



Ah, yes. Christmas in April is almost here. If you're a Browns fan, it's easily the most exciting part of any season (*bah-dah-ching!*).

Many feel that the move of the 1st Round to Thursday night and the 2nd and 3rd Rounds to Friday night is a bad idea. Not me.

I'll be watching the whole thing those first 2 days regardless, and the media coverage between Day 1 and Day 2 now will be (to me) fascinating. The top of Round 2 will now become a highly coveted spot, and there will likely be increased trade action in that area with all day Friday for teams to contact each other.

Plus, that's an extra day of the Draft. It does ruin many people's draft parties, but who's to say we can't now stretch the party over a 2 night span? I, for one, have no qualms with taking that Friday off. It'd be like making New Year's Eve last 2 days (with all apologies to my liver).

Now, to help prep all y'all, I could list all the key draftable players at each of the Browns positions of need (namely, everything). I have in the past. But that would merely be a regurgitation of what you could easily find on so many other sites, and I will not pretend to be Draft Guru. No, I'm just a man, same as you. (*You're not a man, you're a bishop for God's sakes!*)

Instead, I will refer you to a couple of excellent sites that have all that information readily ready for you:

NFLDraftScout.com (CBS Sportsline)

DraftCountdown.com

Onto the speculation...

Regarding Sam Bradford



Much has been made of Mike Holmgren and Tom Heckert speaking about the prospect of trading up to the #1 overall spot in order to draft Oklahoma QB Sam Bradford. They simply mentioned that it was a "possibility", and even the national media made it a top story.

Let's look at some of the [actual quotes](#) from the most recent press conference:

Heckert - *"We have actually been at workouts with the Rams' people and kind of mentioned stuff to them, but just talk. We've talked to all the teams ahead of us and most of the teams immediately behind us. We have talked to all of them ."*

Holmgren - *"I will say this, I don't want to pull the rug out from everybody in our first draft here. He's a coveted young man. To be able to go up and change somebody's mind ahead of us, you would have to mortgage the ranch... Absolutely we love the player, as do a lot of people, but in the real world we are probably going to go in a different direction there ."*

In a recent [Terry Pluto article](#) , he quotes Holmgren as saying "And I'd like to grow hair, too" in reference to getting Bradford.

Which means he's realistic about the fact that the price will be just too high for the Browns to justify moving up to the #1 spot.

I agree (I'm sure Holmgren will sleep better knowing that). The price is likely to be this year's 1st and 2nd Round picks, and next year's #1. Instead of 3 starters, you get one Sam Bradford. Oh, and the pleasure of paying his sure-to-be-ridiculous #1 overall QB contract.

This is not to say that - should the Browns make the move - I would disagree. This team needs a Franchise QB, and the sooner they get one, the sooner they can move towards the promised land, a place we will not reach without some kind of long term solution at that position. If Heckgren feels that Sam Bradford is that QB, a Franchise QB head-and-shoulders above the rest of what's out there, then the move is justified.

But they'd better be right, or it would be the biggest mistake this Franchise has made since '99 (and that's saying something). It's a huge gamble, and I just don't think Heckgren is willing to take it.

So chalk that rumor up in the "*ain't gonna happen*" category, and let's move on.

Regarding Drafting a QB

Despite the unlikelihood of acquiring Bradford, and despite recent Holmgren attempts at smokescreens, there is little doubt the Browns will draft a QB *somewhere*. Once again, this is a good thing. No, not just a good thing - a NECESSARY thing. IMPERATIVE. ESSENTIAL. AND OTHER STUFF THAT MEANS IT HAS TO HAPPEN.

Every year you wait to get your (hopefully) future Starting/Franchise QB is another year longer it will take you to get where you want to go.

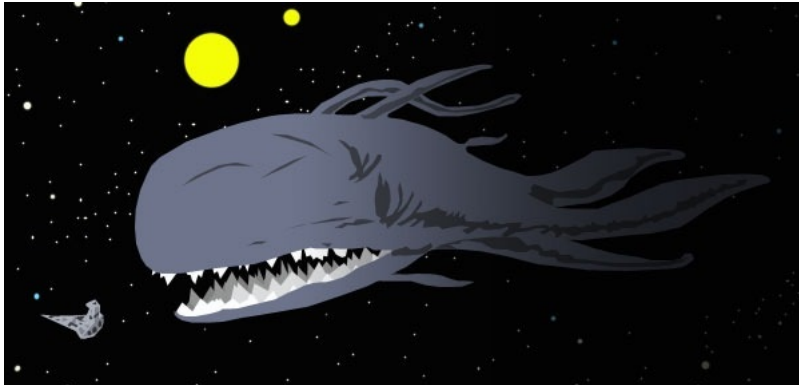
I have heard some individuals bring forth the idea that the Browns should just wait for next year to draft a QB. "*Why not just wait until next year and get Jake Locker or Andrew Luck?*" they say.

I wish I could e-slap them in the head.

There is no next year. 2011 doesn't exist. Due to the impending labor doom, who knows what will happen to the season? And, best case scenario and no games are lost, there's still the problem that we have no idea where the Browns will be drafting in 2011, or whom will be available to draft.

What if the Browns are drafting somewhere in the back half of the 1st Round? There's no guarantee Cleveland will suck in 2010 (a decent assumption, maybe, but hardly a certainty). So there they are, drafting at, say, 17, with absolutely no chance of moving all the way up to the

Top 5 to get, say, Locker or Luck.



And even if the Browns do finish in some position of Suckage, who's to say what might become of Locker and Luck? They might get hurt. They might have such a terrible 2010 season that they're no longer considered Franchise quality. Locker might decide pro baseball is a much cushier career path.

Or the world might blow up. A giant space whale might swallow Ohio whole. You never know.

There are so many uncertainties with trying to wait for a future draft with a specific target in mind that I would question the sanity of any GM that tried to do so. Fortunately, no GM ever would; that's why they still have their jobs.

I remember last year when Mark Sanchez was available, and there was a vocal group that claimed we should "*Wait until next year and get Bradford, McCoy, or Tebow in the 1st Round.*" (Not that I have any problem with passing on Sanchez last year).

Well, we were "lucky" enough to be in the Top 10 again this year, but Bradford still isn't available to us. Tebow and McCoy will be, but their stock has dropped quite a bit in a year's time. No longer are they thought of as sure-fire Franchise QB's.

How do you make God laugh? Make a plan.

Regarding The Biggest Needs

Now, I am perfectly aware that it is an unwise policy to draft for need. The good GM takes the Best Player Available, and only considers need as a tiebreaker.

Right?

I don't think it can be that simple. If your BPA is a player of lesser need, then you select him despite that because lesser need is still a need, and you don't take an inferior player just to fill out the roster.

However, if your BPA is not a need at all, then you think long and hard about taking someone else (assuming you can't trade down). For instance, let's say - when the Browns come on the clock - their BPA is a Left Tackle. Do you really take that guy?

I know, you might argue that they can just move that LT to Guard or Right Tackle. But that's not his position. Is he the BPA as a Guard or Right Tackle? How do you know?



Besides that, there are a couple of positions which are in such dire straits that it would be

DISASTEROUS to come out of the draft without acquiring some serious help.

Let's look at the Browns squad-by-squad. If they came out of the draft without an Offensive Lineman, they would still have a pretty decent line. The Defensive Line is aging, but it's still fairly talented, and could probably survive another year. The Linebacking corps isn't necessarily Hall of Fame quality, but there are lots of bodies and some quality depth. The same could be said for the Offensive backfield. And any QB that is drafted won't be starting in 2010 anyway - that would be a pick for the future.

There are two positions, however, where the quality and quantity of players is at critical mass:

Defensive Backfield - The acquisition of Sheldon Brown certainly helps, but right now the starting Safeties are Abe Elam (RFA) and Mike Adams. Currently on the roster at DB are Brown, Elam, Adams, Eric Wright, Brandon McDonald, Coye Francies, Nick Sorensen, Ray Ventrone, John Bowie, Gerard Lawson, Matteredal Richardson, Chris Roberson, and Ramzee Robinson.

I probably pay attention to the Browns more than the average fan, but I look at 2 or 3 of those names and ask... WHO?

The DB situation is UGLY (it ain't got no alibi). That's why it's so imperative that the Browns pick up a Safety/Corner in at least one of their first 3 picks. When your need is so great, then going BPA all the way through doesn't work if one of those BPA's doesn't happen to play Safety.

Wide Receiver - This one is really every bit as ugly as DB, but isn't quite as pressing due to the fact that it can - to some extent - be addressed with some available veterans (Marty Booker, Laveranues Coles, Kevin Curtis, Devard Darling, Mike Furrey, Joey Galloway, Torry Holt, Greg Lewis, Muhsin Muhammad, Terrell Owens, Josh Reed, David Tyree, Bobby Wade, Javon Walker, Kelley Washington) after the draft. Yeah, a lot of those names are no-way-in-hells. But some of them could still be productive, and I'll bet you a beer that at least one of those guys is on the roster come Training Camp.

But they would only be a stopgap, and really should be used only to complement the depth of the position. The Browns need to draft at least one WR, and they probably need to do it before the end of the 3rd Round. I highly doubt that Dez Bryant is even a consideration at #7, but look for Heckert to pull the trigger on one of the little (supposed) deep threat speed demons at some point prior to Saturday, regardless if they're the BPA at that juncture or not.

You don't really expect the Browns to go into the season with Jake Allen, Josh Cribbs, Mo Massaquoi, Brian Robiskie, Syndric Steptoe, and Chansi Stuckey, do you? The thought gives me the night terrors.



Regarding Number 7 Overall

With all this in mind, what DOES the Browns board look like?

I'd imagine it looks a lot like this: 1. *Sam Bradford*, 2. *Ndamukong Suh*, 3. *Gerald McCoy*.

Duh.

Should any of those gentlemen inexplicably drop, you can rest assured the Browns would be all over them like flies on a dead groundhog. But the odds are astronomically low that any of those players will be available, so it is fruitless to discuss them further.



Many a draft pundit feels that if Tennessee Safety Eric Berry is available at #7, he will be the pick. I would agree - not only does he fill a huge need, but he is regarded as one of the Top 3 Defensive talents of the draft (Suh & McCoy being the others). My guess is that he's #4 on the Brown's draft board. The talent dropoff after him could be considered depressing (should he not be available).

But what if he ain't? That's when all Hell breaks loose.

I have seen speculation that it could be any of the following: *S Earl Thomas, CB Joe Haden, RB CJ Spiller, WR Dez Bryant, QB Jimmy Clausen, DT Jared Odrick, OT Trent Williams, OT Bryan Bulaga, DT Dan Williams, ILB Rolando McClain, DE Derrick Morgan,*
and
DE Jason Pierre-Paul

Which doesn't even take into account what might happen if the Browns DID manage to trade down from the spot (doubtful, but not impossible). Depending on how far they go, they might snatch up the likes of: *Odrick, C/G Maurkice Pouncey, OLB Brandon Graham, G Mike Iupati, S Taylor Mays, S/CB Kyle Wilson, CB Devin McCourty, OLB Sergio Kindle, OT Anthony Davis, QB Colt McCoy,* or even *QB Tim Tebow* (God forbid).

So, it's an easy call as to what happens if Berry is bye-bye.

Hopefully, Heckgren knows exactly what they will do, that they will have the draft board prepared for this eventuality and make a confident and effective pick, one which they will have absolutely no qualms about (despite the inevitable questioning by the legions of pocket-GM's).

So who should it be? If it were me, here would be the answers (in order of preference):

Jimmy Clausen - I think Clausen is a really solid QB. His accuracy is good, his arm strength is above average, his mobility is more than adequate, and I like his intangibles. I don't care that he comes across as cocky - his teammates liked him enough to vote him captain, and the respect of his teammates/coaches is all that I care about. I don't care if he went to Notre Dame - that fact means nothing to me since it is clear that he is a much better QB than Brady Quinn ever was/will be.

Plus, I think this move would have the greatest long-term impact on the Franchise (providing, of course, Clausen doesn't bomb).

However, I don't think it's a smoke screen when Holmgren doesn't speak glowingly of Clausen.

He probably feels it's better to go a safe route with that #7 pick and pick up a developmental QB later in the draft - and I can't really argue if that's the logic. There are several project QB's that the Browns could get later in the draft that intrigue me very much, so that path would be acceptable as well.

CJ Spiller - This isn't a huge need for the Browns, but this might be a situation where Spiller is the clear Best Player Available. Spiller has the skill set to be a home run hitter, a difference maker. He would be a clear upgrade over anyone we have in the back field, and would make Jerome Harrison expendable (he's at the height of his trade value - probably a 3rd Round pick could be retrieved for him).



Jared Odrick - If this guy is taken at #7, there will be no end to the whining. Complaints that "*he was a late 1st Rounder*" and "*we could've gotten him later*" and probably something about "*value*" would be echoing all over the Cuyahoga basin. Well, A) Who cares where draftniks "value" him when he might be the most effective addition for your particular team and B) He won't be there in the 2nd Round.

Could you get him if you trade back? Probably. But who's to say you can trade back? That might not be an option.

Could you trade up to the end of the 1st Round to get him? Maybe, but there's no way of knowing if you can find that partner with whom to trade up and there's no way of knowing if he'll still be there at the spot where he's "slotted".

If you can't trade and he's the guy you want - you take him. Especially when I really feel that this guy would be a very solid addition to the aging Defensive Line, likely starting right away at one of the DE positions alongside Ahtyba Rubin and Shaun Rogers. And as valuable as Defensive Linemen are considered (2 of them will probably go in the Top 3 of the draft), I don't know why anyone would complain.

But they will.

Trent Williams & Bryan Bulaga - If you want to be safe in the Top 10, go Offensive Lineman. Sure, there's a bust here or there, but, in general, you're gonna get a solid player that can start right away and stay there for several years. So you look at these two guys and figure out which one translates better to a long-term Right Tackle, and you pick him, plugging him in immediately at one of the Guard positions and work him into the RT spot in the near future. Bam! Your entire Offensive Line is pretty much set for the next 5 years.



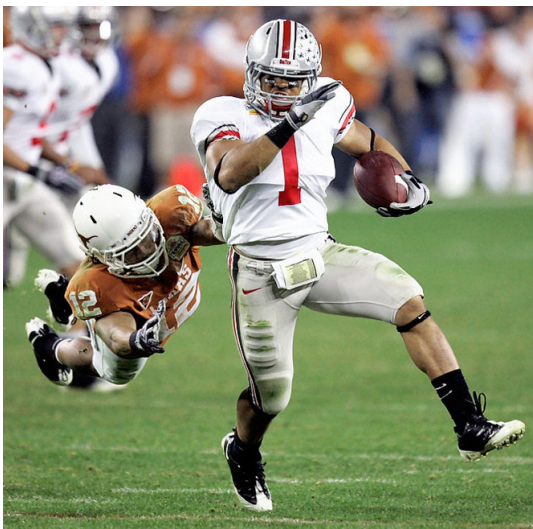
Rolando McClain - Despite the logjam at the Linebacker position, I think McClain instantly becomes the best LB on the team upon his drafting. If he is a special ILB - and many people feel he can be - then his presence alone could incredibly impact the nature of any game. I'm not saying he's Ray Lewis, per se, but just think about the impact that Lewis had during his career, then be aware that the Browns do not currently have an ILB of that caliber currently on the squad. Not even close.

Plus, it makes D'Qwell Jackson even more expendable, and the Browns would likely be able to get the same kind of compensation for DQ as Harrison - probably a 3rd.

Dan Williams - See Jared Odrick above. The only reason I have him lower than Odrick is that Williams projects to more of a Nose Tackle, and the Browns need that less than a 3-4 DE.

Dez Bryant - Yes, I know there's no chance in Detroit that the Browns take this guy, but we DO have a HUGE need at Wide Receiver, and Bryant is by far the best WR in the draft. I don't think he's as good as Michael Crabtree coming out of college, but he's still damn good.

I know that he's a diva, and that he has "issues". With a WR, the amount of crap you endure is directly proportional to his production. For instance, if we had Brandon Marshall, we would forgive him for the junk that Braylon Edwards pulled because Marshall is vastly more productive than Edwards. Thus, if Bryant is highly productive, or if he could be controlled... well, he's just what we need. I will admit though that - all things considered - he's a pretty risky pick.



Earl Thomas - Surprised to see him down here? Something about Thomas has me uneasy, especially as a Safety. I feel like he'd be a consolation prize for not getting Eric Berry (despite some people's assertion that he's the better of the two Safeties). His coverage skills are high

quality, but I don't like him very much as a complete DB when it comes to run defense and tackling.

He might almost be a better pick as a Cornerback than Safety, and I just feel like someone of similar quality could be had with that 2nd Round pick.

The fact that Texas put out 2 highly drafted DB's in the last 5 years that have (so far) been mediocre in the NFL is also not encouraging. It tells me the Defensive system at Texas might be tailored to make DB's look better than they are.

Don't get me wrong - I DO like Earl Thomas. I like him a lot. I'm just not sure how much I like him at #7.

Joe Haden - I have similar reservations about Haden. I almost feel like he might be a better Safety prospect in the long run. He's fine as a Corner, but I don't think he will become a player of "elite" level at that position, and I don't think you take a guy in the Top 10 if you don't feel like he can do that. Still, if the Browns take him, it will help fill one of the spots of greatest need, so I wouldn't complain.

Derrick Morgan & Jason Pierre-Paul - These are the only two players of rumored interest that I absolutely forbid the Browns to draft at 7. Neither excites me as much as they should, and I just feel that it is reckless to take a player in the Top 10 that you will need to convert to 3-4 OLB. It's a haphazard project, and you have no clue how it will end up. They might be great like Julius Peppers. They might be busts like Vernon Gholston. They might be merely average like Kam Wimbley. You don't know.

Take your project later on.

Regarding Shaun Rogers

Trading him would be a mistake.

I don't care if Ahtyba Rubin has developed into a better Nose Guard. Shaun Rogers can still wreak Hell upon our enemies much more effectively than any DE we currently have. Plus, it would leave the depth at DL uncomfortably thin.

You don't trade that man unless you can get an absolute pillaging in return.

Regarding POS

If you have not read the rape allegations against Ben Roethlisberger made by the 20 year old in the police report, then you ought to, and can do so [here](#) . Sounds like the ol' buy-shots-for-girls-until-they're-drunk-have-bodyguard-take-drunk-girl-to-back-room-pull-out-wa ng-bang-her-in-the-bathroom-no-matter-what-she-says-while-bodyguard-blocks-girl's-friends-fro m-intervening move. Which is - and I don't say this often - disgusting.



Let's assume the allegations are true (not necessarily fair, but I'm going to do it anyway).

Why is that POS not in jail?

Yes, yes, I understand the lack of evidence and the unwillingness of the young lady to get dragged through the mud. I'm talking more in a idealistic sense - that guy should be learning the other side of rape in the pen. Some huge guy named Bubba should be telling him "It's OK" as they explore romance in a jailhouse bathroom stall.

Instead, POS is in Minicamp.

Obviously, I was not at that night club (or any of the other places), and cannot for certain determine that POS wasn't innocent in all - what is it now, 4? 5? - of the numerous recent sexual misconduct allegations. There is a similar pattern in the allegations, and it's really not hard to imagine that a big, dumb, ugly Cro Magnon like POS gets off on forcing himself on drunk chicks, but I must admit that there is a slim possibility that some of it is fabricated.

Even if it is, his sexual MO, his pants dropping ice breaker, still screams "POS".

So that's his new name from now on. The name given to him at birth is no longer at play. Like Chad Eight-Five in Cincy, the Steeler QB has now legally had his name changed to Piece O. Shit.

Regarding Santonio Holmes

In all honesty, the trade of Holmes to the Jets for a mere 5th Rounder is great thing. The Jets

best receiver is and will remain Jericho Cotchery. Holmes and Edwards will fight it out for #2, and may they both die trying. Holmes is much better than Edwards, but you just know the Jets will give Bray-Bray every chance because they paid a LOT more for him.

I ain't afraid of no Jets, and the more malcontents they sign, the more I know they will implode.

However, the big picture is the effect this has on the Steelers. They can't run the ball for shit any more; haven't been able to for years. POS is comin' off what can only be termed a "bad" offseason, and, well, his best Receiver's playing in Jersey.

Everything's coming up roses.



Regarding Tedd Ginn Jr.

I don't really get this trade from Miami's standpoint. Sure, he was a bust as a Top 10 WR, but

he's still an all-world Kick Returner, and even if he's no better than your 4th WR, he still has plenty of speed to stretch Defenses in that capacity. Are you trying to tell me that's worth less than a 5th Round pick?

The only reason that makes any sense to me is if the Ginn trade from Miami to San Fran was because it was a Braylon Edwards-type situation - where there was such a disconnect between him and the fanbase/organization that he just needed to go.

I do wish the Browns had seen fit to use a 5th Rounder to pick up Ginn, who I think can be every bit as effective as the desired deep threat WR as anyone the Browns might nab in the 5th Round. I can see the idea that Cleveland didn't make a move for him because they didn't need his greatest skill - Kickoff Returns. But I still think he was worth a flier at that piddling price, and there's no reason the Return team couldn't change things up with sticking Ginn back there as a change of pace every once in a while.

Regarding Chris Jennings

Mr. Jennings, the Browns 3rd or 4th string RB, depending on who you're talking to, got himself in [a bit of trouble](#) Friday night/Saturday morning and got arrested. The details are sketchy, but it sounds like he got into a fight with a bouncer.

I like to also call this tactic "*How to make certain roster decisions oh so much easier*".

Insert synonym for "dumb" here.

Regarding The Masters

Now, I know that winning the Green Jacket is one of the most prestigious things in Sport. But can they maybe update said Green Jacket so it doesn't look like something a 65 year old alcoholic carpet salesman would wear?

You know what a big deal it is to win The Masters, but yet the supposed climax is for them to walk into some cabin and don a jacket that Rodney Dangerfield might wear in the 70's?



Regarding Aaron Goldhammer

For those of you that don't know him, he works for Cleveland sports talk radio WKNR. He's from Denver, went to school in New York, had his first job in Wisconsin, and somehow ended up here. He's a producer on several radio shows, and sometimes takes to the air to discuss the Cleveland/Ohio sports teams, all of which he obviously loathes.

Every time I hear his nasally, condescending voice, I know it will convey something stupid to me. Generally, I am under the assumption that his takes are based on shock and whatever he (pettily) thinks will piss off the most listeners. It is clear that he desires to rapidly climb the ESPN ladder right the hell outta here, and I invite him to hurry up. Whenever he might be assaulting my car radio's airwaves, I usually reach rapidly for the pre-set buttons, employing an "anywhere but here" policy for KNR until he is gone.

However, my unreasonable dislike for this young man is unreasonably unreasonable. I must force myself to admit this. I really don't know him at all. I'm sure he's just fine as a producer, and probably a decent human being. It's not like he goes around sexually assaulting drunk girls (as far as I know).

So, in this light, I will remind myself in a new weekly Outsider segment that - in the grand scheme of things - he's not such a bad guy.

Person That I Dislike More Than Aaron Goldhammer

Joseph Stalin.

