

Feeling a Draft- Fullbacks & TEs

Written by {ga=jta1975}

Sunday, April 01 2012 1:00 PM - Last Updated Sunday, April 01 2012 2:25 PM



Greetings Browns fans. So far this draft series has taken us to the Senior Bowl, NFL Combine, and through a roster evaluation. Now it is time to turn up the energy a bit and get into our player profiles as we gain steam toward April 26th and the NFL draft.

If you are new to the series or just don't remember from last year, I have no intentions on profiling all the good players at any particular position. The way I do it is a simple concept; I profile players that I think make sense for the Browns based on the projected player availability and the schemes the Browns run. I throw in my observations and opinions from studying these players and we end up with a projected pick for the position of the day.

I will profile a few players in the early rounds (1-2), mid-rounds (3-5), and late rounds (6-7) as we all try figuring out the pieces of the puzzle called the NFL Draft. I do it this way so it isn't just some copy and pasted list of every player coming out, plus it is a lot more fun trying to match prospects with our schemes and team needs than just throwing out a bunch of names.

For those of you that think I am crazy for the amount of time I put in studying this stuff, well, you are probably right. But I love it and I have been doing the research this year anyways so I was pumped last The Cleveland Fan asked me to share some of it with the readers. I had a blast doing it and hope people who followed it enjoyed it and knew a little more about the players when they were finished.

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Although it is fun to me and I do it mostly for enjoyment I get even more pumped and excited about the work I put in when I actually get a projection right like I did last year in my [WR preview](#). I predicted the Browns would fall in love with Greg Little and his run after catch ability and select him as a WR for Pat Shurmur and his west coast offense.

Well enough about last year. I want to start the positional previews with two positions I didn't get to preview last year before the Browns actually selected one of each. Fullback and Tight End were two areas that I didn't think Cleveland would really be in the market for, but I obviously was wrong, so this year I will run through all positions except maybe kickers and punters so I don't be caught off guard.

The good thing about going into the draft this year is the fact that we have gotten to see exactly what type of schemes the new coaching staff like to use and we also got to see how they use or didn't use certain positions as features in their schemes. That is the reason I am merging these two positions in this preview.

Watching the 2011 season again a few times it is clear the Browns need a "move" TE, otherwise called an "H-back". The Browns need a TE/FB to play the H-back who is strong at the point of attack on wham blocks, but athletic enough to easily get second level blocks as well to seal edges in the running game. This same player also needs to be able to catch the ball on plays where he is asked to slip out for a pass.

Even though the Browns drafted both a TE and a FB last year, in my opinion they don't have the right man on the roster to fill the role. Owen Marecic is the FB Cleveland drafted last year and he looks about as uncomfortable with the ball in his hands as a FB or TE could.....Oh yeah, he wasn't a dominating blocker either. The TE the Browns took last year, Jordan Cameron, is a super athletic talent with plenty of upside but his size and speed make him a better candidate to take over the starting TE spot more so than being used as a H-back.

For these reasons and the fact that Cleveland has 7 picks in the last 3 rounds of the draft, I believe the Browns will look to the draft to fill the position.

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Here is a look at the players I think best fit the job description.

Early Rounds (1-2)

TE **Coby Fleener** Stanford (**6-6, 247lbs**)

I know...I know, I just gave an intro talking about the Browns needing an H-back and the first player I listed is by far the best TE in the draft and the only one that probably has a legitimate shot at going in the first round, but the Browns have 3 picks in the first 37 and Fleener is the type of player that teams will pick simply because they can't pass up the talent.

Any time a player is that big, runs a sub 4.5 forty while averaging 20 yards a catch and catching 10TDs in only 34 receptions he will make teams think twice before passing him. Another thing to note, and it actually falls in line with the H-back talk, is the fact that Stanford ran a ton of big personnel with Fleener on the field and he was actually used in an H-back capacity quite a bit. I watched a lot of Stanford this year and I can tell you that although Fleener doesn't knock many guys down, he is usually always blocking the correct guy and using solid angles which is a good place to start when talking about TEs blocking in the NFL.

When it is all said and done, I think Fleener will be picked before the Browns have to decide if his value outweighs their need, so I won't get too involved in more of his strengths and weaknesses.

Mid Rounds (3-5)

TE **Orson Charles** Georgia (**6-2, 251lbs**)

Charles is a player that many were projecting to go in the second round but he got a DUI in early March that could have him slide a bit so I am projecting him as a 3rd round player. If you could get a guy with his type of talent in the 3

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it would be tremendous value. He is extremely athletic and ox strong. At the Combine he led all TEs with 35 reps of 225lbs and can be seen on film knocking back plenty of LBs with his initial contact. He is only an average blocker as a whole because after the initial contact his form tends to break down and that is why I think he could be a perfect second TE on a roster that is used to create mismatches and execute quicker trap blocks off of motion.

Charles has talent that should make him a higher pick but I will keep him here because this is really the highest I think Cleveland would pull the trigger.

TE **Adrien Robinson** Cincinnati (6-4, 264lbs)

Robinson is one of those players in college who just wasn't used to his full capabilities. He has good ball skills and runs well for his size (4.5 forty) but he just wasn't thrown the ball too much at all. Some players are victims of scheme and Robinson is one. He is a good blocker and actually could end up as the best of all the prospects as a NFL in-line blocker. His speed and athleticism tell me he can be a solid H-back for a team who has a good TE already, and he could end up being a starter down the road. Robinson was not invited to the combine but if he had been his forty-time would have put in the top 3 TEs tested. Robinson has all the skills to last 10 years in the NFL and for the right team he can be a regular contributor in the passing game.

TE **DeAngelo Peterson** LSU (6-3, 243lbs)

Peterson is a player who is blessed with really good talent but always seems to come up short of doing what you think he is capable of. LSU uses him in an H-back type of role so he is used to doing some of those things already. He doesn't have a lot of production but the reality of the offense we saw in Cleveland says no TE, and especially one that doesn't start, is going to put up big numbers for the Browns either. The fact that I have seen Peterson perform in the H-back role on film, combined with the talent he has to exploit some LB mismatches makes him worth picking.

TE **James Hanna** Oklahoma (6-4, 252lbs)

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James Hanna is one of those players that make you go back and try to figure out why he doesn't look as explosive on game tape as he tests. He ran a 4.49 forty and had an impressive 6.76 in the 3-cone drill which are great numbers for a TE but you didn't really see that type of explosiveness on film. That is probably why a player with that type of athleticism and a solid 15 yards a catch average ends up getting picked on the third day of the draft. He shows solid angles blocking but doesn't drive people off the ball like you want from an in-line TE but he may be a perfect candidate for offenses like Cleveland's that get TEs on the move as blockers.

Late Rounds (6-7)

FB/TE **Emil Igwenagu** UMass (6-1, 250lbs)

Igwenagu played a true H-back in college catching 38 passes his senior year. He is a really good blocker who has experience blocking from the line of scrimmage, the conventional FB position, and offset or in motion. Some may knock him for his height but I saw him practice during senior bowl week and not only did he hold up well during blocking drills, he made some great adjustments on poorly thrown balls in the passing game. Height won't keep out of the league and whoever gets Igwenagu on their team will be getting a ready-made contributor on offense and special teams.

TE/FB **Rhett Ellison** USC (6-5, 251lbs)

Ellison is a player that started off his career as a TE and was moved to FB his senior year. He has started 29 games at USC at multiple positions. Much like some of the other profiled players, Ellison has experience in a FB/TE hybrid role and has performed well. He is a consummate team player and will contribute in any way possible including on special teams where he has at least one blocked FG on his resume. Ellison has soft hands and a hard head which is the perfect combination for the H-back position.

TE **Anthony Miller** Cal (6-4, 260lbs)

Miller is one of those players that need a good poke to get going. He is a really strong, powerful

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blocker when he wants to be. Consistency seems to be his theme. If he stays motivated he has the size and blocking ability to be employed for a long time in the NFL. If he is a player who learns the importance of performing on a daily basis in order to collect steady pay checks he can be a solid blocking TE on a roster, and his glue like hands will allow him to catch the ball when it is thrown his way.

Projected Pick



My natural instincts for the H-back position is to grab one of the players like Rhett Ellison or Emil Igwenagu that have experience doing it and I know will at least be a good blocker and special teams player, but I can't help go with the player with the biggest upside and that is Adrien Robinson.

Robinson is such an explosive athlete I still don't understand why the Bearcats didn't find a way to get him the ball. He weighs 265lbs and runs a 4.5 forty with a 39.5 inch vertical and a broad jump that is over 11 feet..... that is pretty impressive. If you add in the fact that he blocked a ton for the Bearcats and did it well, I don't see how he couldn't be a huge asset on the Brown's offense as a backup TE and H-back.

If you can get a player with that type of ability caught up in some LB mismatches it could really help your passing game, and if he blocks like he has in the past the running game would be

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better as well. Drafting a player like him later in the draft that actually contributes as he develops could be a great addition to an anemic offense like the one Cleveland had last year.

This honestly was a more difficult decision than it looked and I still have half of my brain telling me that I should go with one of the FBs who have experience in the position, so if the Browns end up picking Emil Igwenagu I won't be upset.

I mean, if *I'm* still having nightmares of Alex Smith fumbling inside the ten yard line with the game on the line.....I wonder how much sleep new offensive coordinator Brad Childress is losing over the thought of Smith taking handoffs? But then again Childress probably won't be calling a FB dive 15 seconds after he is told his starting FB is on the sidelines.

The Browns need more than Alex Smith and Owen Marecic opening up holes and catching balls out of the backfield so they would be foolish not to consider using one of their 13 draft picks on the position.

Next up in this series is offensive tackle so be on the lookout for the next installment and.....Go Browns!

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