

## 2005 NFL Draft Recap: Our Report Card BY MATTHEW HATFIELD

Each year after the draft I like to hand out my report card on how each team did on draft weekend. As I've said before, drafting is an inexact science since you don't know how many of these players are going to turn out. However, we like to breakdown which teams addressed their need areas and got football players who can make their team better. Also, which teams failed to do so, bringing their overall grade down compared to the other teams. Without furthermore, here are my team grades for the 2005 NFL Draft...



**Arizona Cardinals (6-10): By far, the best draft in the entire NFL for 2005. No, not a misprint, nor have I finally gone off the deep end!** Dennis Green showed why once again why he's not only one of the best talent evaluators in the National Football League, **but possibly the very best.** As we correctly projected, Green took Miami (FL) corner Antrel Rolle (121Tack. 3Int. last two seasons). An exceptional corner blitzer and wonderful in run support, Rolle is a guy teams throw away from and Arizona also has the luxury of using him at free safety if need be. I really love their second round pick, JUCO transfer J.J. Arrington of Cal, a 5-8 tailback that ran for over 2000 yards last season. Compact runner with the ability to catch the ball out of the backfield and get good yards per carry (7.0YPC last season). Then you get to the state of Virginia where the Cardinals took Hokies corner Eric Green, UVA OLB Darryl Blackstock, and 6-4 329 pound Cavs guard Elton Brown. All were great value picks, especially Brown in the fourth round since he allowed zero sacks in 2004 and is tremendous at pulling out in run blocking. Also, adding a MLB from Oklahoma in Lance Mitchell doesn't hurt when you consider you're getting a guy who made 218 tackles (31TFL) in the 5<sup>th</sup> round. He'll be a contributor if he can stay healthy after tearing his ACL in 2003. *My Grade: A+*



**Atlanta Falcons (11-5):** Last season the Atlanta Falcons got very little production from their wide receivers as tight end Alge Crumpler was the team's leader in receptions with 48. Peerless Price was given big money to come there, but only caught 45 passes. Last year's second first round pick - Ohio St. lanky WR Michael Jenkins - did little (about seven grabs). So what's Atlanta do in the first round? Take UAB's 1<sup>st</sup> Team All-CUSA performer Roddy White (6-1¼ 207). His 121 yards per game was not only 2<sup>nd</sup> in D-1A, but the 1452 yards by White was a conference record. Coach Jim Mora Jr. is looking at White (over 20YPC the last two seasons), a former State Wrestling Champion, as someone who can stretch the field and run with Mike Vick. Nabbing him ahead of San Diego was a pretty solid move, though I am not high on their next three decisions. The Falcons are one of the best in the league at applying pressure on the opposition's quarterback. One d-tackle like Jonathan Babineaux - Big Ten's highs in TFL (25) and sacks (11) - was a thoughtful move. That being said, they could have bolstered their secondary more, gotten a better OT than 5<sup>th</sup> rounder Frank Omiyale, and added a punter in

the late rounds. Michael Boley, MVP of the 2004 New Orleans Bowl, was a smart 5<sup>th</sup> round choice for the Falcons to make their defense quicker/more intense. **My Grade: C+**



**Baltimore Ravens (9-7):** Baltimore's draft, in my opinion, is on the fringe between an A- and a B+. They wanted steady Mark Clayton to fall to them at #22 overall and were fortunate to see it happen with both the Jags and Cowboys passing on him. What's unique about Clayton is he is the best downfield blocking receiver and route runner in this draft. For a team that ranked 30<sup>th</sup> or worse in passing touchdowns and aerial yards per game - he will help. Many teams finally realized like I did that Dan Cody could be the bust in this draft (nothing personal against him though). Baltimore took the gamble on him in the second round as he'll be another player to be the cross between DE and OLB. With their two subsequent picks they took Syracuse OT Adam Terry (36 consec. starts), someone with good lateral movement, and No. Carolina center Jason Brown. It was clear adding more protection for Kyle Boller proved to be a necessity. Neither one of those guys appears to be a Pro Bowl player in this league, though watch out for 6<sup>th</sup> round QB selection Derek Anderson of Oregon St. Andersno had a **great** bowl game vs. Notre Dame and can air it out as depicted by his 11,000+ passing yards. It's important he keeps the interception total down if he wants to be an eventual starter in this league. Fullback Justin Green (Montana) is an interesting 5<sup>th</sup> rounder. **My Grade: B+**



**Buffalo Bills (9-7):** We've got to remember the Bills' first round choice for this year was taken in 2004 when they traded up for Tulane signal caller J.P. Losman. In a way, their grade is still pending because we'll soon find out what kind of player he is. Buffalo's biggest loss in the off-season was DT Pat Williams departing to Minnesota. The Bills failed to draft a single defensive lineman, got two interior o-linemen, and only one of those two in Vandy's Justin Geisinger fits them in my book. Already set at starting wide receiver with slot man Josh Reed (LSU) still trying to become a formidable playmaker, the Bills will wait no more on him now that they've drafted Roscoe Parrish. Parrish, starting running back Willis McGahee, and third round tight end Kevin Everett (JC transfer from Kilgore), someone who could've been better than Jeremy Shockey and Kellen Winslow Jr. had he stayed in school, gives Buffalo a Miami Hurricanes look offense. At 5-9<sup>3/4</sup>, Parrish is short but can fly shown by his 4.36-4.43 40-yard dash time. He's got skills as a receiver and is more of a developmental player at that position. They'll look to get him involved in the return game right away I would think. Like the smooth pick of Everett a lot; question the rest. Louisville RB Lionel Gates has a chance to make the team, while Eric King may be a dime corner for them. **My Grade: C-**



**Carolina Panthers (7-9):** Carolina came into the draft looking to add a playmaking receiver if one was there (i.e. Troy Williamson), an offensive lineman, or another key player on defense. New Orleans traded up one pick ahead of them to get someone they were targeting in OT Jammal Brown. Can't fault Carolina for then taking an outside linebacker playing safety in Georgia's Thomas Davis one pick ahead of Kansas

City. Question is will Davis turn out to be a better pro than Texas' Derrick Johnson, who they passed on? I don't think so, but still you are getting a quality football player in Davis, my top safety in the draft. Davis (219 tackles the last two years) is an aggressive and versatile playmaker on defense, becoming the Panthers' fifth defensive choice in the first round in the last six drafts. Running back Eric Shelton of Louisville, a Florida St. transfer, brings a blend of power and speed to the Panthers rushing attack. The fluid runner can have substantial success in the NFL, and if you want to debate that go right ahead. What you can't debate is 40+ rushing touchdowns the past two years. Alabama's Evan Mathis (6-5¼ 304) is someone with a 35½ inch vertical for an o-lineman, has started 47 straight games, and has a tiny bit of experience at OT. Who better to have learn behind Jake Delhomme than lefty Stefan LeFors, another guy with a big heart? **My Grade: B-**



**Chicago Bears (5-11):** Football's worst offense in 2004 can only get better this coming season with rookie additions Cedric Benson, Kyle Orton, Mark Bradley and Airese Currie. All but two of the Bears' six picks were offensive guys compared to six of eight defensive choices a year ago. Lovie Smith knows with Benson (1834Yds. 19TD runs in '04) he's getting someone that will run the ball effectively 25+ times every game in cold weather. Benson, a former draft pick of the LA Dodgers, ran for 8423 yards in High School and scored 127 touchdowns. He had no trouble trying to duplicate it at the collegiate level, rushing for more than 5300 yards plus 64 touchdowns. I don't buy it when I hear Benson isn't a good blocker, a good pass catcher, and will be unable to carry over what he did to the NFL. I think he's the best red zone running back in the draft, and remember, the last time Chicago went running back in the first round they took some guy named Walter Payton. In the 6-4 233 pound Orton (3090Yds. 30TD 5Int.) they have someone who can be a serviceable backup, maybe starter if he uses his live arm to improve his anticipation reads. Bradley's someone that is still developing since he transferred from Arkansas Pine-Bluff to OU as a DB. He'll contribute on special teams and same could go for their final two picks. Airese Currie has potential if he overcomes the foot problems that have nagged him the last year and a half. **My Grade: A-**



**Cincinnati Bengals (8-8):** Cincinnati certainly got some players that get them where they want to go and that's the postseason. My biggest beef with their draft was not getting the run stuffing d-tackle. Travis Johnson was off the board by the time they picked so he was not an option. The guy they did get is someone I consider to be the best defensive end in the land - Georgia's David Pollack. In addition to earning a number of awards/accolades including being a 3-time All-American, Pollack was the SEC's Def. POY in 2002 as well as 2004. Despite short arms, Pollack uses all the things you need to be an effective player like energy, heart, and pride. Bringing in his teammate at Georgia - MLB Odell Thurman (186Tack. 29.5TFL, 9.5 sacks) - was a good chemistry move, although I would've preferred Florida's Channing Crowder. My way to counter Crowder's character problems would be the fact Thurman missed quite a few games due to injury. And if character problems was an issue for Marvin Lewis, then why take Chris

Henry? At 6-4 197, Henry, the 2003 Big East POY, averaged 24.6YPC and nine of his 17 touchdowns were 30 yards or more. He's got instant impact ability, but coming into a place that already has Chad Johnson and Peter Warrick presents some possible playing time quarrels. The Central Michigan linemen were solid selections. *My Grade: C+*



**Cleveland Browns (4-12):** New Browns Head Coach Romeo Crennell approached this draft very wisely and similar to Dennis Green did a year ago with Arizona. Crennell, former defensive coordinator with the Patriots and was on the Giants coaching staff that won the Super Bowl in 1991, knew Cleveland (30-66 since 1999) was 28<sup>th</sup> in offense last season. Instead of trading down with the third pick to get a defensive guy he did the right thing and take Michigan wideout/2004 Bilitnekoff Award winner Braylon Edwards (87Rec. 1221Yds. 12TD). He's going to make the QB, whoever that shall be, look better. Albeit a dropped pass every now and then, Edwards is a big difference maker that hauled in 39 touchdowns in college. In the second round the Browns got a safety that's much better in zone coverage than man - Oklahoma's Brodney Pool. Some say he compares favorably to Ed Reed and if that's the case they are getting a better than fine/okay ball player. Pool had a poor showing vs. USC in the Orange Bowl, though it's the body work and seven interceptions is rather nice. Then in the third round the Browns got **MY TOP RATED QB** - Akron's Charlie Frye. No doubt about it, Frye has the goods to be the next successful MAC quarterback. The 2005 MVP of the Senior Bowl has the second most total yards (11,478) in MAC history. Dangerous return man Antonio Perkins joins Pool in the secondary. Good picks all around here. *My Grade: A*



**Dallas Cowboys (6-10):** I like the players that Bill Parcells, Jerry Jones, and the Dallas Cowboys selected in the 2005 NFL Draft. However, I just don't quite understand the strategy. Big D', which is switching from a 4-3 to a 3-4 defensive setup (which gives a team greater flexibility), took two d-ends and a pair of guys whom meet the requirement to play outside linebacker. But wouldn't it have been better for them to get another wide receiver, especially considering you never know what you're getting with Keyshawn Johnson, and add a different defensive back than Justin Berialt (125Tackles; 21 in one game), whose tackles are what I categorize as chase him down one's at Ball State? Because of that I knock Dallas down from an A- or B+ to a B-. What will be key for these guys is stopping the run, though getting to the quarterback won't be pressure for Troy 'tweener' Demarcus Ware (4.46-40), who had 17.5TFL in addition to a SBC best 11 sacks entering the Silicon Valley Classic. 2004 First Team All-American Marcus Spears of LSU, a converted tight end, started 38 consecutive contests and is the ideal 3-4 DE that's big, yet athletic. 6-2<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> 239 pound Tennessee linebacker Kevin Burnett made 274 tackles, including 23 for a loss. He's bounced back well from a knee injury and imposes his upper body strength on offensive players. OT Rob Petitti held Dwight Freeney without a sack, Marion Barber can spell Julius, and Chris Canty has skills. *My Grade: B-*



**Denver Broncos (10-6):** Most definitely the #1 question mark draft. I don't like the idea of Denver building their team to stop Indy and Peyton Manning by choosing three corners right off the bat. Then, you take Maurice Clarett (4.86-40; 1237 yards and 16TD), the troubled Ohio State tailback that led the Buckeyes to a Natl. Championship, with the final pick in round three. I understand why they took Clarett so high because the Broncos did not have a fourth or fifth round pick. Still, my thinking coming into the draft was fourth round at best. Maybe it would have been in the Broncos best interest to go after a more quality offensive lineman than under sized Chris Myers in trading down so they could maybe bolster the o-line as well as the RB position. Of all their picks my opinion is Oklahoma State corner Darrent Williams will turn out to be the best find. Once considered to be a late first/early second prospect, Williams fell into Mike Shanahan's lap because he is one of the smallest corners out there. He's effective against the lesser athletic WR's and can be a nice nickel/dime guy; starter later perhaps. Another interesting note about Williams is he returned three punts for scores and played close to spectacularly after a forearm injury. Clarett is the 10<sup>th</sup> Denver RB drafted since 98. **My Grade: D**



**Detroit Lions (6-10): Automatically drafting Mike Williams gives them no worse than a C+ or B- in my book.** What you get with Williams, even though he has been away from the game for a year, is touchdowns in the red zone. In his two season career at USC he made 176 catches, 2579 yards receiving, scored 20 times in the red zone, and caught a Trojans school record 30 touchdowns. So was it in the team's best interest to go wide receiver when they already have a number of capable guys at the position including the last two first round picks - Roy Williams (Texas) and injury prone Charles Rogers (Michigan St.)? Not necessarily, but that's just it - Rogers is indeed injury prone. You make room for someone as special as Mike Williams, bottom line, end of story. Now what Detroit needed to do to get an A was upgrade their defense by leaps and bounds. That meant improve a secondary which allowed 62% completions and a front seven that got run on leading to the Lions allowing 22PPG. Getting Shaun Cody up front really helps, Dan Orlovsky is an erratic QB added to the mix, and Stanford corner Stanley Wilson is adequate for now. Detroit got two good sixth round value picks in Oregon State defensive end Bill Swancutt, a double-digit sack artist for the Beavers each of the past two seasons, and Marshall 'twenner' Jonathan Goodard. **My Grade: B+**



**Green Bay Packers (10-6): Brett Favre is probably the best quarterback I've watched the past 10-15 years in football.** However, the Packers got the value steal of first round without question getting Cal QB Aaron Rodgers at #24 overall when it appeared a given for him to go #1 overall two weeks ago. Rodgers has better accuracy than Jason Campbell, better footwork and a quicker release than Alex Smith, and did in fact complete 63.8% of his passes on to a 24-8 record at Cal. **Also, keep in mind the last three guys picked 24<sup>th</sup> overall: Steven Jackson, Dallas Clark, and reigning Def. POY Ed Reed.** Rodgers is in good company, though does he fit the Packers offense and did the organization bolster their defense? To me the answers are maybe and no way Jose

[in that order obviously]. You're always taking a chance when you draft a corner out of a small corner like they did with Behtune Cookman's Nick Collins in the second round. Not saying he won't be good; just it is tough pick since he has not played vs. the best D-1A schools. Going receiver with their second pick in the second round was not what I had in mind, especially someone that does not find the end zone often in Terrence Murphy. They would have been better off to just stick with 6<sup>th</sup> rounder Craig Bragg, get a better offensive guard, and then upgrade the DT, DE, and safety areas. **My Grade: D+**



**Houston Texans (7-9):** Dom Capers' Houston Texans ranked 19<sup>th</sup> in total offense and 23<sup>rd</sup> in total defense last season. That tells me it was important for the Texans to improve those numbers by getting a good balance of hard-working players on both sides of the ball. They did it to a certain degree by drafting three players each offensively and defensively. I don't see how the Texans' trade to go down three spots with the Saints really significantly helps either team. Maybe would've been had they gone finesse pass protector Alex Barron, instead they went for his teammate, DT Travis Johnson (44TFL - 2<sup>nd</sup> most in school history). In the 3-4 defense Marcus Spears would've been an option, but if Johnson turns out to be like Vikings DT Kevin Williams, then the pick will be defined as a good one. Houston got one of the best fourth round finds out there in Hampton speedster Jerome Mathis, whose 40-time (4.28) at the combine indicated to me that he's lightning quick, plus he's a dynamo return man (i.e. Dante Hall). In the third round the Texans went Okla. St. tailback Vernand Morency, a 2004 All-Big 12 Second Teamer performer that was drafted in the 14<sup>th</sup> round by baseball's Colorado Rockies. His production was similar to that of teammate Tatum Bell, a 2004 second round pick by Denver. Shiftiness and vision are in the Morency scouting report. **My Grade: C**



**Indianapolis Colts (12-4):** Five of the Colts' ten picks were Big Ten players. Nothing stood out distinctly concerning the Colts over the weekend. At 6-0 5/8 198 pounds, Michigan's Marlin Jackson is All-American material that is said to be a mini Antrel Rolle. No doubt about it, the Colts had to go this route to not only become better defensively, but also against the Patriots, who they are 0-4 versus. They're hoping that the physical Jackson, who impressively broke into the Wolverines starting lineup as a freshman, can be a reliable playmaker. Illinois' Kelvin Hayden is capable against the run as well as the pass. What will help him at the next level is his experience at the wide receiver position with the Illini. My biggest beef with the Colts is why they did not pursue a linebacker such as Florida's Channing Crowder. Even though they do get to the quarterback well with Dwight Freeney and others, Indy has to wrap up ball carriers better and that means going linebacker. Jonathan Welsh of Wisconsin is a DE that will be a situational outside linebacker at best. His Badgers teammate - Anthony Davis (5-9) - has a motor, but also has durability questions. Dave Rayner was drafted just for kickoffs. Vinnie "Sweet Pea" Burns is a player I like, but third round is a tad high for him. They could've done way better from my viewpoint in the fourth round, too. **My Grade: C**



**Jacksonville Jaguars (9-7):** Jacksonville's decision to take Matt Jones, the receiver out of Arkansas, over a few guys including someone on their wish list (Nebraska CB Fabian Washington) was a little surprising to say the least. At 6-6¼ 240 pounds, we know Jones, the SEC's all-time QB leading rusher, is a physical specimen with the speed to play the receiver position. Look for Jones, 22 receptions his junior year in HS, to be used a trickster. Khalif Barnes pick is interesting since I had him going in Rnd. 1 to them. The Jags made up for some things by going Virginia RB Alvin Pearman in round #4, someone that impressed me at the combine. Pearman, 5-9, caught a lot of passes (about 63 or so), then rushed for 1,000. His sound understanding of the game makes him a viable comparison to Mewelde Moore from last year. Wisconsin corner Scott Starks and North Carolina's Gerald Sensabaugh (78Tack. in '04) seem to be okay picks. Sensabaugh, a former State long jump Champ that can play OLB/SS, has a 46-inch vertical that helped him be a 1-AA All-American at East Tennessee State. Jacksonville's sixth round pick of Chad Owens from Hawaii seems to be sufficient. Owens reminds me of New Orleans' Michael Lewis with his quickness and return ability. An average pass catcher at the NFL level, Owens figures to play a larger role on special teams. **My Grade: C+**



**Kansas City Chiefs (7-9):** It's pretty easy to make the argument that Kansas City had a C, C- or D type of draft. I definitely would start that argument too with the fact the Chiefs took a punter... in the third round. But later on the draft they may have a few players to fill out their depth chart. **We also cannot forget part of their draft included getting Patrick Surtain from Miami for a second round pick.** Miami used that pick on DE Matt Roth of Iowa, all in all, pretty equal trade. Kansas City got my fourth rated player in this entire draft at #15 overall - Texas linebacker Derrick Johnson. Say what you want about him not taking on blocks and putting forth 120% on run stopping plays. Bottom line is this guy, all 6-3 241 pounds of him that ran in the 4.5-40 range, is a gifted athlete coming off a season where he made an NCAA record nine forced fumbles. He'll be a Ray Lewis type of impact player, and make a bunch of tackles (made 20 in one game; 130 for the season). Put him with Kendrell Bell and you're looking at someone that can have an even bigger impact on the Chiefs defense than Jonathan Vilma had last year on the Jets. Crayton Thorpe comes to the Chiefs with injury concerns. I see him developing into an above average slot receiver or decent #2 guy. **My Grade: B-**



**Miami Dolphins (4-12):** Former LSU and now Miami Dolphins Head Coach Nick Saban (sidebar: if you ever hear him talk you know he uses the word value a lot when talking about the draft) did a fascinating thing on draft day 2005. He brought in players that he was familiar with whether it be playing against them in the SEC conference, playing against them out of the SEC, or his own defensive back in Travis Daneils of LSU. Auburn's Ronnie Brown - possibly the complete package - becomes the highest running back selected by the Dolphins in the first since 1968 when the fish fished

for someone by the name of Larry Csonka. If memory serves me right... he wasn't bad - just Hall-of-Fame material. Brown will definitely improve a Dolphins ground gamethat ranked 31<sup>st</sup> in the league at 83.7 yards per game. Getting Iowa defenisve end Matt Roth, a guy Saban saw up close and personal in the Capital One Bowl, helps them for an eventual replacement to Jason Taylor, or perhaps come in and start ahead of Vonnie Holliday. Roth, third in Iowa football history with 30 sacks, has a small chance to play outside 'backer because he has a motor that literally never stops running. When you talk about Channing Crowder of Florida the words character and issues come up. That being said, he's another play capable of coming right in and starting. Don't worry about injury problems; he was second in D-1A as a freshman in tackle with 106 in '03. **My Grade: B+**



**Minnesota Vikings (8-8):** In my opinion, when you pass on Mike Williams like the Vikings did to draft Troy Williamson, you've automatically disqualified yourself from getting an A, especially when you go with Erasmus James over Marcus Spears. Well you say, James is better than Spears and Spears is a 3-4 DE. Maybe true, but James has more injury concerns than Spears, and he [James] was able to get to the QB at Wisconsin partly because of Anttaj Hawthorne consuming interior blocks. Maybe not the whole reason for why James, also a type of player that can be used in the 3-4, had success this past year. We know how scary fast Williamson is (4.38-40) and that his numbers are misleading having played in a run-oriented offense. But don't tell me he's going to be a better pro than Williams because he's faster and will be an excellent underneath and vertical target for Daunte Culpepper. First off, who's to say he will score more TD's than Williams? Secondly, how are you going to cover Williams, a guy that basically did nothing wrong at Southern Cal on the field of play? Nonetheless, the players Minnesota got in James, an attack guy that was the Big Ten's Def. POY, and Williamson, who can make guys miss, are good players. They just aren't the guys I would have taken. Am not high on them getting another RB, while the Ole Miss guard could start. **My Grade: B-**



**New England Patriots (14-2):** They are the defending World Champions and the first team since the Dallas Cowboys in the early-mid 90's to win three Super Bowls in four years. However, on paper the Patriots draft does not look like an unbelievable one. Logan Mankins - kid I really like; borderline love the way he plays. Mankins (6-4 307), a 2004 1<sup>st</sup>-Team All-WAC selection that was named the MVP of his team, played dominating on the road vs. Kansas State. His Senior Bowl showing was very nice; proving he can use a good technique at any point in the NFL. Finally, if you want to sum this young man up in a nutshell, he's flat out hard to get past if you're a defensive end. All those wonderful things said, taking him with the last pick in the first round caught even me off guard, and I have him as the top rated guard (also can play OT). Believe me, they are not getting marked down at all, if any, for taking Mankins. Second round pick - Iowa State corner Ellis Hobbs III - had some strong games to finish the season. Wasn't the consummate second round pick when you rate his entire body of work with the Cyclones. Nick Kaczur comes to the Pats almost in an identical frame as Mankins, 6-4 303. There are question for him vs. overpowering DT's as well as whether he, the four-

time All-MAC selection, can be able to use his great shielding ability to stay healthy and productive for many years. James Sanders is a decent safety prospect. Thought the Champs could've upgraded the LB position, receiver and backup QB better than they did.

**My Grade: C-**



**New Orleans Saints (8-8):** I have to say the Saints have had worse drafts. Although, this one could've been better I guess when you really think long and hard about it. New Orleans made a deal with the Houston Texans to move up a few spots to get Jammal Brown, the mammoth OT out of Oklahoma. When I first saw the deal I thought, hmm... maybe they are moving up to get someone to push Aaron Brooks (a.k.a. Aaron Rodgers). Wasn't the case, and I'm not sure giving up a third rounder next year gave either team an edge. Their worry must've been Carolina at #14 grabbing him. My thinking was improve a defense that was one of the very worst in all of football. Could've gotten Thomas Davis, Derrick Johnson, or just about any pass rusher/d-tackle available. Wayne Gandy is getting old at LT so Brown could go to right while Jon Stinchomb/Jermaine Mayberry fight for the left tackle spot. Brown has made progress, allowing not a single sack or hurry last year while starting in 40 consecutive games at OU. I like him as a run blocker. I like safety Josh Bullocks (10Int. in '03) getting takeaways for the Saints deep in their defensive backfield. Middle linebacker Alfred Fincher at #82 became the first UCONN draftee in 11 years as he led the Big East in tackles with 140. Fincher started his final 29 games there, while WR Chase Lyman was in and out of the Cal lineup. Adrian McPherson - athletic, big-time strong gun - is a super pick. **My Grade: C**



**New York Giants (6-10):** Keep in mind that the Giants were limited in this year's draft because of the 2004 draft where they gave up so much to acquire the rights of Eli Manning. New York had only four draft picks, going defensive end with half the picks. When you think of weapons you don't think of fullbacks. Notwithstanding is fullback Brandon Jacobs of So. Illinois. Powerful with 4.56-40 speed, Jacobs was a 2<sup>nd</sup> Team All-Gateway player transferring over from Auburn. We know the great stable of backs the Tigers had a year ago so maybe Jacobs turns out to give the G-men 4-6 pops a game. If LSU CB Corey Webster (25PBU, 7Int. in '03) had come out a year early or been more productive in his senior season, then Webster, who's often lost in man-coverage, would've been a first round lock. Instead, the Giants get a bargain with someone that is second in LSU history with 16 picks. Notre Dame's Justin Tuck set an Irish school rec. with 24.5 sacks. Tuck, a linebacker in high school, has developed into a steady 4-3 DE. He, like Webster, had some nagging injuries as well. Look for big things out of Tuck and 6<sup>th</sup> round choice Eric Moore to battle to make the roster. **My Grade: C**



**New York Jets (10-6):** You don't often see a team take a kicker with their first pick in the draft. After trading their first round pick to Oakland for tight end Doug Jolley, the Jets did. His name - Mike Nugent. The one-of-a-kind kicker from Ohio State drilled

8-9 field goals from 50+ yards and is the highest selected kicker since Sebastian Janikowski. Nugent (4<sup>th</sup> kicker in the past 17 years to go in round two) has uncanny accuracy and had he been on the Jets this past season they may have been in the AFC Conference Championship game. Getting Justin Miller at pick #57 overall was an excellent steal in my book. I kind of thought the Jets should've gone Miller with the 47<sup>th</sup> choice, though they ended up getting him anyway. Miller, who may have fallen due to Clemson's unusual 4-2-5 defense, led D-1A with 33 yards per kick return. After making eight interceptions and 61 tackles as a freshman, Miller had a mini sophomore slump that had some questioning his work ethic. I think he can be an interception threat at corner and a touchdown waiting to happen if teams punt to him. After those two picks, the Jets reached with their next three players. Oddly enough, the last two choices - Cedric Houston of Tennessee and Colorado St. TE Joel Dreessen - may pan out. **My Grade: C+**



**Oakland Raiders (5-11):** Nebraska corner Fabian Washington played as a true freshman and came out as a junior. He's not the type of run stopper Antrel Rolle is or the dual threat like Pac-Man. What Washington is, is someone with recovery speed (4.25-4.30 speed) and can use his sick speed to be a Pro Bowler if he works on his cover skills. The Stanford Routt (also computer speed) selection in the second round has me scratching my head. ESPN analyst/former Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Ron Jaworski describes the Raiders' third round draft pick, Andrew Walter, as a 'judicious' decision maker. In fact, the 6-foot-6 Walter holds the Pac-10 record to passing touchdowns with 85 (John Elway has 77 with Stanford). He's also the school's pass yardage and pass completions leader, but has to play the game at a faster pace. Like the Walter pick, also like the Kirk Morrison pick because he was a solid hitter at San Diego State. D-coordinator Rob Ryan really gets a wonderful player in Anttaj Hawthorne, a d-tackle out of Wisconsin that fell due to positive marijuana tests. Hawthorne (42.5TFL in 50 games) has a nasty streak and the ability to eat up blockers. Routt is a major stretch to me, like the last three picks, but neither Oakland nor the Jets got a helpful WR/TE. **My Grade: C**



**Philadelphia Eagles (13-3):** Tampa Bay was the only team in the entire draft that had more overall picks than Philadelphia, and when you put things into perspective, that's good for Andy Reid's Eagles. USC's Mike Patterson went early to the Eagles at 31 overall. A muscle penetrator, Patterson reminds many of Warren Sapp. He can make plays behind the line of scrimmage as shown by 46 career tackles for loss. That was an above average pick (albeit a small reach) as was taking Georgia's Reggie Brown. Brown's 71.7 yards per game was second in the SEC and may be able to start since he's a good blocker with raw skills. I, for one, am not drinking the Matt McCoy (6-0 230) kool-aid. Reason I say that is I thought his LB teammate at San Diego St. - Kirk Morrison - was and will be better. McCoy did move up the board well as he had a 2003 MWC best 75 solo tackles to go with 18 tackles vs. Michigan. Hard to believe it, but the Eagles got one of the finer running backs in this draft in La. Tech's Ryan Moats. Moats, the WAC POY, might be the most underrated and disciplined out there. Five 200-yard games and a 4.49-40 at the combine isn't bad is it? Scott Young of BYU is an outstanding fifth round

choice since he's ox-like strong, and Iowa's Sean Considine (five blocked kicks) is a heady special teams player who draws comparisons to Matt Bowen. **My Grade: B+**



**Pittsburgh Steelers (15-1):** Let's not forget the Pittsburgh Steelers won a regular season best 15 games this past year. In order to keep up with the big boys in the AFC they must replace WR Plaxico Burress, who fled in the off-season to the Giants. They went a long way towards doing that in getting UVA tight end Heath Miller at pick #30. "Big Money" set ACC tight end records with 144Rec. 1703Yds. and 20 scores. A converted QB, Miller, 6-5 256, reminds me a lot of Todd Heap. He'll be a better than decent blocker (a notch above adequate), and despite the sports hernia problem, will easily have more than the 16 receptions Pittsburgh got out of their tight ends. At 5-11, Florida State corner Bryant McFadden can play opposite of Ricardo Colclough next year by being a physical player. McFadden did not allow a pass TD, broke up 26 passes in 2004, and doesn't get tested often. Therefore, his tackle numbers are rather low. Big Ben gets a tall passing option to go to in 6-4 Georgia wideout Fred Gibson. Inconsistent, sometimes hurt, etc. Gibson can put all that to rest by just going up for lobs. Rian Wallace and Chris Kemoatu won't be disappointing picks; are pretty steady players. Don't quite understand the Trai Essex (Northwestern guard) pick to be perfectly honest. **My Grade: B**



**St. Louis Rams (8-8):** Like the Packers **overall** draft, I feel the Rams did just a little bit better than Seattle and Denver - my two preseason teams to reach Super Bowl 39 (how'd that work out for me?). Therefore, I have to give the Rams a grade between a C- and a D+ with a C to C+ in reach if Alex Barron proves the doubters wrong. I believe he can, and that's why he is my top rated offensive tackle prospect in the draft. Ronald Bartell Jr. out of d-2 school Howard has raw skills comparable to Ricardo Colclough from last year. Bartell, the highest player ever picked out of Howard, is a confident transfer from Central Michigan with poignant 4.37 speed. That being said, he was picked apart by crisp route running receivers Mark Clayton and Taylor Stubblefield at the Senior Bowl. Nigerian O.J. Atogwe led Stanford in tackles the last three seasons and is a "rugged enforcer" according to ESPN draft guru Mel Kiper Jr. Nebraska's Richie Incognito (hasn't played since '03) is a wild card pick for Mike Martz and co. Incognito has a nasty/mean streak and made the transition from left tackle to center admirably. Can he stay away from injuries is the question because if he can the Rams have a surprisingly speed o-lineman in him as well. Ball State receiver Dante Ridgeway, New Mexico OG Claude Terrell, and Harvard QB Ryan Fitzpatrick are three intriguing developmental players to keep an eye on. **My Grade: C-**



**San Diego Chargers (12-4):** Nicknamed "Lights Out," Maryland hybrid Shawne Merriman is now the first player since Chad Scott in 1997 to be taken in the first round of the NFL Draft. Merriman brings an intensity like Willie McGinest according to

Rams receiver Torry Holt. If he moves to defensive end I think it's a nice move. If he plays OLB I think it is between nice and decent. Steve Foley was really the team's only pass rusher, making ten sacks from the outside linebacker position. Luis Castillo admitted to using steroids before the NFL combine and Marty Schottenheimer will be the first to admit he'll be the backup, not starter to Jamal Williams. Up to that point the Chargers were not having an impressive draft because they took someone I consider a second rounder and failed to get Roddy White, Mark Clayton, or Troy Williamson. Plus, the Chargers did not get an o-tackle until Wesley Britt, who can be a Roman Oben like starter if his leg holds up. At 6-4 $\frac{3}{4}$  241 pounds, No. Colorado receiver Vincent Jackson looks to prove those wrong who think he will be ineffective since he had a weak senior bowl and played low D-1AA competition. Getting him and a guy with 6512 all-purpose yards - Darren Sproles - made their draft in my mind. Sproles is a diminutive, yet shifty runner that drew comparisons to Barry Sanders while in college. **My Grade: B-**



**San Francisco 49ers (2-14):** San Francisco made Utah quarterback Alex Smith (46-2 in High School; 3.74GPA) the second youngest quarterback to ever be taken first overall in the NFL Draft. At 6-4, Smith is a system QB with running ability. Personally, I thought that Smith was the third best at his position in this draft and would be late first/early second in most drafts. Obviously, the Niners disagree with me, seeing some terrific upside with Smith, the nephew of Michigan St. Head Coach John L. Smith. What San Fran to help Smith (42Tot. TD in '04) out was get better protection up front. Michigan's David Baas, a man I really like since he can contribute immediately at any of the three interior line positions, received the label of 'tough hombre' from Chris Berman. Another rock solid, robust player (or close to it) is Oregon's Adam Snyder, an All-Pac-10 performer back-to-back seasons. Frank Gore (9YPC as a true frosh.) seems whole again after his injury. That was a very good pick in my opinion for the Niners as he (945Yds. 8TD splitting time with Tyrone Moss) can be slowly brought along. Fifth rounder Ronald Fields, All-SEC, has dropped about ten pounds, potentially allowing him to be the nose tackle in a 3-4 scheme. They like that he uses leverage, and they also like the speed ability with Rasheed Marshall (West Virginia), the Niners' second fifth round pick. Since the Niners do have so many multiple needs you cannot possibly fill them all. Overall, they deserve about a B- to B+ for their scouting work. **My Grade: B**



**Seattle Seahawks (9-7): Worst overall draft hands down.** No, I'm not trying to take shots at Mike Holmgren or the Seahawks front office. All I'm saying is they did not draft the way they should have and were in my mind had the most unpredictable. Generally, the most unpredictable draft can be the worst one. This time it is the case as they got an Ole Miss center in Chris Spencer, who I know for a fact was expected to go to Cincinnati in the middle of the second round. Instead, the Seahawks pass on OT Khalif Barnes, are unable to trade up for a DE or even select a decent one, and go Spencer. Then in round two they threw a major curve ball, choosing USC's Lofa Tatupu. Tatupu is a mini Pisa Tinosimoa except the only way I see him having a successful career is on special teams. Again, my visions could be wrong as they generally

are from time to time. Also, did not foresee them taking Georgia's David Greene, a lefty QB that won an NCAA record 42 games as a starter. Again, that's at the NCAA level so it's unlikely to translate over in my opinion since Greene was benched at times for D.J. Shockley because of inconsistent arm strength leading to disappointing 3 & outs. Linebackers LeRoy Hill and Cornelius Wortham combined for 370 tackles a year ago, but you're getting a limited player in Hill due to size and questionable coverage skills with Wortham. **My Grade: D**



**Tampa Bay Buccaneers (5-11): No team had more picks to play around with than the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.** Jon Gruden has to be pleased they got the running back they wanted in Auburn's Carnell Williams. Cadillac, in fact was the starter at Auburn ahead of second overall pick Ronnie Brown. Williams has taken a semi beating, can block and catch well, and was All-SEC as a running back as well as return specialist. Tampa's reason with the pick was pretty logical to me. They already took a WR in Mike Clayton last year with the first pick, and he's been tremendous. The Bucs don't need to make a ridiculous reach for defense when they already have some good players on that side of the ball. Finally, the quarterback position looks manageable since they re-signed Brian Griese to a large contract and have Chris Simms to back him up. Barrett Rudd has football in his blood as some people in his family played the game before him. Rudd set a Nebraska school record for tackles with 432 while there. After those two picks, the Bucs are playing the hope game/wait and see. Two receivers they got in the seventh round intrigue me: Paris Warren of Utah, who set a Fiesta Bowl record for receptions, and Louisville's J.R. Russell. At 6-4 258, Stanford TE Alex Smith (10Rec. 131Yds. vs. UCLA) gives Griese a sizable Antonio Gates type of target. **My Grade: B-**



**Tennessee Titans (5-11): Thrilled isn't a word I would associate with the Titans draft if I was a Titans fan.** What really got to me was how they could have gotten Jerome Mathis of Hampton or West Virginia's Chris Henry to solidify the receiver position. Instead, they opted for a few different guys and went David Stewart over Adam Kieft at OT (a move that is debatable). Of course, the big name the Titans got was PR/CB Adam "Pac-Man" Jones, who became the first Mountaineers players to go in round once since 1990. He's a fantastic athlete that brings instant speed to the table. After that they went 6-6½ 320 pound OT Michael Roos, who in my opinion is a project. Born in Estonia, Roos started 30 straight games after he made the transition from defense to o-line. Indiana's Courtney Roby is decent in my book at the next level, averaging just a mediocre 14.7 yards per catch meaning he is a short possession option (though I would have looked at Henry). Brandon Jones has baseball skills - he was their second WR pick. Roydell Williams was a small steal. Really don't know what to expect out of fourth round safety Vincent Fuller from Virginia Tech. **My Grade: C+**



**Washington Redskins (6-10):** Here's my biggest problem with the Redskins' draft: they passed on my #1 overall player in the draft to get someone I consider to be the second or third best corner available. Don't get me wrong, I like Carlos Rogers out of Auburn at pick #9. Joe Gibbs says the word 'physical' when talking about him, which is absolutely the case. Nobody looked better to me this past season in press coverage than him where he is wonderful. Rogers is a B+ player, while Williams, in my opinion, is an A+ player that can make an impact on any team. You make room on your football team for special players like him even in spite of the fact he did not play football at the collegiate level in 2004-05. As far as the Redskins' other picks go, Auburn QB Jason Campbell was indeed who they targeted to get by going up in the late first round. Campbell (school record 31 wins), who was the 2004 SEC Off. POY in Al Borges' west coast system at Auburn, did make great progress a season ago. Big arm? Yes. Has he made adjustments and been able to cope without great receivers? Yes. Is it also possible he regresses and fails to throw an accurate ball? Yes. Louisville linebacker Robert McCune is simply one ripped dude. He'll be a punisher on defense as well as special teams for the Skins. One of the fullbacks hopes to figure in their plans, too. ***My Grade:***  
***C-***