



The draft is only a week old, and already you are getting my "analysis" on the players the Browns selected. The magic of modern technology!

With hundreds (OK, one) of people clamoring for a post-draft article, I was finally able to cobble together my "thoughts" and present them to you for consideration, the first and foremost being that the NFL Draft has become to me what Christmas was when I was a kid: You wait with eager anticipation for it to come, it takes forever to get here, and when it finally arrives it's over way too quickly and is strangely unsatisfying.

Not that I am unhappy with the draft. Quite the contrary. But the passing of the draft reminds me of how many holes the Browns had, and how many more they have yet to fill.

2012 mock drafts have begun to spring up around the country with anticipated 2012 draft slots, and I've seen the Browns as high as #1 overall and as low as #3 overall, so obviously no one seems to think that Cleveland will be anything but dog-poo this season.

And it's hard to really argue with them. There are still many positions of need, the Browns are implementing both a new Offensive and Defensive scheme with a bunch of new coaches, and the QB is still a major question mark. The longer this lockout keeps the team from exploring their new systems with their new personnel - not to mention acquiring key Free Agents - the less likely it is the Browns will be non-terrible.

But that's sheer speculation and hardly worth yapping about.

As you know, the Browns started the draft at #6 overall. In my opinion, there were 4 "elite" players in this draft (Marcell Dareus, Patrick Peterson, Von Miller, AJ Green), and when the last of them was selected at #5, the Browns had every right to explore a trade down to maximize the value of the slot. Fortunately, there was a team out there (Atlanta) that felt that they were only one impact player away from Super Bowl-dom, so they were willing to pay a King's Ransom to move up from 27 to 6, surrendering the following to Cleveland in return:

2011 1st Rounder (27 - became Phil Taylor)

2011 2nd Rounder (59 - Greg Little)

2011 4th Rounder (124 - Owen Marecic)

2012 1st Rounder

2012 4th Rounder

I'm not going to compare the points via the draft chart since that chart is straight retarded. Let's just say it was Phil Taylor, Greg Little, and Owen Marecic (and 2 players yet to be named) for Julio Jones.

3 (possibly 5) starters for one talented but unproven player.

One of those starters (Little) plays the same position as Jones, and there's no logical reason to think that they can't have similar rookie production.

The only way this backfires is if Jones goes on to a Hall of Fame type career.

The Browns came out big winners right from the get with that swap.

So what looked like an early night for many turned into a waiting game through the 1st Round like we were fans of a Playoff team.

Phil Taylor - DT - Baylor - 1st Round (21)



First, let's address the trade up to get Mr. Taylor. The Browns were sitting at 27, then traded that pick and a 3rd Rounder to KC to move up to get him at 21.

This was immediately met with remorse along with the customary calls that "*he would've been there at 27*"
".

This is one of my draftnik analysis pet peeves. How do YOU know that he'd be there at 27? If you're gonna start making facts up, why not just claim that we can pick up Andrew Luck next year in the 4th Round - "

He would've been there

."

Now, I can see claiming that a player "*would've been there*" if he was projected as a 3rd Round pick and the Browns moved up to 21 to take him, but Phil Taylor was a late 1st Round pick according to many, and there several teams (Baltimore, Philly, New Orleans) in between 21 and 27 that were supposedly eyeing him.

So it ain't overly-effective sit at 27, lose the guy you want (to the Ravens, of all teams), then claim "

Hey!

He was supposed to be there at 27!

"

Yeah, it sucks they had to give up that 3rd to move up 6 spots. Wish it had been a 4th, but it wasn't - that was the price that KC demanded, and if you're Tom Heckert and you've had a good idea for a while that you were going to be moving back to 27 and you also have a good idea of who you want to nab there, you don't want to lose that guy at the last second due to inaction, especially if you just extracted and extra 2nd and 4th to somewhat make up for losing that 3rd.

Let's talk Phil Taylor himself. Huge dude. Makes Bigfoot look like a squirrel. Can climb Mt. Everest in 13 steps.

He's 6'4, 335, and looks almost svelte at that.

Highlight from
[his scouting report](#)

:

Explosion: Explodes from four-point stance into blockers, consistently getting push up front. Gets off low and quick near goal line to set the line backwards. Despite his size, flashes the quickness to penetrate the "A" gap. Requires double-teams to keep him out of the backfield.

Strength: Huge frame and upper-body development give him the strength to be a 3-4 nose tackle at the next level. Moves offensive linemen to either side with relative ease when covering two gaps. Forces fumbles with one hand punching at the ball while ballcarrier comes through the hole. Uses leverage to hold the line against double teams.

Tackling: Running backs get swallowed up when crossing his path, and he can separate the ball from a ballcarrier with pure strength. Stays low despite his height and will capture backs from behind if they have not yet hit their stride. Chase and hustle are impressive for his size, will chase backs down the line, help linebackers make stops at the second level, and takes deep angles to chase down running backs 20 yards down the sideline.

Taylor originally played at Penn State, but was suspended and eventually kicked off the team

for getting into a fight at a frat party. I've heard many people talk about this being a black mark character-wise, but, honestly, how many college students HAVEN'T gotten into a fight at a frat party?
me, and then there is fighting. There are character issues that raise red flags for
19 year old "Got into fight as a
right up there with " " is
Doesn't floss
" and "
Farts in elevators
" as far as how worried I am about it.

What I am worried about are the holes on the Browns' Defensive Line, and Phil fills a big (tongue-in-cheek) one. Most people projected him as a 3-4 Nose Tackle, but that's just because of his size; he played in a 4-3 in college. He and Ahtyba Rubin will be charged with clogging the middle of the line and beating down the run game - any QB pressure out of those two will be an added bonus.

Not that I'll mind if he "*takes POS down*", to paraphrase Taylor from his [initial press conference](#)

Every Defensive player the Browns draft is the one I dream is destined to remove that guy's head from his shoulders.

This move solidifies the middle of the Defensive Line with talented young players - a dire need. Sure, depth will still be a problem there, but Taylor will likely play more snaps than huge DT's usually do - he once ballooned up to 385 while at Baylor, but, after thinning down to 335, was playing (reportedly) 80 snaps a game.

Of course, he was gassed at the end of those games, but the fact that he was still on the field at that size... can you imagine Shaun Rogers playing 80 snaps a game?

(Can you imagine Shaun Rogers playing 80 snaps a season?)

The fact that he once fattened up to 380+ is a valid concern, and the Browns will have to stick some kind of weight incentive into his contract. But there's no reason to believe that Phil can't maintain a solid 335-345 and his explosiveness.

There was some pre-draft concern about his foot, something about the bones having grown together or being made of sandstone or something, but this rumor was dispelled by both the Browns medical team and Phil himself (who suggested it was a tactic floated by a late round team to try and get him to fall to them - certainly not unheard of).

Anyway, you can obviously pencil Taylor in as a starting DT, meaning the move from 6 down to (eventually) 21 didn't cost you a quality long-term starter at a position of great need and got you the extra picks to boot. No problems at all with this pick.

Jabaal Sheard - DE - Pitt - 2nd Round (37)



With Da'Quan Bowers still on the board, many a Browns fan was calling for him. However, if you listened to Tom Heckert's DE comments pre-draft, you had to know that an End of Bowers' size (6'3, 280) wasn't what Cleveland was looking for, so he probably wasn't a big option even without the funky knee.

Instead, Heckert went with a guy that did fit his prototype DE - 250-260 lbs (Sheard is 6'3, 260), fast (ran a 4.68 forty), and disruptive (14.5 tackles for loss, 9 sacks, 4 forced fumbles in 2010). Sheard likely won't be the best run stopper in the world, but his job is to do something that no one in Cleveland has been able to do consistently since The Return - put the opposing QB on his ass.

A little of his [scouting report](#) :

Pass rush: Hustling power rusher who can be a tough task for right tackles. Nice bull rush, gets under the blocker's pads and pushes them into the backfield. Gives great effort to get to the quarterback, even when he's all but tackled by blockers. Sniffs out misdirection and quick screens to his side; not exceptionally agile in space, but he reads cut blocks well and contains and drops to affect passing lanes. Very active moving and jumping to affect passing lanes if unable to reach the quarterback. Keeps his feet moving after initial contact, but is inconsistent disengaging from the blocks of better linemen. Needs to be more violent with his hands and take advantage of his speed against slower tackles. Only adequate flexibility and change-of-direction agility to turn the corner or be effective on twists. Must learn counter pass-rush moves to get past tackles at the next level; loses his balance and backfield awareness when attempting the occasional spin move.

Sheard also had the "off-field incident" earmark; he reportedly threw some dude through a glass door at an art gallery. Again, what 19-20 year old hasn't thrown a man through a glass door? (Actually, who has?

That's some Hollywood-type shit right there.)

Like Taylor, his red flag is for fighting, and you don't really have a big problem if your football players - especially Defensive football players - get into a scrap or two.

Plus, dude also helped an old woman escape a burning house, so he can't be all bad.

In all likelihood, Sheard will line up at LDE (over the Right Tackle), so he won't be the perceived #1 pass rushing threat (that is usually the RDE who rushes the QB's blind side and matches up against the LT), but he will likely be a Day One starter at another position of need. It's still a need - the only other DE of note that the Browns have under contract right now is Marcus Benard, and I'm not sure you'd consider him a premiere pass rusher quite yet (to put it gently).

Still, Heckert can't fix all the holes in one draft, no matter how many times they trade down for extra picks (especially with no Free Agency). Fixing (hopefully) a big one like Pass Rusher at the top of the 2nd Round is a very good step.

Greg Little - WR - North Carolina - 2nd Round (59)



