

There is no doubt who would win a public popularity contest between Derek Anderson and Brady Quinn. A quick stroll through your area mall will reveal dozens and dozens of brown and white No. 10 Quinn jerseys for sale, right alongside those of Edwards, Kellen Winslow, Joe Thomas and Joe Jurevicius. Conspicuously absent in many cases are Anderson #3 tops for sale. And despite the fact many fans assume DA is simply a place holder for a job destined to be Quinn's, Erik Cassano isn't quite convinced that's the case.



Sometimes, it is said, luck is in the numbers.

The Browns have two potential starting quarterbacks. Coincidentally, adding Derek Anderson's jersey No. 3 to Brady Quinn's No. 10 brings you unlucky 13. Subtract Anderson from Quinn, and you end up with lucky 7.

If you wanted to read into the numerical significance more deeply, perhaps that's a harbinger of the decision GM Phil Savage will have to make in the next year or so. It will likely bring bad luck to try and make the Anderson-Quinn coexistence last too long. And just maybe, it will bring the best luck to bet that Savage will at some point have to subtract Anderson from the team in favor of Quinn. Or at least, that's what a lot of fans are thinking.

That's all speculation. What we do know is that right now, if you're a Cleveland Browns quarterback, it's better to be lucky than good.

Anderson represents luck. That's not to say that he doesn't have a nicely-sized helping of talent, but his present status as one of the league's rising young QBs is

due mostly to a few chance happenings.

A lost-in-the-shuffle signal-caller from an Oregon State program largely unrecognized by the rest of the nation, the former sixth-round pick of the Ravens was plucked off Baltimore's practice squad by Savage, the former Baltimore scouting head who was in his first year running Cleveland's roster.

Had it been a team with an established quarterback already under center, Anderson might have stayed in the background. But the Browns were in the midst of shuffling through a long string of has-beens and never-will-be's at QB. When Anderson arrived, his teammates were Charlie Frye and Trent Dilfer

Dilfer

was gone before the '06 season began, and by the time Anderson started his first NFL game late in the '06 season, it was becoming apparent that Frye possessed neither the arm nor the quickness to succeed as a starting NFL quarterback. The door was still open for Anderson, but due to an strong-but-erratic arm, he totally seized the opportunity.

That's when Brady Quinn entered picture. Quinn represents good. The jury is still out on how good, but he is an NFL blueblood, groomed at Notre Dame under QB guru Charlie Weis for professional greatness.

The Browns traded up on draft day in 2007 to get Quinn in the first round. He was expected to arrive in Cleveland as the franchise savior, running Anderson and the era of bargain-basement QBs out of town.

But then, Anderson was the beneficiary of yet another series of lucky breaks. Quinn held out of the first part of training camp as a rookie, putting him behind the curve in learning the playbook. Anderson didn't play well in the '07 preseason, but neither did Frye, and even when Frye was by default named the starter at the outset of last season, Anderson was still front-of-mind for the Browns' decision-makers.

Then came the opening week debacle against the Steelers. The 34-7 loss got Frye traded to Seattle, and Anderson was installed as the starting QB only because Romeo Crenshaw

nel
thought Quinn wasn't ready.

Anderson was the one who set up shop behind the Browns' rebuilt offensive line, and the rest is history. A 10-6 record and a Pro Bowl appearance for Anderson. Quinn didn't take his first official NFL snaps until the final week of the season against San Francisco.

Despite his success, Anderson was welcomed by fans as something less than a conquering hero after the season. His four interceptions against Cincinnati in Week 16 directly caused the Browns to miss the playoffs. He was still viewed by many in the stands and the press box as too much of a gunslinger, trying to solve problems with his arm instead of his mind, throwing ill-advised passes into coverage and potentially leading his receivers into violent collisions with defensive backs with his high throws.

Anderson is the test model, the beta-version software with bugs still in the system. Quinn will be the finished product with all the tools for stardom. We are still convinced of that in most circles.

But each time we wait for Quinn to become the cream that rises to the top, Anderson emerges as the better QB -- as he has throughout his career. Somehow, some way, Anderson does enough to stick around. When he needed to find a way to stick around in the NFL, he did it. Now that he needs to do enough to hold onto his starting job, he appears to be doing it.

It's Anderson who is developing timing with Braylon Edwards and Donte' Stallworth
h while

Quinn
captains

the second team. It's Anderson who is winning over his receivers with his vertical passing game while Quinn remains inconsistent throwing deep balls.

While the fans believe in the Fighting Irish legend of Brady Quinn, the guys who don the orange helmets on Sundays seem to believe in the here-and-now of Derek Anderson. The more we wait for that to change, the more entrenched Anderson seems to become.

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brown and white No. 10 Quinn jerseys for sale, right alongside those of Edwards, Kellen Winslow, Joe Thomas and Joe Jurevicius. Conspicuously absent in many cases are Anderson No. 3 tops for sale.

There aren't many NFL cities, particularly NFL cities that have had the recent history of losing Cleveland has had, where the local team's Pro Bowl starting QB would be dismissed with a general wave of the hand. But that's how convinced we've become that Anderson is merely the seat-warmer in advance of Quinn's coronation.

But Lady Luck keeps smiling on Anderson, the man who has found ways to take advantage of the fortune he has encountered. If it's better to be lucky than good, Anderson might hold onto his starting job a lot longer than we think he will.