

# NFL Network Media Conference

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## Mike Mayock

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for joining us today on NFL Network's 2017 NFL Scouting Combine conference call. Joining me on the call is NFL Network's lead analyst for the combine, Emmy-nominated analyst, Mike Mayock.

Before I open it up to questions for Mike, a few quick programming notes on the 2017 NFL Scouting Combine on NFL Network and across the NFL's digital properties.

This is the 13th year NFL Network has covered the combine. Beginning Wednesday, NFL Network, nfl.com, NFL Now, and NFL Mobile will broadcast live from Indianapolis. Live coverage of the 2017 NFL Scouting Combine begins this Wednesday at noon Eastern time with coverage of the combine press conferences. Individual workouts begin Friday at 9:00 Eastern with running backs and offensive linemen. On Saturday, the quarterbacks, wide receivers, and tight ends will work out, followed by the linebackers and defensive linemen on Sunday, and finally the defensive backs on Monday.

All individual workouts begin at 9:00 a.m. Eastern on NFL Network.

On NFL Media digital properties, fans can follow all the action from the combine with NFL Now Live presented by Old Spice, which airs Friday, March 3rd through Monday, March 6th, streaming live on nfl.com, NFL Now, NFL Mobile, and yahoo.com beginning at 9:00 a.m. Eastern each day. A live show features three separate sets providing comprehensive coverage and analysis of the on-field drills.

NFL Network's live coverage of the 2017 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 on tablets, PCs, Xbox One and Xbox 360, and other connected TV devices.

Lastly, as he has done for the previous 12 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 Hospital.



# NETWORK

Fans can participate and show their support by submitting videos of themselves running the 40-yard dash with the hashtags Run Rich Run and St. Jude.

For more information, visit [nfl.com/runrichrun](http://nfl.com/runrichrun).

MIKE MAYOCK: I'm going to give a brief opening statement, if you don't mind.

THE MODERATOR: Sounds good, Mike. Thanks.

MIKE MAYOCK: Thank you, Alex, and thanks to everybody for getting on the line, and, like usual, we'll try to get through everybody's questions so you don't get cut off at the end.

Two topics I've been kind of inundated the last couple weeks, and I just thought I'd make a really quick overview so it might help some of you guys immediately. Number one, just the overall quarterback play in the NFL and how it relates to the draft. If you look at some numbers, in the last ten years, there have been 26 first-round quarterbacks drafted.

Now, I'm going to discount the last two years just because it's not fair to grade those kids yet. Although like most people, I'm kind of bullish on Winston, Mariota and Carson Wentz. But if you look at the last eight years beyond that -- in other words, '07 through '14, there have been 21 first-round quarterbacks. Out of that group, there are either four or five franchise quarterbacks. There's Matt Ryan, Matt Stafford, Cam Newton, Andrew Luck, and if you want to put Joe Flacco in there.

After that, there are nine first-round kids not even in the league anymore. Then, as far as starting quarterbacks go, you've got Bortles, Tannehill, Bradford, and Flacco. Again, depending on what category you want Flacco in. Then there are four back-ups, or Teddy Bridgewater, who has been hurt, EJ Manuel, RG3, and Sanchez. So it gives you a pretty good feel for the hit rate of franchise quarterbacks in the first round.

Now, beyond the first round, there has been Derek Carr in the second, I'd throw Garoppolo in there as a potential quality starter in the second, Russell Wilson in third, Kirk Cousins in the fourth, and Andy Dalton in the second. So five potential quality starters outside of the

first round.

So, the numbers aren't real good. The four franchise guys out of 21, five, if you include Flacco, you're looking at about a 20% chance of drafting a franchise quarterback for the first-round pick. And my message to NFL teams would be you've got to keep trying. You've got to keep swinging. Like Pete Carroll and John Schneider did, they signed Flynn to the big free agent contract, and they still that same year went out and drafted Russell Wilson in the third. And by the way, they have been doing that for several years, kind of looking for a quarterback.

Secondly, the whole who should be invited to the combine and who shouldn't with the poster boy of that being Joe Mixon. Here's my feelings. The combine was set up for this type of situation. As a matter of fact, it was set up as a medical clearinghouse for all players back in the early '80s -- medical, psychological, off the field. This is the ideal environment to deal with some of these character players and maybe, to take it a step further, proactively, vet them.

What I'd like to see instead of not inviting them, I'd like to proactively get after the situation, get in front of the situation and sit these kids down at the combine, these troubled players, and give them a level of expectations if they want to play in the NFL, what the infrastructure's going to look like when they get there. Do they have to pee in a cup? If so, how many times? Let's sit these kids down and proactively get in front of it and try to make them good citizens along with good football players.

Finally, I think an unintended consequence to banning Joe Mixon is it gives this kid an advantage as far as all the athletic drills are concerned. He's asleep in his own bed while getting ready for his Pro Day instead of being poked and prodded for four consecutive days.

So in addition to that, I think he and his agent can control the message to the media. So I think it was unintentional, and I really do believe the NFL was trying to do the right thing. But I think if we really think it through, I think there are better ways to deal with it.

Having said those two things, guys, let's open it up for questions.

**Q. The Titans sitting there at 5 and 18 in the first round. What is the best-case scenario for them in the first round? And how does this draft match up with their needs, probably wide receiver and secondary being the biggest two?**

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, I think it sets up well for them. As a matter of fact, you could almost clean up that secondary at 5 and 18. I mean, there's a good chance

you could get one of those two quality safeties at No. 5, either Malik Hooker or Jamal Adams. Both of whom I'm bullish on. And you've got to kind of figure out who you'd like to pair with Byard. But they're both potential All-Pro safeties.

Then I think you could come back at 18 and take a look at either a wideout or a corner. Depending on what is sitting there, you know, the wide receiver situation, I think there are three potential guys. There's Corey Davis. There is John Ross, who just absolutely flies, from University of Washington. And Mike Williams from Clemson. And I think they're three different-type players. I think it just depends on what you're looking for.

Then as far as a corner situation is concerned, this is a great corner class. If you don't get one in the first round, you can come back in the second or third round and really help yourself. But if you're looking at 18, I think Sidney Jones and Marshon Lattimore are gone by then. If Sidney Jones is sitting there, I'd jump all over him. He reminds me a lot of Marcus Peters, but then I think you're starting to look at Marlon Humphrey from Alabama. How fast does Teez Tabor run from Florida, Quincy Wilson from Florida. Adoree' Jackson, I think, is more of a second-round guy, but his talent is through the roof.

So I think at 5 and 18, Tennessee can really help themselves regardless of what direction they go in.

**Q. Mike, you were among the many who commented on the depth of the defensive tackle talent in last year's draft. Are there any positions with better than normal depth this year that could benefit the Lions in these early rounds? The team needs pretty much talent anywhere on defense?**

MIKE MAYOCK: I think it's one of the best defensive drafts I've seen, and I think the defensive edge rusher, whether it's 4-3 or 3-4. But, you know, Detroit is typically a four-man front, and I think when you start getting into the middle of the round -- you know, Tim Williams from Alabama is more of a 3-4 outside linebacker. He's got some off-the-field issues, but those could cause him to slide.

I think Derek Barnett is one of the hardest working, toughest edge rushers in this draft or any draft. I think he's going to go somewhere. Let's say 10 to 22, somewhere in that range.

Solomon Thomas from Stanford. Kid can play outside on run down, inside on pass downs. There have been some comparisons to Aaron Donald. I'm not sure I see that, but I love his versatility. And then you start talking about a Taco Charlton from Michigan, who is really

gifted. A long-edge guy. Charles Harris.

The nice thing for the Lions is even if they chose to go in a different direction, like a linebacker, for instance, I don't think Reuben Foster would be there, but if he was, you can get a corner in the second or third round. You can get an edge guy in the second or third round. This defensive draft at edge and corner is outstanding, also at safety.

**Q. You've long been bullish on Alex Smith and his ability to get the Chiefs to the Super Bowl. Just curious if you still feel that way, number one. Then number two, who are some quarterback fits for the Chiefs in this draft, and if you see any, why?**

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, that's a hard question. It's a good question: I am bullish on Alex Smith because I read you guys a list of quarterbacks early on, and, you know, there's only eight or ten franchise guys in the league. If Alex Smith isn't one of them, he's just kind of a notch below, and that's better than most of the other teams around the league. I could name you half the league that needs a quality starting quarterback.

So I believe the Chiefs are ahead of most of the teams. I think you've got to be careful for what you wish for because it may come true. As far as this particular draft is concerned, the way I'd look at it if I was Kansas City and I was looking for a quarterback, I'd rather get a guy that I felt like had some talent.

Again, my message early on is keep slinging. Look at New England, they've been thinking for years when Tom Brady is going to run out of gas. And they've drafted consistently second-round quarterbacks, and they did it again last year with Jacoby Brissett in the third round.

So I would see no problem with Kansas City if they took a look at. And I tell you one guy I think is interesting is Chad Kelly from Ole Miss. He's got character concerns and he's got injury concerns. If he didn't have those, we'd be talking about him as a second-round guy and maybe higher.

I think Brad Kaaya from Miami and Josh Dobbs from Tennessee are the two quarterbacks I would classify as having some talent, but kind of long-range, developmental prospects. But they have talent. So if you took a guy like that in the third round, for instance, and tried to develop him, I think that would be a pretty good plan. I also think in general that the free agent quarterback class is going to be a little more intriguing to some teams this year than in typical.

**Q. The Colts obviously have a near desperate need for an edge rusher. My question is do they need to**

**go first round, or is this a deep enough group where they can wait and maybe find somebody day two?**

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, I think one of the messages in this year's draft at edge, corner and safety is there is great quality at the top, but there is depth throughout. So just for instance, say they're looking in the second or third round for an edge guy. I would tell you that DeMarcus Walker from Florida State is intriguing, and he's going to go in the second or third round. Tarell Basham from Ohio University, he's a really good football player, and he can play for somebody this year as a rookie. He probably -- he might not go to the third, but I've got a second-round grade on him. Jordan Willis from Kansas State. There is this freaky kid from Villanova named Tanoh Kpassagnon. He's 6'7", 280, and just kind of starting to figure out how good he might be some day. He's going to be an intriguing guy to watch at the combine. I mean, he could go as high as the second round, as low as the fourth round, but he's got freaky gifts.

So there is talent throughout for the edge-rush group.

**Q. When you go through the film library on Jonathan Allen, what do you see in terms of his NFL-readiness, and where do you see his elite strength at the next level?**

MIKE MAYOCK: I think he's one of the two or three best players in this draft. I think you bang the tables for him, he came backs a senior and had a crazy good year. His tape is outstanding, and it doesn't matter which tape you put in, they're all good.

What I like about him is he dominates outside in the run game. So you could line this 296-pound guy up outside on first down, if you wanted to, and let him set a physical edge. But I think he's going to make his money as an inside pass-rusher. He's quick enough to beat some of those guards and tackles, and he's strong enough to beat those guards and tackles.

So inside or outside, I think he's a special player, and I think the fact that he came back this year and had the kind of year he did when it would have been easy to come out last year, for me, I think Cleveland, for one, has got to be looking at the kid from A&M, Myles Garrett, and they've got to be looking at Jonathan Allen. And by the way, I think Chicago has to be also.

**Q. Want to ask you about the Eagles' strategy. They draft either 14 or 15, and their biggest needs, obviously, are wide receiver and cornerback. So at that spot, would it be best for them to pick which guy is best available there and then maybe try to double back into the later rounds? If they do that with the cornerback in the first round, is the wide**

**receiver class as defense as maybe cornerbacks are in the later rounds?**

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, I think the wide receiver class is good, but I don't think it's as deep as corner. So, if you're there at 14 or 15, I think the Eagles have to be looking really hard at all three of those potential first-round wideouts.

I think all three of them potentially go between 10 and 20, and I know people have some injury concerns about John Ross from Washington, but as a vertical threat, he's probably the best one in this draft.

So I think the Eagles have to be looking at all three. They're distinctly different. I think the Eagles have to figure out what their order of preference is, what kind of style they want. But they've got to be looking hard at all three of those guys and know up front whether or not if one or two or all three were available who they're going to take. Then I think they can drop back in the later round.

It wouldn't bother me at all if they drafted a couple corners, and I think they could. I think they can get one and two, I think they could. It's so deep at corner when you start talking where's Gareon Conley going to go from Ohio State? There is a kid named Ahkello Witherspoon, 6'3", out of Colorado. People are talking about him in the fourth round. He's a good football player. Damontae Kazee if they want a nickel. Cam Sutton. I can get through four rounds of quality corners, and I've never been able to say that before.

**Q. Knowing what the Cardinals need to do once Palmer retires maybe after this season, do they go draft to look for that future guy? Is there a guy they can mold within a year to take over?**

MIKE MAYOCK: I think it's a similar question that a lot of teams throughout the league are answering right now with aging quarterbacks. Drew Brees is 38, Tom Brady is 39, your guy's 37, Ben Roethlisberger is getting older.

I think there are a bunch of teams around the league saying: Who is next? And when do you pull the trigger and how high do you pull the trigger?

I mentioned earlier in the call two quarterbacks I thought were interesting developmental prospects, and that's Kaaya and Dobbs. Another person I'd throw in there who is probably a third-round pick is Davis Webb from Cal, transfer from Texas Tech who was the MVP of the Senior Bowl. Played in the same Cal offense that Jared Goff did. He's very much a spread guy. He's not ready to play, but he's a big guy. He's got a live arm. He's got good enough feet. He's another guy I would really like to develop.

There is a lot of conversation with Patrick Mahomes from Texas Tech. He's different. He's a gunslinger. He's got an innate feel for the game. The more I look at him, the more I'm pushing him higher and closer to that first-round conversation with Kizer, Watson, and Trubisky. So I think Mahomes is picking up steam in NFL circles.

I think you could get Webb perhaps in the third round, and then I think Kaaya and Dobbs are the guys as far as developmental guys if you're not going to try to trade for a quarterback, like a Garoppolo or Romo, et cetera.

**Q. Mike, this is sort of an off-the-wall type of question, but you're sort of in both environments now. How do you see the NFL balancing the combines as being -- what it's for in evaluating, chance to interview players, yet it's a marketing tool with all the fan access and media access? You sort of see it's tough to balance that or not?**

MIKE MAYOCK: What do you mean?

**Q. Well, I get the impression that the NFL is trying to get fans more involved. I just think the NFL wants it to be more of a player-only type of thing. Or is it easy to balance those two?**

MIKE MAYOCK: I think what it is is kind of the age-old conversation inside the NFL where the competition committee and football guys would like to keep it as private as possible. It was difficult to open it up years ago for television. As you guys know, there is no media allowed inside. They have very few fans allowed inside. And I think the football guys like it that way.

Now, I think the other side of the NFL looks at it as a huge media opportunity. The ratings are good, the interest is high. Just how far do we go with pushing the, quote, Underwear Olympics out there as a massive event for fans, and I think the recent legitimate conversation internally about how it should be treated. I'm kind of an old-school football guy, and I kind of like just sitting there, evaluating and keeping it that what it is, but obviously what I think doesn't matter.

**Q. Wondering how you envision the interview process in Indianapolis going for Christian McCaffrey in terms of how much might teams press him on the decision to miss the Sun Bowl? Is that an issue for only teams that already had issues about him? Is it an issue for nobody? How do you look at that?**

MIKE MAYOCK: It's a tough one because it's a new one. I think Fournette's going to have to answer the same questions. The old-school football people are going to go a little bit more hard. Hey, what are you thinking about here? You walked out on your teammates. You put individual ahead of team.

I don't think it's going to ultimately cost him. In my opinion I think there's enough people out there that kind of look at the talent and the fact that he's completely clean off the field in what he can present to an NFL franchise. Now, doesn't mean he's not going to have to answer some questions by every team. He is. But I ultimately don't think it's going to cost him.

I think we're seeing kind of a new age. And I think more and more players are kind of looking out there, especially after the Jaylon Smith Notre Dame situation in his bowl game. So I think they're going to face a few uncomfortable questions. But at the end of the day, I don't think it's going to cost any of them a draft slot.

**Q. Got another McCaffrey question for you, I guess. I wanted to know if he's worthy of a first-round pick given his position and the depths of running back in the draft. Beyond that, looking at the Lions who desperately need to upgrade their running game. How much would he actually diversify things, given they have a pass-catcher in Reddick and Abdullah, and a guy that's not been healthy of late?**

MIKE MAYOCK: Right, and I think you have to be smart at how you're looking at utilizing talent. I think the best match-up coach in football is Bill Belichick, and he's been doing that for years. From my perspective, McCaffrey's a match-up guy. He's a chess piece. He averaged -- just like Dalvin Cook and Fournette and Kamara, he averaged between 6 and 6.5 yards a carry. He's an outstanding pass catcher. He's bigger and tougher than people think he is. And he's also a return guy.

So you've got to have a plan if you draft him with the first-round pick as to how you want to utilize him, especially based on what you have on your roster already. Now, if you're Detroit and you're looking for a running back, are you looking for a big, physical guy that can handle the load in the fourth quarter in your four-minute offense and downhill in denying? Or are you looking for a guy that can go out the slot and play and all that when you already have Reddick? I think each team's going to evaluate him differently.

But the bottom line for me is that especially the whole running back position, Fournette is a different conversation than Dalvin Cook, Christian McCaffrey, or Alvin Kamara, or throw Mixon in there, because those last four guys are today's NFL. They're going to get 20 touches, but it's going to be probably 12 or 13 in the run game; 6, 7 or 8 in pass game. If you draft Fournette, you better give him 25 touches in the run game.

So you've got to have a plan. And I've got five running

backs with first-round grades. I think three are going to go in the first round, because Mixon's character, and I think Kamara's going to have enough questions about why he didn't play more. But I think the other three are going in the first round.

**Q. I'm wondering how you would compare and contrast Malik Hooker and Jamal Adams, and would either of those guys give the Bears better value at No. 3 than a corner?**

MIKE MAYOCK: I think this is a year where we're looking at two safeties that are certainly Top 10 picks, and maybe even Top 5, and looking at the best talent in the draft, the Texas A&M edge and the Alabama defensive tackle to me are probably one and two, but after that the corners are in the conversation -- excuse me, the two safeties are in the conversation.

Today's NFL is a pass-first league, and the safety position is changing. Playing against three wideouts and a tight end at a minimum, 65, 70% of the time.

So safeties that can cover are at a premium. That's a long way of saying that I think both these kids can cover. I wouldn't be talking about them as Top 10 picks if I didn't think they were complete safeties.

I think Adams is a little bit more physical. Comes downhill a little bit better and is a more consistent tackler. I think Hooker has better range and ball skills. Hooker as a centerfielder is phenomenal. He's got an instinct for the game and an ability to go around the football. But I think Adams is more physical.

So it's really what a team's looking for, but they both can drop down and cover the slot. They both can cover tight ends. But there is just a subtle difference in the styles that they play.

**Q. Jim Schwartz's defense is all about the pass rush. They gave up the second most pass plays of 30 yards or more in the league last year, but also only had 37 sacks. Given that, how do you weigh what's a greater need for that unit right now, edge rusher or corner?**

MIKE MAYOCK: I think the way you do it is as you're approaching being on the clock, you're evaluating what's available in both units or both positions, I should say. The bottom line for the Eagles, they need, I think, at least a couple corners this year. I don't care if you're talking about draft or free agency. You need two or three bodies back there.

And up front, anybody that can get to the quarterback is going to be of interest to the Eagles, whether it's inside or outside. So I think when you're at the clock at 15 or 14, you're looking at it and going, okay, if Sidney

Jones, the corner from Washington who I think is instinctive, like a Marcus Peters, are you comparing him to who as an edge rusher or an internal rusher? Who is there on the clock at that time? Who does the job better?

I think that's how they have to look at it, and it's the same thing in the second round, is that defensive end or defensive tackle more highly rated than that corner or that safety? I think there's enough really good players at both of those positions that they can do really well in this draft.

**Q. What are Deshaun Watson's issues transitioning to the program in that spread offense? What do you have on the Arkansas D-lineman Jeremiah Ledbetter?**

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, I tell you, Watson, from my perspective, I'm fascinated with the kid. Just a really quick overview on the quarterback position in general this year, you know, I'm not bullish on the quarterbacks this year because I don't think any of them are ready day one. I think they all have different issues.

But when you look at Deshaun Watson, I see a kid that went 28-2 in his last two years as a starter. I thought he played his best when the lights were brightest against the best defenses. His two games of 15 and 16 against Alabama. Put the tape on and watch the kid play. He's a competitor. When the game's on the line, he gets better. He does not shrink.

So, having said that, I love and I'm fascinated by him, but my concern, like all spread quarterbacks, and I don't care if it's Jared Goff, Paxton Lynch, Marcus Mariota, Johnny Manziel, RG3, I don't care who they are, they all have a major adjustment when they get to the NFL. And Deshaun Watson, like those other guys, has to show he can win in the pocket. When he sits there and that first read is available, he's really good. He can make throws at all three levels with great accuracy. When that first look isn't there, it starts to break down a little bit.

Part of his instinct is to try to get out of the pocket because he's such a good athlete, but when he stays in the pocket, his accuracy drops, I think his decision-making drops. He throws a lot of interceptions where he doesn't see underneath coverage, and typically it's on his second or third read. So like most spread quarterbacks, I think that's the challenge.

Now, as far as Ledbetter, he's an interesting kid. He's 6'3", 281, really long arms, led the team in sacks. Had a really good East-West league. I think he's got to fight consistency. He's got to play hard on every single snap. I think the 4-3 teams out there are going to like him as a base defensive end. And I think he's probably

going to go on the third day somewhere.

**Q. As a follow-up to the running back discussion earlier, I'm just curious how you weigh their needs in the running game between the offensive line getting improvements there or in the back field. And as a follow-up to that, what running backs make sense to you for the Lions?**

MIKE MAYOCK: Well, their offensive line is pretty soft. They did a nice job with Taylor Decker. I think the interior guys are all pretty interesting. Tomlinson and Warford are big bodies and should be better in the run game. Riley Reiff, I believe he's a potential free agent this year.

So I'm always bullish on inside-out. If you can help yourself in the run game with an offensive lineman, I think that's probably the best way to go about it. But when you look at the Lions running backs, it comes down to who is healthy and how do you use them? And what they really don't have, I don't think, is that big banger that is the first of the ten backs, your fourth quarterback, you've got pass catchers, you've got quick guys, you've got fast guys. But I think you need that back, and they don't have that bigger back. From my perspective, pairing a big back with what they have in-house would really help them.

**Q. My question is about the Browns with the number one overall pick. I keep hearing a lot of people, pretty much everybody, saying, hey, it's Myles Garrett, Myles Garrett. You seem to have a more open mind saying they really need to look at Myles Garrett and Jonathan Allen. Is that more because you have worries about Myles Garrett or you just think so highly of Jonathan Allen? Can you break down your thoughts on those two guys and the Browns looking at them in number one with Gregg Williams and his defense and considering all those factors?**

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, here's my deal. I think Myles Garrett has the most upside of any pass-rusher in this draft. When healthy, he's easy to do on tape. He's 6'5", 262 pounds. He's got outside edgeability, he's got ability to come up and underneath, he can set a physical edge in the run game. But most importantly, he can affect quarterbacks. That's what this league is about. I think he makes a ton of sense at number one.

The reason I think Jonathan Allen has to be considered also is, in addition to affecting the game, he affects it a little bit differently. So you can move him around. He can play just about anyplace on Gregg Williams' front four, inside, outside, and he could do it at a high level.

I also think he's a little bit safer. At number one, you need a guy that you can sit there and you need a

difference maker. I think they're both difference makers. I think there is a higher ceiling for the Texas A&M kid, but I think that Alabama kid is a great defensive player for the next ten years, and I think he's just a little bit safer than Garrett because he stays healthy, and he just seems like he plays every single week. But I love them both.

**Q. The Miami kid was suspended two of the last three years, Al-Quadin Muhammad. Do you see him being drafted at all? And the front seven guys the Dolphins will have an option at, they'll likely go front seven. Who is your personal favorite among Barnett and Charles Harris and Taco Charlton and McKinley, Jarrad Davis, that group?**

MIKE MAYOCK: As far as the Al-Quadin Muhammad kid, he didn't play basically two of the last three years. He's got a significant number of issues off the field. I think teams are intrigued by his athleticism, but I'd be surprised if he got drafted. I think he's going to be a free agent.

As far as front seven people for Miami at No. 22, I look at it two different ways. I look at, when I say linebackers, I'm looking at off-the-ball linebackers, like in a 4-3, which is effectively what they're going to be. Reuben Foster should be long gone. And then after that, you want a Zach Cunningham from Vanderbilt, a Jarrad Davis from Florida, or Haason Reddick from Temple.

I'm very much a Haason Reddick guy, and if he tests well at the combine, I think he's going to come from nowhere to being, at worst, a second-round pick and perhaps a late first-round pick.

Then you start talking about the edge guys as far as front seven. I really like Derek Barnett. I think Tim Williams is going to slide a little bit with the off-the-field stuff, but he's more of a 3-4 guy. Derek Barnett, Solomon Thomas, Taco Charlton, I think they're all 4-3 guys and really all first-round picks.

Then you get to the 3-4 guys, Takk McKinley, T.J. Watt, Charles Harris can probably play in either. There are eight guys that I have potential first-round grades on the edge. So anybody looking for an edge in the first round is going to find them.

**Q. I want to ask you about a few CU kids, the quarterback, Sefo, and then three DBs, Chidobe Awuzie, Tedric Thompson, and Ahkello Witherspoon, like you mentioned. And what are your thoughts on the offensive linemen, and particularly the tackle that's top of the class.**

MIKE MAYOCK: Okay, the Colorado kids. The quarterback, I love his competitiveness and his

toughness. I don't think he's a natural thrower of the football. In a typical year, only about 12 quarterbacks get drafted. That is the average over the last five years. I'm not sure he's going to be drafted as a quarterback.

As far as the defensive backs are concerned, I really like their defensive backs. Awuzie is one of my favorite players. If he's not going to start at the outside, he's going to start at nickel and perhaps even free safety. I've got a second-round grade on him, and I think he's physical, tough.

The Witherspoon kid, very quietly a lot of NFL teams like because of his length. He fits that cover one/cover three, Seattle, Atlanta, San Francisco kind of style.

The safety, Thompson, I also like. He's a ball-hawking free safety. Not as physical as I would like. At the present time misses a lot of tackles, doesn't get very involved in the run game, so he's really a free safety only, which will limit where he can go.

Then I guess the second question was the tackles. It's one of the few groups that isn't really strong this year. I've got Ramczyk and Bolles one and two. After those two kids -- and when I say that, I've got Cam Robinson as a guard. He could also play tackle, obviously. But I think there is a drop-off after Ramczyk and Bolles. In a typical year, ten tackles go in the first three rounds, and I can't find ten guys that I would give grades to their rounds one through three.

**Q. What are your thoughts on what the Jets should do at No. 6 as you look at their many needs? Would you in any way put quarterback in there as a possibility for them?**

MIKE MAYOCK: I don't do team needs until after free agency because it's, frankly, a waste of time. But the quarterback thing for the Jets is really frustrating. I mean, they took Hackenberg last year. Geno's not working out. Petty's still on the roster.

So they've expended some pretty high draft picks on a bunch of quarterbacks that have paid no fruit. So if you're asking me whether the Jets at No. 6 should take a quarterback, I would emphatically tell you no. As a matter of fact, I don't have a Top 10 grade on any quarterback in this draft. So I would not be in that conversation.

If you're talking about what the Jets should do at six based on what they've done with their offensive line, they just released or didn't re-sign three of their starting offensive linemen. That's a real need for them, obviously. At No. 6, is there a guy worthy of that? Probably not. I think you're going to end up, just because of value, unless they trade back -- I think

you're going to look at a defensive back, corner or safety, or one of the edge guys. I think that's where they're going to end up being. Because if you're picking six, you've got to get a great football player. You've got to get five or six of the best players in the draft. So if you're the Jets, you're hoping a couple of those quarterbacks go early until a better positional player falls to you.

**Q. Lions linebackers last year, no sacks, no interceptions, no fumbles. No really impact plays. Obviously, DeAndre Levy didn't help that. But I'm curious, at No. 21, is there an impact guy at that position that makes sense for them? I know you mentioned Foster's probably gone. But Reddick, Davis, Cunningham, does one fit the lines at 21?**

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, I think they could. Keep in mind, for instance, the Atlanta Falcons did an unbelievable job rebuilding their defense over a two-year period and almost winning a Super Bowl. It was based on a couple things. It was based on speed and toughness. For instance, they drafted that safety, Keanu Neal, and he set a tone. They drafted in the second round, Deion Jones, the linebacker from LSU who is one of the fastest linebackers who ever ran at the combine. And he had a great year. De'Vondre Campbell, who I think they took in the fourth or fifth round, again, tough guy that could run.

So in a similar situation with Detroit, Reuben Foster is gone. I think the three guys that you have to talk about are Haason Reddick, Zach Cunningham, and Jarrad Davis. All three of them fit the bill of guys that can run. Highly competitive and tough.

Now, Cunningham is kind of a high-cut guy, where the other two are just a little bit more low-cut and explosive. But there are three that would have to be in the conversation if you were going to pull the trigger at a linebacker at, what is it? 21, I believe.

So, beyond that there are some guys in the second round. And a couple of those guys could fall into the second round. I mean, Reddick or Jarrad Davis might even be there in the second round. But they're good football players. Alex Anzalone from Florida, the second or third round. Tyus Bowser from Louisville, second or third round. So I think there are linebackers that could help Detroit, and I think they could get them in the first three rounds.

**Q. The Ravens have a lot of needs on defense -- cornerback, safety, outside linebacker. But if they saw Corey Davis or Mike Williams go there, drop down to No. 16 or even one of the running backs, do you think they could pull the trigger on the offensive weapon there given all the depth on**

**defense and whatnot?**

MIKE MAYOCK: Well, I think if you follow Ozzie and Eric DeCosta over the years, what they do really well is they typically get good football players because they don't reach for positional needs. Of course they have common sense about what they need. But at the end of the day, if they're picking 16, when there is a running back on the board that they've got ranked No. 7 and he's the highest rated guy on the board, yeah, I could see them pulling the trigger, and that's it. That's why they're typically such a good football team.

Now, you can look anywhere on that front seven, because I think they have some needs, and I think you could understand that at 16 there is going to be some front-seven talent available. So, my gut tells me it will be somewhere in that front seven. But, shoot, if they had a wideout or running back highly rated and some of that defensive talent got gobbled up early, yeah, I could see them pulling the trigger.

**Q. Kevin Colbert said what he wants to accomplish at the combine. As you see what edge rushers fit into the scheme and drop into coverage, my question to you is that a difficult evaluation to make in a short time at the combine, and what guys do you think can do that?**

MIKE MAYOCK: I struggled to hear you there. You're talking about edge rushers that can rush and drop and whether or not you'll see that at the combine?

**Q. Yeah, the edge rushers who can also drop into coverage, what guys can make that transition to the NFL? And is that a difficult evaluation to make at the combine, like Colbert said they'd try to do this weekend, next weekend?**

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, you see every year they do a couple drills for what they call the hybrids, which are defensive ends that work out with the defensive line group but maybe ask to stand up as 34 outside linebackers in the NFL. And they do a really nice job after the D-line is done of pulling those guys out. There is always a group of anywhere from five to ten of those guys, and they put them through a linebacker workout, which is all drops. It's all opening your hips, running on angles, trying to catch a football.

You can tell some of the guys are going to be a project. You can also tell that although it's a little bit foreign to some of the other guys, they're kind of fluid. It's easier for them to open their hips, drop their weight, et cetera.

I think Pittsburgh over the years has done a pretty good job of developing their edge guy. Sometimes it takes a year or two. But in this particular draft, I've said several times, Tim Williams from Alabama could do it easily. And I think he's going to slide a little bit for some off-

the-field stuff. I think Takk McKinley from UCLA is better going forward. He's a little bit tight.

But, again, when you're evaluating 34 outside linebackers, there are three things they've got to be able to do, and in this order: Number one, they've got to be hellacious pass-rushers; number two, they've got to set a physical edge in the run game; and number three, they have to drop.

So the ability to drop is number three, and by far the least important. So, I think Takk McKinley can do it. I think T.J. Watt can do it exceptionally well. Charles Harris can do it. Ryan Anderson can probably do it. Carl Lawson.

So there are a bunch of guys in this draft. Youngstown State has two kids. There are a bunch of guys that fit the bill, and I know Kevin and his guys will be busy with that.

**Q. Two of the prominent players in this draft, Myles Garrett and Deshaun Watson, have jokingly appealed to the Cowboys to trade for the No. 1 pick so that they could draft them. Obviously, it was a joke. But if you're the Browns, how do you react to this in the interview with these players? Do you write this off to player immaturity, bad advice, or is this a show of the lack of respect the Browns have gotten has sunk to the college ranks?**

MIKE MAYOCK: No, I don't see any lack of respect for Cleveland. I see a little bit of immaturity on behalf of the kids. And I also see some natural -- I mean, some kids grow up in a certain area or are attracted to a certain team. They're a little bit too bubbly and infectious about it. I understand that.

I don't think Cleveland should be -- I don't think the fans or the people in the building in Cleveland should worry about it at all. Sit down, work the kids out, interview them. Trust me, if Cleveland drafts either of those kids, they're going to come in ready to play.

**Q. Who would you take if you were the Chargers at No. 7?**

MIKE MAYOCK: Again, who do you think -- what positions are you looking at? O-line? Outside linebacker? Safety? What do you think?

**Q. We're thinking, well, either one. Just looking for your perspective on this.**

MIKE MAYOCK: Well, again, we haven't had free agency, so that can change everything as far as what a team's looking for.

From my perspective, when you're drafting at No. 7, you get a great football player regardless of position. I

don't look at team needs quite as hard, A, at this time of the year, or, B, in the Top 10. Because if you're in the Top 10, you've got to come out with a Pro Bowl player.

So the Chargers at No. 7, first thing you've got to look at, you've got to protect your quarterback and that offensive line has struggled. Is there an offensive lineman worthy of the seventh pick in the draft? My answer would probably be no. So then I would tend to move on and say, okay, how about outside linebacker, safety, corner?

And I think two safeties that I talked about earlier, Malik Hooker, because, let's face it, the Chargers lost Eric Weddle, I think Malik Hooker fits them like a glove. Then, again, at the edge position, getting two quarterbacks, who makes a lot of sense there? Garrett's going to be gone. Tim Williams has some off-the-field stuff. I think they'd be looking hard at a Derek Barnett or -- Derek Barnett would probably make the most sense at No. 7.

**Q. Real quick, of course, the Panthers apparently just tagged KK Short, but the edge rusher is a position for them that a lot of people are marking to them at 8. But the other position you've already talked about is running back, and I just wonder what you think is the most bang for your buck? The best impact player at that position? Would it be running back for the Panthers at 8 or an edge rusher?**

MIKE MAYOCK: I'm a little bit intrigued by the Leonard Fournette-Carolina conversation, because, as I mentioned earlier in the call, I think Fournette is a different conversation. He's got to go to a team that's going to run him the football and feed him 20 to 25 times. He's not going to be much of an impact in the pass game.

But when you start talking about Cam Newton taking less hits, it's, to me, if you've got a big back like that that you can commit for the next six to eight years, we're just going to feed the big boy and we're going after it on the run game, and feed the Cam Newton strength off the play action, I think that would be a significant impact.

Now, obviously the edge guys are important. And when you get on the clock, you're looking at a bunch of different things. But I happen to think Fournette is a nice fit with Carolina.

**Q. Thank you very much. I wonder if I may get your evaluation and grade on an offensive lineman from Ole Miss, Justin Senior? And also pick your brain on three other players -- Geoff Gray, an offensive**

**lineman from Manitoba; Antony Auclair from Laval, a tight end; and Justin Herdman, the linebacker from Simon Fraser, please?**

MIKE MAYOCK: We're going Canadian here, right?

**Q. Yeah, well, the Canadian press.**

MIKE MAYOCK: The second name, I don't think I've seen tape on him, what is his name? Gray?

**Q. Geoff Gray, the offensive lineman from Manitoba. He was at the East-West.**

MIKE MAYOCK: I saw very little of him, but I saw note a. But the other three I have a pretty good feel for. Justin Senior's a guy that I thought over a two-week period, because he was in East-West and Senior Bowl, what I thought he did best was get better as the weeks went on. I thought he was a little bit overwhelmed early in the Senior Bowl, and all of a sudden by mid week, it seemed to click.

He's got length, he's got size. I think he's probably going to be -- and this is a really bad offensive tackle class, so he could get pushed up higher. Typically I'd have him as a fifth-round guy, but he could go in the third or fourth round because it's a tough class, and he's got some upside.

Auclair is the tight end, I believe, correct, from Laval, if I remember?

**Q. You're correct.**

MIKE MAYOCK: He opened some eyes at the East-West game. He's a strong kid. He works hard. He's a tough kid, but he's a better athlete than I think people were expecting. Very raw, doesn't know what he's doing yet, doesn't really know how to run routes the way he's going to have to run them, but he caught the ball well. And because of his height-weight-speed combination, I think even in a really deep tight end class this year, I think he could be late draftable.

Then the other kid was Herdman, right, the Simon Fraser kid?

**Q. That's correct.**

MIKE MAYOCK: I saw him a little bit on tape, and, again, at The Senior Bowl, and I liked his movement skills. I thought again as the week went he did a better job of covering running backs. I wasn't sure whether it would be an edge guy or off-the-ball linebacker. But I think he's an off-the-ball linebacker with enough athletic skill to get drafted a little later in the draft on the third day.

**Q. I wanted to ask, how much do you think all this stuff about Chad Kelly not getting invited to the combine has kind of affected his stock? And what**

**Ole Miss prospect has the most to gain at the combine?**

MIKE MAYOCK: How many guys do they have, Ole Miss, at the combine?

**Q. I think four or five.**

MIKE MAYOCK: You have a couple wideouts.

**Q. D.J. Jones.**

MIKE MAYOCK: Oh, yeah, you know what? I like him. D.J. Jones is a defensive tackle that kind of popped for me on tape. Better player than I thought he was. Short area quickness that I really liked, and I think the wideouts will go there and look pretty and run fast, but this kid in short areas -- and I'm anxious to see him in kind of -- forget the measurables for a second, but just the defensive line drills, I think he's quick, explosive in short areas, and I like him. I think he can help himself.

I think Adeboyejo is a good receiver who is very slim, but I think he's going to run pretty well. He helped himself at the East-West game.

Again, I told you guys how I felt about the character players not being invited. I think it's a mistake. How much is it going to hurt them? I don't think it's going to hurt them because the teams still have to vet these kids. They still have to spend time with these kids.

They've got two evaluations with him. He's coming off -- he's got two ACLs, one in '13, one in '16, and he's got multiple off-the-field issues. So they've got to vet him medically and from a character perspective.

So I think worst-case scenario, he's got second-round talent. But when you throw the medical and off-the-field in there, I don't think he's going in the first two rounds.

So I don't think it's hurting him that he's not at the combine, but he's going to need to put his best foot forward with all the individual meetings with the teams.

**Q. Hey, Mike, you had talked earlier about the three wide receivers in the first round and the decision the Eagles would have to make. In most years, rookie wide receivers, and obviously you're not drafting them for one year, but most years rookie wide receivers don't have a huge impact. Do you see any of those guys really being capable of putting up big numbers as rookies, being like No. 1 type receivers right away?**

MIKE MAYOCK: Well, there are three distinctly different guys left. And I think John Ross is intriguing to me from an Eagles perspective. So, again, he's got some medical. I'm just saying talent. You take the medical off the board for a second. He's probably the best

vertical threat in the draft.

I think that would help the rest of the Eagles underneath. They desperately need speed. If you're talking about a guy that's going to run 4.35, which I think he will, and he's also really quick. For instance, Fuller, Will Fuller of Notre Dame, went in the middle of the first round last year, and he's almost the same height and weight, and he ran 4.3 (indiscernible).

I think this kid can run just as fast as Fuller, but I think he's quicker and a better natural catcher than Fuller. So if you take the medical out of it and just say vertical stretch, quick, fast, good hands, he's really intriguing, I think, as an Eagles prospect.

But then you have to look at the other two guys, and Mike Williams creates his own space. I mean, he's a big, physical dude. I think he welcomes press coverage. He uses his physicality. He catches back shoulders.

Again, if you're looking from an Eagles perspective in scoring in red zone opportunities, he's probably the best guy as a wide receiver position in this draft in the red zone because of his catching radius and physicality.

I have Corey Davis as the No. 1 receiver, because I think he's a better athlete with good size. Better run after the catch than Mike Williams. He's not going to be able to work out because he's injured at the combine.

I think all three of them are in the conversation. They bring different things to the table. And, lastly, I think I'd struggle thinking that the three of them will struggle like Nelson Agholor did, who was another first round pick. I think they're going to be fine.

**Q. The Raiders last year finished last in sacks despite having Khalil Mack and Bruce Irvin. They've talked about getting an interior pass rush. You've talked about the edge guys. But who are the interior guys the Raiders might be looking at at 24 or later?**

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, and it's interesting. Obviously Oakland got back -- didn't they get back the edge guy, what's his name, from Florida State? Towards the end of the year.

**Q. Mario Edwards. He played very late, yeah.**

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, I think he's one of those guys that can kick inside in sub packages. I think he's got that kind of size and versatility to play inside and out, and they really missed him.

As far as this year's draft, Caleb Brantley from Florida, who is kind of a late first round into the second round, I think he's intriguing. He's a quick, one-gap guy. I don't think you want him playing three downs every snap. But as far as an ability to rush the quarterback and get an edge on interior offensive linemen, I think he's got that burst that you're looking for.

I think Larry Ogunjobi from Charlotte, a name that not many people know about, I think he's really a talented guy. He's probably a second-round pick. He's got some real quick one-gap-and-go possibilities. He's also a tough guy. At Charlotte, he's got a two-gap. He's got run game potential, and I think he's got upside as a pass-game guy.

As you drop down, I mean, you could even get into the third round and talk about a guy like Tanel Smart from Tulane. Again, great motor, has some ability to push the pocket.

You know, I think Eddie Vanderdoes from UCLA really helped himself. He had a poor year coming off an ACL. I think he was heavy and out of shape. Then he showed up at The Senior Bowl and started knocking people around. He's more of a physical guy. Always going to rush the quarterback with a bull rush. He's not going to beat you with speed. But he's really strong as can be.

I think there are other guys in the second-third round, Montravius Adams, Jaleel Johnson, there are some guys out there that can help even through the third round.

So I think the key to this interior defensive line class is Jonathan Allen's up top, and then I didn't even mention Malik McDowell from Michigan State who is probably a first- or second-round guy also. I think there is really good depth in the first three or four rounds for the interior D-line.

**Q. I was hoping you could talk about DeShone Kizer and why you have him as your top quarterback, and whether you think he could sneak into the Top 10, perhaps or even the 49ers at pick No. 2?**

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, I don't have any quarterbacks anywhere near the Top 10. It doesn't mean that I don't think there is talent there, because I think there are four quarterbacks in this draft that have first-round talent. In my order that I had for my initial Top 5, it was Kizer, Watson, Trubisky, and Mahomes. All four of them have holes in their game. I don't think any of them are ready to start week one.

You're asking me about Kizer, I think he's the prototype quarterback in the NFL. He's at 6'5", 235-, 240-pound

quarterback. He's got a big arm. He's got a quick release. He's athletic. He's smart. He's got enough athletic ability to move around the pocket. So I love his physical traits. I think he'll work hard, and I know he's smart.

What I don't like is how his game fell apart in the fourth quarter of a lot of games. So you either think -- it depends whether you like him or you don't. If you like him, you think your game fell apart because he tried to do too much this year in the fourth quarter. Or, if you don't like him, you say, well, it's never going to happen.

I felt like his pocket mechanics fell apart, he tried to do too much, and the reason I have him as the number one quarterback is I think he's got the highest ceiling of any of the quarterbacks. But, again, I don't think he's ready to play yet.

**Q. Given what the concerns are for Deshaun Watson, how does he help himself at this stage of the process when it is the shorts and shirts Olympics? What's he do to alleviate some of those concerns?**

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, it's a good question. I think it goes for all the quarterbacks, especially Watson. He's played so darn well. And there are a bunch of quarterback coaches around the NFL that can't wait to meet him, can't wait to get into a room with him and have a conversation with him.

I think the two things he can do, number one, he's already said he's going to throw, and I love that. Cam Newton said, hey, I'm coming out and throwing.

I think every quarterback needs to embrace that. Who cares if you've thrown an incomplete pass? Get out there and show them how athletic your feet are. And he's got a live arm. Don't be afraid of the stage. That's number one.

Number two, you're going to go to all these back-to-back-to-back 15-minute meetings, and, man, this is a high-level kid, and when you're talking about the face of a franchise, everybody from ownership to the GM, the head coaches on down, they can't wait to walk into this 15-minute meeting.

And I would assume he's going to walk in and light up the room. He's well-spoken. I hear he's very smart. But they put him up on the board, put a piece of tape on it and tell him to walk through it, I think he will.

What you really want is to whet the appetites of all these teams so they say I can't wait to get a private meeting with this kid, go out to dinner with him, get a private workout. In other words, you want this kid to have all 32 teams say: Wow, I want to spend more

time with you.

**Q. I know there are 300-plus players in Indy this week, so I don't know how much you know about Isaiah McKenzie from Georgia, explosive returner, leading receiver on the team last season. How important is a week like this for him? And given his size, what do you see from him?**

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, which kid is it again? Did you say Georgia or West Georgia?

**Q. Isaiah McKenzie from Georgia.**

MIKE MAYOCK: Let me grab my notes here because I watched some tape on him the other day. Isaiah McKenzie; correct?

**Q. Yeah, that's it.**

MIKE MAYOCK: 5'8, 175, surprised he came out as a third-year junior. Obviously, one of the keys for a kid that size is the return game. He returned five punts for a touchdown, one kickoff. He's got six returns. He averaged almost 12 yards a return, almost 59 punts. So that's going to be a big deal on this kid.

I put on a little bit of his punt return wheel, and you can see how quick he is laterally. I think one of the things he can do to help himself this week is also run fast vertically. Some kids are quicker than fast, like a lot of punt returners are. But if he can run at a certain level, 4.5 or better, that would really help him. Because he really had ten touchdowns last year. Seven by pass, two by run, and one on a punt returner. He's a space player, run after catch, find crease.

I think what you're trying to do is show you have good hands, natural hands, you can be a return guy and a special teams player, but you can also be a specialty guy on offense. Slot, move around, jet sweep. So that's where this kid could help himself this week.

**Q. You've got the worst-case scenario for the Bengals there. No quarterback going in the Top 10. They're looking for an edge rusher. They're looking for it to get fast on defense. Could they be in no-man's land at No. 9? Is it too high for a guy like Charlton Barnett? And is it too high for those wide receivers, Williams or Davis? And what do you think you could get from McCarron?**

MIKE MAYOCK: I think there is some interest. If you look around the league at the quarterback situation, which is all, you know, we always talk about, I think underneath the Garoppolo stuff, there is some AJ McCarron interest out there. I don't know what kind of value to throw on him. And I don't know if Cincinnati would be willing -- what situation they'd be willing to give him up for.

But they're going to lose him after next year. I don't know if it's a second-round pick or third-round pick. I don't know what the value is, but I know there are some people out there who are saying is AJ McCarron better than what we have right now?

Now, as far as the No. 9 overall pick, you want all three of those quarterbacks to go early. And they might. I'm just telling you what I think. You could easily make a case for Cleveland at 1, San Francisco at 2, Chicago 3, the Jets at 6. Easily make a case. They need quarterbacks desperately. And you would imagine at least one, if not two or three, are gone by the time you get to 9. Sitting there at 9 was the value. And there are a couple running backs, because that would probably help, and another situation that I don't think Cincinnati is going to take.

So if quarterbacks and running backs go early, it helps Cincinnati. As far as the edge guys, Derek Barnett, he very well could be sitting on the board. Derek Barnett can play. Taco Charlton, that's a little high for me, but he sits where that defense is. He looks like Carlos Dunlap, he looks like Michael Johnson. He's 6'6", 270. That's what Paul Guenther loves, those kinds of guys.

So that's a little high for me, for him. But still he's a first-round defensive end. And I know Coach Guenther will get the most out of him. So I still think, regardless of what happens, you're going to be fine at 9. You're going to get a good football player.

**Q. How about a receiver? Is that too high for one of those receivers?**

MIKE MAYOCK: No, I don't think it's too high for the conversation of Mike Williams. It's kind of at the borderline. But I don't think it's too high. I also think some of those safeties and corners make some sense also. I haven't mentioned the name Marshon Lattimore on this entire call, and those two safeties are Top 10 picks. Again, depending on the quarterbacks and the running backs, we have no idea what's going to be available with those safeties.

**Q. You have Trubisky rated third. What is it about his game, other than the fact that he's played only 13 games, that you have questions about?**

MIKE MAYOCK: You hit it on the head. You can't ask me that question by saying "other than" because that's my main answer. I'm probably old school when it comes to quarterbacks and having some experience.

I'll be the first to tell you, I really like Mitch Trubisky. He's got quick release, a big arm, good feet. He moves around the pocket fairly well. So I was really impressed. I wasn't expecting a whole lot when I put the first tape in. I think I've watched five of his games.

By the way, he threw the ball 571 times this year. If you look at Carson Wentz in his entire career, I think Carson only threw it 612 times. So he only threw it 30 or 40 times less than Wentz did in college.

However, one year as a starter, I look at that and go, okay, 13 games, how many two-minute situations was he in? How many four-minute situations where he knew he had to bleed the clock and make calls at the line of scrimmage and do pass protections and get the ball out?

I look at the Bowl game and think it's a perfect example. It's a microcosm of what I'm talking about. He made two or three throws in that Bowl game against Stanford that were big-time NFL throws under pressure. Loved them. However, in the same half, in the second half of that game, he threw a pick six that was an awful read and an awful throw.

I just don't think he's ready yet. I think he's talented and I think he's a starting NFL quarterback, but I had about the same grade on him that I had on Garoppolo. I think they're similar coming out of college. I had a second-round grade on Garoppolo. So I think the kid's a starting quarterback in the NFL. I just don't think he's ready yet.

**Q. You just mentioned Jimmy Garoppolo. I'm just curious, in your opinion, would he be worth a first-round pick in a trade for one of these teams that's a little bit higher than the Patriots in the draft and a need at that position? And wanted to get your take on a tight end, is there anybody in this class who fits what the Patriots typically look for in a guy in terms of being able to excel both as a receiver and as a blocker in the running game?**

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, and I'm sorry, what was the first part of that question? I blanked.

**Q. I was just curious in your opinion is Garoppolo worth a first-round pick?**

MIKE MAYOCK: In my opinion, if I'm the Cleveland Browns and I've got 1 and 12, if I came away with either Garrett or Jonathan Allen at No. 1 and gave up the 12th pick in the draft to get Garoppolo, I would be stoked. I would feel like I've got a difference maker on defense, and we've got our quarterback on offense. Now let's get to work. We've got five of the first 65 picks, let's get to work.

So, yeah, from my perspective, looking at the quarterbacks this year, if they gave up 12 and could get Garoppolo, I'd be all over that.

From a tight end perspective, O.J. Howard is my No. 1 tight end. I don't think he gets to the end of the first

round, but he's what they like. He can block. He's a really good pass receiver, he comes out of that Alabama program that they respect.

And as you drop down and look at the other tight ends after him, there are some really good pass-catching tight ends that would be more like a Hernandez. You start talking about David Njoku from Miami, he's an absolute freak, and he's also tough enough to learn how to block.

Again, I don't know if he gets to the Patriots. Evan Engram and Gerald Everett are two guys that are kind of the move, wide receiver/tight end that can play in the slot. Jake Butt had an ACL at the end of his season for Michigan, but he's one of those in-line blockers. Tough guy and good enough athletically to catch the ball short and immediate.

I mean, this is a great tight end class. You can get second-, third-round tight ends that make a lot of sense. Down the road a little bit, Michael Roberts from Toledo is a big guy that needs to block better, but he's got some pass catching skills.

So I think New England's going to have a choice of a bunch of different tight ends in this draft. And they get them in the first three rounds.

**Q. Kind of following up on the tight ends with the Giants at 23, do you think Howard and Njoku would be there and be guys that would make sense to target?**

MIKE MAYOCK: Typically when you start talking about first-round tight ends, they come in to play somewhere in that second half of the first rounds. And I think that's what's going to happen with Howard and Njoku. Haven't gone through a bunch of team needs here, so I can't sit here and tell you if I think the head of the Giants is going to take a tight end. I do think that Howard and Njoku would both be in a conversation at that point, though. They're both that talented.

**Q. I just wanted to know what positions do you think the Seahawks are going to focus on this week at the NFL combine and just in the draft in general, what areas you think they'll add more depth at?**

MIKE MAYOCK: Well, I think you start with offensive line. They've spent a lot of years trusting Tom Cable to work wonders with defensive players converted and basketball players and all the rest. But I think priority number one has got to be to help Russell Wilson take less hits. It's not a good tackle class; however, who knows if Ramczyk or Garrett Bolles was sitting there later in the first round.

I think there are some really good interior offensive

linemen that could be available. One of the guys that I think would be a great fit for Seattle is Forrest Lamp from Western Kentucky. He's a left tackle. He had the best single offensive line game I've seen against Alabama in five years. He played left tackle there. I think he's going to be a guard in the NFL, like a Zack Martin-type guard, that's how good I think he is. Cam Robinson is another guy, but I think he's probably gone by then.

So I think first and foremost they've got to concentrate on drafts and a couple of offensive linemen and try and help Russell Wilson. After that, if you're looking at 26, I think the corner class would be really interesting. Who was it? Shead I think got hurt at the end of the year, and they need some depth behind those two starters.

You start to get down to 26 in the draft. I think you're looking at Darrion Wilson -- excuse me, Darien Conley, Quincy Wilson, Adoree' Jackson would be really intriguing at some point, first or second round. I think they're going to pay some attention to the defensive tackles, too, just to try to bolster that interior pass rush, Caleb Brantley, Malik McDowell, Larry Ogunjobi.

**Q. Deep corner draft, deep safety draft, as I think you mentioned, who are some of the guys that you see might fit for what Bill Belichick usually looks for that versatility in the secondary?**

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, it's really -- I mean, this safety class, it's not sexy to talk safeties, and the only two we've really talked about are Malik Hooker or Jamal Adams. Of my Top 5 safeties, Jabrill Peppers is the next one from Michigan, and he's more of an in-the-box nickel linebacker. He's just always around football, as is Budda Baker from Washington. Very similar. I think he's a nickel more than anything.

I think a guy that would have to be interesting to New England is Obi Melifonwu from Connecticut. He's 6'4, 219, and he's probably going to run sub-4.5, and if he runs in that range, I think teams are going to look at him as a corner and say safety.

And the reason -- I think New England with Matt Patricia, I think they're the best match-up group in the league. You look at what they did with Eric Rowe from the Eagles, what they did with Van Noy, two guys that were kind of castoffs, and they brought them there for match-up reasons. That's what they do.

So I look at Melifonwu, and he's a guy that could cover tight ends one week and go out on a big wideout the next week. I think he'd be interesting.

And a really good football player that nobody talks about is Lorenzo Jerome of Saint Francis. And what he runs this week is going to be important. But I think

he can play both safety positions, and he's really, really a good football player. Like him a lot.

And two other names. Des King, who is a corner from Iowa that I think is going to be a nickel or safety. And I think New England always has success moving those guys around a little bit. I like Des King. I like Kevin King from Washington who is a corner that can play some free safety. And I like Chidobe Awuzie from Colorado who getting a corner I think might be better off as a safety. So there are a bunch of names for you.

**Q. I'm focusing on the San Diego State kids. First off, Donnel Pumphrey, wanted to get your assessment of him coming into the combine. What can he do to improve his stock this week? And if you can give any thoughts on some of his teammates coming this week -- Siragusa, Kazee, and Brunskill. Thank you.**

MIKE MAYOCK: I'm a big fan of those first two kids, and when you start talking about two-time, Mountain West Conference, Offensive and Defensive Players of the Year, to me, that's significant. They've performed at a high level over a period of time. And getting Offensive and Defensive Players of the Year I think is really special.

Pumphrey is not a big guy, but he's quick. I think how fast he is, it will be interesting. He's got to catch the football, because in the NFL he's going to be a third-down change-of-pace guy, and I think they want to see how natural his hands are.

Kazee I love because here he is a great defensive player, but he played one side of the ball at San Diego State, and he was always off. He was never in press coverage. He went to the Senior Bowl and played both sides and he pressed. There is no problem. He's instinctive, he's tough.

A lot of teams are going to ding him on size. But at the end of the day, this kid is really a good football player. So it's going to be important for him to run fast. Teams do not like short, slow corners. So he's got to run fast, and I think he will.

Let's see, the guard? The guard's a mauler, and I think he just has to show some footwork to help himself a little bit in the individual drills. What he runs in the 40 is not important unless he runs something really bad like 5.6 or 5.5.

And the Brunskill kid is interesting because of a conversion from tight end to tackle. How big is he? What's he weigh? We all know he's going to be a project, but how long is that project going to take.

**Q. My question is about Tyrod Taylor. So much of what the Bills are going to do this off-season is going to be guided by their decision there. What do you think they should do there and how might that dictate their draft plans at number 10? Also, could you break down Chad Kelly's strengths and weaknesses on the field, and what do you think would be a fit for him in Buffalo given his family connection here?**

MIKE MAYOCK: Right. First and foremost, I'm a Tyrod Taylor fan. I understand the question here is more about dollars and cap dollars than it is about whether or not he's a capable quarterback.

We started out this whole conversation today talking about the dearth of quarterbacks in the NFL, and he's a capable quarterback. Is he a franchise guy? No, I don't believe so. But he doesn't turn the football over. And when you complement him with a strong run game and good defense, it's a winning formula.

Now, I kind of like the kid. Now, I can't comment on their cap situation. I know Sean McDermott probably has to look at this guy and go, hey, he doesn't turn the ball over. If we play good defense, we have a chance of being pretty good, pretty quickly.

Now, as far as Chad Kelly goes, I've said several times on this call, if he didn't have medical and off-the-field character concerns, he'd be in this conversation with the Top 5 quarterbacks. I think worst case talent-wise, he's a second-round guy. He might even sneak into the first round in some drafts. Again, without the medical and without the off-the-field.

He had 22 starts, I think he was 14-8. He's a 64% guy. What I liked is he beat Alabama at Alabama. That tape was good. He beat LSU. I think he beat LSU. But in 2015, the tape against LSU was really good. He can push the ball down the field. He's got a big arm. He can push it down the field.

My one on-the-field criticism, and he's a tough guy, my one on-the-field criticism would be like a lot of big-armed quarterbacks, he likes to wait and see the route come open rather than have the anticipation and touch to put it out early.

But I think that's something that the big-arm guys learn later. So will he be a fit in Buffalo? I'm sure he would. You've got to figure the kid out. I've never met him. All I know is there is a bunch of stuff for him off the field.

So you better figure the kid out. Have an infrastructure in place, starting with the head coach, the coordinator, the quarterback coach, and the quarterback room. You better have an infrastructure in place that's going to

take care of this kid and make sure he makes the right decision.

**Q. When the 31st pick rolls around, who is on the top of your board for the Falcons in order to bolster their front four?**

MIKE MAYOCK: Their front four? I would make a slight argument that I would be looking at that offensive line because you've got two guards that are aging and eligible free agency, for free agency over the next year and next year. So I would put guard in that equation as well, and I would put a guy like Forrest Lamp from Western Kentucky, would fit what Atlanta does to a T. And if they could go that way and get Forrest Lamp, I would love that.

But as far as the defensive line and up front, at that 31, a guy like Caleb Brantley could team with Grady Jarrett.

I think on the edge side as far as outside is concerned, I think you'd be looking at potentially a Solomon Thomas or Taco Charlton. So I think their names right there, all of whom would fit into what Atlanta does scheme-wise, and knowing Thomas and Scott, they're looking for tough guys with a motor. They're also quick and explosive.

**Q. The Falcons had seven starters in the past two draft classes. Out of all seven of those guys, between the Vic Beasley class, and the Keanu Neal class, which of those players have surprised you the most?**

MIKE MAYOCK: You know, that's a good question. I think Keanu Neal's contribution to the team this year was not just as a really good football player, but a tough guy that set a tone, and I thought that was outstanding. I also thought that De'Vondre Campbell from Minnesota, who is a fourth- or fifth-round pick, surprised a lot of people. I was even looking at him as a potential edge rusher because he's so long. But he's fast and he's tough. And with Deion Jones, the defensive makeover that the Falcons have had in the last two years has been amazing. I think I said earlier in the call, it has to do with the fact that they wanted tough guys that could run, and that's what they got.

**Q. Mike, I wanted to ask about the non-DeShone Kizer Notre Dame guys, specifically Jarron Jones, Isaac Rochell, Tarean Folston, and James Onwualu, what are your thoughts on those guys?**

MIKE MAYOCK: It's an interesting conversation with Jones and Rochell. If Jones played every week like he did against Miami, he'd be in a completely different conversation than the reality he faces now. You know, he was dominant against Miami. He showed length and power and quickness and everything. He

dominated that game, but you don't see the consistency of his effort and production, which is going to hurt them.

So then people look at Isaac Rochell, and they don't see quite as much talent, but they see a guy that comes to work every day, he's banging and working, and not as long, he's 6'3", 280.

So I think Rochell's going to be a base 4-3 end. He probably goes on the third day, fourth or fifth round. I think Jones is looked at more as a 3-4 defensive end, which is called a five technique. And I think his talent warrants him going higher. But he probably doesn't go to the third, fourth, fifth round either.

And then Onwualu, I really like Onwualu. He doesn't have as much talent as maybe you want, but you want to talk about a hard-working, tough kid. Assignment sound, knows what he's doing. Onwualu is going to be late draftable or a free agent, but he's going to play for special teams and he's not going to make any mistakes mentally.

Then Tarean Folston is kind of interesting to me. I don't think he's going to get drafted. But when he first got to Notre Dame, I thought he had natural runability. I thought he had a good feel for the run game. In his workouts, he's got to run well and catch the football even better.

**Q. It's a big group of potential first-round cornerbacks here. How do you stack up those players? Who has the best chance to help himself this weekend?**

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, interesting question. The corners, I keep saying, are so deep. It's going to be kind of pick your flavor based on what's important in your scheme. I think Lattimore's going to be gone in the Top 10 from Ohio State. Sidney Jones to me is kind of lean, but I think he's instinctive like Marcus Peters, and I think he's a top 15 pick all day long.

The guys that I think can help himself or hurt himself is Teez Tabor from Florida. He's a good instinct and feel for the game, but he's better with (indiscernible) in the quarterback. A lot of people worry about whether or not he's going to run well. So what Teez Tabor runs this week I think is really important.

And I think some guys that can help, like Adoree' Jackson I've mentioned several times from USC, he's got the ability to be a Pro-Bowl corner, but that's down the road, but he's got the ability day one to be a difference maker in your return game.

So Adoree' Jackson comes with a caveat because he can help in a couple different areas. You can go three

or four rounds deep and find potential starters, you can find nickels. We've talked about the safety group also and who needs to run well and why. But if Melifonwu runs 4.5 or better, as I said earlier, a lot of teams can look at him at corner also. And potentially in the first round.

**Q. I wanted to get your thoughts on the two defensive ends and where they might go, Dawuane Smoot and Carroll Phillips. The line, they were kind of bad against the run this year. Do you think that might hurt their stock? Do you think working under Lovie Smith might help it? And are there character concerns about Phillips? I heard there might have been.**

MIKE MAYOCK: Smoot is a little bigger and had more consistent production over a longer period of time. I thought he struggled a little bit against Jon Heck from North Carolina, and I thought the kid from Western Michigan, Moton, handled it also. That made me nervous. He came to the Senior Bowl and had a good week. He's got natural pass-rush ability but has to be better against the run.

I think Phillips can't be a 4-3 defensive end. I think he's got to be a 3-4 outside linebacker. He's not big enough or strong enough to stand up in the run game. But he's got rare, physical gifts. A lot of his sack production came at a running chase. He's going to struggle at the point of attack. He's a one-year wonder, which people worry about. I'm not sure about issues off the field.

But at the end of the day, they're both going to get drafted. I think Smoot probably goes third, fourth round, somewhere near that. I think Phillips is going to be a 3-4 outside linebacker or a 4-3 will. And he's probably a fourth or fifth round guy also.

**Q. Mike, I'm sure you talked about Adoree' Jackson and I know you just did a little more about him. Talk about how he could contribute, maybe in all three phases. I wonder if there are reservations about taking a small corner up high. And lastly, just sort of the history of skill position players out of USC, it seems like some people fall in love with these skill position guys and they don't really pan out in the pros or it's been hit and miss. Is it a case-by-case basis, or does the school get labeled for that kind of issue?**

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, you know, it's interesting. A school can get labeled. I don't think USC has been labeled, and I saw something recently, the same thing you're talking about with all the skill position players with USC, but where schools kind of get labeled, and I'm not going to mention schools, but where they get labeled a little bit is whether it's a soft, quote, soft program or not. What kind of kids are coming out of

there. Is it a country club? Can we coach them hard? Are they coming every day to practice? Those kind of things sometimes make reputations for schools.

I don't think USCs in that classification. When I look at Adoree' Jackson, I'm intrigued by this kid. I'll give you a couple examples in one game. Against the University of Washington, he had two interceptions, and both of those interceptions were in the zone. And I was really surprised he was able to make a sophisticated read with the minimal amount he's played at corner. But he made sophisticated read where the number three receiver was breaking out. He had to read through one and two to get to three, and I'm not going to get any deeper into it. But, really surprised that he had the ability to make sophisticated reads and go on coverage. Then he got two interceptions out of it.

Now, can that same game -- he had to cover John Ross man-to-man and press a couple of times. One of them, John Ross, he just went 70 yards on a touchdown. He kind of broke his ankles at the line of scrimmage. I mean, John Ross is so quick and fast, and he got him back on his heels, and he never could recover. So he's got a long way to go. But I was impressed. The press-man stuff he's going to learn. And I know he's a smaller physical corner, but whether he's a nickel or on the outside, I'm all in on the kid. I know he's going to be a very good player.

And what's beautiful about it is day one he's your punt returner, he's your kick returner and you expect he can put the ball in the end zone for you while he learns his craft as a corner.

I think the last part, I struggle to see a team using him on offense also, just because he's got so much he's got to learn as a rookie. He's got to learn defense. He's got to learn special teams. I'm not sure unless you have a specialty player, too, for him, I'm not sure he's going to do much on offense.

**Q. You've emphasized the depth at the cornerback position, which is obviously for a team like the Saints hoping to improve their pass defense. Who are some of the cornerbacks beyond the first round that you believe are ready to be first-year impact starters, taking into consideration the jump from college to the NFL?**

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, I mean, let's face it, New Orleans needs a defensive draft year regardless of position and because corner is deep, it makes sense to look at it down the road a little bit, second, third, fourth rounds.

I mentioned Witherspoon, who is the long corner from

Colorado who I think you can get in the third or fourth round. He's really already got a good feel for press coverage. Press man-to-man. I like him a lot.

There is a kid from Houston, last name is Wilson. Boy, is he interesting. Howard Wilson. He can press. He plays off. He's got a similar skillset of the kid that went in the first round last year to Cincinnati. Who was that? Will Jackson, I think. William Jackson. So, I think Wilson's probably a third-round corner. Another guy I really like. Fabian Moreau from UCLA. He's going to run sub 4.5. He's long. Another second or third-round guy.

You could get into the fourth fifth round in Nate Hairston from Temple. Aarion Penton, who probably won't go until the fifth or sixth round, and wasn't even invited to the combine, and I think he's going to compete with somebody to start at nickel.

So there is all kinds of depth to this corner draft. There are probably eight to ten corners that are 6'2" or taller, also, so it's really intriguing from that perspective. But for a team like New Orleans, I think they can sit there at -- where were they? No. 11, I think. Just try to pick the best defensive player on the board at 11, and they can come back and get a corner later.

**Q. Looking at the Broncos at No. 20, you touched on the lack of offensive linemen in this draft, of course, but do they look offensive line or do they go in another position where their value might be better at that spot?**

MIKE MAYOCK: I think it depends. I think Ryan Ramczyk is the best tackle in the draft. To tell you where this draft is for tackles, the two top guys, Ramczyk and Garrett Bolles from Utah are both one-year starters in major college football. Which is kind of amazing. If Ramczyk was in last year's draft, he would be the fourth or fifth guy taken. So just to give you some perspective there.

So I think Ramczyk and Bolles are going to get pushed up a little bit, just because there is a drop off after them. So I'm not sure either of them are going to be available at No. 20. But I could easily see Denver being involved in the free agency side of the offensive tackle need.

There is a lot of depth in the interior offensive line if they wanted to go in that direction. But trying to get a starting tackle in this draft is going to be difficult. I start looking down my list at tackle, and after you get past it, and by the way, I mean, this kid Bolles might be there at 20, and he's a gifted kid, but he still needs to get stronger. He had a bunch of off-the-field stuff before he got to Utah. So you have to do your homework on these tackles.

I've got Antonio Garcia from Troy as my number three tackle. In a normal year, he'd probably be a third-round pick at best. He's a really gifted, athletic kid. But this year he's going to be bumped up into the second round, and who knows from there.

So the tackle thing is really hard this year. And if they don't go tackle, the second part of the question, where is value at No. 20? I think they're looking at inside linebacker, but Reuben Foster is probably gone. The five technique. I think they can get a five technique further and further down in the draft. I think wide receiver makes a little bit of sense there. I think they could use some depth behind those first two guys.

So I think they're going to get into a situation where they're going to have to find the best football player they can at No. 20.

**Q. You mentioned Peppers a little bit. He's working out as a linebacker here, but you mentioned the safety area. Why do you think he's working out as a linebacker? Is that the reason for that?**

MIKE MAYOCK: At the combine, you mean?

**Q. Yeah, yeah.**

**A. Yeah, I think the reason is that was his college position, basically. He played linebacker at Michigan last year. And I think that teams are going to look at them different ways, and a lot of teams play that dime linebacker now that Deone Bucannon and McDonald and all those guys play in. He fits that role also.**

**But when I look at him, I remember when he first came out of high school, and there was a kid that was playing free safety, nickel. He was all over the place. His size at 210 or whatever, 205, 210, I think he's going to have to be more of a safety and less of a linebacker.**

**Q. What do you think teams want to see this week from him?**

MIKE MAYOCK: I think they want to see two things. I think, number one, he's going to run fast. He's got a track background, and I think he can shed the skin of the linebacker and go run in the 4.3s. Even if he ran 4.45, whatever. Run, sub 4.5, run fast. And then I think we get into the drills, you just want to show that you've got a defensive back skillset, open your hips, drive. He hasn't driven to a deep outside or deep middle or deep half because he's been playing linebacker. So I think the more he can do to show people he could be a starting safety day one, and a dime linebacker and all those other things, the kid is always around the football, but where he can help

himself is, A, run fast and show some hip flexibility driving to deep outside, deep middle.

**Q. In light of what you just said about the tackles, do you think it's becoming more difficult for these guys because they're coming from spread offenses in college? I know you had Conklin last year that comes in and starts right away. But do you think it's more difficult for these guys to step in and have that immediate impact like a guy like Ryan Clady or Joe Thomas did coming out of school a decade ago?**

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, I do. And I think that's a good question because we spend way too much time talking about how difficult the conversion is for quarterbacks and not enough time talking about other positions, and one of them is tackle. And we've had a bunch of tackles that have either been buffed or have struggled to play until about the third year at a certain level.

Greg Robinson came out of Auburn, and he's as gifted a tackle as you could find, but he was never in a three-point stance in his life. So you start looking at these tackles that are always in two-point stances, never have to get in the three-point, really don't play much point (indiscernible) at all, pass game is different, the ball is out quickly, you're not doing multiple pass protections.

So I think two things happen to these guys. They're not used to the physicality of the NFL game in a three-point stance, and they're not used to how complex the pass protections are, and I think it slows them all down. And I think the guy that you mentioned, what's his name from Michigan State? Conklin, and Decker came in, they're coming for more conventional offenses. I think they've got a better chance of playing day one.

**Q. I'm curious how many players could be drafted at No. 2 and say, yeah, they're worthy of that selection. Just in terms of how top heavy the draft is, I know you have Allen and Foster, but who else you think are worthy of that pick?**

MIKE MAYOCK: Of the second overall pick?

**Q. Yep.**

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, I mean, basically probably about five guys. I think if you put them with the best football players in this draft, you're talking about the defensive end Myles Garrett. You're talking about the defensive tackle, Jonathan Allen. I think you're talking about the two safeties, Adams and Hooker. And if you're talking about just pure football play in full, you're talking about Reuben Foster. I think those five guys are all legit. And if you want to start talking about running backs and whether they should go that high, you can make that conversation also, I think, with Barnett or with

Dalvin Cook.

**Q. The two receivers, would that be a reach there with Davis and Williams?**

MIKE MAYOCK: I think it's a bit of a reach. I think the value starts around 10 or so. But I wouldn't quite put them up with that other group.

**Q. Hey, Mike, despite ending the season 9-4, and they finished ranked 20th, the University of Miami has nine players heading to the combine. My first question, what does that say about the depth of talent there?**

MIKE MAYOCK: I think what it says is that over the years, and I'm always amazed when I'm doing my homework for the combine, I'm always fascinated when I'm sitting there going through each page of 330 kids and their background how many come from Florida in general and Miami in particular.

So the Miami-area kids, we talk about it all the time, but it's true, there are a lot of great football players that come out of that area. Obviously, Miami, Florida State, and Florida do a great job of mining that talent and keeping it in-state.

And as an aside, I think it's going to get more competitive with Kiffin and Butch Davis in town. So I find it fascinating, and I think it's a reflection of the home-grown talent.

**Q. I heard you talk about Kaaya a little bit and Dobbs. But I was wondering if you could talk more about Kaaya and Njoku and where you think they stand and why. And the other thing would be, I was wondering if there is anybody else you think will be drafted? There is Stacy Coley, let's say, cornerback, Corn Elder, there are two safeties, Jamal Carter and Rayshawn Jenkins. Any thoughts on any of those guys?**

MIKE MAYOCK: Okay, as far as Kaaya is concerned, here are my thoughts on him. I think he's a talented kid. He's got the prototypical size. He makes three to five throws per game that are awesome. That you sit back and go, Yep, that's it. That's it. That's NFL.

Then you watch the pocket mechanics break down, and I think he starts to panic a little bit when he sees a flash of color from the other team. He starts to hurry his throws and ends up with poor locations and poor decisions.

When he has clear vision and clean feet, he's really good. But it's the pocket mechanics. I think it's going to take him a little bit of time. Njoku is a freaky kid that looks like a wide receiver, and you can't believe that he's actually as big as he is. Catches the ball well, can

get vertical, and what I like is if you watch enough of his tape, he gets after some people in the run game. He's not really a good run-blocker yet. But the key is he gets after it. And as long as you get after it and you have a willingness to do it, you can be taught.

So I'm bullish on Njoku. I'm surprised Coley didn't go to the East-West game. He declined the invitation. I thought he had a chance to shine there. He's got skills as a returner and a receiver. He'll probably go in the fourth round, fifth round, somewhere in there. I think Corn Elder and Rayshawn Jenkins, I think it's important for Jenkins to run fast. He's a bigger safety that brings some thought. If he can run well, I think it will really help him.

Isidora is a solid guard, third day he'll get drafted. Corn Elder beats people up. Tough kid. I hope he runs fast, because I think he can be a core special teams player also. I'm running out of Miami players in my head.

**Q. Safety Jamal Carter?**

MIKE MAYOCK: Another tough guy. Big. Who was it? East-West game. He's a little bit tight hiped. There is another Miami kid who I loved. He's not a combine guy. Another defensive back who is just tougher than nails. Really fast.

**Q. You're talking about Adrian Colbert?**

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, I think he's going to be a special teams demon.

**Q. Really? You think he'll be drafted?**

MIKE MAYOCK: I don't know if he'll be drafted. But he'll be in camp and because of his height, weight, speed, he'll end up having an opportunity to make a team.

**Q. And there is one guy, I don't know punters, you know, how often they have a very good punter who is going to the combine named Justin Vogel.**

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, we've got to move on here, and I don't do punters. I don't evaluate those guys. I let special teams tell me the week before the draft. Thank you.

**Q. You talked about Malik McDowell earlier, and a deep draft, but do you see any other players available with the 24th pick to the Raiders?**

MIKE MAYOCK: McDowell is an interesting guy. He's a late first-round guy, perhaps. I think when you're looking at Oakland, when you're that late in the round anyway, I think you've got to take a step back and get a really good football player. What comes to mind for me is what about a running back. Who is going to be available at 24 are they going to let what is his face go to free agency? Who is going to help them? Is

Christian McCaffrey on the clock at that point? Who could help the Oakland Raiders at No. 24?

I think the running back situation is interesting. I'm not sure there are going to be any tackles at that point. I think they also have to look at linebackers and at 24, I think there are some interesting guys off the line linebackers also, whether it's Reddick, Cunningham, Jarrad Davis. I think they're interesting players also.

**Q. The Jaguars have a ton of needs this off-season, obviously. But running back, safety, and edge rusher seemed to be the three biggest. Obviously they're sitting at four, and you've talked about the safeties and running backs.**

**(Audio interruption.)**

MIKE MAYOCK: So here's what it is. He wants to hit a home run every snap. He's not patient in the pocket and he wants space. He doesn't like to be confined in the pocket. But I feel like I think he's got an innate feel for the game. He throws with timing and anticipation, which a lot of quarterbacks, most quarterbacks coming out of college football don't. He's got a quick release. He's got quick feet. He can throw from every freakin' platform there is. Side arm, overarm. He's a creator on offense.

Now, what happens is that's all positive stuff, and that's why I like him so much. What happens is the consistency of his mechanics break down as he tries to throw home runs every snap, and he'll throw off his back foot one snap, and it's 50 yards down the field and you go: Wow, what a great play. The next snap will do the same thing and throw an interception.

The second thing is just awareness of situational football. He's got to have a better idea of when he can take chances and when he can't. I saw him make some throws in the fourth quarter down a touchdown in the red zone that made no sense at all to me.

So, I think he's big. He's 6'3", 230, with a big arm, athletic kid, great feel. He's a gunslinger, and it all comes down to how comfortable you are that you can get him on the right side of that thin line, that gunslinger line. You can get his mechanics where they need to be. You can get his decision-making where it needs to be, and he's still making big plays.

**Q. You talk about none of these quarterbacks being ready to start day one, and is any one of them closer than the other guys?**

MIKE MAYOCK: They're all kind of different conversations. I think a lot of it depends on what the infrastructure is and what they're being asked to do offensively with their new team. I don't know how to

answer that without any context of where they go.

**Q. You've talked about Jabrill or a little about Jabrill. Are you at all part of this group that's not sure where he fits at the next level, and they've dropped them in some of these mock drafts. Are you part of that contingent and where is your take on where he fits?**

MIKE MAYOCK: The biggest compliment I can give him is he's a football player. That sounds stupid, but he is. I don't think you can put a label on Jabrill Peppers. He was asked to do a bunch of different things at Michigan, and he did them at a high level.

I think what's going to happen at the combine is you're going to see this explosive athlete running around. I think once coaches get involved, along with the personnel guys, then the coaches, the key with the guy like him is defining how you want to use him when you draft him. If you're going to put a first-round grade on Jabrill Peppers, there has to be a marriage between the personnel side and the coaching side as to how you're going to develop this young player. How does he get the biggest impact for you?

And I think he can do it in several ways. The kid was a punt returner. He's been a deep safety. He's been a box safety. He's been a linebacker. Each team's going to look at him differently. At the end of the day, to me, he's a first-round draft pick, but you better have a plan for how you're going to use him.

**Q. You talked about how you want or think these teams should kind of keep swinging at the quarterback position. What is your view on doing that in the middle rounds? We've seen the Russell Wilsons and Dak Prescotts. But it's still a pretty tough hit rate there. Do you think teams should still go for those guys in the middleweight rounds? And which of those middle round quarterbacks kind of stand out to you?**

MIKE MAYOCK: Yeah, I think if you were on one at the beginning of the conference call when I talked about the quarterbacks, really the only starters in the league in the last ten years that weren't first-round picks were either second, third, or one fourth-rounder in Cousins. So you had Carr, Garoppolo, Dalton in the second round, Russell Wilson in the third, and Cousins in the fourth, over the last ten years.

So basically what that tells you is I do believe you take shots, but you pretty much probably take them in the second, third or fourth round. Where that comes from, as far as this particular draft, any of those top four guys that I've been talking about all day. Because you've heard me say I don't have a Top 10 grade on any of them. Kizer, Watson, Trubisky, Mahomes, any of them

could slide into the second round. I'd love to have one of those kids in the second round. Take my time, develop them for different reasons, they're not ready. Davis Webb in the third round. I'd be really happy with Webb in the third round. I think there are four guys that have potential at some point. We've talked about Chad Kelly and what he is. Off-the-field character, plus medical. He's got, at worst, second-round talent.

Brad Kaaya and Josh Dobbs, both of them have a lot of talent. They've got size, talent, arm talent, athletic ability. They're just not ready. What are they, third round, fourth round, I don't know. I'd love to try to develop either of them.

And the other guy that is a little like Kirk Cousins is Nate Peterman from Pitt. And I've had a lot of people tell me that is who he is. He's similar, focused, dedicated. Don't have a big arm, but has enough arm that he throws with anticipation and timing. He's the kind of guy that might be a lower-level starter. I just gave him nine names there of guys. Only 12 get drafted on average at the quarterback position. So, yeah, I think you'd take a shot almost every year with one of these guys.

**Q. You were talking about the tight end talent in this year's class. Given the need to kind of bolster that group, do you see them taking one at No. 20 in this year's draft? Is there someone you think would be a good fit for them?**

MIKE MAYOCK: I think the beauty of the tight end class this year is it doesn't have to be at 20. It can be in the second or third round or maybe in the fourth round. Or what kind of tight end you're looking for at the end of the day. When you look at what the Broncos have had, whether it's Virgil Green or Heuerman or whomever, you probably are looking for one of those dynamic receiving types. And, again, that helps a young quarterback. Whoever is starting for Denver, a good pass receiving tight end is who is a match-up nightmare can really help.

So at 20, we've talked a bunch about Howard and Njoku who are distinctly different kind of players, both of whom are worthy of the 20th pick for different reasons. Both of whom I think would fit in Denver. But if they didn't go with either of those guys, I think in the second, third, fourth round, you could be looking at an Evan Engram or Gerald Everett, both of whom probably go in the second or third, and they're really good pass-catching tight ends.

I think Jordan Leggett is a different conversation. He's about 6'5" from Clemson. He's, again, a move guy. He's out wide. Bucky Hodges, Virginia Tech. Shoot, there is a kid named Adam Shaheen, a small school kid that's 277 pounds and catches the ball really well.

So my point is I'm not trying to throw a bunch of names at you, but it doesn't have to be the first round. I think Denver can find a really good, viable option in the second, third or fourth. And you really need that with the young quarterbacks.