

Exploring the Browns QB Options

Written by {ga=jerryroche}

Wednesday, February 10 2010 12:00 AM - Last Updated Wednesday, February 10 2010 10:45 PM



If Super Bowl XLIV proved anything, it's the importance of a quarterback in the NFL these days -- as Browns president Mike Holmgren was quick to point out during a recent press conference.

Watching MVP Drew Brees of New Orleans and Peyton Manning of Indianapolis throw tight spirals, right on the money, time after time (except Manning's major faux pass, of course), made us Browns fans drool with envy. We haven't seen such unerring accuracy in Cleveland since the days of Bernie Kosar -- certainly nothing even close since Browns Stadium was built.

With unproven **Brady Quinn** the Browns' incumbent quarterback, our aching hearts eagerly turn to other options that Holmgren might consider before training camp opens in July.

But first, let me take a moment to say something about Quinn. I've always been a staunch supporter. There stands a distinct possibility that he will indeed be the team's No.1 QB in 2010, but he has yet to live up to his advance billing and, perhaps, his potential. His arm strength has always been a question mark, and this past season he would've had a hard time hitting Lake Erie from the bow of the Goodtime III. But he's still only 25, so he may be one of those late bloomers, not unlike Brees, whose QB rating as a 25-year-old was 67.5.

If Holmgren doesn't sign a capable free agent or make a trade, chances are that Quinn will

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indeed open the season under center, simply because the college draft doesn't excite. Experts are quick to point out that the NCAA's quarterback class of 2010 lacks any slam-dunk potential stars. (And, we might add, the heralded Mark Sanchez, first-round choice of the Jets in the 2009 draft, had a QB rating of just 63.0 his rookie year, which doesn't exactly excite, either.)

So ... what are Holmgren's options? If you scroll down, you'll see a complete list of NFL and top college quarterbacks -- Quinn included -- from which the Browns' 2010 starter will almost certainly (99.9%) be culled.

Here are one man's conclusions from that list.

- Let's get this out of the way: the top 10 starters from other teams (from Aaron Rodgers to Brett Favre) are not going anywhere, though Favre has already alluded to another possible retirement.

- Of the free agents, only **Daunte Culpepper** stands ready to step in as a starting QB. Culpepper's career rating is decent, and he's still young enough that he could be a stop-gap measure until Quinn or a future draftee is ready to take the reins.

- Washington free agent **Jason Campbell** has a pretty decent rating, and he can be had for the right price. But the Redskins finished just 4-12 with Campbell at the helm, scoring just 1.5 points per game more than the sorry Browns. He's also said to be not much of a leader. So let's pass on him. Please.

- As for the other possible free agents ... **Jeff Garcia** ain't bad, but he's getting long in the tooth, and we've already been down that road -- unsuccessfully -- one too many times. Minnesota's

Tarvaris Jackson

might be an option, but the Vikings didn't sign Favre last year for no good reason. The well-traveled

David Carr

is intriguing: a first overall draft choice in 2002, he is still young enough to be developed into a top-flight QB by an astute handler (like, maybe, Holmgren?).

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- If Holmgren decides to swing a trade, Carolina's **Matt Moore** might be a prime target. And what of Baltimore's **Troy Smith**, all you OSU fans ask? Well, the Ravens didn't draft Joe Flacco for no good reason.
- Much has been made on the [TCF message boards](#) of **Kevin Kolb**, who backed up Donovan McNabb in Philadelphia this past season. But I don't understand this fascination, since Kolb's career rating is in Quinn-Derek Anderson territory -- and he'd be coming to a team with a lack of proven receivers.
- Neither does the "Limited Experience" list show much promise, based on statistics alone. However, Holmgren might go after one of those guys -- or pick a couple off the waiver wire come fall -- if he sees any potential. Two names stand out: Washington's **Colt Brennan**, who set a raft of NCAA records; and **Curtis Painter**, who is P. Manning's understudy in Indianapolis.
- As noted earlier, there are no bona fides in the draft -- and the accompanying table lists the top prospects as cumulatively ranked by professional scouts. **Jimmy Claussen**, Notre Dame: been there, done that.
Sam Bradford, Oklahoma: delicate as a ceramic vase.
Tim Tebow, Florida: couldn't even take a direct snap from center during Senior Bowl practices.
Colt McCoy, Texas: undersized "spread" passer with below average arm strength.
Dan LeFevour, Central Michigan: played in the weak Mid-Am. And on, and on.
- However, if **Tebow**'s still on the board in the second round, he might be worth a flyer. Here's what Bucky Brooks, an analyst for NFL.com had to say about Tebow: *"A fiery leader with a magnetic personality, Tebow is a natural leader of men, and his ability to galvanize a team isn't lost on coaches and scouts. Several say Tebow's intangibles are off the charts, and that is why, despite his flaws, it is so hard to completely dismiss his pro prospects. The league has seen quarterbacks with similar warts enjoy success as pros."*
[Bernie Kosar](#), who was selected in the first round of the 1985 supplemental draft by the [Cleveland Browns](#), enjoyed a successful 13-year career despite possessing a quirky throwing motion and limited

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arm strength. Although his physical tools would rank as sub-standard in today's game, Kosar's guile and superb decision-making ability allowed him to overcome his deficiencies."

(And make no mistake, the Browns could definitely use another Kosar.)

There you have it. One fan's opinion, for what it's worth. Any further discussion is welcome on the [TCF.com message boards](#).

2009 STARTERS

| Name | Team | Size | Age |
|----------------|------|----------|-----|
| Aaron Rodgers | GB | 6-2, 220 | 26 |
| Philip Rivers | SD | 6-5, 228 | 28 |
| Tony Romo | DAL | 6-2, 226 | 30 |
| Peyton Manning | IND | 6-5, 230 | 34 |
| Tom Brady | NE | 6-4, 225 | 33 |

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| | | | |
|--------------------|------|----------|----|
| Drew Brees | NO | 6-0, 209 | 31 |
| Ben Roethlisberger | PIT | 6-5, 241 | 28 |
| Matt Schaub | HOU | 6-5, 239 | 29 |
| Carson Palmer | CIN | 6-5, 235 | 30 |
| Brett Favre | MIN | 6-2, 222 | 40 |
| Donovan McNabb | PHIL | 6-2, 240 | 33 |
| David Garrard | JAC | 6-1, 236 | 32 |
| Joe Flacco | BAL | 6-6, 230 | 25 |
| Marc Bulger | STL | 6-3, 208 | 33 |
| Matt Ryan | ATL | 6-4, 220 | 25 |

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| | | | |
|-----------------|------|----------|----|
| Jay Cutler | CHI | 6-3, 233 | 27 |
| Matt Hasselbeck | SEA | 6-4, 225 | 34 |
| Jason Campbell | WASH | 6-5, 230 | 28 |
| Jake Delhomme | CAR | 6-2, 215 | 35 |
| Trent Edwards | BUF | 6-4, 231 | 26 |
| Matt Cassel | KC | 6-4, 230 | 28 |
| Eli Manning | NYG | 6-4, 225 | 29 |
| Chad Henne | MIA | 6-3, 230 | 25 |
| Vince Young | TEN | 6-5, 233 | 27 |
| Kyle Orton | DEN | 6-4, 225 | 27 |

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| | | | |
|------------------|-----|----------|----|
| Alex Smith | SF | 6-4, 217 | 26 |
| Brady Quinn | CLE | 6-3, 235 | 25 |
| Mark Sanchez | NYJ | 6-2, 225 | 23 |
| Matthew Stafford | DET | 6-2, 232 | 22 |
| Josh Freeman | TAM | 6-6, 248 | 22 |
| JaMarcus Russell | OAK | 6-6, 260 | 25 |

EXPERIENCED VETERANS

| | | | |
|------------------|------|----------|----|
| Daunte Culpepper | DET | 6-4, 260 | 33 |
| Jeff Garcia | PHIL | 6-1, 205 | 40 |

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| | | | |
|------------------|-----|-----------|----|
| Shaun Hill | SF | 6-3, 220 | 30 |
| Matt Moore | CAR | 6-3, 202 | 26 |
| Mark Brunell | NO | 6-1, 217 | 39 |
| Seneca Wallace | SEA | 5-11, 205 | 30 |
| Sage Rosenfels | MIN | 6-4, 225 | 32 |
| Troy Smith | BAL | 6-0, 215 | 26 |
| Byron Leftwich | TAM | 6-5, 250 | 30 |
| Chris Redman | ATL | 6-3, 221 | 33 |
| Charlie Batch | PIT | 6-2, 216 | 35 |
| Tarvaris Jackson | MIN | 6-2, 225 | 27 |

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| | | | |
|-----------------|------|----------|----|
| Jon Kitna | DAL | 6-2, 208 | 37 |
| Chad Pennington | MIA | 6-3, 230 | 34 |
| Todd Collins | WASH | 6-4, 223 | 38 |
| Michael Vick | PHIL | 6-0, 215 | 30 |
| David Carr | NYG | 6-3, 216 | 31 |
| Patrick Ramsey | DET | 6-2, 225 | 31 |
| Luke McCown | JAC | 6-4, 217 | 29 |
| Kerry Collins | TEN | 6-5, 245 | 37 |
| Charlie Frye | OAK | 6-4, 220 | 29 |
| Josh McCown | CAR | 6-4, 215 | 31 |

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|------------------|------|----------|----|
| Kyle Boller | STL | 6-3, 218 | 28 |
| Rex Grossman | HOU | 6-1, 217 | 30 |
| Bruce Gradkowski | OAK | 6-1, 220 | 27 |
| Derek Anderson | CLE | 6-6, 230 | 27 |
| A.J. Feeley | CAR | 6-3, 220 | 33 |
| Kevin Kolbe | PHIL | 6-3, 218 | 26 |
| Kellen Clemens | NYJ | 6-2, 221 | 27 |
| Matt Leinart | ARIZ | 6-5, 232 | 27 |
| Josh Johnson | TAM | 6-3, 205 | 24 |
| Keith Null | STL | 6-4, 219 | 24 |

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LIMITED EXPERIENCE

| | | | |
|-----------------|-----|----------|----|
| Matt Guterrez | KC | 6-4, 230 | 26 |
| Billy Volek | SD | 6-2, 214 | 34 |
| Brian Hoyer | NE | 6-2, 215 | 24 |
| Kevin O'Connell | NYJ | 6-5, 225 | 25 |
| J.T. O'Sullivan | CIN | 6-2, 230 | 31 |
| Brodie Croyle | KC | 6-2, 206 | 27 |
| Dan Olrovsky | HOU | 6-5, 230 | 27 |
| Chris Simms | DEN | 6-4, 230 | 30 |

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| | | | |
|------------------|------|----------|----|
| Ryan Fitzpatrick | BUF | 6-2, 225 | 27 |
| John Beck | BAL | 6-2, 216 | 29 |
| Dennis Dixon | PIT | 6-3, 195 | 25 |
| Gibran Hamdan | BUF | 6-4, 220 | 29 |
| Brian St. Pierre | ARIZ | 6-3, 224 | 29 |
| Brian Brohm | BUF | 6-3, 223 | 24 |
| Pat White | MIA | 6-0, 190 | 24 |
| Matt Flynn | GB | 6-2, 225 | 25 |
| Brett Basanez | CHI | 6-1, 208 | 27 |
| Drew Stanton | DET | 6-3, 230 | 26 |

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| | | | |
|------------------|------|----------|----|
| Jordan Palmer | CIN | 6-5, 235 | 26 |
| Caleb Hanie | CHI | 6-2, 225 | 24 |
| Curtis Painter | IND | 6-4, 230 | 25 |
| Erik Ainge | NYJ | 6-2, 221 | 24 |
| Richard Bartel | WASH | 6-3, 230 | 27 |
| John David Booty | HOU | 6-3, 215 | 25 |
| Tom Brandstater | DEN | 6-5, 223 | 25 |
| Colt Brennan | WASH | 6-3, 212 | 27 |
| Hunter Cantwell | CAR | 6-4, 236 | 24 |
| Rudy Carpenter | TAM | 6-2, 212 | 24 |

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| | | | |
|--------------------|-----|----------|----|
| Chase Daniel | NO | 6-0, 225 | 23 |
| Nate Davis | SF | 6-1, 226 | 23 |
| Stephen McGee | DAL | 6-3, 218 | 24 |
| Chris Pizzotti | GB | 6-5, 226 | 24 |
| Brett Ratliff | CLE | 6-4, 224 | 25 |
| Mike Reilly | STL | 6-3, 212 | 25 |
| Tyler Thigpen | MIA | 6-1, 224 | 26 |
| D.J. Shockley | ATL | 6-0, 222 | 27 |
| Mike Teel | SEA | 6-3, 230 | 24 |
| Charlie Whitehurst | SD | 6-4, 220 | 28 |

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| | | | |
|--------------------|-----|----------|----|
| John Parker Wilson | ATL | 6-2, 211 | 24 |
|--------------------|-----|----------|----|

NOTES: Age as of 9/1/2010. QB ratings are for career, not 2009. Current free agents italicized.

DRAFT PROSPECTS

| | | | |
|---------------|-------------|----------|--------------------------|
| Jimmy Clausen | Notre Dame | 6-3, 217 | 68.0%, 8.8 ypa, 28-4, 16 |
| Sam Bradford | Oklahoma | 6-4, 214 | INJ 2008 Heisman |
| Tim Tebow | Florida | 6-3, 236 | 67.8%, 9.2 ypa, 21-5, 16 |
| Colt McCoy | Texas | 6-2, 210 | 70.6%, 7.5 ypa, 27-12, 1 |
| Tony Pike | Cincinnati | 6-6, 212 | 62.4%, 7.5 ypa, 29-6, 14 |
| Dan LeFevour | Cent. Mich. | 6-3, 229 | 69.7%, 7.5 ypa, 28-7, 15 |
| Jevan Snead | Mississippi | 6-3, 220 | 54.4%, 7.5 ypa, 15-13, 1 |
| Jarrett Brown | W. Virginia | 6-3, 219 | 63.2%, 7.2 ypa, 11-9, 13 |
| Zac Robinson | Okla. St. | 6-2, 210 | 59.8%, 6.9 ypa, 15-12, 1 |

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| | | | |
|-------------------|-------------|----------|--------------------------|
| Sean Canfield | Oregon St. | 6-3, 221 | 67.9%, 7.3 ypa, 21-7, 14 |
| Tim Hiller | W. Michigan | 6-5, 234 | 60.1%, 6.3 ypa, 23-13, 1 |
| John Skelton | Fordham | 6-5, 245 | 64.4%, 8.4 ypa, 26-10, 1 |
| Bill Stull | Pittsburgh | 6-3, 215 | 65.1%, 8.2 ypa, 21-8, 15 |
| Max Hall | BYU | 6-1, 201 | 67.2%, 8.7 ypa, 32-14, 1 |
| Jonathan Crompton | Tennessee | 6-4, 224 | 58.3%, 7.3 ypa, 27-13, 1 |

NOTE: Last column shows 2009 stats, in order: % completions, yards per attempt, touchdowns-interceptions, QB rating