



THE NFL DRAFT. OR, THE NFL CRAP SHOOT

By Kerry Schmidt

04-27-2008

Well, another NFL draft is upon us. ARGGGHHHH!!

Many thousands of hours have been spent (wasted?) on scouting every possible individual that knows what a football looks like. They analyze every thing from their cup size to their police blotters.

Many, many millions of dollars rest on the decisions of all those former players, whatever, whose brains have been bashed around in their days, that you wonder how they can even remember names.

As with ALL drafts, many ALL-Pros will emerge, and, an equal number of total washouts will be shown up as pretenders.

Thus, you can either have some of this next batch end up with their busts in Canton, Ohio, or you can have some end up as just plain busts. Big ones, like Dolly's.

One thing that you must remember about the draft.

It is absolutely nowhere near the mega-event that ESPN and a thousand other talking heads try to tell you it is.

But, there is one very good thing about this year's draft.

In the past, each team had 15 minutes to make their choice just after the previous team has picked.

This year, they have shortened it to 10 minutes. Praise the Lord. I mean, with the thousands of hours and money they have spent on just judging these bloated glandular cases, they pretty damn well know who they want.

All this nonsense about last minute trades, check-offs and other skull-duggery is a bunch of crap. If you don't know by the time the bell rings, what the hell have you been doing?

Last year's first round took 6 hours, 8 minutes, the longest in draft history.

Also, the time between picks in rounds 3 through 8 is 5 minutes, not 8.

Plus, only the first 2 rounds will be screwed up Saturday, the rest on Sunday. Thus, this entire fiasco will start at 3 PM EST rather than noon.

One thing that will certainly not change is the huge number of beer saturated, beer-bellied morons who will wear their teams whatever, cheer and boo as if this were at the SB, and, like always, make fools of themselves.

Another thing that will never change.

The famous/infamous "Mock Drafts." (MD's).

When I googled mock drafts, over 119,000 entries opened up, and I was able to locate over 1,985 MD's that, the computer said, were the ones from "experts" and "other knowledgeable individuals."

Right. No way in hell there are nearly 2000 people that have even a foggy idea what they are doing about these MD's.

The NFL is my sport, but, well, wake me when this joke-a-thon is over.

Now, I have said this is a crap shoot. It is. A huge financial gamble is being made by 32, billion dollar organizations that will spend millions on their first few "guesses."

Several of the "first and best," as they call themselves, came out with their MD's four days ago.

Most had Virginia's DE Chris Long (son of Hall-of-Fame DE – Raiders - and current FOX analyst), as the No. 1 overall pick, Miami.

Well, they were half right. Miami picked, and signed, Michigan OT Jake Long. Getting your first round pick signed BEFORE your draft him makes a world of sense, but for some reason very few



OFF THE WALL SPORTS

teams are able to do this. Thus the reason for the long hold-outs by players whose agents are mostly full of shit.

Remember last year? JaMarcus Russell, QB of LSU, was the top pick, and he stayed out the entire training camp and well into the pre-season. Thus, he was a virtual wash-out his rookie year. And for staying out so long and screwing up the team, he was rewarded with \$24 guaranteed on his contract.

Hell, I'd settle for 2.4 mil to not have to go to work! Actually, a lot less, but....

So we can't say how Russell will end up, but we can take a look back at a few of the MAJOR F-ups in round one.

QB Ryan Leaf, 1998. The Chargers traded up, giving two first-round picks, a second round and All-Pro Eric Metcalf to draft Leaf. And remember, many of the "experts" said Leaf was a better pick than some doofus, gangly kid named Peyton Manning.

Leaf got \$10 million guaranteed, and for this he pissed off most of his teammates, infuriated the fans and cussed out sportswriters (what's wrong with that? Kyle Turley damn near killed me in the locker room one day).

He produced just 21 starts, 14 TD passes and 36 INT's. When he was unceremoniously jettisoned from SD, his parting actions were a huge scowl and his infamous statement, "F all of you ass....s. I got my \$10 million."

Another was OT Tony Manderich, of Michigan. Green Bay took him as No. 1 after he was on the cover of Sports Illustrated with the statement, "The Greatest Offensive Lineman Ever?"

He held out most of his first year, had steroid problems in year two, played mostly on special teams in year 3 then was cut loose. No one picked him up. Career over.

And, GB passed on a "too small" RB to get "the greatest offensive lineman." The "too small" RB was Barry Sanders.

One of my favorites was the Mary Jane QB, Todd Marinovich, a QB from USC, by the Raiders in '91.

Mary Jane had a huge pot problem coming out of college, and, with lots of money to buy more, he pretty much stoned himself out of the league in just two years.

In the first few years after he was out of football, his name appeared quite often in police blotters, and even his girl friend (Mary Jane) got pissed at him because he started "dating" the stronger stuff.

(I wrote a column a couple of years ago about his horribly abusive father – he pushed Todd to be the 6-million dollar man, but that's another story in itself).

Last, but not least of the washouts was Lawrence Phillips, drafted by the Rams in '96.

Not only was he one of the worst No. 1 picks ever, he was one of the worst human beings ever. His extensive history of domestic violence in college somehow did not deter the Rams. Once in the NFL, he continued that behavior untold number of times. When he got drunk and drove into three teenagers, killing them, he got only one year in prison. Once out, both the Bucs and Bills took chances on him, but he was quickly gone.

I don't know who was more stupid. The Rams for drafting him despite his history, or the other two, after he killed three kids.

Oh, and six picks after Phillips, another RB named Eddie George was drafted.

Unfortunately, this gets us back to the oh-too-many MD's.

ESPN's Mel Kiper is said by many to be the best "expert."

I will not bore you with all his choices, but he came out a little early, as he also had the wrong Long, Chris DE, going to Miami, with Jake going at No. 5 to KC.

His remaining top 10: 2 – Rams, DT Glen Dorsey (LSU). 3 – Atlanta, QB Matt Ryan (Boston College). 4 – Raiders, RB Darren McFadden, (Arkansas).



OFF THE WALL SPORTS

6 – Jets, DE Vernon Gholston, DE (Ohio State). 7 – Patriots Dominique Rodgers-Cromartie, CB (Tennessee St.). 8 – Ravens, Sedrick Ellis, DT (USC). 9 – Bengals, Phillip Merling, DE (Clemson), and No. 10 – Saints, Leodis McKelvin, CB (Troy).

I only listed Kiper, because, as mentioned, most consider him to be the, ah, whatever. Anyway, if anyone of you is stupid enough to check out his list, remember one thing. His very first pick was WRONG.

The USA/TODAY came out with a special addition of their Sports Weekly, which contained 48 pages all about the draft. Talk about a good waste of trees and ink.

Anyway, they listed their 100 top rated players in the draft.

I put that list on a wall in my shed and threw 32 darts. Dart No.1 was my first pick and so forth. We'll see how I came out against the "experts. Or maybe not. If I can still find my "dart board" after being so bored with the draft, who knows. And who the F cares?!

Does anyone wonder – or care – where all these stars come from?

Three states, California, Texas and Florida produced 1,808 of 5,395, or 34% of all players drafted from 1988 to 2007. Proving that big is better, 30 of the largest Division I schools generated nearly 50% of the 5,395. When you consider that the NFL has a total of 628 schools – from Div. I, II and III levels, plus NAIA and Jr. Colleges, the best come from the best.

Miami has had 136 players drafted, including 41 first-round picks since 1998.

USC is second with 129 draftees, 56 in the first round.

Many have heard that Penn State is "Linebacker U."

Don't know, but USC in particular, and the Pac 10 in general are "QB U."

Seven QB's from USC were drafted since 1988, with John David Booty to be No. 8, and a total of 40 Pac-10 QB's have been drafted since 1988.

As one may expect, a good QB is extremely valuable. Thus, since 1988, 42 have been drafted in the first round and 11 of those were No. 1 picks.

Thus, a Great QB is the first thing all teams would like to have, but they can be risky picks, as seen with Leaf and MaryJane-o-vich above.

You draft a QB NO. 1, thus giving him at least \$30 million guaranteed, you become very religious very quickly.

As you can imagine, smaller, historically black schools have produced some decent players.

Jackson State gave us Walter Payton and Mississippi Valley State, the greatest WR ever, Jerry Rice.

Grambling and Southern have produced 19 and 16 NFL players, respectively, and the NFL has drafted as many QB's from Alabama State as from powerhouse Alabama.

Grambling's Doug Williams was the 17th pick in the '78 draft, and he became the first (and only) black QB to win and be voted MVP in SB XXII on January 31, 1988. He threw 5 TD passes in the second quarter.

Oklahoma State is not a predominantly black school, nor is it small, but it certainly is not the powerhouse that Oklahoma is. It has always been a step sister to the Oakies, but a little RB named Barry Sanders came from there.

Well, I would say have fun watching the draft, but if anyone really does, they are idiots. Me and my single malt have better things to do.

But at least we will sleep well knowing that there will be about 150 young, new millionaires.