



Quick, without looking him up, think of everything you know about Cleveland Browns head coach candidate Dan Quinn. Here's what I know:

- He is currently the defensive coordinator for the Seattle Seahawks, a unit that is arguably the best defense in the NFL.
- He has only been the Seahawks defensive coordinator for one season, as their former defensive coordinator, Gus Bradley, was hired by the Jacksonville Jaguars last offseason.
- He favors a 4-3 alignment, or at least that's the alignment the Seahawks are currently employing ( [or are they ?](#)).

That's it. This guy was rumored to potentially be the Browns' next head coach (as well as [other teams](#)

) and that's all I know about him. And I don't think that puts me in the minority. Look at the guy's [Wikipedia page](#)

. His bio on the Seattle Seahawks team website [isn't much better](#)

. At least his bio on the Florida Gators' website (Quinn was their defensive coordinator for the 2011 and 2012 seasons)

[lists some of his accomplishments](#)

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Now, none of this is to say Dan Quinn can't be a good head coach, or that he won't be a good head coach as soon as next season. For all I know, Dan Quinn could be one of the greatest defensive minds to ever grace a sideline. Or he may be one of the greatest motivators of men since George Washington lead his charges across the Delaware River.

But that's the point. I haven't the faintest idea if Dan Quinn would be a great head coach or not. Same goes for Adam Gase, Todd Bowles (we just hired an Arizona Cardinals defensive coordinator!), Ben McAdoo, and any other coordinator or position coach that has never been a head coach at the NFL level.

The Browns have also been looking at guys who have previously been NFL head coaches, such as Josh McDaniels and Ken Whisenhunt. While there is a track record for these guys as NFL head coaches, there are still mysterious elements as to what kind of coaches they'll be in their second go-around. Before McDaniels took himself out of the running, the issues were whether or not he gained any humility after a tumultuous time in Denver and whether or not he can command the respect of the locker room. For Whisenhunt, the issues are whether or not he can coach a quarterback in the modern era of football and if his success in Arizona was due to an outdated gameplan and the presence of Kurt Warner.

College coaches? The Browns have also expressed interest in Auburn's Gus Malzahn and Vanderbilt's James Franklin, though Franklin seems bound for Penn State at this point. Those two carry the same questions of any college coach making the transition to the NFL. Can they adjust their gameplans to the speed and strength of NFL players? Can they handle an NFL locker room with NFL-sized personalities and issues? Can they function without being the undisputed top dog in the organization like they were in their collegiate stomping grounds?

There are dozens of factors that go into whether or not a guy will be a successful head coach, and many of them aren't readily apparent to fans. Fans have little if any insight into how hard a guy works, how good he is at delegating tasks, how accepting he is of feedback and criticism from his subordinates, how he manages outsized personalities in the locker room, how smart he is, if he is an ideologue or if he is willing to adjust his scheme to fit the personnel given to him, and a litany of other factors, most of which have little to do with football knowledge and everything to do with leadership.

Being a head coach is more than just being the smartest X's and O's guy on the sideline; if that were the case, it would be easy for Joe Banner and Jimmy Haslam to figure out which guy to hire. Irrespective of football, identifying what makes someone a good leader is an incredibly difficult task. Most times, you won't know for sure until you see that person, you know, actually *lead*.

Even then, people are complex beings, capable of learning and adjusting and bettering themselves. A guy who struggles as a leader today may take those experiences and fashion himself into one of the great leaders of tomorrow.

I've thought a lot about whom I want to be the Browns next head coach, but in all honesty, I have little faith in my ability to spot which candidates will make good head coaches, mostly because I have no earthly way of knowing which of these men possess the right mix of qualities to be a good head coach. And despite having access to inside information and conducting 8-hour long interviews with the candidates, I don't think Joe Banner and Jimmy Haslam do either, or else they wouldn't be in this position to begin with.

*Jeremy Klein is an unabashed Cleveland Sports fan who would make [this](#) his walkup song if he ever played professional baseball. You can follow him on Twitter*

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