

Sports Roundup: Browns choice of Carr up for debate

by Steve Doerschuk

CANTON, Ohio - It's fun to debate whether the Cleveland Browns should make a run at David Carr.

Up front, we hear they have virtually no interest in the No. 1 overall pick of the 2002 draft.

Kinda shades the debate, but ... are they making a mistake? One NFL man with strong knowledge of Carr tells us he's still sold on the 27-year-old QB.

"He's going to make it," the source said. "He reminds me of Steve Young, both in the way the early part of his career has gone and the kind of talent he has to break through.

"Steve Young was very athletic. A lot of people don't realize how athletic David is."

Young was 25 and three years out of college when he became a starter for Tampa Bay. He threw eight touchdown passes and 13 interceptions. The Bucs went 2-14.

Young went to the 49ers and was stuck behind Joe Montana. Young was 31 the year he became a full-time starter, only then launching a run to the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

Another plugged-in NFL man, likewise with strong knowledge of Carr, sees more Steve Bono than Steve Young.

His view:

- Carr came out of Fresno State graded by some scouts as a borderline first-round talent. His college offense required him to read only a third of the field. He never proved as a Texan he could read the whole book.

- He never became a leader, leaning too much on a father who seemed to spend more time at the team complex than some players.

- Bottom line: Talent wrapped in an enigma, compromised by an expansion team.

Carr didn't click at Fresno State until he was a fifth-year senior in 2001. He helped the Bulldogs beat Wisconsin to trigger an 11-3 year. He passed for 4,839 yards and 46 TDs. Then life became a Texas beatdown.

He was sacked an NFL-record 76 times as a 2002 rookie. He started all 48 of Houston's games from 2004-06 but was sacked 158 times.

His record as a starter is 22-53. The NFL has chewed him up and spit him out. He was released last month.

Can a change of scenery and a little healing put him on a Steve Young course? There is virtually no chance it will happen in Cleveland in the current time frame.

Trading for Kansas City's Trent Green, on the other hand, is on the Browns' radar, but so are other scenarios. The Chiefs would have to settle for a fifth-round pick.

Green, 36, missed much of the 2006 season with a severe concussion. The Chiefs-Bengals game was delayed 15 minutes after he was smashed by Robert Geathers.

In the three years before that, Green averaged 4,221 passing yards. The top three seasons in Browns history were by Brian Sipe (4,132, 1980 and 3,876, 1981) and Bernie Kosar (3,854, 1986). The NFL man who sees David Carr and Steve Young in the same light made an interesting prediction:

"If the Browns get Green, that's a pretty sure sign they intend to draft a quarterback."

The thinking: Green starts for a year; somebody named JaMarcus or Brady chills and learns. It's not the scenario you would choose if your name is, say, Charlie.