

Combined With Everything Else

Written by {ga=riverburns}

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I have mentioned it before, but I'll remind you that the NFL Draft, while critical, is not my favorite part of being a Browns fan. I'm most interested in the actual football games being played, and what ultimately piques my interest are the playoff games that they are bound to play in and win some day.

So, you will just have to forgive me if I don't get too caught up in the mock drafts, or any of the brew-ha-ha that leads up to it.

Don't get me wrong, I eat up the analysis of this game, and I often leave the NFL Network on as background noise when I'm doing things slightly more productive than watching the boob tube.

That said, I'll be skipping the NFL Combine taking place in Indianapolis this week.

There isn't a better way to put this than to just tell you, it's boring. Sure, it's important, but even for a pigskin junkie like myself, it doesn't make for good theater.

Of course, this is an evaluation tool for the draft, one of many, and the draft is a critical part of building a Super Bowl Champion, but it isn't the only tool.

Browns fans can rest assured that the brain trust of the organization will get everything they can out of Indianapolis this week, but it's certainly only a fraction of the evaluation process to determine what they will do with their nine selections in April.

It's like how Gym Class figures into your overall grade point average, or how your GPA figures

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into what kind of job regular people get when they finish school.

Truthfully, and this is my opinion without insight from any team executive, the most invaluable piece of the NFL Combine is not televised.

Behind closed doors, job interviews are taking place for a lot of people. Behavioral and mental evaluations are being done, each team is allowed sixty 15 minute interviews.

This is where these young men go beyond auditioning to be professional football players, and evolve into interviewing for a specific role in a system on a team.

The 335 invited participants obviously have the football skills to warrant their invitation to this exclusive tryout, so we already know these guys can play football, but the question comes down to, can they learn it at the next level?

Can they be coached to exploit their skills, to play football within the bounds of an organization's philosophy?

Speaking of knowing these guys can play, for most of the guys we're going to see play on Sundays, there's quite a bit of video out there. For regular people, there's YouTube and ESPN, among many other sites and channels. You can see any number of highlight films accompanied by atrocious rap music or Drowning Pool's "Bodies", but for everything available to the general public, it pales in comparison to the quantity and quality of video exclusively available to the people whose opinions actually matter.

There is generally three or four years of tape on the prospects that the Browns will be looking at with their picks at 4, 22, 37, 66, and so on. However, I do understand that the tape might be as plentiful for a player from Mount Union, Hillside, Liberty, or Fordham; the physical aspects of the combine should definitely help that unknown player, but the hype never surrounds them.

We get hung up with whether or not Andrew Luck and Robert Griffin III are going to throw this week, as if Stanford and Baylor weren't televised enough to give a sufficient sample of what they can or cannot do with their arms.

