

Feeling a Draft: Browns Related Thoughts

Written by {ga=jta1975}

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Draft Day- Browns Related Thoughts

Now that we've broken down some of the positions and gotten a good taste of the talent coming out in this year's draft, the big day is finally here. Some decisions need to be made on who is worth pulling the draft day trigger. If you take the time to look at the drafting history of not only the Eagles (Tom Heckert's previous employer) but also other teams year in and year out you actually can find some common denominators when it comes to the draft. The teams who compete year in and year out believe in taking big boys and secondary players in most every draft and they don't hesitate to spend early round picks on players who don't handle the rock.

When trying to figure out the direction the Browns will head in the draft I point to GM Heckert's history while working the draft room for the Eagles combined with his draft for the Browns last year. You might also want to listen to his words from his press conference last week. He said a few things that should stick out in your mind. The first was the fact he said he placed extra value on corners, left tackles, and defensive lineman. The second thing that stuck in my head is when he said you can never have enough offensive and defensive linemen. Now, when you look at his time in Philly you will see that in 9 drafts he was involved in they selected either a DL, OL, or CB 6 of those times with their first pick in the draft. That is also during the same time frame when outsiders were screaming for the Eagles to get Donovan McNabb some weapons" while rating WR as the Eagles top need.

Fast forward to Heckert's draft last year: the Browns clearly needed help in the secondary so some might say the Haden pick was simply a need pick. In reality it filled a need, yes, but it also satisfied a philosophy on drafting players. I think based on history and weighing Heckert's own words that the Browns will either pick Patrick Peterson or draft a new member of the DL. I think they pass on the WR (no pun intended). I expect Heckert to attack the second round with the same philosophy and I expect either a CB or another lineman on either side of the ball. He could go best WR in the second but I think he will wait until the 3rd for that. I do think he will follow his board on all the picks. It's just that I think his board weighs the positions he stated in

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his press conference a little heavier than other positions.

Player Thoughts

Nick Fairley

The one player I'd love to see the Browns' notes on is Nick Fairley. I think Fairley is a player at the top of the draft that will have a variety of ratings from teams in the league. He is so immensely talented that teams will be ultra-impressed with what they see from the tape but also one who has so many people questioning his maturity level that some teams will weigh that heavier than talent.

I still think that talent-wise this guy has an extremely high ceiling. It is really rare in football to find a DL who can find a way to make plays at the most important times in games and Fairley does just that. Some may say he has motor issues because he doesn't find a way to do it on every play but statements like that are simply not fair when you talk about the DL. Think about the best DTs you have ever seen play and weigh how many snaps they've taken against impact plays made and you will find the percentages are not high at all. It is a position that big men do eventually get mashed and leaned on enough to the point where they either get subbed out or they take a break.

I am not condoning any laziness but the big guys do take breaks. Those breaks may come either while they're on the sidelines or on the field but the ability to make big plays at big moments is what separates the Warren Sapps from a "Big Money" Gerard Warren-type of player. You find me a 300lb guy who takes 60 snaps of double teams and plays every play at the same dominant level and pace and he is probably a robot. If Fairley has low football character then by all means STAY AWAY, but if the guy is just a young man who has some maturing to do then it will be hard for teams to ignore him for very long at all.

Cam Newton

I don't think Cam Newton could have asked for a better team to have the number one pick. Rob

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Chudzinski is probably drooling over a player who can execute his “high” vertical passing game with the potential that Newton has. ‘Chud’ made Derek Anderson (a guy who never competed even 60% of his passes in college) into a pro bowl passer with the very down field vertical passing game that Newton will run. Newton was a 65% passer in college with a cannon arm and the feet to get out of trouble and buy time on those 5 and 7 step drops. I do think Cam Newton can be a star playing in that type of scheme given the running game that Carolina employs and with the addition of Jeremy Shockey as Newton’s personal security blanket.

Julio Jones

When you actually break down the statistics of Jones’s 179 catches and 15 TDs (which is a TD catch every 11.9 catches) and then you look at some other elite receiving prospects’ numbers from the past like Andre Johnson (92 catches 20tds 1 td every 4.6), Larry Fitzgerald(161 catches 34tds 1 td every 4.7), Calvin Johnson(178 catches 28tds 1 td every 6.3) and Braylon Edwards (252 catches 39tds 1 td every 6.46) people might be expecting Jones to do too much in the NFL.

When it comes to elite prospects at the position you can sometimes focus too much on things done in shorts rather than on the field. To me it is no different than when GMs think they can “turn” a guy into a sack master who didn’t get to the QB at the college level (kind of in the Kam Wimbley mold where the guy had 12 career sacks in college then is expected to consistently get sacks in the NFL). Sometimes it can happen where a guy is asked to do less in college and he can really do more but often times you set a guy up for failure when you try to get more out of him than he has ever given. Just be careful of what you expect out of Julio Jones.

JJ Watt and Cameron Jordan

Although I didn’t speak about these two players specifically when analyzing the DL I really think these two are more than 3-4 DEs and feel they both can play in the 4-3 as strong side ends. JJ Watt in particular is just learning the position on a big time level and will only get better with NFL coaching. Jordan played a 3-4 DE in college so he wasn’t asked to be a pass rush guy. He instead focused his game more on power than speed but he has proven that he has the athleticism to do more than he was asked to do for CAL.

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Things I expect to see

- I expect the Patriots to continue to think of draft picks as currency and either use them move up to get a specific player or keep trading down and piling up more picks for the future.

- I expect to see some teams reach for a QB because of need and take guys who are not rated where they are picked. I anticipate some organizations to count on some type of rookie cap when this labor mess is resolves, making the risk less in their minds.

- I expect the all three players the players the Browns take in the first 3 rounds to end up starting in Week 1 (unless they take a 3rd round WR).

- I expect the Browns will have multiple players to pick from in the second round that have first round grades because of those teams who reached on QBs earlier and pushed talented guys down the board.

I expect the Browns to get 2 DL, 1 OL, 1 WR, 1 LB, 1QB and1 CB

Stand up Cleveland

If people around the country didn't understand our indignation and passion when the Browns left town now they might. If they didn't know we have the biggest official backers association in the league, well, now they do.

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The fact that our guy Peyton Hillis was able to beat out super bowl MVPs and Comeback Player of the Year recipients to win the cover of the beloved Madden video game is absolutely amazing. You cannot find me one other franchise in this league that has fans that are as engaged and aware of their team no matter what the time of year it is than the Cleveland Browns. It may seem trivial to some but it is yet another example of why the roots of football run through Northeast Ohio and forever will. People are always talking about the best fans in the league and which team has them, but you only have to look to the shores of Lake Erie and you will quickly know WE ARE THEM.

Stand up Browns fans and take a bow because you showed everyone around the league what you are made of.

Oh yeah, Merry Draft Day!!