

2005 NFL Scouting Combine Review BY MATTHEW HATFIELD

I've finally broken down basically all of the film from the 2005 NFL Scouting Combine held at the RCA Dome in Indianapolis, Indiana. Thanks goes out to the people at the NFL Network for televising this event throughout the week....

Quarterbacks:

Unlike some of the certain skill positions that require speed such as defensive back, running back and wide receiver - the 40-time for a QB is not that important, nor is an emphasis placed as heavily on players who play this position.

One QB that stood out above the rest during the week was Arkansas' Matt Jones. Ironically, Jones won't be playing QB in the NFL. His 40-time was among the best at the QB position, though look for him to be used somewhere else like at receiver for instance. Another athletic quarterback that could be in that fourth round area or higher is Adrian McPherson, formerly of Florida State. McPherson, who has a big-time, strong gun, played some ball out of college last season. Another interesting prospect at this position is Oregon State's Derek Anderson if he can overcome a lack of mobility and throw the ball with consistency accuracy wise. At 6-6 241 pounds, Anderson, who had a great showing in his team's bowl win over Notre Dame, has the size and big arm to excel later on in the league. **My top rated quarterback entering the draft: Charlie Frye of Akron - something about this kid I really like even more so than Aaron Rodgers of Cal and Alex Smith of Utah. If I'm a team like Green Bay --- I take him in a heartbeat.**

Running Backs:

A couple of guys really helped themselves at the combine excluding the Auburn runners Carnell "Cadillac" Williams and Ronnie Brown. J.J. Arrington, a California running back that had 12 straight 100-yard games last season, was initially clocked in at a 4.46. Right behind him were diminutive, yet shifty Kansas State back Darren Sproles (compared to Barry Sanders by many in college), Brown of Auburn, Michigan State's DeAndra Cobb, Louisiana Tech tailback Ryan Moats and Walter Reyes (Syracuse).

One runner that really has a sound understanding of the game of football is Virginia's Alvin Pearman. He split much of his time in college beside Wali Lundy, though Pearman does a lot of things well including pass protect. A good third or fourth round value pick, Pearman rushed for 1,000 yards one year after hauling in 63 balls or so. Vernand Morency (Oklahoma State) is a solid second round selection that has the ability to contribute right away on a team in search of help at running back. Whether he's able to hold onto the ball will determine his NFL success. **My top rated running back entering the draft: Cedric Benson of Texas - It's believed the Dolphins will take him second overall if they have not gone out and gotten someone in free agency by April. Benson would be a good guy to replace one Ricky Williams since they both ran the**

ball phenomenally at Texas. Benson is my #1 back in spite of the fact he did not go to Indianapolis to workout.

Wide Receivers:

Did you see what Jerome Mathis of Hampton University did? This young fellow saw his draft stock rocket into the second round. Mathis set the 40-yard dash combine record previously held by Deion Sanders, a fast man in his own right. At 5-11 181 pounds, Mathis reminds me of Dante Hall, a member of the Kansas City Chiefs. If things like rout running and dropping too many balls become problematic for him, you can always move Mathis to kick returner or punt specialist. He's got fine/fair strength and was a 200M All-American at Hampton.

Quite a few receivers may have helped themselves in this draft. Troy Williamson of South Carolina was one guy I had my eye on. He really solidified his position as a first round pick by coming in at a 4.38 unofficially. Williamson was able to catch 43 passes in a rushing oriented offense under Lou Holtz at South Carolina. Unlike Williams of USC, he'll use his speed to get off man coverage and take advantage of weak defenses down field. **My top rated wide receiver entering the draft: Mike Williams of USC - A lot of people have Braylon Edwards here and I'm not going to bicker with you over that one. I think Edwards will be an excellent pro and is not far behind Williams on my overall board as the Michigan player is in my top five overall. What I most like about Williams is his playmaking ability near the end zone (i.e. in the red zone). His 6-5 229 pound stature make him an imposing figure, capable of bringing in double-digit passes near the goal line.**

Offensive Linemen:

One scout told me that this is one of the deepest offensive linemen drafts he's seen in years. I find it hard to disagree since there are some massive guys who can not only move quicker than you think, but also be willing enough to play a couple different positions. BYU center Scott Young is massively strong and blew everyone away as far as lifting is concerned. If you're looking for two rock solid prospects that did not hurt their stock as top three round players, then look no further than Nebraska's gritty center Richie Incognito and Fresno State's Logan Mankins. Mankins was real impressive to me on film and showed me a lot in his team's win over Kansas State as well as one vs. Washington to being the year. Speaking of the Washington Huskies, offensive tackle Khalif Barnes fared well at the combine, ranking second among o-linemen in 40-time and vertical jump.

Barnes and Mankins are a couple names to remember. Some others include first round possibilities Elton Brown (Virginia), Jamaal Brown (Oklahoma) and Florida State's Alex Barron. Barron is a clear cut first rounder and probably my second rated OL.

My top rated offensive linemen: Michigan's David Baas - Biggest reason Baas is my best rated o-lineman is because he is rather large and even more so versatile. Baas can play either center or guard in the NFL and can be moved to tackle if someone is to go down due to injury. The Michigan Wolverine ranked 4th

among linemen in the 40-yard dash and 3rd in the bench press. He's also very robust on the interior, too.



Oklahoma offensive tackle Jamaal Brown is about 6-6 313 pounds. He creates plenty of problems for all d-line guys that try to get by him.

Well, that's it for now. Be sure to look for my defensive breakdown of the combine next week and to follow all my updated Mock Draft features here on www.matthewhatfield.com !