



A LOOK AT THE SOME OF THE BUSTS IN THE NFL

By Kerry Schmidt 09-12-2004

No, I'm not talking about those bronze busts in Canton, Ohio.

As the NFL kicks off another season, every team is a "winner," with Super Bowl dreams.

And, promising rookies are about to make themselves rich and famous.

Or so they hope. But many do not. In fact, some of the biggest "can't miss" players have been the biggest busts in the NFL.

In no particular order...

Ryan Leaf. Remember the debate over which QB was the best in the '98 draft? Leaf or Peyton Manning. Many so called experts said Leaf.

San Diego mortgaged the farm to get Leaf with the No. 2 pick. He lasted three seasons with the Chargers, playing in only 18 games and had a QB rating of 48.8. In his rookie season, he threw two TD's and 15 INT's. And, his locker room and off field demeanor was worse. He literally attacked two sportswriters and constantly used profane language. He pretty well summed up his pathetic career and attitude when, as he left the Chargers, he said, "Bleep them, I got my \$10 million sign-on bonus and contract."

Lawrence Phillips was one of the greatest RB's to come out of football factory Nebraska. The Rams drafted him No.6 overall in 1996. He lasted less that two years there and from '97-2003 he had stints with nine teams, most in the AFL and Canada. Each and every time he was released due to disciplinary reasons.

At Nebraska, I guess it was OK to beat up your girlfriend, but not in the NFL He even threatened to shoot her in both knees and elbows. He was arrested 13 times.

Brian Bosworth, the two-time Butkis Award winning LB from Nebraska.

He entered the NFL saying he was gong to be the best ever, and would crush "those damn running backs."

Seattle paid plenty for this bust. He lasted three years, and is most famous for having Bo Jackson blasting over him to score on Monday Night Football. Another Cornshucker loser.

Todd Marinovich., aka Marijuanavich.

Programmed by his dad from age three to be a great QB, Marinovich began to self-destruct as a star at USC. Not only did he smoke weed, he grew it in his apartment, which the cops frowned on when they found it.

The Raiders top choice, they signed him to a \$2.27 million deal in '91. He lasted less than two seasons, then took his marijuana and other drugs to Canada and the Arena League before going to jail. When heroin was found in his car, he was sentenced to re-hab, then just sort of disappeared.

Tony Mandrich, second overall pick in '89 by Green Bay. The Michigan State All-American was on the cover of "Sports Illustrated" with the caption, "The best offensive prospect ever," and a sub title, the "Incredible Bulk." Green Bay passed over Barry Sanders, Deion Sanders and Derrick Thomas to draft Mandrich.



OFF THE WALL SPORTS

Steroid use got to him and he was a fraction of what he was in college. He lasted four inglorious seasons before a knee injury and lack of ability washed him out. He then again appeared on "SI's," cover with the title, "The Incredible Bust."

The NFL's version of Pete Rose, Art Schlichter, was a sad one. The Ohio State QB was drafted in the first round by the Colts in 1982. He played a total of 13 games for two teams over three years, with three TD passes and 11 INT's.

He was addicted to gambling, running up hundreds of thousands of dollars in losses, which caused him to commit virtually every scam and crime possible to get money. He has spent over 10 years in prison and is currently under indictment again.

Heisman Trophies do not mean NFL greatness.

Andre Ware won the Heisman in 1989 as the QB for the University of Houston. The Lions picked him in the first round and said, "Here is the next great QB in the NFL." In his four seasons with Detroit and Minnesota, he rarely got off the bench. He went to the Canadian League, where he watched from the bench as Doug Flutie led this team to the CFL title.

Colorado's Rashaan Salaam took the Heisman in 1994 when he broke 14 NCAA rushing records. The Bears' No. 1 pick had a good rookie season, rushing for 1,074 yards, but then his self-described marijuana addiction held him to less than 500 yards the next two years and then injuries ended his NFL career.

Danny "Awful" Weurffel, Florida, 1996. Had three very uneventful seasons with the Saints and a couple more with the Redskins before the rest of the league realized he was no NFL caliber QB.

Eric Crouch, another Heisman from Nebraska. Went to camp with the Rams and quit before the season even started. At least he was smart enough to know he was terrible.

Pat Sullivan, Auburn QB, 1971 and Gino Torretta, Miami QB, 1992 were both Heisman busts.

My internet research turned up over 200 names of great college players who flopped in the NFL. The above list is just a sample. The great Bill Walsh, architect of the 49'ers and the West Coast offense, said it all. "Drafting the right players is about the hardest thing to do in the NFL."