third-round draft pick Leon McFadden, who didn't see any action until Week 8. Now that he should be on the field more, that will give the Browns so solid game tape to help evaluate just what they have in the rookie from San Diego State.

(Photo courtesy of ClevelandBrowns.com)