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An Interview with

**MIKE MAYOCK
ERIC WEINBERGER**

PATRICK PANTANO: I want to welcome all of you to NFL Network's 2007 NFL Draft Conference Call with Mike Mayock and Eric Weinberger.

A quick overview of NFL Network's draft coverage will be on the air live from Radio City Music Hall from the first overall pick to the last pick on Sunday night of draft weekend.

Our talent includes host Rich Eisen, along with analyst Mike Mayock, Marshall Faulk, Steve Mariucci and Charles Davis. We also have Deion Sanders interviewing the top picks at Radio City Music Hall. NFL Network will have a pre-draft show on Saturday and post shows on Saturday and Sunday.

Quickly for the introductions. Mike Mayock is NFL Network's lead college football and draft analyst. He was dubbed the "No. 1 pick for draft coverage" by the New York Times last year. And two years back he was one of the only analysts to predict that Aaron Rogers would go No. 24 overall to the Green Bay Packers.

We also have Eric Weinberger, NFL Network's executive producer who oversees all of NFL Network's 2007 draft coverage live from Radio Music City Hall. Eric has a few comments about our coverage before we begin.

ERIC WEINBERGER: Thanks, Pat. We're so excited for this time of year here at the network as we get to celebrate one of the great sporting events during the year. And following Mike Mayock into this event has been such a great experience, especially this year as we continue to grow in our coverage for all of our producers and all of our talent. And we look at this as a real culmination of a year-long analysis of all these kids

who are entering the NFL with this great event at Radio City.

Mike and his production team, along with Charles Davis, Marshall Faulk and Steve Mariucci, have been so up close and personal with these kids, especially working the Senior Bowl for a week and working at the Combine for a week. Their analysis has been so thorough. Their feel for what is going to happen on Saturday goes so deep and is so knowledgeable that it's such an amazing -- it's such an amazing endeavor to take on and to do on this network. We are real excited.

Many of you we know have spoken with Mike. Again, the work that he's done with Rich, with Charles, with Coach Mariucci, and Marshall and Deion on Saturday along with Adam Scheffer will definitely be, we will focus on thoroughness with the kids that are coming into the NFL, focusing on the event that is happening in New York City and at Radio City.

Also spending a lot of time, a lot of focus on all 32 teams, team needs. And we are also for this year going to try to really open this up for fan interaction as well as we know that is a huge part of what happens within fantasy football and within the draft. We will have a fan confessional room set up at Radio City where various fans are going to be able to give their point of view as to what's been going on either with the draft in total or with their team. I give you Mike Mayock and we look forward to hearing from all of you today and the next two weeks. Mike.

MIKE MAYOCK: Eric, thank you. But I'd like you to stay out of the confessional, please.

I'm here to talk football. I'm not going to make a speech or anything. We'll open it up for questions. I feel like I've been on these guys for 11 months. I can't wait for next weekend. So let's open up it for questions.

Q. How far of a drop is there in ability from Adrian Peterson to Marshawn Lynch, and then just by way of example how far does it go from Lynch to Antonio Pitman?

MIKE MAYOCK: Talking about as far as pure ability or where you think they're going to go in the draft?

Q. How they're going to play when they get to the NFL, what their careers will be like.

MIKE MAYOCK: I think, number one, Peterson is one of those types of tailbacks, because of size, explosion and what I've liked is his ability to catch the football that you couldn't see at the University of Oklahoma because they don't have that in their pass offense. I think he's done a great job of showing an ability to catch. That was really the only question mark outside of durability. To me he's a top five pick and a type of guy that comes around every three to five years plus or minus.

Marshawn Lynch played in the two tailback system at Cal. Catches the ball extremely well. cut-back runner. I think he's the kind of kid that is going to be a really good, solid, all-around back. Maybe doesn't have the same game-breaking ability that Adrian Peterson has.

Now, the third tailback, I believe you asked about, was Pitman. I've got him as my No. 5 tailback, Booker and Leonard ahead of him. I think he's the kind of guy that's going to have to fight given his size to show people he can be a three-down back. He's a good back.

He does a nice job with his footwork and cut back. Catches the ball well, can work on his blocking a little bit. I think he's probably a second round pick, but ideally you'd like to see him a little bit bigger or stronger to be a three-down back.

Q. Mike, I know there have been a lot of really good picks at 30 or 31 or 32. But historically, have you seen you know, those late round picks sometimes it's a read. Sometimes it's a guy you had projected in the second round or maybe should have been a second or third rounder?

MIKE MAYOCK: The way I look at these late first round picks is sometimes I think where you get in trouble is where you're sitting there in the 25 to 32 range and you think you have to make a splash. You're looking for that really talented kid that maybe slipped a little bit because of character, off-the-field issues, et cetera.

I think that's where you make a mistake. I think what you're seeing more and more teams do at the end of the first round is they have a really good solid football player in their back pocket.

Somebody who is probably considered an early second round guy. He's clean off the field. You know what you're getting on the field. No surprises.

And I think that kind of guy -- and I'll give you an example. Logan Mankins a couple of years ago to the New England Patriots at 32. Basically the defensive side of the board was decimated and they wanted defense that year. But it was gone. So instead of reaching for a guy, they picked a real solid interior offensive lineman that was clean off the field and they knew could play.

And I think if you take that philosophy, you're probably less likely to get hurt and more likely to get a good football player.

Q. Reaching back to the 2004 draft, I know it's only been three years, but based on those three years and the players they got, Shaun Phillips, Rivers, Hardwick, Merriman out of the trade, Nate Kaeding and Michael Turner even. Can you put the 2004 draft to the Chargers in perspective; does it stand out to you?

MIKE MAYOCK: Yes, I thought it was kind of the perfect marriage between two basic mantras in the NFL, which is, number one, if there's a franchise quarterback available you've got to take him. And number two, you've got to control perceived value.

And that year the perceived value happened to be the franchise quarterback, Eli Manning. He didn't want to go to San Diego. They drafted him anyway. They controlled value.

And they were able to take that and turn it into Merriman, Kaeding, et cetera. So I think that draft along with the Michael Vick/Tomlinson situation has allowed them to become probably the most talent-rich team in the National Football League.

You've got to give them credit, because not only did they make the trades but the second piece of that is converting the trades into actual talent, and they were able to do both.

Q. Mike, you look at cornerback, the trend a few years ago around the league was to find a lot of times big college safeties and convert them into the corners. I know the Chiefs did that with great frequency but without great luck over the years. Is that trend pretty much over, do you think, when we're talking

about teams looking for corners?

MIKE MAYOCK: I really believe it goes the other way and I think the NFL was a speed first league right now at almost every position but especially in the back 4. So if you see anything, you see teams looking for those corners that might have marginal speed for a corner like a Tanard Jackson from Syracuse, for instance, played corner his entire career at Syracuse but more and more teams are looking at him as a free safety.

So I really believe the trend is the other way, find a tough corner, kick him inside the safety as opposed to the other way, because typically you're talking about bigger, slower players inside with a much more difficult transition to the outside.

Q. Okay. So basically the corners in the top two or three rounds this year, they're all solid corners. I mean these guys aren't converted safeties or anything like that?

MIKE MAYOCK: No, no, you're looking at world class athletes with great speed, great footwork. For instance, when you look at the safety board, Brandon Meriweather is probably the best cover safety in the draft, but he's being considered purely as a safety and not as a corner.

Q. You look at another matter, you look at the Chiefs, they're looking for a defensive tackle again obviously. They've tried without any luck at all in the high rounds in recent years, guys like Eddie Freeman, Junior Siavvi, Ryan Simms, Eric Downing, do you remember looking at the Chiefs' draft when they picked these guys and say wow, those guys are a reach?

MIKE MAYOCK: You know what a couple of years ago Junior Siavvi had a pretty interesting combine. He shows a lot of strength and I think some people got carried away with him. I think the key is making sure that production on the field on tape matches up with what you're seeing at the combine or the Senior Bowl, and I think that's where you can get hurt with a kid like Siavvi who came out of nowhere.

So I think the Chargers this year they have to look at O-line or D-line again, excuse me not the Chargers, the Chiefs. Look at O-line or again D-line because they picked up Alfonso Boone but they're very average inside.

Q. What about a guy like Ryan Sims, where did the Chiefs go wrong with him?

MIKE MAYOCK: I didn't even watch him when he came out. I was not doing the player personnel full-time at that point.

Q. Given Miami's precarious situation at quarterback right now, the Dolphins, do you see a chance that Quinn could fall to them and would that be Miami's best option, if it is, or would one of the next tier guys, and who in that group do you think has a chance to make the most impact?

MIKE MAYOCK: I think it's highly doubtful that Quinn will drop to No. 9. I think if he was there they would jump all over him.

I think the more likely scenario is early second round. I think the third quarterback off the board is going to be Trent Edwards from Stanford, and he's the guy if available at that point I think would make the most sense.

Q. What are the pros and cons of a few of the guys, Edwards back, Stanton and just a few of the guys that you think are legitimate maybe starting quarterbacks one day, possibly legitimate starting quarterbacks?

MIKE MAYOCK: The interesting thing is this year that next tier of quarterbacks were all difficult evaluations for different reasons. Trent Edwards has been banged up, injured, got hurt again this year. So there's a durability issue. But he played for a bad football team. So he got hit just about every time he threw the ball. He had below-average receivers in the PAC 10. I kind of look at that as a positive.

When you watch tape of Edwards, he's throwing into much smaller windows than the rest of the collegiate quarterbacks of that top level. So he's used to trying to fit it in the small places. He's big, strong kid with a good arm. Better athlete than people think he is, but there's durability issues there with Edwards.

I've got him at No. 3 after Russell and Quinn. Then there's John Beck from BYU. Reminds me a little bit of Kellen Clemens from last year how quickly he's moving up boards at the end of the day. Clemens went in the second round. I think Beck has a chance to go mid to late second round. A little smaller, 6'2". He also throws from a low ball position. So he's 6'2" but he actually plays even smaller than that because of where the ball's delivered from.

However, you've got great feet in the

pocket. He's got an innate feel for how to keep a play alive. And I think he actually sees windows before they open up, which is atypical of a college player.

So that boils down to I think he's got a really good feel for the game. Slightly above-average arm. Not the size and strength you would like but a real good feel for the game.

And then after that you're talking about either Drew Stanton or Kevin Kolb. And again two difficult evaluations. Kolb played in the same offense for eight years, which is not the same type of offense as the NFL. He struggled at the Senior Bowl. I think he's three years away from being comfortable in an NFL system.

And then Drew Stanton, you know the more tape I watch of him, I really want to like him but I'm struggling with him. Highly inconsistent thrower. I just watched more tape of his pro day yesterday and he was just as inconsistent in his pro day with a pair of shorts on as he was during his senior season.

He's another guy I would be worried about. At this point the two guys I would really lock in would be Edwards and Beck with the edge to Edwards.

Q. Mike, couple of questions about the Penn State guys. Levi Brown, most people have him slotted somewhere in the middle of the first. Linebacker Paul Posluszny seems to be a wide variance of opinion, middle first, late first, maybe even early second. Where do you come down on those two guys?

MIKE MAYOCK: That was a pretty good overview. Levi Brown also has a diversity of opinion. Some people think he could go in the top 10, perhaps to Miami. He's a big, strong kid that from a technique perspective has a lot to learn.

But a lot of the offensive line coaches in the NFL are enamored of him because they think he's big and strong. They like him better than the personnel people do, to be honest with you. I think he's going to go somewhere in the top 15.

And Posluszny, there's opinions all over the board. I happen to think he's going to go between 22 and 32 because I think one of those playoff teams is going to sit there and say, "Hey, smart, tough, fairly instinctive, clean off the field." He can come in on day one, the 4-3 team, and play the weak outside linebacker and be a good player but not a great player.

He doesn't have the explosion of say an A.J. Hawk. That's the knock against him. He's not gifted like that kid but emotionally mentally he's tough and you know what you're getting.

I know some teams in the league that have him graded in the third or fourth round. So that goes to your variance of opinion over the kid, but it only takes one team to really like him. And I think one of those playoff teams in the mid-20s, New Orleans, Philadelphia, some of those teams in there have got to find him pretty attractive.

Q. You just talked about a couple of players where opinions vary. Seems this is a really difficult draft to project. Do you see this as being more difficult than in recent years, and is that because of the variety of opinions on different players, different needs not matching, where players are slotted in this draft? How do you qualify the unpredictability of this particular draft?

MIKE MAYOCK: That's a good question. I think it has to do more with the uncertainty at the top end. Once you start to slot kids at the top end, it gets a lot easier to fit kids based on scheme. 3-4, 4-3 kid, that type of thing. It gets easier as you go along.

The problem is that at the top end this year you've got Oakland Raiders and Al Davis. And absolutely nobody knows what he's going to do, in my opinion including Al. And I think he's going to go down to the last minute and he's got a tough decision, because they need a quarterback and there's two franchise quarterbacks out there. Yet I'm sure he also wants any trade rumors regarding Calvin Johnson to come through him, which he should.

So if I was him I'd be open for business right up to the last minute of the first pick there in the first round. And because of that unpredictability, I think it just triggers everything behind him, and Jon Gruden wants to come up get Calvin Johnson. Does Detroit want to trade down get games at him and later. There's so much of that trade type of intrigue going on right now at the top end that I think it makes it really hard to qualify.

Q. Sure. Second question, in the last ten or so years, we've seen an exponential leap in fan interest. They know not only the first rounders, they know the third rounders, they know the priority free agents right now. And

that's through the NFL Network and the Internet and other sources. Has that had any tangible impact on what teams do come draft day because they know there's could be an immediate backlash, not with just first round where they go second and third; do they play safe? Do this he gamble more? Does it have no impact whatsoever?

MIKE MAYOCK: I would lean toward no impact whatsoever, with the caveat because the teams that have been winning Super Bowls in the last three, four, five years have been fairly clean off the field, the New England Patriots, Colts, the Steelers. These are teams that have drafted well and conservatively regarding off-the-field issues. NFL is a copycat league. And when teams start winning like that, other teams begin to follow.

And when you throw in the NFL's new stance against off-the-field issues, then you would have to be kind of crazy to sit back there and say you're going to continue to draft kids at a real high level that have had significant off-the-field problems.

Q. Mike, I'm just curious. First, regardless or irregardless of what the Browns do in the first round they might be looking for an offensive lineman or a corner in the second with that high pick, which is the better, I don't know, deeper spot or value thing there? I'm just curious.

MIKE MAYOCK: That's a good question. Now, the problem is I think they've probably loved to have Joe Staley sitting there at the beginning of round two. But I think he's going to be gone.

So if you're looking O line or corner you're in a pretty good situation this year, because the draft is fairly deep with interior offensive linemen, not necessarily tackles but interior offensive linemen or corners.

So as they walk into the second round there, I think they've got to make a decision based on who is left on the board, what makes more sense. Who is your higher rated guy, trust your board.

There could be -- you could end up with a guy like Eric Wright from UNLV who, again, off the field issues, but unbelievably tall lend. Marcus McCauley from Fresno is a first round corner based on ability. He had a horrible senior year.

There are some guys like that that from a physical gifted perspective are going to tempt Phil Savage.

Q. Any chance Ben Grubbs is that far?

MIKE MAYOCK: I doubt it. I've got him late in the first round. He could slide into early in the second round. But he's a good football player. And I think between Grubbs and Sears, Sears from Tennessee he could slip a little bit because of his injury history. And Justin Blalock from Texas. Three really good interior offensive linemen. I think one of them is going to slide into the early part of the second round my guest would be Aaron Sears.

Q. Is Michael Bush going to be able to play this year?

MIKE MAYOCK: He had the rod inserted, an awful lot of question marks right now. Most teams don't know what to do with him. I've had this discussion with a few teams. And I think most of them are saying, okay, we've got to slot him in a position now that we're going to assume that we're not going to get anything from him this year.

If we do, it's a bonus. So to me that probably means fourth round.

Q. Just wondered if he would even get drafted. Savage seemed a little iffy.

MIKE MAYOCK: I think some teams are going to say we have no interest in taking a guy in the fourth round that we're not going to get anything for a year. Another team might say we really like the kid, we feel like we've got plenty of draft picks this year, we have three extra supplemental picks and we're going to use that, one of those on him.

Q. Teams historically drafted in the second round, gotten guys that helped them for a long time, gotten guys that helped them not at all or very little. And I was wondering if that's something exclusive to them both ends of the spectrum. Something about the second round that is why they get guys like that.

MIKE MAYOCK: Those are kind of hit or miss either way?

Q. Yes. They hit or completely miss.

MIKE MAYOCK: I would say that they are the rule and not the exception. Obviously the further out you get in this draft, when you start talking about first round picks being a 50-50 proposition, obviously second round picks are even worse exponentially. I don't think it's

indicative or inherent of the Pittsburgh Steelers. And I keep going back to me more and more you've got to trust the film that you watch and you want a kid that's fairly clean off the field because I think you start to eliminate a lot of variables, especially in the first day of the draft, if you stay consistent to that philosophy.

Q. Where do you see them going with their first pick in the draft?

MIKE MAYOCK: I think they need a back 7 guy. And to me it would either be the highest rated corner or linebacker on their board and a guy like Darrelle Revis from hometown Pittsburgh, if he gets past Buffalo at 12, cover 2 corner, fits Mike Tomlins' system, I think he would be a perfect fit in Pittsburgh.

Q. What are some line backers that could play at 3-4, 4-3 that they're looking at?

MIKE MAYOCK: Jon Beason from Miami, a lot of people think that would be early for him. The Timmons kid from Florida State. Most teams think he's a 3-4 player. I don't. He's slightly under 6'1". I don't think he has growth potential. He has to play covered up at the second level, which means a 4-3 team.

I think they would love to see Patrick Willis there from Old Miss. But the way he's worked out I don't think that's going to happen. So if Willis isn't there, I think you can probably see him go towards the corner.

Q. With the 49ers shifting pretty much full time to a 3-4, how does that affect what they do at the number 11 spot concerning specifically defensive linemen such as Jamaal Anderson, Okoye, Branch and Carriker.

MIKE MAYOCK: Good question. At number 11 the guy that I think brings them the most versatility and production would be Adam Carriker, the defensive end from Nebraska. He fits what Mike Nolan likes. He's big. He's strong, he's technically sound and he's very clean off the field.

Jamaal Anderson, and then by the way, he can play in either defense, a 4-3 or 3-4 if they go multiple fronts, which is so nice about him. Jamal Anderson is similar. A little bit better pass rusher than Carriker, not as stout against the run.

He's only 21 years old. He's got some upside to him. I would slightly favor Carriker against those two guys. And then as far as the tackles are concerned, I think the better fit would

be Branch. He's a natural nose tackle, the 325 pound guys are rare to find, especially when they're athletic.

I think he has more value to a 3-4 team than he has to a 4-3 team. He's not one of my favorite players but he matches up perfectly to the 3-4.

Q. Follow-up on the 3-4 how would Patrick Willis fare in a 3-4?

MIKE MAYOCK: I think Patrick Willis is, I think he would fare well in any defense. I mean it as a compliment. He's big enough to play inside linebacker in a 3-4 with more tracks to work through. Athletic enough you could probably play him on the edge in a 3-4 and we all know he can play in the 4-3. I think because of his size, his physical skill set, his toughness, he could translate into either defense.

Q. Wanted to ask your opinion on some of the interior offensive linemen that you mentioned, specifically Grubbs, Blalock and Kalil. Their strengths and weaknesses what you like about each guy?

MIKE MAYOCK: I've given Ryan Kalil a first round grade which is atypical for a center. I think he's the best technician among all the offensive linemen in the draft. I think he will be particularly coveted by the zone scheme offenses.

I think he's really -- he has a chance to be really special. Ben Grubbs is a natural guard, has not played any tackle. Can play either guard. Plays with a great base, real good punch. Kind of guy that could step in day one, be a starter in the NFL. I don't think -- he's very athletic. He can pull -- he's the kind of kid that I don't think would be in awe of the situation. He's played at the highest levels in the SEC.

Blalock from Texas was a former tackle. Played most of his career at tackle. Has kicked inside at guard. Some teams think he's athletic enough to play right tackle. That helps him from a versatility standpoint if you can do more than just play guard or just play tackle.

So I think Blalock and Aaron Sears are the two college tackles that are expected to kick inside and start immediately as guards. So I've got Kalil and Grubbs late first round picks. I've got Blalock right on the cusp of that first or second round with the Sears right behind him. I think all four of those guys are high quality interior offensive linemen.

Q. Do you think Kalil is a viable option at guard as well as Kalil Blalock goes, that versatility thing, the value of it?

MIKE MAYOCK: I believe you asked me if he could kick the guard?

Q. Kalil.

MIKE MAYOCK: He played some guard at the Senior Bowl. He's been traditionally a center. But he's athletic enough, and what I like about the kid is he's very, very smart kid. So he could play guard. I think what you'll see with him is he'll back up both guard positions and be a starting center.

Because he's probably going to be the smartest guy on your offensive line. You want him making all the calls.

Q. Question about Staley, would you take him over Levi Brown, more left tackle side?

MIKE MAYOCK: Staley has gained a lot of steam since his on-campus workout. Former tight end. He's really athletic. Here's my take on those two. Levi Brown I think ultimately might be a better right tackle than a left tackle. He's explosive in the run game. He's got pretty good feet. Pretty good athletic ability. I think his technique especially in pass protection needs to be upgraded.

Staley is a kid whose best football is two or three years away. Needs to get stronger. They're almost complete opposites. Staley needs to get stronger. He's got great feet. He's got to play with a slightly lower base. But somebody who is going to take him near the end of the first round, and he's going to develop into the kind of kid that can be an all-pro lineman in two to three years.

Q. The Washington Redskins always seem to surprise everyone with their draft choices. What could be in store for this time around?

MIKE MAYOCK: You mean they actually have a draft pick this year?

Q. As of right this moment, yes. But you know we're still on the clock. So I don't know what's going on. It might happen by the time you finish your answer they might have traded?

MIKE MAYOCK: I'm telling you it goes to show that it's difficult to build free agency. It does come down to draft. Washington right now looking

at all the defensive linemen, especially Gaines Adams, Okoye and Branch. Joe Gibbs' philosophy against off-the-field issues, positive drug tests all those types of things will make them look also at a back-up. And when I say that, I think as a back-up they're also looking at LaRon Landry, the safety from LSU, who is clean off the field. Explosive on the field, and I think he's a guy that could go anywhere from Arizona at 5, Washington at 6, Minnesota at 7, anywhere in through there.

If your guy is not available or you're not convinced that you've got the right guy, you're taking too much of a chance, I think he's the safe back-up. So I think Washington is looking defensive line first and they certainly need that. But if not defensive line, even though they signed Omar Stoutmire, I think he would be a real nice addition with Sean Taylor.

Q. Eric, seemed like last year your coverage of the draft really set you apart from the others. Do you feel that with that one under your belt and this one coming up that the NFL Network can establish itself as possibly the premiere network for the draft?

ERIC WEINBERGER:

First of all, I think just by listening to Mike alone could help -- will help us stand apart.

Mike can also explain the people that are working here and what their one common goal is. Similar to Mike, it's to give you the best information about football.

And Mike I think you'll agree that has been our goal since we started, and we continue to grow on that. And we hope to build tremendously off of last year's -- with any TV or any reporting you always want to get better. And we hope to make some more advancements this year at the draft to, yes, to -- I don't know who to separate from, but to continually be considered as the top football source for fans and everyone out there.

Q. A guy like Jason Hill never considered a burner at Washington State goes into the combine and runs as fast as he did. How does that impact teams' evaluation of him and what's it done to his draft stock?

MIKE MAYOCK: You're feeding right into my kitchen here because this is one of my pet peeves, which is the whole question of manufactured speed versus functional football

playing speed.

We've had a lot of talks about this on the network in the last couple of weeks, and it makes it more difficult for the talent evaluator. And you guys all know, they're all going away, the minute their college season ends they're going away to somebody's camp somewhere with a nutritionist and lifting and running and they're coming back looking and running like different athletes.

So when Jason Hill, who had a productive college career, runs in the low 4.3s, what that made me do, and of all the guys I talked to around the league, it was -- people were buzzing that night about Jason Hill at the combine. We're all talking out at dinner that night. Now what? Where do you have him? What are you going to do with him? You go back and watch more tape, that's what you do. You don't get carried away with the 4.32 or 4.35.

You put the tape back on, both junior year and senior year, and you say, "Does he run 4.3 on the football with shoulder pads and a helmet on?"

And my answer is he's a heck of a football player, but I see a guy that runs in the 4.4, 4.5 range on the football field. He's fast but he's not Ted Ginn. He doesn't get on top of a corner like Ted Ginn gets on top of a corner.

When I look at him, I take a step back and say don't get carried away with the combine. Understand what he is, which is a productive receiver, who did a great job in college. He's fast but he's not a burner. I've got him late in the second round.

Q. One more about Adam Carriker, you've got him eight overall, why is that and what do you like about him?

MIKE MAYOCK: The thing I like about Carriker, you'll probably see a lot of consistencies in a lot of my answers that is first his scheme versatility he can play in the 3-4 as a defensive end or 4-3 as a defensive end or defensive tackle.

Second of all, he uses his hands from a technique perspective better than any defensive lineman coming out of college football this year and lastly his work ethic and his off-the-field persona tell you take him high you're going to get a clean player for the next eight to ten years who is going to be a high level producer.

Is he going to be a Pro Bowl player? He might. But he's not one of those guys that take your breath away that are easy to evaluate. When I look at Gaines Adams from Clemson he gets into

a 'Greyhound stance,' all he has to do is get up the field and pressure the quarterback. Adam Carriker is coming out of a scheme that's much more difficult to evaluate.

But what you're going to get on the next level is a really good football player. He might not be great, but he's going to be really good for a lot of years.

Q. Mike, the University of Florida in recent years has not had much of a presence in the draft and I guess next weekend maybe 10 to 12 guys could get picked. Is Florida moving back into a major producer of talent for the league, do you think?

MIKE MAYOCK: I think the state of Florida always has been. I think the University of Florida is absolutely moving there. I think that what you're seeing are the fruits of Ron Zook early and now with Urban Meyer. When I talk to college coaches around the country, the schools I hear most consistently from a recruiting perspective are the University of Florida, University of Texas, USC and Ohio State.

And boy you're going to see those names called a lot in every draft.

Q. How much NFL do they pay attention to recruiting, what schools are recruiting each year as far as future talent?

MIKE MAYOCK: As far as the NFL?

Q. Yes.

MIKE MAYOCK: The NFL knows exactly where the preponderance of talent is, and another school I should have mentioned there is LSU. There's been an awful lot of great players that have come out of there in the last five or six years.

But the NFL knows exactly where the players are coming from. Sometimes to the point where I think they overdue it a little bit. And one of my pet peeves is that sometimes I feel like somebody on board in the NFL teams ought to take ownership and responsibility for the non-division 1 schools. Sometimes those guys, the Tony Romos, they slide through the cracks a little bit because of the NFL. But you have to understand their theory.

Their theory is if 95% of the players are coming out of those schools, they're going to spend close to 100% of their time scouting them.

Q. Do you think Florida is a school that scouts are going to be looking at for the next few years then?

MIKE MAYOCK: No question. The amount of talent coming through there is tremendous. You'll see it reflected in this year's draft. And that's a no-brainer.

Q. Question for you about the NFL's new personal conduct code. How much do you think that might affect Brandon Meriweather and what other players do you think are at risk to having their draft stock dropped because of it?

MIKE MAYOCK: I think the most obvious guy is Marcus Thomas from Florida. I think he's a guy with first day ability that may not even get drafted and if he does it's going to be very, very late. Regarding Meriweather, the perception, the feeling I get from around the league is that we all know what happened against FIU.

But I don't sense that teams are taking him off their board. And I still think -- I've got him as my No. 2 safety in this draft. I still think he's going to go somewhere between about 17 and 27. I think he's a real good football player, and I don't sense that people think that the significance of what he has done warrants taking him off their boards.

Q. What is your assessment of FIU's Antoine Barnes and where do you see him going?

MIKE MAYOCK: Very explosive kid off the edge. They had him playing with his hand down. Everybody wants to stand him up as a linebacker. I think he's an explosive straight-line speed kid. I think he's going to go early day two. Fourth or fifth round. I think he's going to be a core special teams player.

And the key for him is whether or not, because he's a tweener size-wise, whether or not he can stand up and play outside linebacker.

Right now my answer would be no, I think he's going to be a situational pass rusher as a 4-3 defensive end.

Q. First off, hoping you can give me your assessment of Tim Shaw out of Penn State?

MIKE MAYOCK: Boy, Tim Shaw, I really like Tim Shaw for two reasons. Number one, he played out of position as a senior this year. When

defensive coordinator Tom Bradley went to him and asked him to play defensive end he didn't even hesitate, even though he knew it would hurt him or he perceived it would hurt him in this year's draft.

So he took one for the team. He helped Penn State be a better defense by moving to defensive end. He's an athletic kid that showed it at the combine. I think he woke some people up at the combine with how athletic he is.

What I think he's going to be is a core special team player that you're probably going to get in the fourth round. He might sneak into the third round but I see him in the fourth round. See him as an outside linebacker, and he's the kind of guy that will contribute immediately on special teams and will fight for a starting job a couple years down the road.

Q. And secondly, when you have a school like Penn State, like with linebackers that has a certain reputation for producing players at specific positions, how much of an impact does that really have on teams come draft time?

MIKE MAYOCK: I think you have to respect it but not dwell on it. And just like on the negative side, you know certain schools have negative reputations. I don't think you can knock a kid because he went to a school negative reputation among NFL scouts.

So, on the positive side I think what you take from Penn State you know you're going to get a well coached kid at the linebacker position, and you put the tape on and they know what they're doing. They know where they're going so from an accountability standpoint, I think that's what you take. I don't think you really take anything else from it.

Q. You already answered one Redskins question but the big one I have why in your opinion have their drafts not been more successful, especially with the second-day picks?

MIKE MAYOCK: Boy, if you want to give me specific people I'd be happy to deal with it. But this is a team, and I'm not trying to bash Washington, but this is a team that over the years has had a history of trying to build through free agency.

I take issue with that because I think the

good teams have showed -- even in the free agency era, that you're much better off resigning your own guys, your core young guys, and building from within and then just occasionally filling in with free agency. And I think sometimes, again without getting specific, but I think they have spent so much of their time and effort evaluating the free agency class, and maybe the college piece of it has slipped through a little bit, especially given the fact that they haven't had as many draft picks as everybody else.

They've traded so many draft picks away, unfortunately for them if they make a mistake it gets magnified because they have fewer bodies that have been drafted.

Q. To follow up on that, what is the key to having -- some teams do pretty well on the second day. In general, what separates the teams that do well in the second day from those that don't?

MIKE MAYOCK: I think it's homework, and I think it's a consistency of coaching staff and scouting staff that are married together. And I've talked to enough teams around the league where there's a disconnect between the coaches and the scouts. That's not healthy, especially when you get the second day kids. And there are really two different schools of thought. Some guys get into the fifth, sixth, seventh round and they say, okay, we're going to take a guy that slipped through the cracks or a guy that had off-the-field issues that's got a wow factor. Either ran fast or -- other teams I think the Indianapolis and the New England and some of those kinds of teams that have done well, they kind of hang their hats on the guys that have been high level collegiate production people.

And I would favor the latter philosophy, because if I find a guy that I know played, was a good football player in the Big 10 or SEC or whatever, measurables kind of balance out and he slides through because he's not quite as quick or not quite as big, I already know by watching tape I'm getting a pretty good football player.

The guys that worry me are the guys that run 4.4 at the combine but don't show me the college production. And I think sometimes too many teams get carried away with that 4.4.

Q. Got a question about the cornerback. Leon Hall lot of people think will be the first corner taken. When you look at his

performance in the Rose Bowl, what did you come away with?

MIKE MAYOCK: I watched Dwayne Jarrett run by him on a combination coverage that bothered me a little bit. Jarrett got off the press coverage and ran right by him in the safety and Jarrett's got marginal speed. He's a 4.65 guy. He's unfair to just take one game. You've got to take the body of work of an individual. And I probably saw 9 or 10 of his game tapes this year.

My overview of Leon Hall is he does everything very well but nothing great. He's solid. He's got really good feet. Good change of direction. He tackles well. He's fairly tough.

The one question on him was long speed. And, again, we go back to the manufactured speed question. On tape I watched Jarrett run by him. At the combine he ran 4.39. Well, I'm going to trust the tape. And to me the number 1 -- if I had to make -- it depends on scheme, but right now I would say the Revis kid from Pitt in my opinion would be my first pick in the corner.

Q. I know everyone is excited about Calvin Johnson, hear all these things, maybe the best whiteout in 20 years, what not. You know the history of whiteouts being taken out high in the draft. What makes you believe this guy is going to be different from some others didn't pan out but were hyped to tremendous levels?

MIKE MAYOCK: The difficulty in picking apart this kid's game is two-fold. Number one, he didn't have a quarterback in three years, four years at Georgia Tech. And secondly, you really can't find a hole.

I can find a hole with almost just about every big name wide receiver in the last five years. He was too small. He was too big. He wasn't quick twitch. He was quick twitch but he wasn't tough.

You've got all these things you can pick holes with. And when you watch all of his tape, you go, are you kidding me? 6-5, 239, ran 4.35. High points the ball. His ball skills are similar to Larry Fitzgerald who has the best ball skills I've seen in a while. You look at Larry Fitzgerald and you say he doesn't have that quick twitch separation speed but Calvin Johnson does.

So then I say he can't be a good blocker. And he kills people in the run game. I'm amazed. Most top level wide receivers won't block people.

He does.

So I look at all the on-the-field stuff he might not be quick as a smaller receiver but he beats coverage with his strength he. Accelerates faster than people believe. Then you go to the last question which is off the field, is he intelligent? Will he be able to pick up -- and this is a separator also, by the way. How quickly will he be able to pick up sophisticated NFL defensive schemes and be able to adjust?

The kid went to Georgia Tech, intelligent and clean off the field. So I would love to give you a reason why he's going to fail. But I just don't see one.

Q. Mike, just wanted to ask you about Greg Olsen, The Jets are showing some interest in him. Should they be concerned that he might be a work-out wonder because I know he had a good :40 time at the Combine, or do you think the first round grade is justified with him?

MIKE MAYOCK: What they should be concerned with is the fact that he doesn't block anybody. But he's a good fit for the Jets because they have Pociask and Ryan, who are both blocking tight ends.

To me this is a kid that you have to know what you're getting. He can stretch the field vertically, he's really athletic. He catches the ball naturally. You want to put him in a position, if you take him in the first round, where you know if you put him as an in-line tight end and expect him to block people that's not his deal. You need to use him creatively and create mismatches with his speed and athletic ability. So I believe that he's a really good match for the Jets.

Q. I guess it could come down to a choice there at 25, maybe they choose between the fourth best corner, because that's a position they're really looking at, or a guy like Olsen, who would seem to be a pretty good upside. How do you see that coming down if they're faced with a decision like that?

MIKE MAYOCK: I agree with you. I think a guy like Aaron Ross from Texas who is probably the fourth corner, that's about where he's going to come off the board. Somewhere right in that mid to late 20s.

And I'm not sure Olsen gets there, though. However, if he does, he's a play maker. That's what I like about Olsen. I think if you look around

the league at the tight ends that are play makers, they give their teams a chance every week.

You look at the guy in San Diego. You look at the guy in Kansas City. They've never had quality wide receivers, yet they're able to move the football and score points because they're tailback tight end-oriented and this kid gives you a chance to throw the ball vertically even without great white-outs.

Q. Mike, outside of Calvin Johnson, which receivers do you think are ready to make an immediate impact? And do you see Dallas picking one of them or will they target yet another defensive player as they've done so many years now?

MIKE MAYOCK: You know to me Dallas is going to have to look either at their back 4, and even though she just signed Hamlin, that was a one-year deal. And let's face it, between he and Roy Williams, they don't cover a whole lot of ground. They're both really tough guys but they don't cover a lot of ground.

So I think the safety is a possibility at 22. I think a corner is a possibility at 22. At the wide receiver position, depending on what flavor you like, I can pick apart just about every other first round wide receiver a little bit.

Ted Ginn is different than Dwayne Bowe who is different than Robert Meacham, which one slides through and who is available. I think somebody is going to take Ginn prior to that because of his returnability and the fact that he's probably the fastest guy in the draft.

So if Ginn's not there then you're looking at Bowe and Meacham who are bigger, most physical West Coast type guys. And I think they both can play. Are they game breakers? I don't think so.

Q. Why do you think teams aren't backing away from Meriweather, have his interviews helped him, or are they talking to his coaches? What's keeping him on people's radar screens, outside of the obvious, just the character issues, why are they ignoring that?

MIKE MAYOCK: I talked to a team this morning who was highly impressed with him. And they've spent a lot of time with him.

So he's doing a really good job looking people in the eye saying yes, I messed up a little bit but talk to my teachers, talk to my coaches. I'm okay. I'm going to be a good citizen.

Q. Just wanted to check in with you regarding Troy Smith, what you think about where he's going to land?

MIKE MAYOCK: I've been pretty consistent with him all year, and people have gone up and down, and after the Michigan game, people wanted to say he was a first round pick. And a lot of people -- a lot of draft picks had him in the first round then. I thought that was kind of funny.

Then after the National Championship Game people were killing him. To me he's the same guy he always was. His entire senior year. That is he's an undersized kid with a big arm. He's got an NFL arm. He's got -- he's an athletic kid. I think he's going to end up probably in the late third round which is about where he should go. He'll be the sixth, seventh quarterback taken, somewhere in there. He's a developmental guy.

There aren't many six foot quarterbacks in the NFL starting today. So he's got his work cut out for him. He's got to show people he can -- like Drew Brees did, he's got to show people he can find between the tackle box funnels to throw the football. That's something that he's not shown an the ability too yet.

Q. How about the Eagles, what do you think they're going to do? Are they going to grab a safety or.

MIKE MAYOCK: I think they've got to take the best safety or corner available on their board at No. 26. And at that point you're looking -- if you're the eagles you're looking at probably is Brandon Meriweather there, what do we have think of Reggie Nelson.

At the corner side you're probably looking at the third and fourth corners: Is Chris Houston still there, and, oh, by the way, what about Aaron Ross? I think you're looking at those four guys. If that board is decimated, I think you've got to be looking at the outside linebackers and wide receivers.

Q. Any quarterbacks you think are good conversion candidates out there?

MIKE MAYOCK: Stan Beck, I think from Washington is similar to Michael Robinson. I like him. Got hurt. Wasn't able to run at the combine. Not a whole lot of stuff generated about him. He's a better quarterback than Michael Robinson was, but he's like a 4.4., 4.5 40. Tough as nails. I like

him as a slot receiver or like San Francisco is using Robinson at tailback.

Q. I know when we talked to you before the Combine you had questions about JaMarcus Russell's desire to play football, so to speak. Has he answered any of those questions for you?

MIKE MAYOCK: I think they're all legitimate questions. I think the teams at the top end of the draft are doing their homework right now. He's kept his weight down.

And the only thing that's going to keep him from being great is him. And I watched his Pro Day workout again this morning. I watched all the quarterbacks again this morning. And Paul Burmeister, one of my co-anchors who knows a lot about college football, was a college quarterback. Made the comment while we were watching tapes, he said, "It's unfair to put any other tape on after this kid because his tape is so special."

And that's exactly right. I mean you put on Brady Quinn, put on Trent Edwards and it's a completely different tape.

So this kid has such special physical ability you want to believe him. He's kept his weight down. He's worked hard. Somebody's going to have to take a leap of faith that they can coach him hard every snap of every practice.

And I'm rooting for the kid. If he comes through, you're going to see something really special. The problem is people were talking like this about Ryan Leaf a bunch of years ago.

Q. In your talking to teams do you hear guys, GMs say they're afraid to take him because of those questions?

MIKE MAYOCK: If you weren't afraid you wouldn't be human. You're talking about handing 20 to \$30 million to a young kid who has reportedly ballooned up to close to 300 pounds in his college career.

You have to do your homework. You have to get to know the kid. You've got to find out who his buddies are, who he hangs out with, what he thinks fun is. But the bottom line, to oversimplify the whole thing, what it comes down to me is you gotta figure out whether or not this kid wants to be the best quarterback in football.

If he wants to be the best quarterback in football, he can be.

Q. Could you run down, give me kind of a quickie scouting report on what wide receivers you think will be available in the top five or 10 of the second round, and which ones are particularly suited for the West Coast offense?

MIKE MAYOCK: Sure. Everybody is a little bit different. I've got four wide receivers going in the first round. Could be more. Johnson, Ginn, Bowe and Meacham in the first round. I've got Gonzales from Ohio state. Steve Smith, Sydney Rice, Dwayne Jarrett and Jason Hill going in the second round. That's five more.

Out of that particular group Brad Childress is a West Coast offensive guy. Jarrett Rice and Hill make an awful lot of sense. We all know about Jarrett and what he runs as far as a 40-yard dash time. Sydney Rice to me is a compelling question.

When I talk to people, his ball skills are unbelievable. He's the only wide receiver in the country that had a good day against Chris Houston from Arkansas. Tall, 6'3", 205, red zone kind of guy.

Quicker than Jarrett. But similar size. And then there's Jason Hill from Washington. So at the top end of that second round, I think Gonzales is going to be attractive to people. He's a little bit more of a slot guy. So I think that the logic is Jarrett, Rice and Hill. Probably Jarrett And Rice.

Q. Quick follow-up question. Do you have a late round guy, a sleeper type who think could be this year's Marcus Colston?

MIKE MAYOCK: At wide receiver?

Q. Yes.

MIKE MAYOCK: If you want me to go really, really deep, and this kid doesn't have the same explosion as Colston, but there's a kid at UMass named Brandon London.

He probably won't even get drafted which Colston almost didn't. But similar body type to Colston. Not as explosive, but good hands. Similar body type.

His father is one of the coordinators at the University of Virginia, Mike London. So you know he knows the game.

Q. A more general question. Last year's draft had a lot of celebrity cache to it with all these guys who were household names even before the Combine were kind of magazine cover guys right from the get-go.

This year's draft doesn't have that same kind of sizzle. Does that say anything substantial about the two drafts or is it more of a superficial circumstance?

MIKE MAYOCK: Yes, I think last year you kind of had the cover boys of the National Championship game out there with Bush and Leinart, Vince, on the Texas side, Cutler slipping in from underneath at the quarterback position.

So I think you had the confluence of some real high visibility football players that played for high visibility teams who also happened to be top five picks.

So I think that was rare. I think this draft is a little more typical at the top end of what kind of kids you're getting.

Q. And as far as to the draft, last year's draft was really productive. A lot of first rounders wound up starting. Along with having a big name they actually produced. Or at least started. This year's draft likely to be the same or not?

MIKE MAYOCK: I think last year's draft was a little deeper. Bill, I think what's happening in the NFL right now is that teams are looking at New England and the winning teams out there who are drafting kids to play them immediately. And they're looking around and saying because of salary cap issues, we're much better if we can get, rush that tackle or rush that linebacker and let him start and we can release one of those high paid veterans and we can efficiently manage our cap.

So we saw more production last year I'm going to say from the rookie class than any rookie class I can remember in NFL history. And I think that's more of a trend. Am I saying this year is going to be quite as good? No, but I think more and more teams are saying we gotta get -- we have to draft these people for a specific reason and then get them into the lineup as quickly as possible.

And you saw it all levels. You saw it in the first round. De Meco Ryans was the second round. Jhari Evans from Bloomsburg, offensive lineman, fourth round. Colston, seventh round. Every level at every position. Green Bay Packers played three rookie offensive linemen. Years ago that was against the code.

So I think it's more of a trend than anything, Bill.

>> PATRICK PANTANO: Thank you very

much for being on the call. Again NFL Network will have coverage of both rounds, all rounds of the draft on Saturday and Sunday. Any follow-up questions you can just contact me. Thanks for joining and have a good day.

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