

Last Second Pass

Clarett's boorishness is boisterous behavior

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Now it will take a lawsuit battle for him to blaze the trails for underclass NFL hopefuls. Where does the madness stop?

Let's be frank here. Ex-Buckeye star Maurice Clarett is nothing but a barnyard chicken-hawk. Yeah, you know, the little Looney Tunes brown-bird who tries to fight anything and everything in his way. Or, if you will, he's a little like Scrappy Doo.

If it wasn't for somebody holding him back, he'd be getting into a fight.

Now, he's suing the NFL for not letting him declare for the draft.

But this is only after Ohio State suspended him the rest of the season for accepting thousands of dollars in improper benefits and then lying to NCAA officials.

"Aww, c'mon, lemme at 'em."

The NFL has a rule which states that draftees have to be out of high school for three years before they can enter the draft pool.

And now that Clarett cannot play Division I-A football, he's looking for

something else to take down with him — be it D-II or the NFL's draft clause.

With the recent hype of the NBA's number-one pick, Lebron James, it looks as if Clarett has a legitimate shot at being the pied piper for many too-young NFL prospects.

Already, Clarett's got the hype to go along with the game. For example, you can buy a \$4.99 plaque on eBay that features Clarett (in a Heisman position) and James with "ON FIRE!"

inscribed above them.

Does anybody realize that these players have yet to play professionally?

Grambling State coach Doug Williams walked into a press conference holding a jersey with the former Buckeye's number on it.

This led to accusations of indirect contact with Clarett, an NCAA violation. Williams replied by wondering, "What is 'indirect contact' anyway?"

But, who doesn't want Clarett? He's got hype and a whole pile of talent.

With the situation as it stands, Clarett's name is on the tips of thousands of tongues. But most of them are saying that he needs to stay in college. And I think Williams would concur.

And the NFL wouldn't mind if Clarett did stay. Picture the NFL as Floghorn Leghorn —

"Now pay attention to me boy, I'm ain't just talking to hear my head roar."

Obviously, the sophomore has talent, or else he wouldn't have spearheaded the Buckeye offense to a national championship, gaining 1,237 yards and 18 touchdowns — both team freshman records.

But don't forget, N.C. State's T.A. McLendon had 1,101 yards and 18 touchdowns in 2002.

That's not too far from Clarett's marks, and there's no talk that McLendon is contemplating going to the NFL.

So, the questions continue to swirl.

•Will Clarett win his suit against the NFL?

According to ESPN.com, in the opinion of the Congressional Research Service, the NFL's action is a violation of anti-trust laws.

•With that in mind, does Clarett have the game to get into the NFL?

Clearly a yes. He's got moves. He's got talent, and he's got vision. Did I mention all of the hype?

•Does Clarett have the talent to jump to the NFL right now?

Probably. Most pundits consider him to be a likely second-round pick.

•Will D-II get Clarett to the NFL?

Maybe. There're plenty of players who have gone to the draft from D-II, including Jerry Rice. He's obviously doing the right thing by staying enrolled and maintaining his scholarship.

•Finally, does Clarett have the strength for the NFL?

A big no. With no ill intent toward Clarett, there aren't many 19 or 20-year-old backs that could handle it, especially one that missed the Cincinnati game last season due to arthroscopic surgery on his knee.

Not only that, but the NFL game is a way of life. He's gonna have to cope, bad knee and all, with getting banged up day in and day out.

Tampa Bay coach Jon Gruden said: "Personally, I don't want any 18- or 19-year olds in my locker room. This won't end with Clarett ... if he comes in you will see a bunch of kids trying to do the same. This league is different; it's not the NBA or MLB."

So let's not doubt here that Clarett's got talent.

And he'll probably be a trailblazer. On the other hand, he's no martyr for underclassmen everywhere, he's just looking for a way out.

Somebody's got to hold him back. Step on his tail or something.

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COURTESY OF THE (OHIO STATE) LANTERN/WELIZABETH NIHSER

After being suspended for the season by Ohio State, sophomore tailback Maurice Clarett is weighing in his chances at making history by taking the league to court and testing the NFL rule that players have to be out of high school three years.

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Virginia	2	0	54	24	3	1	120	71
Clemson	1	0	39	3	3	1	104	64
Wake Forest	1	1	62	51	3	2	138	111
N.C. State	1	1	71	72	3	2	217	157
Maryland	0	1	10	35	3	2	155	75
Duke	0	2	7	83	2	3	73	138
Georgia Tech	0	2	16	53	2	3	70	97
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In 2 Weeks



Arizona State comes to Chapel Hill
October 14 looking to avenge last season's 38-35 loss at Sun Devil Stadium. UNC is hoping to get in a shootout and have Darian Durant's right arm carry the Tar Heels to victory.