

## Post Traumatic Draft Syndrome

Written by {ga=mitch}

Wednesday, April 30 2008 7:00 PM -

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A lot of Browns fans I talked to this week seemed to feel the Steelers did well this past weekend in landing Rashard Mendenhall (pictured) and Limas Sweed with their top two draft picks. Not Mitch though. He laughs at the fact they failed to address issues on their offensive line, and at the end of the day, doesn't think much of the drafts of the Ravens and the Bungles either. In his latest, Mitch takes a comical look at how he feels the Browns division foes fared in this past weekend's NFL Draft.



This was a draft unlike any I can remember. One that garnered all of the interest that I normally reserve for the hog calling contest in Spivey's Corner, NC or the newest FOX reality show &quot;Which Loser Wants To Debase Themselves In The Most Disgusting Way On Television?&quot;

It was a truly surreal concept. How many years in a row did I trek back up to Ohio for the annual &quot;Let's Get Drunk as a Skunk While We Have Delusions of Grandeur for Our Team&quot; get together of similar minded fools...er...fans? (The answer is 5, I think). In four of those five years, the euphoria lasted anywhere from three to four and a half months...depending on whether reality set in on the first day of Training Camp when the latest Browns' White Knight would either injure himself, hold out, or be proven to be unworthy, or the first game of the season when the Browns got their collective assess handed to them.

But last year was different, and as any self-respecting ego-maniac would do, I'm giving credit to the big shindig Swerb held last April at Panini's with the Mother of All Draft Parties. In a perfect alignment of the stars not seen since a certain

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ping-pong ball made it's way to the top when a certain Akron basketball phenom was turning pro, the Browns made history that day for having what may turn out to be the Greatest Draft Ever (we'll wait a few years to see if it was better than the year they got Ozzie Newsome and Clay Matthews).

This year? It could have been the Anti-Draft Party. Or maybe the Third-Cousin-Once-Removed-Of-All-Draft-Parties.

For me? I had a date late Saturday morning with a Golf Cart and a 12 pack, and a couple of sleeves of Titleist golf balls were holding a prayer ceremony in anticipation of the watery death that was sure to greet them on that day...a day that I knew wouldn't see me back at the house until two hours at least after the draft began.

But knowing what a tricky, tricky GM Phil Savage is, I hedged my bets by programming my DVR to E\$PN, and refusing to look (for once) at my CrackBerry lest someone spoil the surprise I'd get when it was announced that Phil had traded Derek Anderson to Chicago for a first and third round pick, and Jerry Angelo's trophy wife.

My right thumb is now the strongest part of my body, as I did so much fast forwarding through so much blather from some of the most obnoxious talking heads in the history of the universe. In my zipping through what ended up being three hours of coverage in approximately 40 minutes, the only pausing I did was to pay attention when the Ratbirds of Kosovo-on-the-Chesapeake were proven to be unable to land the only QB in this draft with a chance in hell of being any good; Matt Ryan (the Anti-Vick).

The only thing that struck me throughout this entire draft was that if there was ever a time for the Browns NOT to have picks in the first three rounds, it was this one. What a bunch of stiffs! Jake Long? Puh-leeze. The man from The College That Is Jim Tressel's Personal Beyotch reminded many people of either Robert

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Gallery or Joe Thomas. Let us remind everyone that when Gallery came out of college, many experts were saying that he wasn't a natural Left Tackle. Thomas, on the other hand, was viewed as the prototypical LT. As a further reminder, FakeJake has been projected as a better RT prospect than LT...so guess which side of the Bust-Gallery to Rookie-Pro-Bowler-JoeThomas scale I think he'll end up on?

For the rest of the draft roundup, we are now only too familiar with the five additions Phil added to the roster during rounds four through seven. If Beau Bell can replace Andra Davis, that would be a good thing. Personally, I think [Beau Geste](#)

could get out there and do a better job than Davis, but that's just me. Martin Rucker? Sure...I'm OK with a fourth rounder for him, especially when 47 year old Steve Heiden is undergoing back surgery, and Kellen Winslow, Jr is always one crotch-rocket or one

[Bob Sugar](#)

/scumbag agent suggestion away from being history. Not a bad insurance policy. And given that Travis Wilson and his soon to be unemployed Hands of Stone cost the Browns a third round pick, this looks pretty solid.

To me, however, the best part of the draft was watching our rivals in the AFC North draft as if Dwight Clark had taken over their bodies.

Joe Flacco? The man who couldn't even beat out Tyler Palko at Pitt, so he transferred to a 1-AA program? The man who is said to have all the mobility of Scott Mitchell (but none of the charm)? The man with the goofiest looking uni-brow since [Bert on Sesame Street](#) ? Yes, the Ego That Ate Crackmore may be gone, but Brian Billick's QB savvy lingers on for the latest bust-in-the-making QB for Baltimore. Trading all around the place after being thwarted in their efforts to get Matt Ryan, Ozzie did a first round reach not seen since they got Kyle Boller at #22. Once again, they get another workout warrior who was graded as the fourth best QB prospect by many of the experts...one that almost everyone agrees will take two or three years of seasoning before making any impact. Ravens' QBs: the gift that keeps on giving.

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After that, the Ravens did absolutely nothing to shore up two of their biggest holes, cornerback and offensive line.

Maybe they'll do better next year with their Top 10 draft pick.

The dreaded Inbreds from Pittspuke? Massive holes in their offensive line. So in a first round dominated by offensive linemen, who do they take? A fumble prone, slow, running back. I guess the coaching staff took a look at all of the sacks Ben Toothlessburger took last year, and decided to blame it all on Willie Parker.

Now until the Browns prove they are not the Washington Wizards to the Steeler's Cavaliers, then Pittsburgh remains the team to beat in the AFC North. But it looks from here that during the new Mike Tomlin regime, the old, tried and true trait of the Steelers to stress the importance of both offensive and defensive lines has been de-emphasized. And after years of watching the Browns fail using that mindset, it does my evil little heart good to see our most bitter rival about to go down a trail that we know will lead to mediocrity.

The Bungles? I didn't bother watching "Cops" last week, so I didn't see their latest recruits. But you almost feel sorry for them, watching Mike Brown and Marvin Lewis struggle with the mercurial Chad Johnson. Wait a minute. Mike Brown is the cheapskate who almost ruined the Bengals, and Marvin Lewis is the coach that made thug-coddling an Art Form. So scratch that, I don't feel sorry for them at all as they sink back to their customary spot at the bottom of the heap.

For now, we are about a week away from heading back into semi-hibernation, with only tidbits of propaganda...er...news coming out of rookie mini-camps, "voluntary workouts", and undrafted free agent signings. Personally, I expect the next big news to be coming after June 1<sup>st</sup>, when some of the salary cap cuts may give Phil Savage another chance at beefing up the last two areas of concern, cornerback and a pass-rushing outside linebacker.

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We won't (shouldn't) even be hassled by any holdouts this season.

Life is good as a Browns fan right now (knocks on wood, throws massive amounts of salt over the shoulder, and utters several &quot;Hail Mary's&quot;).