



Seneca Wallace is right. Someone has to go.

With the Browns presently carrying quarterbacks Colt McCoy, Thaddeus Lewis and Wallace behind presumed starter Brandon Weeden, someone is the odd man out. Chances are, it won't be Lewis, who rides the bench for cheap, and who team president Mike Holmgren seems to like as a developmental quarterback.

That means Colt and Wallace are left to battle for the No. 2 slot behind Weeden. Somebody is going to end up traded or released between now and the season opener against Philadelphia on Sept. 9.

My question is, why not both?

It has very little to do with Colt's brother, Case, pre-emptively spouting off on Twitter following what turned out to be a fake ESPN report that Colt had been traded to the Eagles. It has very little to do with the notion that you can't keep your current starter and your ex-starter in the same locker room, for fear of fracturing the team. It has very little to do with anything that spews forth from Wallace's maw, which tends to be open a little too much at times.

It has everything to do with the simple facts of the situation.

Holmgren and/or GM Tom Heckert and/or owner Randy Lerner, depending on who you believe, pushed for the selection of Weeden at the 22nd pick precisely because the mounting organization-wide opinion was that Colt lacked the necessary physical tools to excel as an NFL

QB. He didn't have the arm to make all the necessary throws. He didn't possess the reflexes to make split-second decisions. His lack of height exacerbated the other two problems. Wallace, at 5'-11" and a shade over 200 pounds, isn't in a much better position.

In short, the Browns had a pair of short, suspect-armed, quick-footed, scrambling quarterbacks who would just as soon make plays with their legs. Weeden is at the other end of the spectrum. He's a mountain of a man compared to Colt and Wallace -- 6'-4", 225 pounds with a long bullwhip of a throwing arm. He's going to make his dropback, make his read and throw the ball. His legs are only mobile enough to shuffle around in the pocket, perhaps buying a couple seconds to make a throw before the pass rush closes in.

So if you're going to give Weeden the first-team reps during OTAs, if you're presumably going to make him the first-team QB in training camp, if all signs point to Weeden under center on Sept. 9, barring a cataclysmic turn of events, why would you take out an insurance policy in the form of two quarterbacks who have completely different playing styles from the starter?

If Weeden were to suffer an injury, the Browns' entire offense would have to adjust on the fly to a QB with a completely different playing style. Maybe a veteran offense could make the transition. The 49ers of the 1980s won with both pocket-passing Joe Montana and fleet-footed Steve Young under center. But for an offense full of youngsters, in just its second year of learning the intricate West Coast Offense scheme, putting them in a position to potentially go from protecting a rifleman to throwing downfield blocks for a scampering human pinball doesn't seem like a recipe for success.

The better option, it would seem, would be to cut ties with Wallace and Colt -- ideally trading at least one of them -- and bringing in a veteran backup who is a dropback passer in the mold of Weeden. Free agent A.J. Feeley, who is well-schooled in the West Coast Offense, would seem like a logical fit. He's 35, so he wouldn't be more than a stopgap. He's 8-10 in his career as a starter. But at least he'd offer some degree of continuity in the event he had to step in and play. And for a young team that still doesn't figure to do any contending this year, continuity is one of the most important seeds to sow and cultivate. Lack of continuity, lack of stability and lack of organizational philosophy, have been smothering the Browns since they returned to the league 13 years ago.

Why give the gremlins a chance to creep back in?

If you still want to hold onto Colt with the idea that he might not get the job done as a starter, but he could be a quality backup, ask yourself the difference between a starter and a backup.

One play. One James Harrison shot to the head. One wrong-way knee twist. One rolled ankle. That's the difference between clipboard duty and the starting assignment -- perhaps for the rest of the season.

So if Colt is an inadequate starter in your book, he should be an inadequate backup, too. Same goes for any other quarterback. If you won't trust him to lead the team onto the field, you shouldn't trust him to wear the ballcap and hold the clipboard.

And even if Colt develops into a QB who is capable of starting and playing at a reasonably high level, he still won't develop as a plug-in replacement for Weeden.

It's simply the decision the Browns' brass has made: They wanted a tall, big-armed pocket passer. If that's the template for Holmgren and Heckert's ideal QB, Colt isn't that, and Wallace isn't that.

Even if it means bringing in a stale retread like Feeley, it still means a much-needed fresh start for the bench portion of the Browns' QB corps -- which is very nearly as important as the fresh start Weeden is giving them in the starting role.