When the Browns turned in their card to the commissioner for the No. 22 pick, the front office felt they chose “the best player” for the team.

The Browns’ front office looked at Brandon Weeden’s age and saw maturity from the 28-year old college senior in their pre-draft evaluations of the former Oklahoma State quarterback.

At 28 years and 195 days old, former Oklahoma State University quarterback Brandon Weeden will not be the typical NFL rookie.

The Cleveland Browns drafted Weeden with the No. 22 overall pick in the 2012 NFL Draft on Thursday night after they took former Alabama running back Trent Richardson with the No. 3 selection. Weeden was drafted by the New York Yankees out of high school and worked his way through the minor league baseball system before going to college and returning to the gridiron.

“He was a winner,” Browns coach Pat Shurmur said of Weeden. “He obviously took a non-traditional path to being an NFL quarterback, but he’s a very mature guy. I think he’s an outstanding thrower. He’s a good decision-maker, very accurate. He found a way at Oklahoma State to really compete and win a lot of football games against a lot of the quarterbacks we’ve been talking about leading up to the draft. I wasn’t concerned about his age. He is a quarterback that helped lead his team to a lot of victories.”

Shurmur said everyone, from team owner Randy Lerner and president Mike Holmgren to himself and general manager Tom Heckert, were impressed by Weeden during the pre-draft interviews.

“When we went through the process of evaluating him, we became very fond of him, we all did,” Shurmur said. “We came away saying, ‘This is a guy we’d like to have on our team’ and that’s where it’s at right now.”

In addition to the intangibles, Weeden brings a track record of success with him to the Browns.

Weeden earned the Oklahoma State starting job in 2010 and broke 15 school records. Over his four-year run with the Cowboys, he completed 766 of 1,102 attempts for 9,260 yards and 75 touchdowns.

“We think he’s going to project into an outstanding NFL quarterback and we were able to see that in the way that he competed in college,” Shurmur said. “That being the case, when we’re looking to improve, if every move we make, we can say we’re getting better, then, that’s what you’ve got to do. We felt like having him on our team was going to make us better and going to make the position better. That’s why we picked him.”

When the Browns turned in their card to the commissioner for the No. 22 pick, the front office felt they chose “the best player” for the team.

“When you’re talking about a quarterback, we just didn’t think it was worth taking a risk,” Heckert said of waiting on Weeden to fall into the second round. “With a quarterback, we just wanted to make sure we got him and there were some teams that were interested behind us, so we decided to go ahead and get him. A couple guys got picked and it really wasn’t even an afterthought for us. As soon as a couple guys went, we knew we were going to take him and we really didn’t think about moving down.”