

Feeling a Draft: Day One Picks (and Pans)

Written by {ga=jta1975}

Friday, April 27 2012 11:00 AM -



With the first day of the 2012 NFL draft in the books, the Cleveland Browns walk away with a starting RB in Trent Richardson and a starting QB in Brandon Weeden. I am on record saying that I would have taken the CB Morris Claiborne but I also acknowledged that there was a really good chance Cleveland would select both Richardson and Weeden.

Before I talk specifically about my opinions of the picks, I want to talk a bit about the execution of the draft. If you listened to the post draft press conference you heard GM Tom Heckert say that the Browns had Richardson targeted and the Vikings told them they had an offer for that 3rd pick, so if Cleveland wanted Richardson they had to make a trade.

In that trade, Cleveland gave up a 4th, 5th, and 7th round pick in order to draft Trent Richards. So although the picks were in the later rounds you can understand the type of player they think Richardson will be in the NFL.

If a team spends 4 draft picks on one player they must think that player is extremely special regardless of how late the picks are, because even if the Browns had no intentions on using 13 picks, spending 4 to get 1 means a lot when it comes to the NFL draft.

I expected the Browns to trade picks to target players, but I must admit I didn't think they would end up trading 3 picks to move up one spot to ensure they got to draft Richardson. I am not shocked they made a move to go up, but I was caught off guard when they traded from the 4th spot to the 3rd spot.

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As I said in the 'Execution' article, I like the aggression of picking players and ensuring you get them, so from an execution standpoint I can't argue against the move and I actually expect the Browns to do the same thing at least once again before the end of this draft.

In my draft day article I also talked about the pivotal point for Cleveland being the 22nd pick and deciding whether or not they needed to take Weeden with that pick if they decided they were going to target him.

They obviously decided they needed to pick him at 22 and they did. For me this was interesting because I was a bit nervous about the quality of WR the Browns could get if they took Richardson with their first pick and Weeden with the 22nd.

Although the WR I would have taken at 22, Stephen Hill, is still available starting the second day of the draft, I am still nervous about Cleveland's ability to upgrade the WR position and I will continue to be nervous until I see them take a player I think is an upgrade at the spot.

There is still a ton of drafting to do but without a doubt I think the most interesting pick for Cleveland going forward is pick 37, because it will tell a lot about how they view their team weaknesses. If the Browns pass on a WR and pick an offensive lineman or defensive player that would tell us that they look at their WR much differently than the fans do, and who they pick is really crucial because there will be a gigantic difference in the quality of player at the top of the 3rd round compared to the top of the second.

After that pick is made we will know much more about the organization's opinion of the roster because we all knew RB and QB were subject to upgrades, but what else needs early round fixing according to management is the question on my mind

Picks

You can read my position previews about both players the Browns selected on the first day of the draft to get my pre-draft opinions of each. My opinion of Richardson is much the same as most fans when it comes to his abilities as a player. He was the best RB in the draft, he is an

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incredibly hard worker, and he comes from a college program that is run by an ex-NFL head coach, which is a very important aspect when it relates to Richardson adjusting to NFL life.

In general I think Trent Richardson will be a good and productive player in the NFL as long as he stays healthy.

During the draft process I was an advocate of taking a different player because I felt like it was the best way to improve the team as a whole, not because I think negatively about Richardson as a player. At the end of the day I understand there is more than one way to skin a cat, so just because management didn't see it the way I saw it doesn't mean I will be a Richardson basher. I think he will be a good player in the league so I am excited to see him in action.

When it comes to the Brandon Weeden pick I am extremely cautious, because when I watched him play I certainly didn't think to myself "this guy is a franchise QB". I thought he was good and had a strong arm. I also thought he made NFL throws because he could hit tight windows and lead WRs into space.

I am apprehensive because I also saw plenty of negative things too. I remember seeing him take sacks because he drifted into pressure, I saw him react to some false pressure, and I also saw him confused by some coverage and throw interceptions off his back foot.

Honestly Browns fans, when it comes to the Weeden pick initially I was upset for multiple reasons but the more I thought about the things I learned from studying him over the last two years I began to accept a few simple facts and I stopped on him turning 29 years old in October.

The simple facts I accepted are that Weeden has God given ability that Colt McCoy simple doesn't have and if he is better than Colt McCoy is right now the Browns are better off. My thought process also went a step further as I realized that his age also gives the Browns a built in excuse to draft a young QB that they can take their time grooming for the future, without dealing with any extra pressure of playing him and stunting his growth.

If you are a fan struggling to accept the Weeden pick I can tell you without a doubt he has a

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really strong arm, he has a natural ability to lead WRs and anticipate openings, and, unlike our current QB, Weeden is a player who has an extremely even temperament with a short memory that allows him to simply move on and focus on the next play.

Sure there are some flaws in his game that make me nervous, but when it comes to the QB position there usually are. The only QB in this draft that doesn't have major question to be answered in the NFL seems to be Andrew Luck and even he still needs to produce to warrant letting Peyton Manning go. Let's have confidence in what Weeden does well and worry about his flaws after we see him in action.

If you want take issue with Tom Heckert's execution of the draft like I did then go ahead and voice your displeasure, but don't focus all that negative energy at Weeden because it will be wasted energy. He is going to be the Browns QB for the next few years whether you like it or not. The guy was a first round draft pick that is already 28 years old, he will get his chance, and it will be immediately.

Around the Draft

Wow, was that an action packed first round or what? I mean teams were moving all over the place targeting players up and down the board. I honestly can't remember a draft like this where teams were so willing to move up and down. I have applauded Tom Heckert and some other teams for targeting players and executing plans but this year a lot of teams joined the party. It is great to me and I think the trend will continue even more as the GMs get more comfortable with the idea of moving around.

And as more and more relationships expand from the movement I think you will see the trend continue. I have always thought teams should be more aggressive targeting players, especially the teams who are really close to winning big.

*Last year the Browns benefitted from a team targeting a player they thought could help them over the hump and this year it looks like the Rams will be the beneficiary. They now have 3 second round picks this year after already stockpiling extra first round picks over the next few years from Washington.

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*I said it in one of my Kibbles & Bits articles and I will say it again; Jeff Fisher will get the Rams going in the right direction and they will be relevant in the near future.

*The first round also saw the Patriots and Eagles both move up like I anticipated as they targeted players they felt could help them win playoff games.

Surprises

Bruce Irvin- I was surprised the Seahawks picked a situational pass rusher with the 15th pick in the draft.

Quinton Coples- I was surprised Coples lasted until the 16th pick. Let that be a lesson to all of the superbly talented players that decide when they want to play hard and when they don't.

Shea McClellin- I am not surprised McClellin was picked high but I am surprised the Bears didn't pick David DeCastro as much as their offensive line struggled.

A.J. Jenkins- I am pleasantly surprised that a team thought of Jenkins as a 1st rounder, but if you read my position preview on TCF for WR or the preview I did on [greymattersports](#) you already know I was high on Jenkins. Still, him going in the first round was a surprise.

Day Two Expectations

Like I said earlier, the 2nd round will tell a lot about how management sees the roster when it comes to Cleveland's pick. The team still needs WR help, the offensive line (RT) needs addressed, and the defense could use LB and DB help, so whichever way the team goes will say a lot because the caliber of player will drop off a ton at all positions between the top of the 2

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WRs- If the Browns take a WR with the 37th pick I prefer Stephen Hill or Alshon Jeffery in that order. I am not a big Rueben Randle fan because I saw him play against Dre Kirkpatrick twice and Brandon Boykins once and he totaled 7 catches for 47 yards...Personally I think he will struggle to get open in the NFL but a lot of people like him so we will see.

Players I like in the 3rd at WR are Brian Quick, Greg Childs, Joe Adams

OT- If the Browns select a tackle at 37 I would probably take Bobby Massie over Mike Adams and Cordy Glenn because of upside and no motivation issues with Massie

If they wait and take a tackle in the 3rd I would probably take Mitchell Schwartz or Zebrie Sanders

Defense- If the Browns go LB with the 37th pick I would take Lavonte David or Mychal Kendricks. If they selected one in the 3rd I would say Nigel Bradham or Ronnell Lewis.

If they select a CB at 37 I would say Janoris Jenkins, and if they select one in the 3rd I would say Trumaine Johnson, Jamel Flemming, or Chase Minnifield.

Players I wouldn't rule out taking for the defense are DTs, Jerel Worthy and Devon Still

Summary

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When I look at the Browns draft so far, I still have mixed feelings because I am usually giving Tom Heckert credit for being patient and targeting his players. But so far in this draft I think he is showing some signs of being impatient and maybe even some signs of border line panic.

The fan inside of me is telling myself to relax and embrace the RB who could possibly carry our team. The fan side of me is also trying to get me to embrace the possibility of having quality QB play for the next 5-8 years. But the draft guy inside of me is ranting and raving.

The draft guy is saying so far the draft feels forced which is something I am not used to from this particular GM that I have grown to respect and trust. From my seat it seemed like the Browns didn't need to pull the trigger on Weeden at 22 because nobody would have thought about drafting him between 22 and 37. The draft side of me was also let down by watching the Browns trade away picks I thought would allow them to trade up into the tail end of rounds 2 or 3 to get future starters. That can still happen but it we will probably have to start dipping into next year's picks and I always hate that idea.

I am not going to go overboard and let the draft side of me get discouraged just because Heckert didn't work the draft like I thought he would, but I am listening closely to the concerns and I will be waiting anxiously to see what Day 2 brings in the 2012 NFL Draft for the Cleveland Browns.....Enjoy day 2 and as always.....Go Browns!