

# SPORTS

## Sports Pundits Rate Recent NFL Draft

By **Jarad Brown** And **Joshua Meeks**

**JARAD:** Ok, so No. 1 overall pick is quarterback Sam Bradford from Oklahoma. Think the Rams got it right?

**JOSH:** I think the Rams definitely got it right. By releasing Bulger, they had no option at quarterback really. I mean Keith Null was their starter for the last game of the season. I feel Bradford showed the arm strength needed at his pro day to complement one of the most accurate arms to come out in a while.

**JARAD:** I like Bradford as a first-round pick. I'd also have to agree that Null isn't going to lead the franchise, so they had to go get a quarterback. The problem I have is spending the No. 1 overall pick on a possibility. Bradford's arm looks good and he was certainly accurate at Oklahoma, but that doesn't always transfer to the NFL (Think Ryan Leaf). If they wanted a quarterback that bad they could have traded down and still gotten a great signal caller (Clausen or McCoy) and received value for their pick. Going No. 1 overall means the \$50 million range contract-wise. I hope for the Rams sake he's worth it.

**JOSH:** Drafting almost any player is a crap shoot. It's extremely difficult to go anywhere else with that kind of money, though. In the past you could give that money to a running back but running backs aren't used the same way they were in the past. The league is pass-happy now so you need a guy who can pull the trigger. I agree that there were other quarterbacks in the draft but someone has to go number one. You can't take a defensive tackle like Suh at one. He may be the best player in the draft but he alone doesn't impact the defense the same way a quarterback like Bradford can impact the offense.

**JARAD:** The NFL is definitely a pass-happy league now, and I think that's exactly what the upper brass of the league wants. Three-hundred yard passing games are fun for fans to watch and only do positive things for ratings. Speaking of Ndamukong Suh, the Detroit Lions couldn't have made a better pick at the No. 2 spot. Suh is a kid with freakish upper body strength and enough quickness to hurry quarterbacks like Bradford. More than that, Suh shows up in the big games (like the Big 12 Conference championship game where he made Colt McCoy's life miserable for four quarters). Add to that the fact that the Lions also signed free-agent defensive end Kyle Vandenbosch before the draft and Detroit's defense is looking rather fierce. With last year's No. 1 overall pick Matthew Stafford in his second season, the Lions might actually have a shot at a playoff run.

**JOSH:** I agree completely. Suh is a monster and the Lions are definitely on the way up. They also picked up Jahvid Best, the lightning-quick running back out of Cal, later in the first round. I think we will definitely see the Lions make strides but I think that a playoff run may be bleak with the Packers, Vikings, and the enigma that is the Chicago Bears all in that division. This may be the toughest division in football by the end of the year. Green Bay finally got some offensive line help by drafting Bryan Bulaga at tackle while the Vikings got a complement to AP by drafting Heisman finalist Toby Gerhart. The Bears got value in the later rounds but their draft was basically Jay Cutler, Julius Peppers, and Chester Taylor. I'm looking at a tough, tough division.

**JARAD:** I couldn't agree more. With the McNabb era over in Philadelphia and, and the Giants dealing with locker-room issues about trade rumors, the NFC East's reign as the toughest division in football is over. The Packers have a young and maturing defense led by former Ohio State Buckeye A.J. Hawk, and offensively I'm pretty sure they have some guy named Aaron Rodgers who can throw the ball all over the field, so they're set.

The Vikings did indeed grab Stanford's Toby Gerhart in the second round with the 51st overall pick. He should be a good complement to former first-round pick Adrian Peterson who has had his share of ball security issues near the end zone. Should the ageless

Bret Favre decide to once again don the purple and gold, then the Vikings might find themselves in the NFC championship game. The Bears are a complete enigma. They went 4-2 in the division last season in the midst of basically imploding. They'll get Brian Urlacher back from injury and the addition of former Pro Bowl defensive end Julius Peppers should make the Bears a defense to be reckoned with.

**JOSH:** They will have to be a defense to be reckoned with if they have any hope of being in games if their offense continues to play so dreadfully. They were 23rd in the league last year in yards per game after bringing in the savior, Jay Cutler. All the blame can't be put on Cutler, though. His leading receivers were Devin Hester and Greg Olson. They didn't address a receiver in the draft because they gave away their draft for Cutler last year. We will see if the defense can carry them this year.

**JARAD:** They certainly did give away their draft to snag Cutler last season, and because of that didn't pick in the first two rounds. Their first pick came in round three at No. 75 overall where they selected Major Wright, the safety from Florida. Not a bad bargain in the third round, but I don't think Wright is going to help prevent Cutler from having another season of 20+ interceptions.

Tampa Bay selected Oklahoma defensive tackle Gerald McCoy at the No. 3 spot followed by the Washington Redskins taking offensive tackle Trent Williams at No. 4. Then the Kansas City Chiefs snagged Tennessee safety Eric Berry at the fifth spot. I like all three picks at those spots, but the Chiefs might have gotten the best of the deal with Berry. Here's a guy who is great in pass coverage, has the physical and mental toughness to step into the box for run support, and might be the most NFL ready, thanks to being coached last season by Monty Kiffin, who was the defensive guru in Tampa Bay for quite some time.

**JOSH:** I think Eric Berry was the surest thing in the draft. He had dominated in the defensive backfield at Tennessee since he was a freshman. Many people had him on their preseason Heisman boards. Many people say he will be the next Ed Reed and I couldn't agree more. The man is all over the field and has great instincts, and with 4.4 speed, you can definitely see him taking a free back to the house like Reed.

**JARAD:** I couldn't agree more. I liked Berry coming into the draft and I think he's an absolute steal at the No. 5 pick. Some people question spending that high of a draft pick on a guy in the defensive secondary, but Berry is a game changer who will have an immediate impact for the Chiefs. Okay, so there's the top five picks; now I'd like to know the biggest surprise for you from the first round and biggest disappointment?

**JOSH:** I think most people will want to go with Tim Tebow to the Broncos at number 25 as the biggest surprise. I don't buy it, though. When taking a quarterback in the draft, you never know what you're going to get. That's why you have hidden gems found in late rounds like Tom Brady in 2000. So why not take a guy who can play. One thing I hate about the draft is teams care way too much about 40 times and 3-cone drills. It seems teams don't pay attention to on-the-field performance as much.

Which is why Vernon Gholston has been a bust in New York. He was a workout warrior before the draft but hasn't been the player the Jets expected. Did you see Tebow play for four years? He may be the greatest college football player ever. I agree you don't know if his release will work in a pro system but you know he will compete and will make the team better. I have to say the biggest surprise had to be Tyson Alualu to Jacksonville at 10. He was rated as an early 2nd round pick by most teams. If you like a guy that much, you take him. But that was the spot teams were trying to trade up to. Both the Broncos and Dolphins traded out of 11 and 12 right behind the Jags. Do you not think they could have gotten out of that spot as well?

**JARAD:** The Jags completely confused me at the No. 10 spot. They easily could have traded out of that position, gotten the guy that they obviously wanted and a bit more in terms of an extra pick in a later round. I'm not quite sure what was said at the Jaguars table before the No. 10 pick was turned in, but they needed a voice of reason. The only thing I can figure is they couldn't get a deal where they felt comfortable they'd still be able to get Alualu.

Tebow at 25 is the dumbest pick in the draft. Forget what he did in college. Chris Weinke won a Heisman Trophy and a national championship at Florida State. Ask the Panthers how great he's been in the NFL. Is Tebow going to probably be a decent quarterback at the next level? Yes because of his drive to compete. He's not worth a first-round pick by any means, though. In the NFL you can't be a leader on a team unless you start; there's no scout team warriors at the next level and Tebow will ride the pine for a minimum of one season. Colt McCoy is the quarterback with the most wins in NCAA Division I history and he didn't come off the board until the third

round. Denver could have saved the equity they wasted to trade the 25th pick and grabbed Tebow later. What was the smartest pick of the first round for you?

**JOSH:** I feel like the easiest move of the first round might have been Kansas City taking Eric Berry at the five spot. However, I think the smartest move of the first round might be Maurkice Pouncey, the center from Florida going to the Steelers. Pouncey will make an immediate impact. Drafted as a center, the 6'5" 304-pound offensive lineman could also be an upgrade at the Steelers dreadful guard position. The Steelers may need him to come of age early to protect whomever is in at quarterback while Big Ben serves his suspension.

**JARAD:** That's certainly one of the smarter picks in the entire draft, much less just the first round. With Big Ben gone for at least four games and Charlie Batch as the probable replacement, the Steelers are going to have to find a way to run the ball, something they failed at for the latter part of last season. With no Willie Parker in the backfield to change pace and add speed to their running game, the Steelers are going to have to rely on Pouncey to provide blocking for a power attack.

Considering he put up 38 reps at 225 during his workout at the combine, he should be able to provide an immediate spark. While the Steelers provided the best possible player for their current situation, I have to commend the Oakland Raiders for taking inside linebacker Rolando McClain at No. 8 overall. While the pick is a little high for an inside linebacker, the Raiders haven't gotten much right in the first round of recent drafts. They took Jamarus Russell No. 1 overall three years ago and he's yet to produce and is probably on his way out with the addition of Jason Campbell. McClain isn't a glamorous pick, but he's a guy who anchored one of the best defenses in college football last season at Alabama and will come in and do exactly what the Raiders need him to do.

**JOSH:** I love the McClain pick. He'll replace Morrison, who was just a tackling machine. McClain is the exact same thing. He can fly across the field and really put a fire on that side of the ball for Oakland. I see him putting up over 100 tackles on the season and being the Defensive Rookie of the Year. I think he is that special. I think many teams were hoping he would fall, especially the Giants. He is a football player in the truest sense and he will show that in his rookie year.

**JARAD:** I'm sure teams like the Giants were hoping he'd fall, but I couldn't agree more about the intangibles this kid brings to the table. The Raiders had just three defensive players record at least 100 tackles last season and with McClain on the roster that number should go to at least four. He will make a strong push for Defensive Rookie of the Year honors next season.

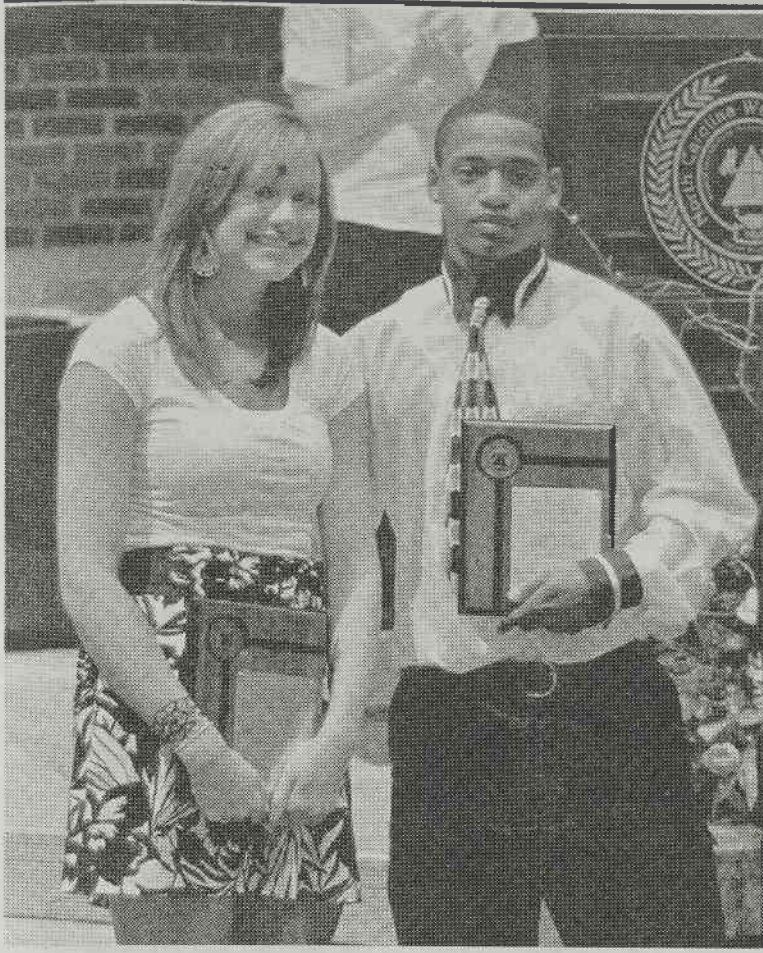
As a quarterback yourself, what do you make of guys like Jimmy Clausen and Colt McCoy falling out of the first round? Which team got the best value for the quarterback they took? St. Louis (Bradford), Denver (Tebow), Carolina (Clausen), or Cleveland (McCoy)?

**JOSH:** I think the Panthers obviously got the best value for their pick with getting Clausen in the 2nd round. He was rated as Mel Kiper's 4th best overall prospect and Carolina snags him with the 48th overall pick. I actually really like where everyone went. I think Bradford was the best quarterback in the draft and rightfully went to the Rams. I personally feel that Colt will have the best career. Jake Delhomme will start for the Browns this year but it will allow the team to build while Colt gets ready to take over the reins. I think the Vikings should have grabbed him in round one to learn from Brett Favre. Even if Favre didn't come back, they have a solid line and great running game and Colt would have flourished. He is an absolute steal and the fans in the Dawg Pound should be thrilled.

**JARAD:** I like Bradford as the highest picked QB. Going by the numbers he was the most impressive of the bunch, and as you've mentioned drafting any QB is a crapshoot. I do have to agree that Colt will probably enjoy the most successful career. The only knock on him is his arm strength in getting the ball down the field, but that won't be a problem in Cleveland. With Mike Holmgren running the front office for the Browns, I fully expect a West Coast offense which would hide McCoy's lack of arm strength and spotlight his decision-making ability. I also agree that the Panthers probably got the best value. Clausen is easily the second best quarterback in the draft by the numbers, and the Panthers grabbed him at 47 after the No. 1 quarterback (Bradford) went. They got a bit lucky with the pick as well. They released Jake Delhomme in the off-season, which, considering his recent play, was a great move. Had Clausen not fallen in their lap in the second round, though, they'd be left with Matt Moore as the premiere QB on their roster. While McCoy and Tebow will probably sit a season or two, Bradford is almost guaranteed to start his rookie season and Clausen has the tools to take the job away from Moore in Carolina as a rookie.

So we've combed through the best and worst of the first round, talked about the QBs, and run through the top five picks. There's one final bit to discuss, though;

see NFL pg8



Brittany Insley (volleyball) and Trey Drake (basketball) were chosen NCWC's athletes of the year for 2009-2010. SI photos.

## Baseball Team Wins Conference, Makes Early Tournament Exit

Burlington—The top-seeded Battling Bishop baseball team dropped its first two games at the 2010 USA South Conference baseball tournament, falling to 5th-seeded Ferrum by a 6-2 score on Thursday before dropping a 13-7 decision to 4th-seeded Christopher Newport on Friday.

Junior Zach Alexander was 4-for-7 with a double, homerun, two RBIs, and two runs scored over the two-game span, while sophomore Patrick Laffin went 5-for-9 with his second homer of the season.

Against Ferrum, the Bishops could not overcome an early 5-0 deficit en route to the 6-2 defeat. Laffin was 4-for-4 in the game with a solo blast in the sixth, while Alexander drove in NCWC's final run with an RBI-double in the seventh.

On the mound, junior Andrew Webb (5-2) suffered the loss, allowing six runs

on 11 hits in eight innings of work. He also struck out four and walked one.

Versus CNU, Wesleyan again fell behind early, trailing the Captains 9-0 after 3 1/2 innings due to five costly fielding miscues that led to eight unearned runs. The Bishops battled back with a pair of runs in each of the fourth and fifth innings, highlighted by a two-run single by Zach Moore.

CNU extended its lead with a four runs in the seventh, although NCWC did manage three runs in the ninth for the 13-7 final. Junior hurler Max Knowles (3-4) took the loss, giving up nine runs (one earned) on six hits in 3 2/3 innings pitched.

The Bishops had earned the top seed by finishing with a 9-3 conference record. The two tourney losses moved the team's overall record to 17-19.

(Article courtesy of Sports Information)



Barbara DeRatt (volleyball), Bo Jordan (football) and Antti Saari (tennis)—pictured here with Dr. Ron Smith—were honored as 2009-2010 student-athletes of the year in recognition of their performance on the field and in the classroom.

## Spring Semester Intramural Champions

- Indoor Soccer – Third World Ballers
- Indoor Volleyball – Team Smith
- Billiard Doubles – Big & Tall
- Table Tennis – Staffan Alm
- NCAA Tourney Pick Em – Jasmin Spain
- Wii Dodgeball – Julian Mingo Gonzalez
- Wii Bowling – Patrick Williams
- 4-on-4 Men's Flag Football – Team We Dat
- Women's Flag Football – Old School
- 5-on-5 Basketball – Stacked
- Sand Volleyball – Str8 Rippin
- Extramural Tournaments
- Bishop/Bulldog Challenge – Terror Squad

## GOLF from pg 4

The players said they were unable to play at Ford's Colony, their home course, for part of the season as the facility changed ownership, forcing the Bishops to find other courses for practice sessions. But Ford's is now open again to Wesleyan team members.

The course's quality is a main reason that Coelho hopes to return next season. But other players expect to leave. Soini said he will enroll at a Golf Academy in California. Another departing player is Idestál, who plans to enter tournaments back home in Sweden.

With the players leaving and Coach Doino returning to basketball, next season looks uncertain. "It is still pretty much a mystery," said freshman Darren Lau. "I'm not really sure what will happen. I guess we'll just have to wait and see."