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An Interview With:

NFL Network Analyst MIKE MAYOCK

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for joining us today on the NFL Network's 2016 NFL Scouting Combine conference call. Joining me on the call today is NFL Network's lead analyst for the combine, Emmy-nominated analyst Mike Mayock. Before I open it up to questions from Mike, a few programming notes on the 2016 NFL scouting combine on NFL Network and across the NFL's digital properties.

This is the 12th year NFL Network has covered the Combine. Beginning Wednesday, NFL Network, NFL.com, NFL Now and NFL Mobile will broadcast live from Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. Live coverage of the 2016 NFL Scouting Combine presented by Hyundai begins Wednesday at noon with coverage of the Combine press conferences from Lucas Oil Stadium.

Individual workouts begin Friday at 9:00 a.m. and for the first time the running backs are included in the first group of workouts along with the offensive linemen and special teams. On Saturday, the quarterbacks, wide receivers and tight ends will work out, followed by the linebackers and defensive ends on Sunday, and finally the defensive backs on Monday. All individual workouts begin at 9:00 a.m. eastern on NFL Network each day.

On NFL Media digital properties fans can follow all the action from the combine with NFL Now Live presented by Old Spice. It starts Friday, February 26th through Monday, February 29th streaming live on NFL.com, NFL Now and NFL Mobile at 9:00 a.m. eastern. Live show features three separate sets providing comprehensive coverage and analysis of the on-field drills.

NFL Network's live coverage of the 2016 NFL Scouting Combine can also be accessed on smartphones exclusively through NFL mobile from Verizon as well as other digital platforms such as

Watch NFL Network for tablets and PC, NFL on Xbox and NFL.com/watch.

Lastly, as he has done for the previous eleven years, the combine will again conclude with Rich Eisen's annual 40-yard dash in his trademark suit. Like last year Run Rich Run will benefit the NFL PLAY 60 relationship with St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Fans can participate and show their support by submitting videos of themselves running the 40-yard dash with the hashtags #RunRichRun and St. Jude. For more information fans can visit NFL.com/runrichrun.

Before we open it up to the media for questions I'll hand it over to Mike for a few quick comments on the combine in general. Mike?

MIKE MAYOCK: Thank you, Alex. Hi, everybody. I'm amazed how far this thing has come. The first year I did this Combine, I sat next to Paul Burmeister and the two of us were in director's chairs. There was nobody else there and nobody cared, and now it's blown up to what it is today.

A couple things real quick: It's a defensive draft. Best interior defensive line I've seen maybe since I've started doing this.

We're seeing with the Super Bowl-winning Denver Broncos what started about five years ago, which is all the NFL teams are talking about, we've got to find people on defense that can affect the pass offense because it's a pass-first league.

So what you saw with Von Miller in that defensive front of Denver is what teams have been trying to build for the last four or five years. And I think the good news is we're so deep on defense, so defensive tackles and the corners especially, it's going to be a good year for those groups.

Without further ado, let's open this thing up and I'll try to get to everybody's questions, I hope.

Q. You've been complimentary of Laremy Tunsil. Do you think he's a No. 1 pick for the Titans, and if not, who could sneak in there and be the one?

MIKE MAYOCK: No, I think very much he's a fit for the Titans especially since you get better at two positions; Tunsil will be your left tackle. You kick, Taylor Lewan over to right tackle, and I think you have to do everything you can to support the quarterback you chose last year, Mariota.

To me, I think they'd love to move down a couple slots, and if Tunsil wasn't there, I don't think that the difference between Tunsil and Ronnie Stanley is all that great. So if they were able to move down four, five, six slots and still get a tackle, I think the same process would hold.

Beyond that, does Joey Bosa make sense? Sure. Does DeForest Buckner make sense? Yeah. Does Jalen Ramsey? Yeah, but I really believe you've got to support the quarterback since he's going to be your franchise guy.

Q. Do you think anyone will prove worthy of moving up forward to No. 1 that would give him a chance to get out?

MIKE MAYOCK: I think with all the good news at the quarterback position as far as -- when I say "good news" all of a sudden people are buying into Carson Wentz. Goff might go No. 2. If Goff goes 2 and somebody likes him, would they jump up to 1? So I think there's a little bit more buzz on those top two quarterbacks.

Q. Myles Jack has been such a phenomenal talent, at least on the West Coast it feels like he's been around forever here, but I'm wondering are there any concerns about him? Is he a guy who might have benefitted from another year or has the NFL seen enough? And sort of given the leeway that he had defensively at UCLA to freelance a little bit, is it going to be -- do you anticipate it being a difficult transition for him to play within the confines of a more sort of rigid scheme?

MIKE MAYOCK: You know what, even though his season was cut short by injury this year, the tape I watched, I saw a different guy this year than in past years, and by that I mean he was more physical. I think more confident in his physicality, able to come down and take on guards, tackles, fullbacks. So I saw a guy that was more of a finesse player early in his career turn into a true linebacker this year, and again, his season was cut short, but I don't think he's going to have much of a problem transitioning. I'd be surprised if -- he looks like a top-10 pick at this point. The medical needs to check out. All those things need to check out prior to the end of April, but I think he's going to be a guy that steps into the lineup day one once medically cleared, and I think he's going to be a high-level player.

Q. Was his versatility and ability to play running back, does that matter to these guys at

all? Not that they're taking him as a running back, but just the fact that he's able to slide right in?

MIKE MAYOCK: I think it reinforces athletic ability, a little bit like Shaq Thompson last year. I think any time you see a kid, especially a potential first-round pick, the more you can reinforce to yourself that he's highly athletic and adaptable, the better you're going to like him.

Q. Lions have cut Joique Bell and they're going to need a power component really to complement Ameer Abdullah. I was wondering if there are any guys that are outside that top 100 that could be good fits for Detroit.

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, I think a guy like CJ Prosise from Notre Dame, about a 220, 222-pound player. What I like about him is he was a wide receiver until this past year and jumped in at tailback and looked completely natural at the position.

So I think he's probably a fourth-round guy. I like his size. I like his speed, and I like his upside. He might make some sense paired with Abdullah.

Q. I was just wondering how similar you feel Jaylon Smith's situation is right now is to that of Willis McGahee back in the '03 draft in terms of proximity to the injury to the pre-draft season and just how far he might fall in light of where his medical sits.

MIKE MAYOCK: Well, it's a great question. I've had this conversation with some general managers and coaches just this past week. First and foremost, I feel horribly for the kid, injuring the knee, especially when he injured it in the bowl game.

Secondly, if he did not get hurt, he'd be in the conversation for the first pick in the draft. That's how good his junior season was.

A little bit like Myles Jack in the sense that I saw him take a big leap forward as a full three-down linebacker this year. He's sideline to sideline with speed, he's as exciting a linebacker prospect as I've seen since Luke Kuechly as far as an insider, off-the-ball linebacker.

That's how excited I was for him.

Now, the next step of this is the medical evaluation, which takes place in Indianapolis. So two things can happen: He could have a fairly

clean evaluation of that knee where it's going to be a "typical ACL-type situation," a "typical time frame," and a team will be able to gauge with pretty close proximity when they can get him back this season.

What happens after that is if that analysis of the knee, the medical, is compounded by potential nerve damage or any other extenuating circumstance, then you start saying, uh-oh, what's going to happen, when are we going to get this kid, and will he ever get to be 100 percent again.

So they're really the two levels I think you see. He could have been the first pick in the draft. Now if he gets a clean evaluation, he's still going to be a first-round pick, probably a top-15 pick, because he's that special.

If there's any cloudiness or murkiness around that knee between now and the draft, teams are going to look at it differently, and since we don't know yet what it is, I can't go there, but I think that's as close as I can get today.

Q. I was just curious with the Lions, they haven't taken a quarterback in the draft since 2009. Any that you think would be a good fit in this particular round?

MIKE MAYOCK: I had trouble hearing you. Are you asking me about the Lions and quarterbacks?

Q. Is there a good fit that would be a good backup for Stafford?

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, I think obviously I'm a big believer that most teams should draft a quarterback every other year. I really am. Just to keep trying to look at different kids and seeing if you can upgrade that position. I'm talking about as a backup.

So from Detroit's perspective, they've really got nobody right now behind Stafford. When you start talking about third, fourth, fifth round, middle-round quarterbacks, one of the big questions this year with GMs around the league is, okay, who's the next Kirk Cousins? Who's that next middle-round that can get you to the playoffs, if he needed to start down the road?

So there's a group of those guys. Kevin Hogan would be one from Stanford. Brandon Allen, fourth- or fifth-round guy from Arkansas. Dak Prescott, developmental guy from Mississippi State, another perhaps fourth-round pick. Jacoby Brissett. That's a whole group of guys, and then I have two wild cards, and the wild cards from me are Christian Hackenberg from Penn State and

Cardale Jones from Ohio State, both of whom have a ton of talent, big, good-looking kids, but their tape is poor. So they're going to be wild cards as to who -- because they have the upside of being from -- from a skills perspective, they have starter skills, but their tape is poor.

So that's a whole group right there.

Q. Two questions if I could: First one is outside the box. What's the most overhyped aspect of the combine that you've seen, and what's the most overlooked? And secondly with the Colts, the fact that they've not protected Luck, is that just the overriding concern coming out of the draft is get offensive line help early and often?

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, I mean, Indianapolis is a little bit like Philadelphia in that I think both those teams can't draft enough offensive linemen, and when you've got a quarterback like Andrew Luck, you'd better protect him. You saw a guy that was one of the best quarterbacks in football have a tough season last year, and really the reason is I don't care how tough you are or how good you are, if you get hit enough, it's going to affect you. Look at Christian Hackenberg at Penn State.

Yes, I think Indianapolis has to do that.

Secondly, the most overhyped thing is the 40-yard dash, and it's fun, and it's easily calculatable, so we can sit there and compare everybody. But it often doesn't matter what a lot of these guys run at the end of the day. 95 percent of it, 99 percent of it should be about their tape and what they've already done.

I think the most overlooked piece of it is a combination of the interviews and the medical, and that's why this thing started 30 years ago anyway, was to get unified medical reports on all these kids.

Q. Knowing that the Dolphins need linebackers and corners, maybe defensive ends depending on what happened with Wake and Vernon, what makes sense to you in the range of eighth for them in the first round?

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, if you're talking linebacker, obviously off the line linebackers in a 4-3 type group, the two linebackers we've already talked about, Myles Jack, who should be healthy, and Jaylon Smith, are by far the two best linebackers in that situation. A guy that I think has gained a lot of steam over the last month is Darron

Lee from Ohio State. He's kind of a weak outside linebacker. He's probably going to run in the 4-4s and everybody is going to get all excited about Darron Lee.

I think he's more of a 20-to-32 guy for me, but he's going to go in the first round, and he fits what Miami does.

As far as corners are concerned, there's going to be a lot of conversation about whether Jalen Ramsey is a corner or safety, and I think the most natural corner in the draft is Vernon Hargreaves from the University of Florida. He can create and change a direction, can play press, can play off. If he went eighth to Miami, I think it would be a heck of a pick. He's that good.

And as far as edge guys are concerned, defensive ends, Bosa is probably gone, then you get into Noah Spence. I think he fits the 3-4 teams a little bit better, but in today's day and age, an edge rusher is an edge rusher.

There's a bunch of logical names for you there.

Q. The kid at Ole Miss, what are his prospects? And the productivity wasn't there; we might have overhyped him coming out of school. But how does he fit in the first round amongst the defensive tackles?

MIKE MAYOCK: That's an interesting guy right there. If you look at Robert Nkemdiche in a vacuum and just watch his Alabama tape against the best team in college football, he was dominant. Off that one tape, if he didn't have any off-the-field issues and if he'd played that hard every week, we'd be talking about him as the first pick in this draft. That's how talented he is, and that's how much upside he has.

However, once you factor in the inconsistency from snap to snap and game to game and the off-the-field situation, then you get into, how do you measure this kid? At what point does the risk justify the reward.

So I don't know where it's going to end up, and this is a huge week for him. He interviews -- he needs to come in in the best shape of his life to show people how serious he is about the process, and then he's going to have to deal with every team in the league asking him about all the off-the-field stuff and the on-the-field inconsistencies. I feel like this kid along with Noah Spence, the edge rusher from Eastern Kentucky, I think it's a huge week for both those kids.

Q. I'm curious what you learned about Ryan Pace from his first draft and if there's anything from last year that you can kind of look at as to what the Bears might be thinking going forward this season.

MIKE MAYOCK: You know, I think he shows those guys that he's going to be a big body, tough guy. It was interesting to me that he took Kevin White in the first round, playmaker, explosive. He was my No. 1 wide receiver in the draft, and obviously you got basically nothing out of him because of injury.

But his next couple picks, if I remember correctly, were I think Eddie Goldman on the defensive line and Hroniss Grasu on the offensive line, and they were really good solid picks from an inside-out perspective, and that's what I think I've seen a little bit with Ryan. He's an inside-out guy, believes in O-line, D-line but he's not afraid to take a shot with an explosive guy like a Kevin White.

Q. Can you talk about Jaylon Smith and the chance that he might miss half this season, the fact that Kevin White didn't play all last season, do you wonder whether the Bears would have the stomach for that?

MIKE MAYOCK: If he had clean medical where you knew you were going to get him for the second half of the season, I think -- I don't care who the team is, Chicago or anybody in the league, this kid is so good that if the medical is clean, you have to take a big-picture look at him, and by that I mean two years from now.

You want to have maybe one of the two or three or four best linebackers in football, and you might have to wait a half a season for him, to me every team is going to have a different answer to that, and I'm not sure what Chicago's would be. But if he has clean medical and you know you're going to get him for a half season plus and he's going to be fine, yeah, I think you pull the trigger on a kid like that.

Q. Assuming the Browns go quarterback at No. 2, they've got so many other needs, obviously receiver, O-line, linebackers and defensive backs, could you just give a quick snapshot of the depth thing or lack thereof in each position group and maybe what you think would make sense for them at No. 32?

MIKE MAYOCK: Okay, give me the

groups you want to talk about again.

Q. Well, receiver, O-line, linebackers, and defensive backs.

MIKE MAYOCK: Well, I mean, real quickly, obviously the Goff and Wentz thing has heated up, and from my perspective it's two different conversations. I think Goff is more polished, ready to go today. I think Wentz has more significant upside.

Now, once you roll around to the second round and you're trying to say if you're the Cleveland Browns, what are you going to do? If you're looking at wide receivers, I don't think it's a great wide receiver class this year, and Cleveland needs, I think, a bigger body type wideout, so who's going to be there? Treadwell and Corey Coleman could be gone in the first round. Michael Thomas, home state, Ohio State, obviously. Josh Doctson from TCU. I think they're both logical people.

As far as offensive line is concerned, obviously they took the center/tackle from Florida State last year. Top of the second round, Le'Raven Clark, Sean Coleman, a lot of people like them in the second. I think it's pushing it for those tackles. However, inside I like Cody Whitehair, I like Vadal Alexander, Ryan Kelly. I think any of those guys would make sense inside because you don't know what's going to happen with Mack for the Cleveland Browns.

Q. With the defensive line class so deep here and the Saints could obviously use some defensive line help either at tackle or end, how tough would it be to kind of differentiate so many prospects considering there's so many that could rise and fall? And then secondly, no more Jahri Evans; the Saints are obviously in the market for a starting guard. Day two, who are some of the guys the Saints may look for?

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, I think what you're going to see happening with that interior defensive line group, and when I've had this discussion with a lot of people, and this is how good it is, okay. You could wait until the third or fourth round this year and get a defensive tackle that in past drafts was a first or second rounder. I mean, I've heard first-round grades on plus or minus 10 to 12 defensive tackles this year from various feeds. So a lot of teams are going to wait until the third or fourth round to get that defensive tackle they need because he's still going to be on the board, and

you're going to get a second rounder instead of a fourth rounder.

So it gives you an opportunity to kind of go and look at some other places, and if they're looking at guard, and I just mentioned a couple of the ones I like, Cody Whitehair, for instance, left tackle for Kansas State will kick inside. Vadal Alexander from LSU will kick inside. Germain Ifedi from Texas A&M is a tackle and a guard. I'm starting to lean towards him as a guard, also. I think all three of those guys would make sense in the second round, also.

I think Connor McGovern from Missouri, a tackle who I think is kicking inside would make sense in the third round.

I think if you're a team that needs a defensive tackle, you can go chase some other things first and then circle back in the third or fourth round and get your guy.

Q. Piggy-backing off what you said about the wide receiver class and now what you said about the D-line, does that sort of mean you might see an overdrafting of some of these top receivers because maybe unlike years past where you can maybe come back and find a guy second, specifically with the Bengals at 24 usually do best available, is this a draft where if they need that receiver, they might have to go for that as opposed to waiting, maybe could have done it years prior?

MIKE MAYOCK: It's an interesting question. I don't think you ever want to reach, but I think common sense tells you that if you're sitting at 24 and you're Cincinnati, we're in the second round, whatever round we're talking about, and there's only X number of wide receivers that you believe in, they're probably is going to be a run on those guys because there's going to be a drop-off after a certain point.

Now, I'm not saying it's an awful class. I think it's solid. I just don't think it's as explosive as the last couple drafts. I mean, two years ago we had Watkins, Mike Evans, Beckham, Cooks, Benjamin. Last year we had a lot of injuries, but Amari Cooper, Kevin White, DeVante Parker, Perryman. I don't see those kind of athletes running around this year in this draft class. So I think you're going to see teams in the first or second round say a particular wide receiver fits what we do, and we'd better get him now.

Treadwell, I don't know what he's going to

run, and he apparently is not running this week. That was a big question. Corey Coleman and Fuller will both run really well. Josh Doctson, big question mark about his speed. If you're looking for a slot, you'd better go get Sterling Shepard. So there's some different conversations here, but I agree with your basic premise. If you really like a kid and he fits what you do, you probably need to get him.

Q. I know it's a real deep interior line class. I want to know who your late-first round guys you could see fall to the Chiefs are. I was curious which nose tackles, 3 techniques do you possibly see being an option at No. 28 in the first round.

MIKE MAYOCK: So you don't like the nose tackle you have, Poe?

Q. No, I love Poe, but Dorsey has shown a tendency to draft ahead of time, and he'll be a free agent in a year. Plus Jay Howard is a free agent as well and he's nose and 3 Tech, so I think that's something they could address this year.

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, I think if you're talking the end of the first round, and again, with this whole defensive tackle, defensive end grouping, who knows who's going to -- as I mentioned, there are 10 to 12 of them. But I think Buckner will be gone. Nkemdiche will probably be gone. I love Sheldon Rankins; he'll probably be gone. Jarran Reed and A'Shawn Robinson, the two Alabama kids, kind of fit what Kansas City does from a scheme perspective. One or both of those guys could be there. But Kenny Clark from UCLA. Billings is probably the best pure nose tackle in this draft from Baylor, strong as can be, probably more of a two-down guy, though. Butler from Louisiana Tech could do a lot of jobs and fits what Kansas City does. He could play nose, he could play 5 technique. He's a really intriguing player at 6'5", 325.

There are some names that I think make some sense late first round.

Q. As you look at this year's tight end class, what do you see overall as the strengths and weaknesses?

MIKE MAYOCK: Kind of the typical tight end class. In the last five years we've averaged 14 tight ends drafted overall, about four and a half tight ends go in the first three rounds, and about every other year we seem to get a first-round tight

end, and I think this is the typical class. We don't get a whole lot of pure tight ends out of college football anymore.

Hunter Henry from Arkansas is kind of a borderline late one to mid two. He will block, you can line him up in line, but he's also a very accomplished receiver when he's in line or detached. Austin Hooper from Stanford really I think a very sophisticated route runner, very much like a Zach Ertz who went in the second round, or a Coby Fleener from Stanford. So I think he's a second-round pick.

The guy I've been impressed with is Jerrell Adams from South Carolina, not known as well. I liked him on tape. He's a long athletic kid, he catches the football, and even though he's not a sophisticated blocker, he's a willing blocker. After that Nick Vannett from Ohio State who is probably more of the old-school, in-line Y and a better receiver than people think.

And those I think are the top four, and I think they're going to go in the first three rounds, and then after that it's kind of pick your flavor. You're looking for a big guy that can block, are you looking for a Tyler Higby from Western Kentucky, more of a pass receiver, or a Thomas Duarte from UCLA who is more like a wide receiver; is he a wideout? Is he a tight end? But that's a long way of saying it's a typical tight end class, and you've kind of got to go and take a specific look at what you need and draft that type of player.

Q. There's been a lot of talk about maybe what the Vikings will do in the first round, but what are some players you could see them targeting in maybe the second and third days?

MIKE MAYOCK: Well, I mean, that's a hard one without knowing what they did on the first day. You know, they could be looking at wideouts, an offensive tackle or guard, a safety. Zim does such a good job developing young players like that, like Alexander last year in the third round.

In a vacuum it's hard to say what Minnesota might do. If they're looking for linemen in that second or third round, we've talked about some of those interior guys that might be available. As far as tackles, I think a Jason Spriggs from Indiana would make a ton of sense, a Jerald Hawkins from LSU are a couple names. The wide receiver position we've talked about a little bit as far as down-the-road guys at wideout.

Depending on, again, what they're looking for, I think Pharoah Cooper is a really interesting guy with the ball in his hands from South Carolina, slot return guy. Tyler Boyd from Pittsburgh, second or third-round guy, tough guy. There are just some names that could be interesting to the Vikings in the second and third.

Q. What are your thoughts on the running back class in general? And where do you have Alex Collins from Arkansas, who's looked great in some games and not so good in some other things?

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, Collins for me, it's funny because I was doing tape on Sebastian Tretola, the guard, and I had the Alabama tape on, and Brandon Allen was getting beat up and it was hard to throw the ball. I wasn't even looking at the tailback, and this guy with dreadlocks kept knocking people down, so I did some -- I went, who is that? And found out it was Alex Collins, who was making a decision whether or not to come out.

Three consecutive 1,000-yard seasons in the SEC is pretty impressive. I don't think he's a natural running back as far as one of those guys who is just innately gifted with when and where to cut, but I think he's got size, I think he's got strength, I think he gets north and south, and I like his pass protection. He knocked one of those defensive tackles from Alabama right on his butt, and that caught my attention.

I think he's a third-round tailback. I've got him kind of as my fifth or sixth running back in this draft. I think it's a solid running back class like usual. We've devalued this position. Ezekiel Elliott will go in the first round. After that I don't think anybody will. People will either love Derrick Henry or not like him that much, one or the other, and there's a bunch of those kind of third-round change-of-pace guys, maybe even second round, Devontae Booker, Kenneth Dixon. I like Jordan Howard from Indiana as a bigger back.

But after the first seven or eight backs, and I've mentioned most of those guys, once you get into that fourth round you're looking at guys that share the load, third-down change-of-pace backs. In today's NFL, let's face it, it's a pass-first league. That position has been devalued. I can't tell you how many coaches and GMs have said, we don't even worry about running backs. We can get one of those guys in the fourth or fifth round. That's where it's gone with the running back position.

Q. I had a question for you about Scooby Wright. Just wanted to know what your general thoughts were on him as a prospect.

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, I loved watching his tape. I watched his bowl game when he got back from injury, and tackle to tackle, he's awesome. The ball finds him. He's got a natural feel for slipping under or over blockers to get to the ball carrier. He's just an instinctive linebacker. He hustles every snap. He understands pass drops, and he's got a little feel for rush, also.

He's one of those guys that's going to be knocked on athletic ability, so this is a big week for him to see what he runs and how he looks, et cetera, but off tape, I really like the kid. I think he's a third-round linebacker who's going to -- whose instincts and toughness will make him a starting linebacker eventually in the NFL.

Q. Of these top offensive tackles, who do you think can slide inside and play guard early in their career?

MIKE MAYOCK: Who can slide inside the guard? Is that what you said?

Q. Yes.

MIKE MAYOCK: Of the tackle group that I think slides inside, most of them I've already got listed as guards, and I think the best one of that is Cody Whitehair from Kansas State. I think Vadal Alexander from LSU is the next one, and I would probably put Germain Ifedi from Texas A&M in that same group. I think all three of them are second-round picks, and the Eagles, as you know, don't have a second-round pick.

You start looking at some other guys beyond that, you have two third-round picks with the Eagles, Rees Odhiambo from Boise State, checkered history with injuries, but I think has some talent. You've got to do your homework on his durability. I think he's going to kick inside. I think Denver Kirkland from Arkansas is a big road raider, he'll kick inside. Dominick Jackson from Alabama, a later-round pick, will kick inside. Darrell Greene from San Diego State. There's a ton of the tackles that kick inside throughout all seven rounds of this draft.

Q. I was wondering if you could comment on the job Dave Caldwell has done sort of building a foundation in Jacksonville,

and I guess where you think they might go at No. 5.

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, I think first and foremost, you have to -- at least from my perspective, I appreciate what Shahid Khan has done. That's where it starts, with the owner. One of my biggest pet peeves in the National Football League is how quickly we're firing head coaches, and to me all that does is reinforce every -- you start firing coaches, you look at Cleveland and see where they are today, that's what happens.

So you've got to find a guy you believe in and give him a chance, and I think that's what's happening right now in Jacksonville. They've found their GM, a young guy, David Caldwell. They tied him at the hip to Gus, Gus Bradley, and I think very quietly this team could be a playoff team next year. They have their quarterback -- by the way, nobody even knows that this guy threw for 4,400 yards and 35 touchdowns last year. They've got an exciting young quarterback. They've got a first-round pick coming off injury from a year ago that will help their pass rush, and this is a team that if they protect their quarterback with all those young, good wide receivers and that tailback from Alabama, this is a team that could be good next year.

So I give the owner credit for keeping that GM and head coach together and trying to build something from the inside out.

As far as what they might do this year, I still think they've got to rebuild on the back end. I think they'd have to be looking at Jalen Ramsey and Vernon Hargreaves and trying to figure out where those guys fit. I think they need a center, but I think you can address that later or move one of those other guys like a Linder.

They've got to be looking at the edge guys. Bosa, will he fall to them? Buckner, you know all the names sitting right there, but I think Jalen Ramsey, Joey Bosa, Hargreaves, they're all logical conversations at No. 5.

Q. I'm going to veer off, I was wondering how effective do you think the NFL combine is today in measuring NFL-ready potential? And I'm wondering if there's any drill or test, whether that's physical or mental, that you would like to see added to give more information.

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, there's been a lot of talk about this recently, and some of it stemming from Coach Belichick's comments, and here's where I am. First and foremost, from a historical

perspective there's value in being able to compare kids from this year to past years, and as a matter of fact, I've probably spent 10 hours this week looking at different comps. For instance, just the -- DeForest Buckner who's coming out of Oregon this year at 6'7", 295, who does he remind you of? Well, Calais Campbell at 6'7", 290 years ago who ran a 5.0 440. And I have all those numbers of Calais Campbell and this year I'm going to be really anxious to look at Buckner, comparing his numbers to Campbell's numbers, and I could go right down the list and give you a bunch of those kind of things.

So there's value in repeating some of those drills so that the analytics of the combine can help you.

However, I'm kind of with Coach Belichick as far as why do we have to train track athletes? Let's be training football athletes, and that's why I would tell kids to run the 40 at the combine and get it over with. Run a good time, get it over with, so on your pro day, all you're doing is getting ready for football drills.

So to kind of answer your question, I think it's important that we continue all the drills that we time for an analytics perspective. However, I'd like to throw some different drills at them on the football side, just to see if kids can learn quickly. When a coach tells them, okay, this is what we're going to do, this, this, and this, go. You have them prepared for three months, now you've got to go do it. That's real life in a game or practice.

So I'd like to see the introduction of some different football drills every year into the combine.

Q. Do you think Marquise Williams has the ability to remain a QB in the NFL or should he convert to running back?

MIKE MAYOCK: I think Marquise Williams has shown enough from a size, arm strength, athletic ability that he'd be the kind of kid you'd like to develop as a backup quarterback. He's got a live arm, and he's got a long way to go, but I would look at him as a late-round developmental quarterback.

Q. If San Francisco moves on from Kaepernick and Wentz/Goff are off the board when the Niners pick, are there any QB's worthy of the seventh pick?

MIKE MAYOCK: That's the same question that Philadelphia and St. Louis are going

to be asking a little bit later. The next guy up is Paxton Lynch and you'd better do your homework on him. He's 6'7", reminds me of Joe Flacco coming out of Delaware. He's a great athlete for 6'7". He'll surprise you with his athletic ability. He's got a big arm, but he's a year or two away from playing. So if you're sitting there at seven, you'd better have a quarterback ready to play this year, and that could be Gabbert, while you develop a Paxton Lynch if that's the direction you want to go.

But if you think, and I'll say this, whether it's San Francisco, Philly, the Los Angeles Rams, I think I said St. Louis, I apologize, if you think Paxton Lynch is a franchise quarterback, you'd better go get him because there aren't many of those guys out there.

Q. You started this call talking about the defensive line and the pass rushers and what the Broncos and Von Miller in particular did in that Super Bowl. The flipside of that for the Panthers, their right tackle had a tough night that night. I'm wondering kind of where you see that right tackle position, with all the different things defenses are doing now to get to the quarterbacks. Has right tackle taken on a greater importance in recent years, and might the Panthers look there?

MIKE MAYOCK: I'm a big believer and people around the league have been talking about this for the last few years, but I'm a big believer that the NFL is a mismatch league. Let me put it a different way, it's a match-up league. If you've got a great left tackle and a poor right tackle, why would I waste my best pass rusher on your left tackle? It's just common sense. And I think more and more, defensive coordinators are looking to take advantage of any weak link. What about your guards? What about your -- you see all those double A gap blitzes with those linebackers? That's to get immediate pressure up the middle.

So your point is well-taken. Your right tackle in the old days was kind of like he'd better be a tough run blocker, but today if he can't block Von Miller, if he can't block any of the premier edge rushers in the NFL, you've got a problem. So yeah, I don't think there's any doubt that more and more teams are looking for more athletic right tackles.

Q. How is this draft at that position?

MIKE MAYOCK: This draft? Well, at this position I would tell you that for instance Jack

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Conklin from Michigan State would be the perfect right tackle. I think he can handle speed off the edge. He's a tough guy, gets movement at the run game. I think Taylor Decker could play left or right.

Then you start to get into a guy like Jason Spriggs, who I think you could get in the second or third round, and I like him on the right side better than I do on the left. Willie Beavers from Western Michigan I think is an under-the-radar kid who can play, but he's going to need a little time to get ready.

So there's some people out there, and it's just a matter of where do you get them, and I think there's going to be a run on tackles somewhere -- I think there's four potential first-round picks, and then after that a group of guys, Le'Raven Clark, Sean Coleman, Spriggs, Ifedi, Hawkins, those kind of guys are going to go fairly quickly. And another two names for you on the right side, Spencer Drango from Baylor, and Kyle Murphy from Stanford. I think both will be right tackles in that kind of fourth-round range.

Q. You had mentioned earlier the league-wide search for the next Kirk Cousins. First I was wondering what you thought Cousins had done over the last four years to exceed his pre-draft expectations? And in terms of day two quarterbacks or early day three quarterbacks, where do you stand in terms of Hogan and Cardale Jones?

MIKE MAYOCK: Cousins is interesting. I was at his pro day at Michigan State, and you know how all those guys have gurus coaching them, quarterback gurus, he didn't have one, which was atypical, and on top of that, he ran the whole pro day by himself. So he worked out with his Michigan State teammates for about three or four days in a row prior to the pro day and had a script that he put together of 60 to 80 plays, and it was amazing watching him run that script.

Basically I was standing next to three different offensive coordinators watching, and they were all going, holy crap, this is awesome. This is what you want to see a quarterback do. He's taking control. He's a leader. He's showing us that he knows his offense, and he's directing everybody where to go.

So from that point on, I've been kind of paying special attention to this kid because he kind of caught my eye at the pro day, and I think what it took was a little bit of time -- and by the way,

Mike Mayock

general comment, we're not developing quarterbacks in the NFL anymore, and I think the result is that we only have 10 or 12 franchise quarterbacks. We don't take the time to develop them. So this kid got some time, and then he got a head coach that believed in him, Jay Gruden, and what he does well matches up with what Jay Gruden wants to do.

So I think it was the confluence of a smart, tough kid, along with a coach that believed in him and an offense that fits him, and he's taken advantage of it.

Now, beyond that, Hogan is probably the most ready intellectually of any of those quarterbacks. I mean, at Stanford, from a pass protection, in a run scheme, change at the line of scrimmage, what they ask him to do, it's probably as close to what you're going to see in the NFL as any of them. So he's going to come in and pick it up very quickly, and he's the type of kid that made a lot of headway from his sophomore year to his senior year. He struggled early, but his career got better and better, and he's one of those guys. I like him.

As far as Cardale Jones, he and Hackenberg, as I said earlier, I've got as my wild cards, and they both scare me because they're really talented, big arm, big-body kids that you want to believe in but the tape is really bad. So I don't know how long either of them, Hackenberg or Jones, will take to go from where they are today to what you would need in a functional NFL quarterback.

Q. I know you were asked about the Chiefs at No. 28 earlier. You named the two Alabama kids, you named Billings. Dorsey has put an emphasis on high football IQ, character guys. Do you see anyone sort of matched up with the skill level and that football IQ around 28? Again, I know how tough it is to try to predict when you get that late.

MIKE MAYOCK: Well, you're talking about defensive line again? Is that what you want?

Q. Yeah, considering this is such a strong defensive line draft, yeah, as far as high football IQ type of guys.

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, I think the two Alabama kids are -- you pretty much know what you're getting with an Alabama kid.

Now, Robinson I think will be gone. Jarran Reed to me checks all the boxes, and he could be

sitting there. I doubt it but he could be. He went to the Senior Bowl, played 15 games. He just checked off every box. He's smart, he's tough. I really like what I've seen with him. I think his football IQ is very, very high.

And as I kind of look down my list, you can even get into the second and third rounds with some of these types of kids, for instance, Jihad Ward from Illinois who could be a second-round 5 technique. He's 6'5", 295 pounds, and his story is phenomenal, what he had to do. To get from the streets of Philadelphia to the University of Illinois, and I've been told he's a high-character, tough kid. He'd be an interesting guy, I think, for them.

Austin Johnson, probably a late second-round guy from Penn State, another one of those type of players. So there's some names for you right there.

Q. I wanted to go back to the wide receiver class for a quick second, since we've been going on about two months here that we've been waiting on Calvin Johnson's retirement announcement. I was wondering if the Lions want to address that wide receiver position. How deep is it there? What's the likelihood they would take someone at 16, if Treadwell maybe slid that far?

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, I think the two guys in the conversation for me today at 16 would be Treadwell and Corey Coleman, and they're completely different conversations. Treadwell is 6'2", 210 pounds, kind of a body-type receiver. I don't think he's a 4.4 guy at all. He's got great hands, snatches the football, is aggressive in the air, will block. I don't think he's as explosive as some of the first-round picks at wideout we've seen in the last few years. I'd compare him more to the kid from South Carolina that's a free agent with Chicago this year.

Q. Alshon Jeffery?

MIKE MAYOCK: Yes, exactly, Alshon Jeffery, whereas Corey Coleman is 5'11", 190, explosive. He's probably going to run 4.45, he's probably going to jump 43 inches, but he's one of those guys that's got a completely different gear down the field.

So they're the two at 16, and then when you start getting into the second and third rounds, I think the conversation shifts to Michael Thomas from Ohio State, Josh Doctson, who I think has

great hands, makes a bunch of catches on those 50/50 balls, but he's 6'3", 195. To put that in perspective, at 195 he's probably 16 pounds lighter than the Clemson receiver that came out a couple years ago that's with Pittsburgh, Martavis Bryant, and you know how skinny Martavis Bryant is. Will Fuller from Notre Dame, late two to mid three. He's going to run 4.35 but does not have natural hands. And then you start getting down to the point where we'd better pick one guy that fits something we do.

I think it's a solid class. I just don't think it's as explosive up top as it has been.

Q. I'm wondering, when you evaluate players based on tape and then they go to the combine and either perform either beyond your expectations or below them, how does that sort of factor in, and then on a related note, we see so much specialized training for the combine nowadays, does that sort of change the way you feel about what these guys are doing on the field basically? They're practicing for it for months.

MIKE MAYOCK: I always say the fast guys run fast, slow guys run slow, and it's only a story when the opposite occurs.

So it me it's a cross-check. The combine should be a cross-check, and if Will Fuller runs 4.35, that's great, but I don't care. I expect him to run 4.35. If Will Fuller runs 4.55, now I've got to go back to the tape and see if I evaluated him incorrectly. So that really is -- for me and for most teams, it's a cross-check. If the kid is explosive on tape, he should be explosive at the combine, and if he's not, you'd better figure out why.

So that's what it should be, I think.

What was the second part of that?

Q. Well, we see these guys now, once their college season ends, they go to a training facility and they work on these shuttle runs and these drills. Are we getting an accurate depiction or is it just guys practicing like for an SAT or something?

MIKE MAYOCK: See, the coaches will tell you they don't really care. The scouts would tell you they actually like that because you're basically getting every athlete at his best, performing a drill they're aware of in advance. You're going to see -- the chance for any exceptions to sneak through is minimal because if you're a great athlete and you train at your highest level, you're going to perform

better than a mediocre athlete at his highest level. So there are no surprises.

So the scouts really like that.

The coaches, not so much.

But that's why I think the analytics are important when you look at the numbers of today's guys versus three years ago or five or seven.

Q. Two separate questions if I may. One related to the Colts. The world seems to have them wanting an offensive lineman and Lord knows they need one. I guess the question being Jonathan Newsome just got cut, he was their sack leader two years ago, Robert Mathis is 35, their sack leader. Where does the talent better align for them maybe in the first couple of days in terms of these clear needs for pass rush and offensive line?

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, and I think that's how you have to look at it. You can't go reaching for positional needs. Indy is sitting there at No. 18, and you're saying, who's the highest rated offensive lineman that may be available at 18 versus the highest rated edge rusher. On the offensive side, you have to figure Tunsil and Stanley are certainly gone. If a Conklin or Decker were there, I think you'd have to look really hard at either of those guys. And one or both could be there. I think they're really logical.

And then you have to compare that to what you see against the edge rush side. Joey Bosa is probably gone. Noah Spence is probably gone. Shaq Lawson from Auburn is an interesting guy, probably a better version of Newsome. Leonard Floyd is a polarizing figure from Georgia. Some people think he's a top-10 pick, some of them think he's going to be Barkevious Mingo, meaning a great-looking, fast but underpowered player who ultimately won't live up to what he should. So Leonard Floyd is a polarizing conversation. He should probably be sitting there at 18.

Kevin Dodd from Clemson, I've got him as a late first-round type of player.

So I think there's your conversation, is will one of those two tackles be available. If so, you might want to jump all over that, versus the uncertainties of Shaq Lawson, Leonard Floyd, and if Noah Spence was there, it would only be because of the off-the-field stuff.

Q. And second question quickly, Nate Sudfeld, the quarterback from Indiana,

obviously statistically prolific, what does he need to show everyone to cement himself at least as a draftable quarterback?

MIKE MAYOCK: I don't know if he's going to show anything this week. I really liked his Michigan State performance. Big, strong kid, can make that far hash comeback throw, he's 6'7", and you start to get excited about him, and then you watch him in person at the East-West game and he barely could get the ball out of his hands. He couldn't complete a flare pass. I think what I see with him is a kid that's kind of trying to rebuild his footwork from the ground up, which is important, and I think he's in transition.

What I see is a late developmental, tall, big-armed quarterback that could go probably somewhere in the fifth, sixth or seventh round, but I think what he needs to do is just show up, rip the -- don't worry too much about where it goes, you've only got about 30 throws, just rip it and do a great job in interviews.

Q. Taking a look at the last few drafts that the Raiders have had with Reggie McKenzie, getting Khalil Mack, Derek Carr, and even the running back in the sixth round a couple years ago, Latavius Murray, sitting at No. 14, which way do you see the Raiders going, and what are some of the needs that they can fill in rounds one through three?

MIKE MAYOCK: Well, I mean, we haven't even gotten to free agency yet, but I would say where we stand today it would be either the highest-rated defensive back on the board at that time or the highest-rated offensive lineman on the board at that time. We just spoke about those two tackles, Conklin from Michigan State, Decker from Ohio State, whether or not they'd be there at 14, versus who would be the highest corner or free safety, given the retirement of Woodson.

You start looking at that whole defensive back situation, I don't think there's a safety justified at 14. I think Ramsey and Hargreaves will both be gone, so then you start to talk about Mackensie Alexander, who he's an interesting conversation right now. Zero interceptions in two years. You don't see corners get drafted with zero interceptions, let alone in the first round, but he's a talented kid. Eli Apple from Ohio State, would he be worth a pick that high.

So as the board unfolds, and before free agency, it wouldn't surprise me if you ended up with an offensive lineman.

Q. You were just talking about some wide receivers, but I'm wondering in the later rounds, I mean, round 3 and day 3, who are some guys that could maybe contribute immediately at that position for the Lions if Calvin Johnson retires?

MIKE MAYOCK: Sure, a polarizing conversation is going to be Braxton Miller, more of a slot receiver, probably a second-round pick. I like Rashard Higgins, Colorado State. I'm anxious to see what he does this weekend. They call him Hollywood, Hollywood Higgins, and his tape is pretty good. I'm anxious to see what he runs. He's got some length to him. He's probably a third-round pick, and I think he's an intriguing player, along with Malcolm Mitchell from Georgia, third- or fourth-round type player, very solid off the field, smart kid, has some traits you like.

Geronimo Allison, third- or fourth-round pick, long, 6'3", 200 pounds from Illinois.

Charone Peake, again, maybe a fourth-round pick from Clemson, one year of heavy production, longer kid, has some speed.

I think the strength, we talk about this not being a great wideout class. I think the strength of it is that it's solid in the middle rounds.

Q. I was just wondering if you could give an assessment of Rutgers linebacker Steve Longa and where you might see him in the draft range.

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, I have not done his tape yet. He's a junior that came out late, and I've got -- I know he's a tough kid, I know he's a smart kid, but I've got to kind of work my way from a priority perspective through the guys that I'm going to see first, so I apologize, I have not seen Longa.

Q. Just wondering, do you think the Bills have to be pretty much locked into taking a defensive player in the first round given how much they slipped on that side of the ball, and if so who are some guys you think might fit for them at No. 19, or do you think they could throw a curve ball if one of those three top quarterbacks were to slip down, would they maybe consider one of those guys?

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, I think quarterback always trumps all. If they believe that a franchise quarterback was sitting there at 19, I think they'd have to consider it, and that's despite

the fact that I really like Tyrod Taylor.

But I think the top three quarterbacks will be gone by that point. I don't think there's any doubt.

Then you're talking about, to me, a little similar to what I talked about a little while ago, probably a defensive line conversation at No. 19, but I also think there's some offensive line needs that have to be dealt with, also. But as far as the defensive line, when you're sitting at 19, that's a pretty good place to be because there's going to be some great football players sitting there.

So Buckner, Nkemdiche, gone. How about Sheldon Rankins at No. 19? We keep talking about what a pass-first league this is, and it certainly has become that. So anybody that can create immediate interior pressure has got higher value than he did five years ago. Rankins is one of those kind of guys. Regardless whether you're a 3-4 or 4-3 team you've got to get guys who can get to the quarterback quicker. Rankins to me is intriguing. I've already talked about both the Alabama kids.

Kenny Clark from UCLA, heavy-handed, tough kid, very good against the run, can get up the field. Vernon Butler, late first-round guy, Bullard from Florida, and then, I mean, you start talking about some of those edge rushers, I went through some of the higher-level guys, you might even be able to look at an Emmanuel Ogbah in the second round who's got some talent, really tight from Oklahoma State, but a big body, pure 3-4 defensive end, can play the 5 technique, also.

Q. Just wondering, what makes you think that Carson Wentz has more upside potential than Jared Goff, and then when you look at those guys from the intangibles standpoint, are they pretty equal in terms of intelligence and character and that kind of stuff?

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, the way I look at Wentz is the first tape I put in, I went, wow, and I didn't even know who he was. He was just a quarterback on my list. No clue. And I watched I think it was Northern Iowa, and I watched this big kid swing the ball around the lot, and then on top of it, was athletic enough where they planned quarterback runs for him. So you do some homework and you find out he's 6'5", 235, and I put the second tape in hoping it would be as good as the first, and it was better.

So you start doing homework on the kids, and yeah, he's only got 23 starts. He's 20-3 as a

starter but he comes out of a great program in Division I-AA, five consecutive National Championships. When I look at him, I see a kid that's as athletic or more athletic than Andrew Luck. He's bigger than Andrew Luck. He's got arm strength comparable to Andrew Luck. He just doesn't have the experience that Andrew Luck has at a high level that Andrew has coming out of college.

So I see a ceiling for this kid similar to Andrew Luck. That's why I believe in this kid so much. But it's going to take a little bit of time. His character apparently is off the charts. That's what I was told by everybody surrounding the Senior Bowl that had any dealings with him. Smart, tough, loves the game.

Regarding Goff, polished, great in the pocket, finds lanes to throw, really good arm. Not elite, but a really good arm, very accurate with a quick release. Most ready to play quarterback in the draft today. If you're Cleveland, I think you've got to make some decisions about how you want to go about it, and from -- I don't know Goff yet. I haven't met him yet. I've been told he's very lean, needs to put some weight on, nowhere near as big as Carson Wentz, but 6'3" to 6'4", 210 pounds, and I think you just have to make a decision if you're the Browns as to which direction you want to go in, which kid do you believe in more.

Q. Basically I know the two biggest needs the Jets pretty much have right now as it pertains obviously to the New York Jets is offensive line and pass rusher. Depending on if they go one or the other in the first round, who are those second-round options that you could see the Jets going with as an outside pass rusher but then also as an offensive lineman, be that a guard or a tackle?

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, the second-round edge rush types would be a kid named -- I can't even pronounce his first name, but his last name is Correa from Boise. 3-4 outside linebacker type player, really quick and twitchy off the edge, tough kid, I like him a lot. I think he makes some sense with what the Jets do.

Another name I can't pronounce from Maryland, Yannick Ngakoue. I apologize. I'm going to need to get to know these before this weekend. But he's a third- or fourth-round guy. But again, prototypical, 3-4 edge rusher with some upside. Both of those kids would make sense,

whether it's second round, third round, fourth round, they fit with what the Jets want to do.

As far as if -- if they go the other way with O-line, you get into that second or third round with the offensive line, and they're getting old on the left side. They've been good over there for a lot of years at left center at left tackle. The guys I like with Cody Whitehair, Vadal Alexander, Germain Ifedi, all interior players, and then I also like some of the centers in that group that could also move outside the guard. So Ryan Kelly and Nick Martin are both outstanding second-round centers. I think they both could play guard. I also think Graham Glasgow from Michigan, who's a center, could play guard. So there's a whole different group depending on how this -- I think the group of centers is one of the best groups I've seen in a while, and a lot of those guys can play all three interior offensive line positions.

Q. I was wondering what you saw the Steelers might be doing at 25 overall, and does their thinking change with Heath Miller in retirement at tight end?

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, I remember when they pulled the trigger on Heath, I think it was at 31 coming off a Super Bowl, and Heath I think was coming off a hernia and had dropped, and look what he turned into. I think it was a great pick by Kevin Colbert because a lot of the league was scared of that injury because he didn't have a chance to work out prior to the draft.

But with him retiring, it shines a little bit of a light on the tight end situation, and if they were going to take one at 25, it would have to be the kid from Arkansas, Hunter Henry. Do I think it's too early? Not necessarily. I think the kid could step in, he can play in line, he can flex, he can block, and he's a very good pass receiver. He's a late one to mid two, and I think he would fit with what Pittsburgh likes to do. If it's not that, then I think they've got to fortify the defensive back position. You're talking late first round, if you're looking at corner, who would be available there. It might be Eli Apple. I think a guy like Artie Burns from Miami is going to run very fast this week. He's a long press cover corner that's a track guy. A lot of people don't know much about him. Kendall Fuller from Virginia Tech I think is more of a second- or third-round player, and a guy rising with me is William Jackson from the University of Houston. The more tape I watch, the more I like of him, and I think he could be a second- or third-round corner.

There are some names there that I think you could look at in the first two or three rounds.

Q. I had a couple questions about a couple of Ohio State wide receivers. You mentioned Braxton Miller and how polarizing he is. Do you think with a good combine workout he could be in the first-round conversation, and a little further down the depth chart, a kid like Jalin Marshall, are you surprised he came out early, and where do you kind of see him slotting in the draft?

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, I have in my notes that I'm stunned that that kid came out. You know, with Michael Thomas and Braxton Miller gone, he has a chance to be the No. 1 wide receiver next year for the Ohio State Buckeyes with all that attention on him and a chance to have a great season and enhance his draft status. I don't know anything about the kid personally, whether it's a family situation or -- I don't know any of that stuff. I'm just saying from a football situation, I think he made a mistake.

As far as Braxton Miller is concerned, I don't think he's a first-round pick this year, and trust me, I love his tape, I love what I saw at the Senior Bowl. I really like everything about this kid. But I think the first round is a little bit of a reach.

I think as good as he looked at the Senior Bowl, he's still very raw at running routes. He takes too long getting off press. There's some things he's got to learn how to do.

Having said that, I think his skill set is awesome. He's probably going to run 4.4, he's quick, he's fast, he's tough, he's really competitive, so I just think it's just a developmental timeline for him to be productive, and I think he's going to go in the second round.

Q. Do you think that D-line is a dark horse position for the Ravens at No. 6? What do you see as their options there? And they have a high second-round pick; where could you see them go in the second round?

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, a lot of what they do in the second, a lot of it will be contingent upon what they do in one. I think the last time the Ravens were in the top 10, I think they got a pretty good edge rusher by the name of Suggs if I remember correctly. Number one, because Ozzie is who he is, it wouldn't surprise me if they traded down. Number two, if they sit there at No. 6, I think

they've got to be looking at the two best defensive backs in this draft, Jalen Ramsey and Vernon Hargreaves, and if either one of those is available and they think he's a Baltimore Raven, they've got to pull the trigger there. That's where I believe they need the most help, and I think one or both of those kids could be sitting there.

Now, as far as edge rushers go, you know, if they don't -- if Joey Bosa slid to 6, should they look at him? Yeah, absolutely. Joey Bosa should be looked at at 6. They'd probably have to take a hard look at Noah Spence. But when you get into the second round at those two positions, what do you see?

So corner or safety, at that position, is Eli Apple, Artie Burns, Jackson from Houston are corners. I think Carl Joseph and Vonn Bell come into the conversation at safety in the second round, and then as far as edge guys that kind of fit what you do, the Correa kid from Boise, Kevin Dodd, Leonard Floyd, second-round type guys there. I also think that Shawn Oakman is -- I'm not a big fan of his, but he's a height, weight, speed freak from Baylor. I think he's interesting. I think the Nassib kid is interesting in the second or third round from Penn State, and Ozzie is the best. He'll move around the board and you'll see what happens.

Q. Let's talk quarterback for one second. To you what is the best indicator of mental toughness of a quarterback prospect? Does it reveal itself on game film or the interview process? And over the years have you learned any tricks of the trade from certain teams as to how to pinpoint this potential quality?

MIKE MAYOCK: Well, I always like on tape watching how a quarterback reacts after a big hit, a bad sack or a bad interception, especially in a big game, and I think those things are really important. To give you an example, Michigan State-Alabama, watching Connor Cook, semifinal championship game, late first half, 3th down, 10-0, and it probably should be 24-0. But it's 10-0, late first half, they're driving. They need at least a field goal. They have to at least kick a field goal, and he threw a bad interception at the end of the half, and Cyrus Jones picked him off, it's 10-0, and that was the end of the game for them. That was the turning point for me, and they weren't able to get anything going in the second half. That's kind of a big moment, and I think you always look at those kind of moments and how kids react.

Now, as far as tricks or what I -- I've been lucky enough to sit in rooms with coaches or offensive coordinators along with college quarterbacks as they put them up on the board, and what NFL coaches do at every position is they'll put a kid up on the board and say, okay, tell me what you call trips to the field, one end of the boundary. We call it whatever. Well, our team calls it Y. And then you go through for about 15 or 20 minutes with verbiage, and then you watch tape for an hour and a half, forgetting about all that verbiage, and then an hour and a half later you come back to it and put the kid back up on the board and say, okay, I'm the offensive coordinator for whoever, I want you to use my verbiage an hour and a half later and explain to me every snap that comes up, tell me what the verbiage is for formation, play, et cetera, and it's kind of intriguing to watch these quarterbacks regurgitate information from an hour and a half ago, and it's also enlightening as to how well or poorly they learn.

Q. What have you heard in the league about any concerns about Connor Cook's character? Obviously he was not a team captain this year. And what kind of questions is he going to have to answer in the interview process at the combine?

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, I think he's a complicated question, and I'll start with the premise that I think he's one of the four quarterbacks that has the physical talent to be a first-round draft pick. The second piece of that is, okay, what's the on-field evaluation, and for me he's never been a 60 percent completion guy, but part of that is because they throw the football down the field aggressively, and I'd like -- for instance, the second half of Michigan State I love what he did. He took a beating and kept throwing the ball and kept throwing tough passes down the field and completing them. I really liked -- even though I think he was 18 for 39 that game, I liked that game.

Then you get to kind of the off-the-field questions and the whole captain thing, and to me it does matter. To some teams and GMs it doesn't matter that you're not a captain, but to other teams it does matter. Why didn't his teammates vote their best player and their quarterback to be their captain and their leader? That's a legitimate question.

And the second question for me is why

didn't he go to the Senior Bowl. If you were healthy, I would think you would have loved to step up to Carson Wentz every day and compete with him and show the world, I'm the guy, not him. Who's this kid from North Dakota State, I'm the guy. I think he could have answered a bunch of those questions in Mobile rather than have to deal with them all this week.

Q. I'm wondering if you can tell me what you think the Jets and Giants will do with their top pick, and also if you can explain why Derrick Henry is probably going to be a second-round pick instead of first. What's the biggest difference between him and Elliott?

MIKE MAYOCK: I think the biggest difference is lateral quickness and burst. Ezekiel Elliott is just about as fast sideways as he is forward, and he's probably -- Ezekiel Elliott is probably going to run 4.45 at 225 pounds, so he's got great speed, but his lateral, jump cuts, acceleration, burst, lower body toughness, all those things add up to me first round.

When you look at Henry, he needs a little more -- he's a tall, high-cut, long-legged back which is atypical, and those backs struggle in the NFL just because there's a lot more vertical mass to aim at.

Now, having said that, I really like the kid. When I say he's an early second-round pick, that means a lot to me. I value a second-round running back. I think he can carry the ball 25 times a game. I think he gets stronger as the game goes on, and I think even those his feet aren't the same as Elliott, I think he's got good feet and he's difficult to tackle. So I value him.

As far as the Jets and the Giants are concerned, we talked about the Jets need an edge rusher on defense. I've gone through some of those names, along with offensive line, and I think if they can probably get in the middle rounds, and with the Giants, I think they're another team sitting at 10 that has to look at edge rushers, and sitting at 10 is a different conversation. Noah Spence could be squarely in the middle of that conversation, and the Giants typically don't take on a lot of risk, and he's one of the riskiest guys in the draft, but he's also one of the best edge rushers.

I think he'll be a polarizing conversation in their meeting rooms.

Q. When you look at the Eagles at 13, who are a couple players that jump to top of mind, and how would you rate the chances of

them actually moving back to possibly pick up a second-round pick in a trade?

MIKE MAYOCK: I think moving back all depends on when they're on the clock and who's available. If I'm the Eagles, my priority list is quarterback, number one. I don't know what they're going to do with Sam Bradford, but they'd better figure it out, and if they think there's a franchise quarterback at 13, they'd better take him. My belief is that Goff and Wentz will be gone. The question is is Paxton Lynch there, and if Paxton Lynch is there at 13, if they believe he's the guy, they'd better take him, even if he didn't play one snap this year. I think they have to take either a Lynch or -- I don't know if there is a Cook or not, but if they think there's a guy at 13 that's a franchise quarterback, I think everything else flies off the board. They have to take him.

And then after that in order of priority, it's quarterback, and then for me it's offensive line. Eagles need to take two or three offensive linemen in this draft, and then after that they need to take a couple of defensive backs.

Depending on how the board sets up at 13, if there's nobody there that they're that wild about and they can trade down and pick up a second, I'd be all about that. But it's going to be all depending on what happens with their board.

Q. Scot McCloughan obviously had a great draft last year as his first year as the Washington Redskins' general manager. Can you kind of talk about where he could go at 21 overall, and also of course with Kirk Cousins being the quarterback, do you think he's actually the future and also if the Redskins could possibly take another quarterback in this draft?

MIKE MAYOCK: I do believe Kirk Cousins is the quarterback of the Redskins for the future, and I think a lot of that is that philosophically he aligns perfectly with what Jay Gruden wants to do. Yeah, I do believe he's the guy. Could they take a quarterback in the middle round? Absolutely they could take a quarterback in the middle rounds. Scot McCloughan and Jay Gruden are tied at the hip, which is the first and most important criteria. Their draft last year revealed who they are. Brandon Scherff was the first pick, big, tough guy; Preston Smith was the second pick, another big, strong, tough outside linebacker type guy; Matt Jones, a big, thick

tailback.

Scotty McCloughan likes the bigger, tougher guys. That's who he wants to be, a big, physical team.

Now, at 21 I think one of the biggest needs is in that defensive line, and it's a defensive line draft. We've already talked about that. He could get defensive linemen second, third, even fourth round, so would he look beyond that knowing there's security in defensive linemen deep in the draft? Would he look at say a corner at 21? To me that is a possibility. He could sit there and say, huh, is this kid from Clemson worth it, Mackensie Alexander at 31, what about Eli Apple, what about Artie Burns. I think there's some interesting corners that would come into that conversation, also.

Q. My question is about the Broncos. Just looking at John Elway typically in recent drafts has had a history of getting a defensive guy that may have an off-the-field record, kind of dropping him on draft, is that something that you see continuing, and what's a name that you could see being that guy?

MIKE MAYOCK: Well, I think the two most obvious guys are Nkemdiche, the defensive tackle from Ole Miss, and Noah Spence. My gut tells me Noah Spence will be gone. I think they've done a pretty good job of cleaning up that conversation, and how he answers things this week is going to be huge. But I think he'll be gone. Nkemdiche for me is a total question mark. I have no idea where he could end up, but he's a top-five talent that who knows where he's going to end up, so I'm sure they're having a conversation about him.

And as far as -- Malik Jackson was a great pick several years ago. People were all talking about who is the next Malik Jackson out there, and a guy like Jihad Ward from Illinois who's a second- or third-round pick would be an interesting pick, also.

Q. I wanted to go back to that scenario where the Browns pick a quarterback at No. 2 and maybe look on defense at 32, like maybe a linebacker or a DB. I think you mentioned Will Fuller. Do you think he'll last that -- anybody else you think might be there at that point?

MIKE MAYOCK: You're talking about a linebacker or a DB at 32?

Q. Yeah, either one of those.

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MIKE MAYOCK: Well, I think linebacker at 32, Reggie Ragland will be gone. I think Darron Lee will be gone. Different teams have different opinions on Su'a Cravens from USC, whether he's a safety or a linebacker, but he fits what today's outside linebacker is. A little bit like a Deone Bucannon. He could be a strong safety, he could be a Will linebacker, he could rush, he could be a dime linebacker in your dime package. So Su'a Cravens is kind of an interesting second-round conversation, also, and as far as defensive line, which I think you mentioned, also, there's going to be a ton of those guys sitting there, Kenny Clark from UCLA, Billings from Baylor, and they might be gone, but my point is whether it's them, Fuller, Butler from LA Tech, Adolphos Washington with some real pass rush ability and some off-the-field issues, but Adolphos Washington is probably going to be an early second-round pick, Sheldon Day from Notre Dame, Jihad Ward, there's a whole group of guys early in the second round that if you get stuck, you're going to find a defensive lineman that fits every scheme.

Q. Any cornerbacks at that spot?

MIKE MAYOCK: Early second for the corners, again, I don't know how the corners are going to play out yet. So just giving you some names that could be first- or second-rounders, Mackensie Alexander from Clemson probably goes in the first; Eli Apple, who's an intriguing conversation, late one, early two, from Ohio State; Artie Burns from Miami, late one, early two; William Jackson from Houston is a name not a lot of people are talking about yet, but I believe they will be. And as you drop down, Cyrus Jones in the third or fourth round, great nickel from Alabama that might also have the ability to play outside.

So there's some real depth in the corner draft, also.

Q. The No. 3 slot, I was curious as to who you might see the Chargers honing in on.

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, and again, I think when you're picking in the top five, it's a little bit of what you need, but it's a lot about making sure you get a great football player at No. 3. You can't make a mistake there. And regardless of position, he's got to start day one, he's got to be an alpha male, and he's got to -- you've got to believe he's going to play the next eight to ten years. You start talking about a Joey Bosa, Ramsey, DeForest

Mike Mayock

Buckner, I mean, it's got to be the highest-rated guys on your board, and hopefully they fit a need. If Tunsil is gone at No. 1, would you pull the trigger on Ronnie Stanley? To me Ronnie Stanley is a top 10 pick. Would you pick him No. 3 overall? I think he's closer to Tunsil than a lot of people do, so I think he could be in the conversation, also. But to me it would be -- if Tunsil is gone, then it's probably more a conversation between Bosa, Buckner and Ramsey.

Q. I was wondering actually -- we're looking at Jeremy Cash, and I was wondering, how do you see a guy like him fitting in in the NFL system?

MIKE MAYOCK: I like Cash a lot. He's one of those guys where the ball finds him, and I see him more in the box, and whether you call him a safety, which he's a strong safety that tackles well, he can line up with some tight ends. If he fits what today's NFL is, he's a -- he's almost the exact height and weight of Deone Bucannon, who's done such a great job as a linebacker for the Arizona Cardinals, and more and more teams are looking for safeties with size and tackling ability that can play three downs. Sometimes they're playing outside linebacker, sometimes they're playing safety, but in the nickel and dime package, they're playing linebacker.

I think there's value for Cash, and he's one of those instinctive, tough kids that's always around the ball.

Q. And a guy at a completely different position, Bryce Williams at tight end out of ECU, how much does his talent as a pass catcher really help him in the draft, and what are you looking for from him at the combine?

MIKE MAYOCK: Well, there's no doubt he catches the ball well. He's detached or flexed almost all the time. I had a real problem trying to figure out if he'll block anybody because they rarely ask him to, so that's a question I have about him.

But he's more like a lot of the tight ends today. What he runs this week will be fairly important; is he a 4.7 guy, is he a 4.8 guy, who is he. He's probably going to go somewhere in the fourth, fifth, sixth rounds, and teams are going to look for him to catch the football.

Q. I know you talked a little bit about Jalen Ramsey. Curious about your conversations with NFL execs if you see him more corner or safety, and then also with

Roberto Aguayo, also curious there, how early do you think an NFL team might make a jump and take a kicker?

MIKE MAYOCK: Regarding the kicker, I've never watched tape of him, nor am I qualified to do that. When we get closer to the draft, I'll talk to my special teams buddies and figure out where he belongs. You can look through historically, you can look through -- go to NFLDraftHistory.com and look at all the kickers that have been drafted, and there are very few that make a difference, and the ones that do -- you know, when Janikowski came out, you could hear him before you saw him because the contact was so significant with the ball.

So I don't know where Aguayo goes. I have no idea. I apologize.

Regarding Jalen Ramsey, it's an intriguing conversation, one that I've had with a lot of NFL teams. I think we're all trying to figure out what he is, and I think most teams would like to believe he's a corner because there's more value attached to that, and could he be Patrick Peterson, for instance. He's got length, he's got world-class speed. Even if he gets beat off the line of scrimmage in press coverage, it's amazing to see his catch-up speed. I mean, it's like beep, beep, and he's there.

That's all the positive side. Where I have to do more work, and I think NFL teams feel like they have to, also, is, A, can he find the ball with his back to the quarterback, and B, can you invest a high draft pick in a defensive back that doesn't turn the ball over regularly. So he didn't get a lot of interceptions. In fact I don't think he had any this year. So that's the conversation. Everybody loves him. Everybody believes in him. But what about his on-ball production at the corner position? Everybody knows he can play free safety, and with his eyes on the quarterback, would he be effective and turn the ball over more frequently using that great speed at free safety. And that's the conversation.

So there's no knock on him there. I'm just saying that's the conversation.

Q. Obviously with the Patriots not having a first-round pick, I was wondering what you thought about the depth of this draft there into the end of the second round and early third round and maybe some players that you think might kind of fit that Patriots mold there

in that spot.

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, you know, they probably have to be looking at some offensive linemen, and obviously they got beat up this year badly up front. They started or played -- they had three rookies play significant time in that interior offensive line, one of whom didn't even get invited to the combine last year, Shaq Mason. So they could be looking at a tackle in that spot. I think they have to be looking on the back end with the way they process through defensive backs.

And I think the wide receiver position has got to continue to be upgraded. I mean, their best receiver is an inside receiver, and I think he'd really like to get a significant threat on the outside. So with all that being said, at wideout at the back end of the second round, would Will Fuller from Notre Dame be sitting there or Josh Doctson be there? They already have a great slot in Edelman, so they're looking for an outside guy that can be a difference maker in the second or third round. Rashard Higgins maybe from Colorado State in third round, and then when you start talking about defensive backs, the corners in the late two, late three range, I keep talking about this Jackson from Houston. I really like him, William Jackson. He can play off, he can play press. I think his value is going to begin to escalate the closer we get to the draft, but he's a long press corner that can play off, and I think the Patriots always value guys that are versatile. Xavien Howard from Baylor, another long corner with really good tape and really bad tape, but a gifted kid, maybe a late third-round pick. Jalen Mills from LSU has some versatility both inside and outside, corner and safety. I think all of those guys are kind of interesting conversations regarding the Patriots.

Q. Ronnie Stanley has been linked with the Ravens in a lot of mock drafts.

MIKE MAYOCK: He was talking about Ronnie Stanley to Baltimore, and I've seen an awful lot of Ronnie Stanley. He was a great high school basketball player in Las Vegas. He's got basketball feet. He's a prototype left tackle. I think he's closer to Tunsil than a lot of people do. They're very similar, great feet, long arms, both are pass protectors first, which is what you want in this pass-first league. Both of them a little bit suspect in the run game, but I think Ronnie Stanley is a day-one starter and would be a solid option for Baltimore at 6.

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