

**NFL Network Analyst Mike Mayock 2014 NFL Scouting Combine Press  
Conference –  
Sunday, February 23**

***On who helped themselves the most and who took a step back in the first two days at the 2014 NFL Scouting Combine:***

“I thought those three offensive tackles [Saturday] were spectacular; [Greg] Robinson from Auburn, [Jake] Matthews and [Taylor] Lewan. I thought they all had good days. [Xavier] Su’a-Filo from UCLA looked really good, [David] Yankey from Stanford looked good. The tight ends were a little disappointing. They were beat up a little bit from some injury stuff with them; the Notre Dame kid [Troy Niklas] was only about 80 percent, couldn’t do a 40. [Jace] Amaro didn’t run as fast as I thought he would run. [Colt] Lyster, the kid from Oregon who I thought was going to be a little bit more explosive, didn’t run as fast or catch as well. The tight ends I think there are still a lot of question marks. I love [Eric] Ebron still. And then [Sunday] the quarterbacks, I thought both [A.J.] McCarron and [Blake] Bortles looked good. I’m a little bit hamstrung there because I don’t get to see everything; I’m kind of tied in to what is shown on the network so if we’re on a receiver, I don’t see a quarterback. I thought those two guys looked pretty good. I think Logan Thomas from Virginia Tech is a huge wild card; he has no footwork whatsoever yet he delivers the football so beautifully. As far as the running backs, I think [Jerick] McKinnon from Georgia Southern is a real wild card in this draft...He had a big day for him. I thought the [Bishop] Sankey kid caught the ball well which I wanted to see him do. And I thought at the wide receiver position, Marqise Lee didn’t run as fast as I expected but he still is the kind of player I think he is; he just didn’t run as fast. I was really impressed with the [Texas] A&M kid and the day he had, Mike Evans; ran well, caught the ball extremely well...[Brandin] Cooks had a really good day, ran fast. He’s a kid I thought that kind of made a statement that, ‘I’m a first-round pick’ and this is one of the best wide receiver drafts I’ve ever seen, so that was significant.”

***On Ohio State running back Carlos Hyde pulling a hamstring in his first 40-yard dash attempt:***

“I don’t think it does a thing to him. He pulled it. It’s one thing if something happens like Aaron Colvin at the Senior Bowl where you’re tearing ACLs. It’s another thing when you pull a calf or hammy. It’s a temporary setback. Hopefully he’ll be ready to go for the Ohio State pro day.”

***On if he is seeing a drop off in the caliber of player at the running back position over the past few years:***

“I don’t think so. Look at the second round last year. OK we didn’t have any first round backs but the kid from North Carolina that went to Cincinnati [Giovani Bernard] had a phenomenal season. [Eddie] Lacy, the kid from Alabama that went to Green Bay, had a phenomenal season, so their impact on their two teams was significant. So I don’t think it’s anything negative on the running back; I just think that it’s a pass-first league now so you’re seeing a lot of different draft picks getting pushed up ahead. I think this running back group (A) is talented, (B) is deep and (C) you kind of have to filter through it to see who you like because there are a lot of different flavors out there depending on what kind of offense you run.”

***On Towson running back Terrance West:***

“He ran well...Heavy production, great vision and balance. I thought he would be kind of higher 4.5s or low 4.6s so I do think he helped himself.”

***On Alabama quarterback A.J. McCarron:***

“I saw McCarron at the Manning Academy last year. I think what happens with Alabama quarterbacks is they kind of get grouped into, ‘Oh, he’s another game manager.’ This is a bigger kid; he’s over 6’3, he’s 220 pounds. He throws a bigger ball and he looked like today like he was hanging out in the backyard throwing it; it was easy. He didn’t seem like he felt any pressure, the ball comes out nice; I don’t think he has a huge arm but he has a good arm. And he’s accurate.”

***On other quarterbacks in the draft:***

“[Zach Mettenberger] has to get over that ACL but he still might be a third or fourth round pick. Aaron Murray from Georgia coming off an ACL might be a fourth or fifth round pick. I think the [Jimmy] Garoppolo kid continues and I saw him throw a couple of balls inaccurately today. He has a very quick release, the ball comes out well; I think he’s a second or third round kind of guy. I keep saying to people wild card Logan Thomas. Another wild card Tom Savage from Pittsburgh is a big strong kid who can throw the football. He’s been at three colleges so nobody even knows about him but he’s a big kid with a live arm.”

***On how Michigan offensive tackle Taylor Lewan stacks up with Auburn’s Greg Robinson and Texas A&M’s Jake Matthews after his workout on Saturday:***

“When linemen have big days like that, I get excited and I love it but it doesn’t change my rankings really. It shows me he’s is athletic which I already thought he was. I think all three of those tackles are probably better than the tackles as a group that we had last year and they went one, [two] and four. So it’s a different draft class but in my opinion those three tackles are top-10 talents.”

***On Clemson wide receiver Sammy Watkins:***

“Sammy Watkins is what you want. I’m not usually a big proponent of top-10 wide receivers, but this kid he runs fast, he catches the football, he’s explosive and what’s my favorite thing about him is he has a chip on his shoulder. He has more toughness than most wide receivers have. I think he’s a franchise wide receiver.”

***On Texas A&M wide receiver Mike Evans and Florida State wide receiver Kelvin Benjamin:***

“There are different ways to separate at the wide receiver position. You can separate with quickness, you can separate with speed, you can separate with route running and you can separate with body type. So when you look at the Texas A&M kid [Mike Evans] and the Florida State kid [Kelvin Benjamin], you’re talking about body type; 6’5-plus, 230-240 pounds. In today’s NFL with the advent of the back-shoulder fade, which I think has changed the whole way we’re drafting now, Benjamin and Evans are today’s NFL; outside the numbers, red zone, throw it up. In the old days, even 10,15 years ago, quarterbacks were taught if a corner or safety covered your guy in press coverage, you went to your second read. Now they’re taught to throw it at the back of his helmet. Mike Evans, he ran fast, he caught everything, he catches naturally. The Benjamin kid from Florida State is a similar body type; I thought he was a little more stiff today

getting in and out of breaks and he had several drops at Florida State so his hands aren't quite as consistent."

***On USC wide receiver Marqise Lee:***

"Marqise Lee is that guy who can play inside, he can play outside, he can return kicks. I thought he was going to run faster than he did."

***On University of Texas defensive end Jackson Jeffcoat:***

"Quite frankly I expected more off the tape. I thought he was going to be more explosive off the edge. I understand his production, his numbers are excellent in a great conference, but on tape I didn't see the explosion that I wanted to see for an edge rusher."

***On if the Seattle Seahawks would be in the market for a bigger body-type wide receiver in the draft:***

"I think they certainly could be. Sidney Rice is probably going to be gone from that group so I think they have to be looking at the wide receiver group. I think the [Mike] Evans kid will be gone in the first 15 picks so it's not just the first round. You can go right down the draft with some of these big body guys; Jordan Matthews ran well today, faster than I expected he would. There are big body guys all the way through this draft. The big kid from Rutgers who had a lot of drops in his career but he's 6'6, so as you go through the rounds, if looking for that newer breed, big body guy, they are out there."

***On what Vanderbilt wide receiver Jordan Matthews' performance on Sunday at the Combine did for his draft stock:***

"I don't know. I made the comment today I thought at the Senior Bowl he struggled separating a little bit. To me, I thought he was about a 4.55 guy coming off the Senior Bowl. I liked his tape at Vandy because he's the most productive wide receiver in SEC history and then he comes out today and runs 4.44. This is a crosscheck; don't get too excited about guys running around in shorts, it's a crosscheck. So that tells me and I have in my notes I have to go back and watch some more of the Matthews kid from Vandy because I'm not quite sure what he is yet."

***On Wisconsin linebacker Chris Borland:***

"If there are 10 players in this draft that I love, he's one of them. I didn't even know who he was quite frankly in October when I put the tape in to get ready for a Notre Dame game and I watched BYU play Wisconsin. It was my first exposure to Chris Borland and I went who is 44? Every tape I put in I was like, 'Wow, this kid reminds me of [Luke] Kuechly.' Not the same body type but he's always around the football. I love Chris Borland."

***On how much LSU wide receiver Odell Beckham helped himself with his performance in the 40-yard dash:***

"I knew Beckham was going to run fast, and when you look at the two LSU wideouts Beckham is faster. I made the comment early I thought he might run 4.35 to 4.40, whereas Jarvis Landry would run 4.55. Now, I'm not sure which is the better football player but Beckham certainly helped himself with his speed, his smoothness. His route running is really, really good and I know the NFL people love him."

***On if bigger cornerbacks are the wave of the future:***

“I think it has to be right now because if we’re going to have a conversation about the big body wide receivers, then you have to go, ‘Who’s covering them?’ It’s the same thing with the tight ends, the 6’4, 250 [pounds] – who is covering him? Look at Seattle. That’s the prototype right now defensively; what are you looking for and how do you cover these big bodies?”

***On the safety class:***

“I don’t think the safety class is as deep as some of these other classes. For instance, Calvin Pryor, if I had one of my 10 favorite players just because of watching them on tape, Calvin Pryor is one of them. He’s like a bigger Bob Sanders. I think he’s better in the box. Ha Ha Clinton-Dix is better back off; he has more range and ball skills back there. Lamarcus Joyner is a corner at Florida State that I think is a safety similar to Tyrann Mathieu. Another one of my real favorites in this draft is Jimmie Ward from Northern Illinois who is more of a free safety. I think after those four it drops off a little bit and then you have to take your pick at guys like Terrence Brooks at Florida State. Ed Reynolds from Stanford is generating a lot of conversation; he’s a true free safety, he might run a little better than people think. I was surprised he came out this year because he had six picks a year ago, came back and didn’t play as well this year, so he’s a guy that has a big question mark. He has some ability. Tre Boston from North Carolina is a guy you can get in the middle rounds who is a little more in the box kind of guy.”

***On wide receivers in this draft that would work well for a team looking for a slot receiver:***

“Starting with Marqise Lee would be an excellent slot. You can go a couple of different ways in the slot; a shorter, quicker guy like Wes Welker or sometimes the big body guy where you’re trying to throwing slants and get him one-on-one with a linebacker. I think Jarvis Landry from LSU is one of the toughest players in this draft; he pulled up today and ran 4.65 which I don’t think means anything but I think he’s a slot. I think Brandin Cooks initially is going to be looked at as a slot. I think [Jared] Abbrederis from Wisconsin is an interesting guy in the slot, Robert Herron from Wyoming is an interesting guy in the slot. [Bruce] Ellington from South Carolina.”

***On what makes Oregon State wide receiver Brandin Cooks a fit for the slot position:***

“He can play [like] Marqise Lee. I think he fits inside or outside. In today’s NFL where guys like Welker are catching eight, 10, 12 passes a game and what you’re looking for is a matchup in the middle of the field. If you’re quicker than fast, that’s where those slot guys typically end up. I think Cooks is quick and fast.”

***On what is holding back Auburn offensive tackle Greg Robinson from being the top tackle in this year’s draft:***

“I think people get too hung up on where people have them ranked. I love the kid; the only reason I don’t have him number one is because I think Jake Matthews is safer. Greg Robinson has as the most upside as any offensive lineman in this draft but I think there are other guys that are safer because they’re a little bit further along as far as technique and number of snaps in college football.”

***On the transition from being a pass rusher to an outside linebacker:***

“Whenever a kid sticks his hand in the dirt and has to stand up, and I’ve had this conversation with a bunch of guys that have done it in the NFL. Tamba Hali talked about eye level and I think it’s kind of cool because he said when your hand is in the dirt, you’re looking in at that tackle and that’s all you see is the tackle. When your hand is in there, all you can see is him. When you’re standing up, now I see all of you guys. Tamba Hali said the hardest thing he had day one was saying, ‘Oh my goodness, I’m seeing this whole game right now whereas before I only saw the left tackle.’ The first thing I think is your eye level and your eye discipline. I asked [Trent] Cole from the Eagles the same question and he doesn’t like seeing the whole field. Some guys want to see more players and other guys want to narrow it down so it’s just one-on-one. So I think when you stand up, everything changes. Think about it: you spent your whole life going forward, now I have some coach telling me to drop back, and some guys can and some guys can’t. The kid from Stanford, Trent Murphy; I think he reminds me a little bit of Mike Vrabel. They put his hand in the dirt at Senior Bowl and probably not fair to the kid; I think he’s; going to be a 3-4 outside linebacker. Dee Ford – probably a 3-4 outside linebacker. There are a bunch of these guys, one of whom is Michael Sam. Can he do it? I don’t think he can. I think he’s a situational edge rusher and I think he knows that. I loved his press conference; he said I have to go rush the quarterback and I think he’s right.”

***On Kent State running back Dri Archer:***

“He had a huge year two years ago and I thought it was awesome. And then of course with the injuries and everything it wasn’t as good this year. He ran fast – almost as fast as Chris Johnson. He helped himself. The fact that he can return helps him. Whenever you get those guys that are 170-plus pounds, the question is how do you use them? Where do you line them up? That’s where the value situation is. How many touches can I get him per game? The more you think you can get him, then the more money you can pay him and the higher you can draft him. The less you think you can get him touches, then his value starts to drop. You look at a kid like that, is he going to be a fourth-round guy where he’s going to be a situational guy, slot, motion, hand him the ball? You look at [Dexter] McCluster, you look at Tavon Austin – they’re still trying to figure out how to get those guys the ball consistently. Most of those guys typically go plus-or-minus the fourth round, and him running the way he did really helped.”

***On if South Carolina defensive end Jadeveon Clowney only benching 21 reps lowers his view of him:***

“No. He’s an interesting deal. The average I think for defensive linemen last year in the bench press was 24, so should Jadeveon Clowney have more than 24? Sure he should. However, he has long arms and I always say to people it’s the shorter, barrel-chested guys that rep out the most. But does it go to work ethic? He got 21. I really don’t care. And by the way, if he runs 4.42 or 4.62 [on Monday], I really don’t care. I already think I know what he is: he’s the scariest, freakiest, physical specimen I’ve ever seen since I’ve been doing this as a potential upside defensive lineman. However, that doesn’t mean I’m saying he’s the best defensive lineman in the draft or the best player in the draft because he worries me with some of the red flags.”