



I know what some of you are thinking: The ruling for the injunction to stop the NFL lockout is a good thing because at least it propels the league forward and (in theory) allows the season to get rolling. It doesn't matter who wins as long as the end result is players back at work and the NFL team business back in gear.

But let us not forget that wins for the Players is definitely not a win for the Fans.

There's no reason to press panic buttons and head for our makeshift bomb shelters. Likely, a relatively familiar CBA will be reached and all this silliness will be forgotten.

But make no mistake what a perfect NFL world would look like if the Players had their say - it would look like Major League Baseball. Or worse.

There would be no Salary Cap (and, consequently, no Salary Floor). There would be no Franchise Tag. Free Agents would have full control and would get paid insane amounts of money.

Contracts would be guaranteed, even if said contract turned out to be an unsheddable anchor around the neck of the team that offered it.

Teams would turn over with disgusting frequency, and the richest teams would have opportunities every season that the smaller market teams would not.

The Dallas Cowboys would be loaded (on paper) every season while the Cincinnati Bengals would become the Pittsburgh Pirates.

Less fortunate teams would be forced to draft better than everyone else just to compete, then trade away their most valuable commodities because they have no chance of keeping them long-term.

Oh, and high draft picks would still be more of a burden (contractually) to bad teams than a boon. If they still had a draft, because some of the anti-trust language deems the draft itself illegal. And if you don't think the Owners won't respond by cutting health care and the minimum salary, you don't know pettiness very well. And that's just the tip. The legal system will have succeeded in making the Players and Owners work together in an environment that both of them despise.

Yes, sports fans, imagine THAT NFL.

The Players were smart to take this thing the legal route, since the legal world - by the letter - probably favors them. But having the Players win this thing and get what they want is inarguably not what is best for Professional Football.

Naturally, the Players don't give a damn about what the Fans want. We mean nothing to them - they figure we'll show up no matter what.

They want to make as much money as they can while they're playing and basically control their entire situation.

Many of them have been spoiled rotten since they got their first pube and have a sense of entitlement that even Manhattan housewives can't comprehend, so they can't abide the normal owner-employee relationship.

This isn't an endorsement of the Owners. They don't give a damn about what the Fans want either. They're just as greedy and just as entitled and just as disgusting. However, it just so happens that what is best for them is what is best for NFL: The Product, so we must hope for the lesser of two evils.

Regardless, the eventual resolution will still likely be not so different than what we had in the past, and a rookie wage scale will still likely be implemented (mainly because the Players aren't against it).

But don't be fooled into thinking that the ruling was a win for the Fans. It very well may have flocked things up even worse.

Regarding the Draft

All right, that's all the labor dispute analysis I can provide before achieving nausea. I'd rather stick my pinky in an electric pencil sharpener while giving myself a Tobasco enema than dwell on lockout litigation.

Besides, the NFL Draft is almost here.

That hopefully will have a much more long-term effect on the Cleveland Browns than the ruling of some judge in Minnesota.

Assuming the Browns stay put at #6 (and that is always a likelihood), there are 8 players I feel would be a viable option for Tom Heckert to select. In all honesty, all 8 hold a level of intrigue for me; none of them would make me lose my biscuits.

There aren't a lot of areas that the Browns couldn't stand upgrading, especially with the transition to the 4-3 Defense, and all of these players offer the *POTENTIAL* of being great.

Which, logically, also means that most of them have the power to bust.

In order of which one I'd like the most to least...

Marcell Dareus



I know, I know... there's a certain trepidation which accompanies taking an SEC Defensive Tackle in the Top 10. It's known as Gerard Warren-itis, and nary a Browns fan can avoid

wincing when hearing that guy's name (and the thought that that pick could've been LaDainian Tomlinson).

But Dareus is a different beast. He doesn't have that "lazy" label, and he's been effective for a while at Alabama. Ask Colt McCoy.

And then there's Dareus himself trumpeting that he would love to be a Brown. Now, athletes say this all the time, especially when it means they'll be a higher pick (and thus richer).

But he's always been projected to go higher than us, so his proclamation is somewhat flattering (even if it is dung).

I believe the Browns' switch to the 4-3 makes D Line the position of greatest need, and when that goes hand-in-hand with the fact that Dareus might be the most talented and probably one of the safest picks that could be made up this high, it's magic, baby.

The sad part is that the 5 teams in front of Cleveland know this too, so there is little likelihood that Dareus makes it all the way back to #6. But if he does... hoo boy, they'd better run up to that podium.

Patrick Peterson



Many people purport PP to be the draft's most talented individual, and since he plays one of the 4 Value Positions (which are, according to Heckert, QB, CB, LT, and Pass Rusher), I don't see any way the Browns let this guy go by him if he's there, despite the fact that they picked a CB high last year too.

It's not like a team only needs one CB. The Haden/Peterson bookends for the next several years is enticing, regardless of the sadness neglecting other positions of need might bring me.

Plus, Peterson is a helluva Return Guy.

Now, I know that we've already got one of those that's pretty good, but it might just be that Father Time is starting to take his toll on good Mr. Cribbs.

And if you believe Tom Heckert's analysis from his [recent press conference](#) , he loves the guy:

"He is a good football player. He is a rare guy just because of his size alone, size and speed. I don't know when the last guy that came out, I know Nnamdi was a big guy but I don't think he ran like Patrick did. He is a rare guy, a rare athlete and he is a very good football player."

Yep, Heckert just compared him favorably against one of the Top 3-4 CB's in the league. That's pretty high praise.

If you believe GM's this time of year, which is dangerous.

In the end, I think the value is just too great for Heckert to pass on Peterson if he's there, and that's a much bigger possibility than Dareus being there.

A.J. Green





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