

2018 S'FELD SCOUTING SERVICES NFL DRAFT PREVIEW

1. Cleveland

Sam Darnold

QB

USC

Give former Browns GM Sashi Brown credit, if there was one thing he accomplished before being relieved of his duties near the end of the 2017 season, it was to stockpile draft capital for Cleveland. Now it will be up to new GM John Dorsey to finally change the downward spiral this team has been on for years and do something with it. I don't think many will argue that selecting USC QB Sam Darnold is a bad start. It would be an understatement to say this draft is vitally important to the Browns. And that is the reason that S'feld Scouting Services (SSS) feels strongly that of the four QBs to consider among at the top of this draft (Darnold, Josh Allen, Josh Rosen & Baker Mayfield), Darnold is the surest of them all. There have been rumors from many of the talking heads that Allen or Mayfield is the pick here, but that equation just doesn't add up. Why risk the #1 overall pick on what could be a potential project in Allen? We know that teams will be tempted to take Allen much higher than where SSS projects him after watching the meteoric rise of Philly QB Carson Wentz. Wentz has completely wiped away the doubts of being drafted from a small school like North Dakota State. Therefore, Allen would be wise to send some of what will be his signing bonus to Wentz, because he is going to make a lot of money off some team drafting him thinking they are getting the second-coming of Philly's superstar QB. That team is not going to be Cleveland, however. Unlike the three other QBs that Darnold is competing with to be the top pick, he doesn't have any checkmarks in the "Issues" category. Mayfield has height and attitude concerns, Rosen has football desire and personality concerns, and Allen has the "lack of strong competition" asterisk. We're not saying that Darnold is going to be the next Peyton Manning, but SSS believes that Darnold doubles up on the others in strengths. Along with his size, he has great feel in and out of the pocket, scans the field well, and most importantly to GMs, he is fearless with the ability to move forward quickly after bad plays. This pick very well could be the beginning of the days in Cleveland turning from brown to beautiful.

THE EXTRA POINT – *The Browns are heading into their 20th season since they were re-awarded a franchise after the original Browns bolted for Baltimore. In that time, the team has seemingly tried a different philosophy every three years. They have tried hiring guys to head their personnel with lots of football experience and they have tried hiring guys to run their personnel with zero football experience. They have experimented with more QBs in that time frame than most teams have had in their entire history, and what has it netted in nearly two decades???* Two seasons over .500 and one playoff loss. In all honesty, you have to actually try to be that bad. The biggest issue with the Browns isn't necessarily that they hire bad people. They just hire the wrong people to work together. Cleveland is essentially hitting the reset button for the fourth time in five years since Jimmy Haslam took over as owner. It's no wonder they can't figure out what they are doing on the field because they can't figure out what they are doing collectively as a front office and with their personnel. Former GM Sashi Brown preferred analytics and new-age tactics to try to outsmart his counterparts. Hue Jackson is an old school coach favoring a hands-on approach and traditional measures. How in the world could you try to fuse these two men together and think they would see eye-to-eye? The Browns are the antithesis of how the successful teams build through aligning c-

oaches and staff that will walk down the same path together. The Browns have strayed from that path and have been wandering through the forest for years.

2. New York Giants Saquon Barkley RB Penn State

The New York Giants are in the enviable position of having multiple teams potentially having to overpay if they want the 2nd overall pick for one of the remaining QBs remaining after Darnold comes off the board to the Browns. And if the G-Men don't get exactly what they want, they still have any of the QBs, PSU RB Saquon Barkley and DE Bradley Chubb staring them right in the face. Decisions. Decisions. SSS is making the dangerous decision to apply logic in figuring out which way the Giants will go on what can often be referred to as one of the zaniest days of the year. For a few of the teams in dire need of a QB like the Jets, Bills and Cardinals, trading for the #2 pick is more difficult and comes at a significantly higher price than trading up to the #4 or #5 overall position. We witnessed that firsthand last year with the Bears having to overpay to move up one spot from #3 to #2. The only team that would be in a position to move up to #2 without giving away the farm would be the Jets sitting at #3, and the Jets are already thin after dealing to get from #6 to #3. SSS thinks the Jets are willing to roll the dice that no team will meet the Giants demands and that the Giants will also not take a QB. On the flip side, the Giants ask will come at a steep price knowing the options they have before them. When no team comes up the board to meet their demands, they happily select Barkley to give them their first real threat in the backfield since Tiki Barber.

THE EXTRA POINT – *This is the pick in the draft where everything could potentially be turned on its ear if the Giants make a deal. That being said, we're not sure the Giants are as willing to part with this pick as some people may believe. As mentioned above, the Giants have long been a 3-yards-and-a-cloud-of-dust team that was designed to punish you on the line, wear you down and force you to submit to a fierce run game. Let's just say that none of that is even remotely possible when Eli Manning turns around and sees Orleans Darkwa, Wayne Gallman or Paul Perkins in the backfield. Larry, Moe and Curly would strike more fear into the hearts of men than that trio. Barkley to the Giants just works on so many levels. First, he is a game-breaker that will throw many more wrinkles into how the Giants can attack. Secondly, a tandem of Odell Beckham Jr. and Barkley would be the envy of most in the league. Finally, this may be exactly what new head coach Pat Shurmer needs to see what tread is really remaining on Eli Manning's tires. And for those who may be thinking QB here, backup QB Davis Webb was a 3rd round pick last year by the Giants who hasn't taken one meaningful snap yet. Who's to say that Shurmur doesn't want to see what he's got with Webb as opposed to using the #2 overall pick on a QB that won't probably help you in 2018 anyway.*

3. New York Jets Josh Rosen QB UCLA

Well the good news about this selection is that we know what the position selected will be. It's only a matter of who it will be. The Jets traded the #6 overall pick and 3 (count em'), 3 second-round picks to move up three spots. They didn't do all that to take DE Bradley Chubb or any other position besides QB. Let's just get that out of the way first to reject anyone trying to bring the Chubb to the Jets rumor to the table. The Jets ignore the noise surrounding Rosen and take the most talented of the remaining QBs on the board. Rosen won't be intimidated by the bright lights of New York, which

could consume other players not as headstrong. We think the fact that there is a lot of talk about Baker Mayfield right now is a sure-fire sign of a smokescreen. Mayfield isn't going to magically pass Rosen in the eleventh hour and it seems to SSS that a Mayfield-New York mixture would be toxic. We understand that Rosen doesn't have the greatest reputation either, but he is a guy who has great feet in the pocket and is willing to stand-and-deliver against the blitz. His completion percentage on blitzes last year was over 60% and receivers will love the touch he can put on the ball as well. We know durability could be an issue as he has had multiple concussions, but again, the Jets need a strong-willed leader who won't run from the spotlight and who is willing to walk-the talk. Rosen is most definitely that guy.

THE EXTRA POINT – The Jets have the luxury of welcoming a new QB to the fold without the pressure of performing right away. With veteran Josh McCown they have a QB who has proven to be effective as long as he can stay upright. Unfortunately, McCown has been beaten and battered throughout his career, but he will be an excellent tutor to any young quarterback. The Jets are kicking the tires on their other addition, Teddy Bridgewater, meaning they will have a serviceable backup whether they select McCown or Bridgewater as their Week 1 starter. This will provide Rosen with a chance to ease into his career. We all know that expectations for the Jets in 2018 will be low and head coach Todd Bowles will be able to buy more time with the selection of a QB that he can develop to take the reins in 2019.

*****TRADE*** (Cleveland trades with Buffalo, giving up Pick #4 to acquire Picks #12, #22 and #53)**

4. Buffalo Josh Allen QB Wyoming

SSS has talked to many folks we trust in the NFL about Josh Allen and have found that the range of where he is ranked from team-to-team is vast. While some have him bordering on being a second-round talent, the Bills have an altogether different view of Allen and don't hold back by trading both of their 1st round picks (#12 & #22) along with one of their 2nd round picks to assure they beat any other team looking to make a deal to the punch. As we mentioned before, the #4 overall pick is where teams can start getting more value on the trade chart, and with the Browns and with the Jets both almost guaranteed to take a QB, the real scramble among the remaining teams to move up for their guy will be at either slot #4 or #5. SSS believes that the Bills didn't move up to #12 just to wait patiently for 11 other teams to steal their thunder. The Bills have draft assets and will make sure to stay one step ahead of the posse and assure themselves of Allen. When you look at Josh Allen he just screams "Buffalo Bills QB" and while it may be a small detail, he is the only likely 1st round QB who has experience in cold or poor weather, and he can also play under center, which would have value in Buffalo.

THE EXTRA POINT . This situation is very similar to the Bears-49ers deal last year in that Chicago overpaid to make sure they got their guy, despite the fact they likely would have been able to get him at #3 without dealing at all. Buffalo will be willing to come over the top to get Allen even if their evaluation of him is considerably higher than others. Allen has been likened to another QB who didn't compete against Power-5 competition - former Miami (OH) QB Ben Roethlisberger. The Bills would be oh-so happy if that comparison became a reality.

5. Denver	Bradley Chubb	DE	N.C. State
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Denver, much like the Giants at #2, should have some pretty good options here despite Buffalo trading up with Cleveland at #4. Even though three QBs have already been selected, there is still plenty of demand for a limited QB supply. That being said, with the losses of corner Aqib Talib, tailback C.J. Anderson and others, the Broncos are caught between the fine line of competing and rebuilding. The addition of QB Case Keenum finally gives the Broncos a QB they should be able to lean on, but there are several holes on this team that still need to be addressed. One of those glaring weak spots is on the defensive line. The Broncos won their last Super Bowl with a strong defense that could beat you in so many ways, but that defensive unit has quickly eroded into merely the Von Miller show. While picking up a few extra picks through a trade would help, it may not help as much as grabbing Chubb, who is heads-and-tails above the rest of this year's defensive end class. A DE of his magnitude won't be available to the Broncos when they pick again in the second round, but a quality running back or cornerback surely will. Denver's defense just hasn't been the same since former DE DeMarcus Ware retired, and the Broncos know the first step in rebuilding their vaunted defense is finding a similar disruptor in Chubb.

THE EXTRA POINT – *Kirk Cousins may have been the biggest free agent signing of the offseason, but the smartest may have been Denver's deal with QB Case Keenum. The Broncos realized multiple teams would be in a bidding war for the coveted Cousins and decided to get a much friendlier deal done with the second-best QB option of this free agent class. Denver gave itself flexibility to see if Keenum will continue to play at the level he did in Minnesota without being locked into him long-term if he isn't. SSS evolved into a big believer of Keenum as the 2017 season progressed and Denver is getting not only a guy who can make plays on the field, but who can command a locker room and set the tone off of it. Keenum kept his head down and eyes on the prize last year while rising from the ashes behind starter Sam Bradford and then holding off Teddy Bridgewater to take the Vikings all the way to the NFC Championship. SSS is confident that we will see more of the Keenum we saw in Minnesota last year than the one who toiled with the Texans and Rams earlier in his career. Keenum may not be the sexy signing that Cousins was, but he is not far off and definitely comes at a better overall value than the 3-year, \$84 million guaranteed commitment that was made to Cousins.*

6. Indianapolis	Quenton Nelson	OG	Notre Dame
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Simple math here. The Colts allowed more sacks than any other team last season. Their elite level QB Andrew Luck has been on the shelf due to injury and his recovery has been the source of more speculation than what happened to the Lindbergh baby. The only other pick that might make sense here is Chubb if he falls, but SSS doesn't see that happening, and your best defense against your QBs getting turned into Swiss cheese is a good offensive line. SSS hears from multiple sources that Nelson is worth his weight in Notre Dame gold and can not only impose his will on defensive linemen but has a compact punch and can't be beaten on power moves alone. Once he secures his block it is game over and while SSS doesn't typically advise taking an OG among the first 10 picks, Nelson presents himself as the exception to the rule. Step 1 to returning the Colts to respectability is keeping their QB upright, and while Nelson alone can't solve that problem completely, he is a

fantastic remedy to the problem. Many talent evaluators think Nelson hung the moon, and this pick proves he is one small step for the Colts, one large step for Andrew Luck's future.

THE EXTRA POINT – *I'm not ready to announce the Colts as a team on the rise, but it does appear that Indianapolis has turned 180 degrees since the hiring of GM Chris Ballard to replace former GM Ryan Grigson. The gregarious Grigson felt more like a placeholder in his final few years during the power struggle that was occurring in Indianapolis. It never felt like management was on the same page.....with anything. Outside of drafting, trading or signing free agents, Grigson was a very effective General Manager. Let's recap. Remember Bjorn Werner, the Colts 2013 1st round pick? Neither do Colts fans. How about Grigson's spending of nearly \$210 million since 2012 on stars like Samson Satele, LaRon Landry, Ricky Jean Francois, Donald Thomas, Arthur Jones, and let's not forget Andre Johnson. Of that group – no one finished their deals with the Colts. But the lasting memory of Grigson may be trading a first rounder for RB Trent Richardson, who would go on to play a whopping 29 games with the Colts in less than two years. On top of that, Grigson provided minimal support to the Colts offensive line, which is why he is now on the unemployment line. After the Colts sent him packing, he landed in Cleveland and was let go after less than one year on the job. The epitaph on Grigson's grave in Indy reads "Even Cleveland didn't want him!!!" It does appear the Colts are ready to rise again under the leadership of Ballard. Ballard was smart enough to take a job where he knew he would be filling the smallest shoes possible.*

*****TRADE*** (Tampa Bay trades with Miami, giving up Pick #7 to acquire Picks #11 and #42)**

7. Miami Baker Mayfield QB Oklahoma

This Tampa Bay team is going nowhere. From a weak running game to a depleted secondary that couldn't cover a corpse with a blanket, the Bucs have achieved double-digit wins only once since 2006. This year provides no hope that any of that will change. That is why the Bucs having multiple needs, deal down four spots to acquire an additional 2nd round pick. The Dolphins on the other hand are ready to put the finishing touches on a complete makeover to the team you saw on the field Week 1 of 2017. In the span of one year, big names like DT Ndamukong Suh, WR Jarvis Landry and RB Jay Ajayi are all gone, and Gase is definitely establishing a no-nonsense, take-no-prisoners approach to the Dolphins. That aggressive strategy continues here. Gase had so little confidence in his backup QBs last year they he brought in a QB he was familiar with in Jay Cutler to lead the team. When you are leaning on Jay Cutler, you have to be somewhat desperate. Do you think that a year later, Gase will be content with the oft-injured Ryan Tannehill or feel safe with Brock Osweiler as the backup? Gase takes the "no time like the present" approach here by trading up to get QB Baker Mayfield. Gase was able to get the best out of Cutler in his only year in Chicago (2015), so you have to believe that he feels he can bring out the best in Mayfield as well. And what Gase does see in the Oklahoma signal caller is a brash gunslinger who commands the respect of his team and who plays with a chip on his shoulder and a fire in his belly. If anyone can harness those characteristics and use them in a positive way, it's Gase.

THE EXTRA POINT – *Don't think for one second that Miami will be the only team trying to make a play with Tampa at #7 or potentially Chicago at #8 to scoop up their QB of the future. SSS has*

identified Arizona, Miami, Cincinnati and New England as the teams with either the most need or the most resources to go up and get their QB, but to us Miami makes the most sense. SSS doesn't see the Patriots climbing the ladder this high to draft a QB. Patriots coach Bill Belichick may move up, but he won't move from picks #23 and #31 to do it. Cincinnati surely has reached a point where Andy Dalton can't be viewed as the solution to their ailments but they also don't strike us as a team to make an overly aggressive move after already trading down in the first place. That leaves Arizona and Miami, and while Arizona still regrets Houston moving ahead of them to steal Deshaun Watson from them last year, this is a new regime with a new coach who may have different ideas on what he wants. Adam Gase didn't head to Miami to deal with a lackluster QB situation forever and this opportunity feels like the right time with the right QB class. And if for some reason Mayfield eludes him, don't be shocked if Lamar Jackson becomes target #2 for the Fish.

8. Chicago	Roquan Smith	OLB	Georgia
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The Bears spent most of their attention during free agency addressing offensive needs to assist QB Mitch Trubisky by signing Jags WR Allen Robinson, Flacons WR Taylor Gabriel and Eagles TE Trey Burton. SSS feels that Bears GM Ryan Pace will turn his attention to the defense in the draft by selecting Georgia OLB Roquan Smith. SSS struggled deciding between Bama DB Minkah Fitzpatrick and Smith, but the Bears have struggled mightily with depth at LB so between Smith and Fitzpatrick, Smith is a need and Fitzpatrick is more of a luxury. The caveat to this would be that Bears DC Vic Fangio could play the versatile Fitzpatrick all over the field to create mismatches defensively, like the Saints used to create advantages with RB Darren Sproles offensively. However, the Bears have a decent secondary after matching Green Bay's offer to CB Kyle Fuller and adding a player like Smith will take a ton of pressure off the rest of the linebacking corps. One of the most underrated aspects of the Bears hire of coach Matt Nagy was the ability to keep the respected Fangio in tow. I think there is a good chance that Fangio gets a ton of input on what the Bears do here and which defensive piece he wants most to fill out his puzzle.

THE EXTRA POINT – I'm sure most Chicago fans are familiar with the Curse of the Billy Goat. You know - the bar owner who cursed the Cubs in 1945 for not allowing his billy goat to be allowed in Wrigley Field for the 1945 World Series? Not only did the Cubs lose that World Series, they didn't return to the Fall Classic until 2016 when they beat the Indians and the curse after 71 long years. Well, while most Chicago fans think that curses are over for them, they are dead wrong. Another curse exists that is equally as dreadful and has proven to be just as hard to overcome – The Lovie Smith Curse. You know – the head coach of the Bears who was fired for not making the playoffs despite a 10-6 season in 2012. Well ole Lovie put a curse on the Bears after being fired that they would never make the playoffs again, and even worse, they haven't been over .500 in the five years since his dismissal! The Bears tried an unconventional coach in Mark Trestman, and he only needed to win one of his last two games in 2013 for the Bears to break the curse and reach the postseason. They proceeded to get pummeled 54-11 in Philly and then lost 33-28 on a busted coverage TD pass from Aaron Rodgers to Randall Cobb the following week. Trestman never recovered and the Bears sought to beat the curse by bringing in a proven commodity in John Fox. Fox had been to the postseason four straight years when the Bears hired him. The Bears had found a sure-fire way to

THE EXTRA POINT – Full disclosure from SSS – while we are very excited to see Jon Gruden back on an NFL sideline calling the shots, we do not in any way, shape or form believe that he will automatically make the Raiders the team to beat in the AFC, let alone the AFC West. Just like the old girlfriend that you haven't seen in 10 years, when you first see her again, it's like a breath of fresh air. You think back to all the things you absolutely loved about her and you forget about the things that used to drive you crazy. Time has a way of blocking out those negative feelings that led to your breakup. The same is true with Jon Gruden. It's easy to remember him hoisting the Vince Lombardi Trophy after winning the Super Bowl in his first year with the Buccaneers, but you tend to forget he was also the same guy who didn't win another playoff game in the six years following that Super Bowl. Much like your old girlfriend, SSS sees the shine wearing off the shoe rather quickly after the initial reunion phase in Oakland.

*****TRADE*** (Miami trades with Tampa Bay, giving up Picks #11 and #42 to acquire Pick #7)**

11. Tampa Bay	Denzel Ward	CB	Ohio State
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This trade with Miami couldn't work out any better for Tampa. They acquire picks from Miami and still will have the option of selecting one of the top corners in the draft in Denzel Ward or the top safety in the draft in Derwin James. The drawback to taking Ward here is that the Bucs are only two years removed from having to spend a previous 1st round pick on Vernon Hargreaves. While he hasn't lived up to his potential, he still could, but the Bucs will need help here at some point whether Hargreaves emerges or not. Their opposite corner Brent Grimes is well past the twilight of his career and likely in Tampa for one final year. Still, many will say this is a tremendous value for the Bucs, who were atrocious against the pass, ranking dead last in the NFL in passing yards allowed.

THE EXTRA POINT – We just referenced Jon Gruden's magical Super Bowl winning year of 2002, but since his departure following the 2008 season, the Bucs have stubbed their toes on every subsequent hire. Raheem Morris was supposed to be the young up-and-comer, but all he did was turn Bucs fans into a bunch of Debbie Downers. Next up was Greg Schiano, who's claim to fame in Tampa was not merely running off his star QB Josh Freeman, but finding a new way to aggravate opposing coaches by instructing his defense to cut the knees of the opposing team's offensive linemen in the hope of forcing a fumble during the opponent's victory formation. Then the Bucs went to Lovie Smith hoping to recapture the magic he created in Chicago, but this time around in Tampa, Lovie brought more of a circus than he did a magic act. And that brings us to current head coach Dirk Koetter. How many of the 31 other NFL teams do you think would have had Dirk Koetter on their top 10 list of coaches they would hire? Any? Well the Bucs did and all SSS sees is a fourth round of the same stale hire that followed the previous one.

*****TRADE*** (Buffalo trades with Cleveland, giving up Picks #12, #22 and #53 to acquire Pick #4)**

12. Cleveland	Mike McGlinchey	OT	Notre Dame
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GM John Dorsey made the front end of his 1-on-1 with Darnold as the top overall pick and he hits nothing but net from the line on his second attempt to the cheers of Browns fans everywhere. When you invest in a QB of Darnold's caliber, you better make an investment in protecting him with a strong offensive line. That point has been proven over the past several years by watching a star QB

like Andrew Luck getting thrown to the wolves week-after-week behind a subpar offensive front. This is not a great draft class for offensive tackles but if you are going to get one McGlinchey is the guy. While his linemate at Notre Dame OG Quenton Nelson gets most of the publicity, McGlinchey is no slouch and was a big reason why Nelson was able to shine. The 6' 8" 310 lb. McGlinchey is a technician who recognizes defensive shifts and blitzes quickly and doesn't waste any movement in setting the pocket. He could play on either the left side or the right side but SSS believes he has the ability to anchor the QB's blindside.

THE EXTRA POINT – In the same way that every college football program tells you that they feel very, very good about who they signed to scholarships on Signing Day, NFL teams will do the same thing following the NFL Draft. You can't name me the last NFL team that said, "We just didn't get it done this year in the draft. We ended up with several guys we didn't want and a few that I'm not sure can really play on Sunday." It can be hard at times to separate the teams that have done very well from the teams that are feeding you a line of baloney. However, if Cleveland's first two picks end up being this good, you can take them for their word when they tell you they are on cloud nine. After losing one of their all-time great players and a no-question first ballot Hall of Famer in OT Joe Thomas, the Browns will not only be adding the top QB in the draft to the fold, but they will also land the top OT in the draft in McGlinchey. We're not sure we can tell you the last time a team has pulled off that coup d'etat.

13. Washington	Da'Ron Payne	DT	Alabama
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While much was made during the offseason about the Redskins offense, in particular the loss of QB Kirk Cousins and the gain of QB Alex Smith, this draft will be focused on Washington's defense. The Redskins had the worst run defense in the NFL last season and while they could add a cornerback here to replace the loss of Kendall Fuller and the likely loss of Bashaud Breeland, the Skins really have to address the defensive line. More specifically – drafting a run-stuffing tackle who can make an immediate impact. While many are projecting Vita Vea to be the DT the Redskins select, SSS is going a different direction and pairing Alabama DT Da'Ron Payne with his former teammate DE Johnathan Allen on the Redskins line. Vea is a stout run-stopper but Payne is no slacker against the run either and provides more impact against the pass than Vea. The other consideration is that Vea has a lot of unlocked potential and I'm not sure Washington wants to spend too much time trying to find the key. With Payne you get a hungry lineman who could be a Ndamukong Suh-type player only without all the headaches, altercations and malaise that Suh can bring.

THE EXTRA POINT – Washington's decision to move on from Kirk Cousins is something that I think will be viewed in a few years as a good decision for both parties. The relationship had become stale between the player and the organization and a black cloud seemed to hang over the Redskins as they never quite fully committed to what they wanted to do with Cousins. After a decline in wins from 9-to-8-to 7 from 2015 to 2017, fresh blood and a new approach was needed, and SSS is anxious to see what a very motivated QB like Alex Smith will do in this regime. Billed as the ultimate game-manager, Smith much like Cousins, was in a situation in Kansas City where it never quite felt like the Chiefs were committed to him. Even after the Chiefs defeated the Patriots on the road in

smokescreen for other teams trying to get Jackson. Lots of negative reviews coming out about Jackson but remember this, there were similar concerns about Watson last year when some said he was a project. Well all that “project” did last year was throw 19 TDs against 8 INTs in only 6 games started. Jackson has a chance to be the bitcoin you picked up for under a \$1 five years ago that is now trading for thousands of dollars. And with where the Cardinals are able to get him at #15, this is really a high reward, little risk proposition. Jackson possesses a flick-of-the-wrist-release reminiscent of Randall Cunningham or Michael Vick and it’s safe to say those two QBs had very strong careers. He is very elusive but also has the good instincts not to force a throw when a conservative approach is preferred. Jackson can get you out of a lot of bad plays with his feet and has all the potential to be among the best QBs in this draft.

THE EXTRA POINT – Leave it to the Arizona Cardinals to replace QB Carson Palmer with Sam Bradford, the only QB who may be more fragile than he is. No quarterback has been able to accumulate more money over his career with less production than Sam Bradford. If there was a Hall of Fame for players with the highest Injury-To-Cash Ratio, he would be a unanimous selection. You have to think with the signings of Bradford and Chicago Bears castoff QB Mike Glennon that the Cardinals have no choice but to draft a QB for the future in either Rounds 1 or 2. SSS has projected Buffalo and Miami to trade up, but of the teams that we didn’t involve in a trade to get a QB, Arizona is easily the most likely of teams to also do it that we didn’t project.

16. Baltimore	James Daniels	C	Iowa
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SSS was tempted to go with Calvin Ridley to the Ravens here but we believe GM Ozzie Newsome may be a little gun shy on drafting a WR in the 1st Round after the Breshad Perriman debacle of a 1st round selection in 2015. Newsome has never drafted a Pro Bowl wide receiver and that is why he goes for the sure thing with the best center available in the draft – Iowa’s James Daniels. The Ravens were ravaged by injuries in 2017 and any help that Newsome can give to aging QB Joe Flacco can’t be construed in any other way than a great decision. Daniels follows in the Iowa tradition of strong Iowa offensive linemen and would line up beside another fellow Hawkeye in Marshal Yanda on the Ravens O-line. Newsome can easily pick up a WR in Round 2 and don’t be surprised if the Ravens are the silent stalkers of a QB.

THE EXTRA POINT – As mentioned in the final sentence of the above paragraph, is it time to start considering the next QB to legitimately lead the Ravens? Joe Flacco’s bet on himself to earn his huge payday during the Ravens last Super Bowl season is one of the greatest gambles of all time, but since then Baltimore hasn’t been much of a threat. Flacco has thrown for over 20 TDs only once since the Super Bowl season and while his receiving corps has been littered with retreads, hangers-on and hopefuls, you start wondering if the Flacco ship has sailed in Baltimore.

17. L.A. Chargers	Vita Vea	DT	Washington
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The Chargers are the envy of the league with outside rushers Joey Bosa and Melvin Ingram but the interior of the line isn’t doing anything to assist those two studs on the edge. Vita Vea would be an ideal pick for L.A. as he would be able to ease into things with the sole purpose of absorbing blocks

playmaking LB like Evans. You can never have too many studs at linebacker and if the Cowboys ignore drafting that position they are going to be leaving a void that could severely set their defense back. Evans became more instinctual for the Tide in 2017 and became a complete player. More importantly, Dallas is getting a guy in Evans who will play through injury and who has tremendous explosiveness. Evans doesn't miss tackles and is very underrated as a blitzer who can evade blocks.

THE EXTRA POINT – Now that we are through most of the trading to get a QB, watch for one of a few teams to potentially trade with Dallas here to get a position player of their liking. Moves around the 20 spot don't typically come from a long way away and teams with assets like the Patriots or Colts could be in play here without having to give up much inventory. Jerry always likes to become involved in the production and you can't rule him out on trying to cut a deal.

20. Detroit	Taven Bryan	DT	Florida
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SSS may be falling into the trap of buying too much into what new head coach Matt Patricia says he wants to do with the team - building a strong defensive front. SSS came to this pick through the process of elimination and that starts with the need for an offensive guard. There isn't a guard in our book worthy of taking at #20 and while some say UTEP OG Will Hernandez would be a good fit here, SSS just doesn't see Patricia coming out of the gate drafting a guard. Bryan is very, very raw, but he proved to be very effective in his limited time at Florida and best of all - he has a high ceiling that Patricia can help him reach. More importantly, his motor can't be questioned and he is very physical at the point of attack. Trusting a disciple of Bill Belichick is a risky proposition but one we are willing to take.

THE EXTRA POINT – SSS is starting to get a sense that most of the teams in this draft that are in need of a RB like Detroit will have a hard time being the ones to pop the seal on the second back to be taken overall. The run on the post-Saquon Barkley RB options may not come until very late in the 1st round or possibly even the beginning of the second, but once that seal is indeed popped, the run could be fast and furious. SSS sees the 2nd round becoming RB Central.

21. Cincinnati	Frank Ragnow	C	Arkansas
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I think the Bengals really, really want to take Ohio State center Billy Price, but there is just too much risk in selecting a player at #21 who is coming off a partial pectoral tear, even if his doctors are saying that he will make a full recovery by training camp. A team like the Eagles, Patriots, Rams or Vikings could afford to roll the dice on a player's injury like that, but I don't think the Bengals can. And let's not forget – Frank Ragnow is no joke. The guy is a heck of a player and will boost the Bengals offensive line that needs an immediate fuel injection. He has the size and strength to start immediately and will give the Bengals flexibility as he has played at both center and guard. There could be a temptation to find a QB to replace A.J. McCarron and potentially challenge Andy Dalton, but if there is one thing we know about the Bengals - they have the patience of Job. Just ask their fans who are still wondering why Marvin Lewis is entering his 16th season as the head coach with an 0-7 postseason record. If the Bengals are that patient with Lewis, I'm sure they will continue to be patient with Dalton. SSS may be writing about this topic for 10 more years for all we know. The

Bengals could also use help on defense along the line and at linebacker but that will come in later rounds. They need to figure out the interior of the offensive line immediately and that means calling the Hogs to get Frank Ragnow on a plane from Fayetteville to Cincy.

THE EXTRA POINT – *I know you are expecting SSS to continue to harp on Marvin Lewis in the Extra Point but we've already had our fill on that topic. In all honesty, what the Bengals need to do now is go all-in and maybe take a few risks to shake things up. This isn't a bad team stuck in the wilderness with directions that lead them in circles like the kids in the Blair Witch Project. This is a team that has simply found ways to turn potentially special seasons into average ones. A solid draft and taking some shots on a few more free agents could actually help this team get over the hump they have been staring at for almost two decades. If the Bengals can keep A.J. Green and Tyler Eifert healthy, get Joe Mixon to play like the player they were hoping he was when they drafted him, and find a way for Vontaze Burfict to stop being suspended at the beginning of each year (this will be the third straight year he starts the regular season on the suspended list), this team is probably a lot closer to 10-6 than 6-10.*

*****TRADE*** (Buffalo trades with Cleveland, giving up Pick #4 for Picks #12, #22 and #53)**

22. Cleveland	Josh Jackson	CB	Iowa
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Lots and lots of variance about Josh Jackson. Scouts were not impressed with his 4.5 40-time at the combine. SSS has a simple response to any negativity surrounding Jackson – Tape Don't Lie. Of all the corners in this draft there isn't another who has the ball-hawking skills of Jackson. His speed didn't limit him when he recorded 3 INTs in an upset win over Ohio State and it sure didn't hinder him from returning 2 INTs for TDs against Wisconsin. This kid has the "it" factor and follows the code of elite corners – "play the ball, not the man". Jackson is S'feld's highest-rated cornerback and definitely ready for primetime. His instincts are otherworldly and his ability to anticipate routes is second-to-none. Ohio State's Denzel Ward had the advantage of a pressuring OSU defensive line, which led the Big Ten in total sacks and forced opposing QBs to get rid of the ball faster than they wanted. On the contrary, Jackson played on an Iowa team that ranked 7th in the Big Ten in sacks and relied on Jackson to cover for longer periods of time. Despite that he still had 27 passes defended with 8 INTs. Cleveland finishes the day with a combined 1st round haul of Darnold, McGlinchey and Jackson, and GM John Dorsey's transformation is well underway before the Browns even reach the second day of the draft.

THE EXTRA POINT – *There is not much more to say about Cleveland and what they should be able to achieve in this draft. Competence at the top of your organization is everything and Cleveland appears to have gotten it right by hiring a true professional in GM John Dorsey. It shouldn't take long before head coach Hue Jackson feels the pressure to win more than a few games a season. You may have never convinced SSS that the greatest optimism coming out of Cleveland would occur so closely to the retirement of OT Joe Thomas, but with the draft cache that former GM Sashi Brown stockpiled and the ability of Dorsey to weaponize that arsenal with quality picks, Cleveland has no where to go but up.*

23. New England	Dallas Goedert	TE	South Dakota State
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If there are two things that we know about Bill Belichick it is that no player is bigger than the team and he doesn't suffer fools. It sure does feel like "The Hoodie" may be at his wit's end with Rob Gronkowski. "But S'feld, Gronkowski is the straw that stirs Brady's drink!" Yes, we understand that, but we have also witnessed Belichick be the master of cutting a player loose a step ahead of when they lose their value to him. And we are not saying that Gronkowski is going to be dealt or that he is even going to be off the team anytime soon. But what we do see, is that Belichick could identify his next Gronk in the same manner he was able to identify his next Brady in Jimmy Garoppolo. We also know that an NFL body can breakdown quickly and Gronk has been injured off and on his whole career and by his own admission he is a little tired of Belichick and maybe football in general. That brings us to Goedert who is sneaky good and can catch the ball on all three levels. Watching tape of his play is eerily reminiscent to what Gronk brings to the table, and unlike a few of the other TE candidates, he appears to have more potential as a blocker. Goedert also has shown the ability to make the acrobatic catch and come down with the ball while defenders are draped all over him. Hmmmmm, what other Patriot TE is know for that? Belichick sends a message to Gronk that we can do this with you or without you and gets his Gronkowski 2.0 in Goedert.

THE EXTRA POINT – *The #1 thing you can expect from any New England draft is that whatever you think may happen, likely won't. Because they are so good, New England typically adds draft assets and doesn't force anything. They trust their board and take what comes to them, drafting for player strength, not need. If you look at any of the experts' "Patriots Draft Needs or Projections," you won't find TE listed as a need and you certainly won't find anyone selecting a TE for them in the 1st round. But that is exactly why you don't just seek out any expert's projections, you come to THEE EXPERT'S Projections – SSS. For over 20 some years we have been providing you with the kind of insight you are getting here about the Patriots - insight that most other so-called experts can't even comprehend. You're welcome.*

24. Carolina	Calvin Ridley	WR	Alabama
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Earlier we referenced how safety Derwin James has steadily moved up draft boards from January to April. Conversely, Bama WR Calvin Ridley has felt the other side of that coin, dropping from a top-10 pick to a WR that may very drop all the way to the mid 20s. Carolina could choose to address the interior of their offensive line here, but it's too tempting to take Ridley, who is heads and tails a more complete receiver than any other wideout in this draft. He can run every single route on the tree to perfection, and corners beware – if you allow Ridley a free release, he will meet you in endzone with reservations for 6. Ridley never gives up on a play when a QB is under pressure and he will find open spaces to bail out his QB when under duress. He is also underrated in what he can do with the ball after the catch. After trading away Kelvin Benjamin to the Bills, the Panthers desperately need another elite receiver for QB Cam Newton. No wide receiver on the Panthers outside of Devin Funchess had more than 17 catches in 2017. That can't happen again.

THE EXTRA POINT – *I wouldn't be one bit surprised to see Carolina come right back with their 2nd round selection and take the best remaining RB on the board. Christian McCaffery proved to be a*

very talented and versatile weapon for Cam & Company last year, but he is not the kind of guy who can carry the full load. Jonathan Stewart brought a lot to the table for the Panthers for many a year, but the rust was starting to show and it was time for the Panthers backfield to go young with some fresh legs. SSS feels Carolina GM Marty Hurney will address WR and RB early in the draft.

25. Tennessee	Harold Landry	OLB	Boston College
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It may be tough for the Titans to pass up on UTEP OG Will Hernandez here but the draft may be at its deepest with offensive guards and that can't be said for edge rushers. Harold Landry is a guy who had he declared for the draft after 2016 may have been a top 15 pick, But he chose to return to Boston College and his production had a hard time matching the 16.5 sacks he recorded in 2016. That being said, he is still every bit the player he was two years ago. A few nagging injuries stunted his progress this year, but he could easily end up being the player in the 1st Round that five years from now people say "How did that guy fall to #25?" Tennessee is so weak with pressure from the edge that Landry likely won't be the final piece of their puzzle at that position, but boy if he isn't a great start.

THE EXTRA POINT – Tennessee had one of those rollercoaster seasons where you didn't know whether the perception was reality and if what you were watching them do week-to-week wasn't a complete mirage. They headed into the season as one of the favorites to break through and not only win the division but make a strong playoff run. Then QB Marcus Mariota started getting dinged up and Tennessee suddenly looked like they might not even be a playoff team. In a game they had to win to make the postseason, they struggled to a 15-10 home win over a Jacksonville team that had their playoff spot secured and didn't need to bring their "A" game. The following week it looked as though they would mercifully be put down by Kansas City only to rally for an incredible comeback in the 4th quarter winning the game. The next week, they left some chances on the field against the vaunted Patriots and the season was over and Mike Mularkey was fired even after everyone assumed he was safe. Most teams can't put together that many storylines in five years. The Titans did it in roughly 5 months.

26. Atlanta	Maurice Hurst	DT	Michigan
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If you take out the fact that Michigan DT Maurice Hurst had heart irregularities at the NFL combine, there is no possible way he is being scooped with the 26th overall pick. This is a steal for a team that doesn't have a lot of glaring needs and can make a luxury pick while still filling out a position where they have lost a key player in Dontari Poe. While some are concerned with the condition of his Hurst's heart, no one is concerned about the condition of his motor which is permanently placed in overdrive. Atlanta is not only going to get the effort, they are going to get a guy who brings not only his lunch pail to work, but yours too because he never stops feasting in the opponent's backfield. This is another round of relatively low risk for a potential high reward for Atlanta.

THE EXTRA POINT – SSS learned a few very valuable lessons last season about the Atlanta Falcons. First, former OC Kyle Shanahan was a BIIIIIIIIIIIG reason why that team was the offensive juggernaut we witnessed during their Super Bowl season of 2016. Also, Steve Sarkisian was a

was amazing in 2016 but suffered a bit of a setback in 2017. SSS believes that in the right system and with his flexibility he will re-emerge as a solid starter. The Eagles are an amazing place for Williams to land. Back to the Broncos – this pick comes down to Georgia’s Sony Michel or Derrius Guice of LSU. SSS believes the nod will go to Michel due to a few of the finer points that you may not get with Guice. Michel is better in pass protection, and if you don’t think that is a big deal – take a look at the reason Frank Gore is still in the NFL. On top of that, Michel is great out of the backfield and could potentially be the Alvin Kamara of the 2018 draft. SSS has him as the second-best RB in the draft and after this selection is made it will take Broncos fans less than 5 seconds to remember the name C.J. Anderson.

****THE EXTRA POINT**** – *Even though the Broncos traded into this pick, we would be remiss if we didn’t have an Extra Point devoted to the Eagles. A few years ago the Cleveland Cavs broke through with a world championship over the Golden State Warriors after trailing 3-1 in the series to capture their first NBA title. Four months later the Chicago Cubs broke a 108-year drought to win the World Series after falling behind the Cleveland Indians 3-1 in the World Series. I guess we should have seen it coming that the 2017 Philadelphia Eagles would close out the trifecta of long-suffering fans with a Super Bowl championship after losing their likely NFL MVP candidate Carson Wentz to injury late in the season. Philly moved way ahead of expectations and added several very key players during the offseason. While it took the Eagles a long time to reach the pinnacle, they likely won’t be waiting that long ever again.*