

## Feeling a Draft: Time to Execute

Written by {ga=jta1975}

Thursday, April 26 2012 1:00 PM -

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It's Christmas day for me. The draft is finally here. So far in this draft series we have covered the Senior Bowl, NFL Combine, and I have also laid out some players I like in the position previews for all to see.

This is a day where GMs can finally pick some of the players they have been passionately studying months and fans can begin daydreams of these young players making impact plays for their football team.

I have previewed numerous players I think can help Cleveland become a better team in 2012. I have also talked about characteristics that may be important for a player to have at the various positions in order to have success in our offensive and defensive systems.

In this article I will talk about draft execution, trade rumors/scenarios, and I will also give 13 names of players I would pick with the 13 picks the Browns have.

### Execution

If you read my summary articles from last year's draft you already know that I am a fan of Cleveland's GM Tom Heckert when it comes to draft day execution. I would much better have a GM like Heckert who trusts his staff's opinions and his ability to make decisions enough to trade out of spots when he doesn't feel right about what's on his board at the time of a pick and I also like that same GM to trade up for players he feels a high level of comfort drafting.

I am not talking about the players themselves as much as I am talking about the way he goes

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about executing his plan to draft those players. I like the aggression Heckert shows when he wants a player and I like the way he understands that more picks equals more opportunities to find good players. Last year you heard me use the term currency when I needed a term to describe the value of draft picks and if you use that term, Cleveland has a lot of currency to target specific players in this year's draft.

I wrote the series with the mindset of Cleveland using all 13 picks in the draft but I understand that Tom Heckert is more likely to use some of those picks to target specific players but I purposely took the mindset of Cleveland using them all because I didn't want to get the readers caught up in any crazy trade scenarios. I do think Cleveland will be involved in more than one trade over the course of this draft but I also understand I can't keep everyone focused on the process and players if I am throwing out trade scenarios that would only distract attention.

When it comes to pure draft execution I think you can expect more of the same from Tom Heckert and the Cleveland Browns and by that I mean you will see them trade back to gain more draft currency when they feel like they have highly rated players at a position of need that they can take later in the draft while also understanding when a tier of players is getting thin on their board and trading up to get a player in that group.

Based on Tom Heckert's first two drafts I think it is safe to say that the first 3 players Cleveland picks will be starters on this team. I really don't think the success Heckert had last year was a fluke and I think hiring Pat Shurmur as head coach gave him tremendous confidence because he knew exactly what type of players he needed to fit into both the offense and defense.

As I have said before, I think that is the one factor that is commonly overlooked when you talk about GMs hitting and missing on players in the draft. No GM is going to be perfect but there is a reason why teams like New England and Philadelphia feel so comfortable moving around the draft selecting players and a having a high comfort level in what exactly they are looking for is a big part of it.

If you totally understand what you are going to ask a player to do you can thoroughly analyze if that player can do it or not and that is why a lot of head coaches push for personnel control.

Taking the names out of the equation, a GM wants to treat the draft no differently than a

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consumer does when making a purchase. From a pure execution standpoint a GM wants the most he can get for the cheapest price so he can save for tomorrow or to have some currency on standby in case he comes across a bargain that is too good of a deal to pass up. So keep that in mind if you start getting upset about 'trading down'.

## Trade Rumors

I really haven't spent any time talking about trades up until this point so I am going to take a few minutes to give my thoughts on a couple of the rumors that have been circulating as the draft nears.

-Eagles and Cleveland....The rumor said the Browns and eagles have talked about the Eagles moving up to 4 from 15.

My first thought on this possibility goes out to the people who were saying Cleveland would pick up another second round pick in the deal. This isn't true, in order for the eagles to move up that far it would take both of the Eagles 2nd round picks based on the draft value chart which to me is an extremely tempting offer because without the trade Cleveland is looking at 3 of the first 37 players taken but with the trade they would be looking at 5 of the first 51 players taken.

For a team looking to revamp offensive personnel and sprinkle in a defensive starter having 5 of the first 51 players taken sounds GREAT to me. There is also a real strong possibility that the value is even greater than 5 of the team's top 51 players because teams rate players differently. It could really be like 5 of their top 30 players (just an example). The potential of getting 5 quality starters as opposed to 3 combined with the fact that Cleveland would still have a 3rd, two 4ths, and two 5ths to use as trade up currency to target specific players gets me real excited.

Not that taking a player with the 4th pick doesn't get me excited by itself, but infusing 5 starters into a team like ours is huge and it would also make me really comfortable with taking a risk on Weeden or Tannehill because they would be able to surround that QB with a significant upgrade in the caliber of talent around him.

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In that trade my 5 players I would target would be CB Stephon Gilmore, WR Stephen Hill, QB Brandon Weeden, RT Bobby Massie, RB David Wilson

-Buffalo wanting to trade for LT.....If the Vikings pick Claiborne or Tampa jumps us for Richardson and Kalil is on the board I would have no problem trading down to 10 and picking up another 2nd round pick (probably a 2 and 4).

In this scenario I would draft WR Michael Floyd, Lavonte David, Lamar Miller, Bobby Massie and having 3 picks in the 4th round would allow a trade up back into the 3rd round to target a specific player.

### Movers and Shakers

As you already know, the NFL is as much about relationships as it is about simply making moves that make sense. Regardless of what people say in public, executives and head coaches that have prior relationships with each other generally find a way to make a deal work and ones that have no ties tend to let deals fall apart. I expect that will be no different in this draft and here are some things I wouldn't be surprised to see in the first round.

**Patriots**- I could actually see the Patriots working both sides of draft movement this year. I think the rookie salary limits could make the Patriots be aggressive and move up from their 27th pick to target a big need area (pass rush) and I think they could also drop back with the 31st pick and allow a team to jump into the first round to target a player.

Even though New England has 2 first round and 2 second round picks they don't own a pick past the 4th round so they will need to be aggressive in their targets and possible acquire some later round picks.

**Eagles**- I know I keep talking about these two teams but they are two teams with histories of "working" the draft. With the Eagles having top talent and Super Bowl aspirations I do think they use those 2 second round picks to target a second player in the first round if they don't use them to move up from pick 15 for a player.

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**Texans and Lions-** These are two teams who took major steps of growth this year and they both seem to be entering their windows for winning big so don't be surprised if one of these teams target a move up in round one for a player they think can help get them through their next stage of growth much like Atlanta attempted to do last year with the Julio Jones trade. Both of those teams are past the point where taking the best player available is simply the best option for them to do.

### 13 for 13

As I have stated before, I don't think the Browns will actually pick 13 players even though they have 13 picks but I am not going to create a bunch of trade scenarios to get the number closer to 8 or 9 that I think make sense. I am giving 13 names for 13 picks.

CB Morris Claiborne, WR Stephen Hill, RB Lamar Miller, OT Mitchell Schwartz, WR A.J. Jenkins, LB Nigel Bradham, DT Jaye Howard, LB Travis Lewis, WR Devon Wylie, S Janzen Jackson, QB Aaron Corp, OT Marcel Jones, RB Terrance Ganaway

If I could randomly select players these are the 13 I would pick. I feel like Claiborne would give Cleveland the needed talent to have an elite defense and the other picks would give the offense immediate big play potential along with a solid offensive line.

I understand there is no QB but you can't go down every route for a solution and without the possibility of getting a player with the talent of Andrew Luck or RG3 I chose to get better talent around Colt McCoy as opposed to starting from scratch with another first year starter at QB.

If you have been reading the previews you could probably guess I was going to go with Claiborne but if you go with the majority opinion the Browns are going to pick Trent Richardson with the 4th pick and Weeden with the 22nd or 37th pick.

If that does happen I will be interested to see what WR they give Weeden to throw to because

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regardless of the name on the back of the jersey of Cleveland's 2012 QB I think everyone is onboard with the idea Cleveland's WR group is in need of a huge upgrade.

Personally I think the biggest aspect of the draft for Cleveland is determining if they want Weeden and where they would have to take him because if they can get him at 37 then they should be able to go any combination of RB and WR with the first two picks that they think is the highest overall upgrade to the offense but if Weeden isn't going to last until 37 and they are forced to pick him at 22 I think they have to go WR,QB,RB in order to maximize the quality of players because RB,QB,WR scares me when I look at the quality of WR I expect to be there at 37.

## Favorite Players

Here is a list of ten players that I consider my favorites in the draft. These players may not be a need and their availability and our draft picks may not match but I still love them as players.

Michael Floyd, Lavonte David, LaMichael James, Harrison Smith, Greg Childs, Lamar Miller, Trumaine Johnson, Mychal Kendricks, Fletcher Cox, RG3

## Decisions

Up until this point I have had a ton of faith in Tom Heckert's ability to work the draft and evaluate players in the early rounds but without a doubt I think this 2012 draft is filled with the most difficult decisions he has made so far in a Browns draft. Playing this right could mean he provides the offensive upgrade the team desperately needs to compliment the talented young defense but getting it wrong could mean he continues to run in place like they have been doing for years. I don't think anyone in this city can possible handle another season where our best offensive player is a kicker so getting the combination of offensive pieces correct couldn't be more crucial.

Well Browns fans, the series isn't over so be on the lookout for recap articles as I give my opinions and analysis on the players Cleveland selects as well as any other interesting stories

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the draft provides.

I am not sure if the position previews for DT and RB will actually make it up before this runs because life got a bit in the way which put me a bit behind so if not here are the archive links if you want to check them out (DT, WR) and if the Browns end up taking some skill players on day one you are not familiar with you can check out my TCF previews or go to <http://www.greymattersports.com/> and check out that players preview in the archives of the site. Until next time.....Go Browns! And Happy Draft Day!