

First mock, WRs & TEs

Contributed by J.P.
Monday, 11 April 2011

Just two more weeks until the draft! Regardless of what happens with the injunction hearing in Minnesota, the draft will be held on April 28th-30th. While we would all love to see Free Agency happen before the draft, the chances right now are at best 50/50. That said, at this point it is even more impossible to predict what teams will be targeting early on than it usually is, so it might be silly to make a mock draft if there will indeed be FA before the 28th (especially for Miami given our many needs and possible veteran acquisitions such as DeAngelo Williams, Darren Sproles, Marshal Yanda, etc). And while this week I will be breaking down the WR and TE positions, (leaving next week for the offensive line and pass rushers), I got the itch to make a mock draft. I think that Miami starts off by trading down with San Diego to number 18. The Chargers LOVE JJ Watt (as do I), who would be a perfect fit for the Patriots. AJ Smith will make the call to Jeff Ireland for the 2nd year in a row and move up ahead of the Pats to grab Watt. This will net the Dolphins a 3rd round pick. Then at 18, with Tampa Bay sitting two spots down, Atlanta will make the call and trade up with Miami. The Falcons need a pass rusher badly, and it is likely that a combination of Akeem Ayers, Justin Houston, Cameron Jordan or Ryan Kerrigan (who the Falcons have shown a lot of interest in and should still be there at 18) will be available. The Falcons would move from 27 to 18, and give the Dolphins a 2nd round pick as well as a 4th round selection, and Miami would give up a 6th round pick. So now Miami is sitting at 27 with a 2nd round pick that they did not have before, an extra 3rd round pick and an extra 4th round selection. If Josh McDaniels could do it last year, why not Miami in a draft that will no doubt feature many desperate/aggressive GMs given the labor situation? *Keep in mind this is a mock draft based on who I believe Miami will take based off of interest shown in the Off Season and how each player fits needs specifically, not what I would do if I was Jeff Ireland*
1. Carolina – Cam Newton, QB, Auburn

2. Denver – Marcell Dareus, DT, Alabama
3. Buffalo – Blaine Gabbert, QB, Mizzou
4. Cincinnati – AJ Green, WR, Georgia
5. Arizona – Von Miller, OLB, Texas A&M
6. Cleveland – Patrick Peterson, CB, LSU
7. San Francisco – Prince Amukamara, CB, Nebraska
8. Tennessee – Nick Fairley, DT, Auburn
9. Dallas – Tyron Smith, OT, USC
10. Washington – Julio Jones, WR, Alabama
11. Houston – Aldon Smith, DE, Mizzou
12. Minnesota – Da'Quan Bowers, DE, Clemson
13. Detroit – Robert Quinn, DE, UNC
14. St. Louis – Corey Liuget, DT, Illinois
15. San Diego (**After a Trade down with Miami**) – JJ Watt, DE/DT, Wisconsin
16. Jacksonville - Cameron Jordan, DE, Cal
17. New England – Gabe Carimi, OT, Wisconsin
18. Atlanta (**after a trade down with Miami**) – Ryan Kerrigan, DE, Purdue
19. New York Giants – Cameron Heyward, DT, Ohio St.
20. Tampa Bay – Justin Houston, DE/OLB, Georgia
21. Kansas City – Akeem Ayers, OLB, UCLA
22. Indianapolis – Mike Pouncey, OG/OC, Florida
23. Philadelphia – Brandon Harris, CB, Miami
24. New Orleans – Adrian Claiborne, DE/DT, Iowa
25. Seattle – Muhammad Wilkerson, DT, Temple
26. Baltimore – Aaron Williams, CB, Texas
27. Miami – Mikel LeShoure, RB, Illinois
28. New England – Mark Ingram, RB, Alabama
29. Chicago – Marvin Austin, DT, UNC
30. New York Jets – Phil Taylor, NT, Baylor
31. Pittsburgh – Nate Solder, OT, Colorado
32. Green Bay – Allen Bailey, DT/DE, Miami

(27). Mikel LeShoure, RB, Illinois – There are many that believe LeShoure could sneak into the teens the way that Ryan Matthews did last year when San Diego moved all the way up to Miami's 12th selection to get him. Todd McShay and Mel Kiper believe LeShoure is a mid 2nd round pick. I think that while there is a chance LeShoure could go earlier than 27, he should still be available and this is good value for the draft's second best back, (according to most behind Ingram, however to me 2nd behind UConn's Jordan Todman. Here is what I wrote in my breakdown of LeShoure in my last entry: “LeShoure is a guy that Miami has shown a lot of interest in, and it's easy to see why. Mikel might have the best combination of power and speed in this year's class. He has very good burst and decisiveness while running inside, but also displays good vision and patience. LeShoure breaks tackles through the hole and has good open field ability into and out of the 2nd level. He's a highly productive player who could sneak into the first round. That said, at 15 he is not an option. Miami would have to trade down in the first round and grab him there. I would be happy with LeShoure though. He's a complete back with good receiving ability and blocking ability as well. He has the potential to be a 3 down back in the NFL; something that is getting very hard to find.”What I forgot to mention was LeShoure's 2nd level running

ability, where he often displays a jump-cut that's rare of a big back. While Mikel draws comparisons to Stephen Jackson, I don't think he has the same type of power and instead has a little more speed and explosiveness. His running style is also a little more finesse than Jackson's. Still, he'd be the perfect back to compliment DeAngelo Williams if Miami does indeed target and sign the star tailback in Free Agency. Miami now trades up in the 2nd round with Dallas. Miami gives up a 4th round and 6th round pick as well as a 2012 mid-late pick.2 (40). Ryan Mallett, QB, Arkansas – I have finally caved. Not in terms of what I think of Mallett, but in Miami's interest. The Dolphins have shown as much interest in Ryan Mallett as any other QB in this draft. Mallett, Nevada's Colin Kaepernick and Virginia Tech's Tyrod Taylor are the three QB's that Miami have worked with the most. The Dolphins met with Mallett at the combine, flew to Arkansas to see his Pro Day and were in full attendance, went to work out Mallett and DJ Williams privately at Arkansas and have a private workout back in Davie with Mallett coming up this week. I doubt that Mallett would be able to start from day 1. He would not beat out Chad Henne and would likely need Miami to change their personnel around a little bit to fit his style (add more speed and depth). Here is my breakdown of Mallett from a few weeks ago:“Mallett has the best arm I have ever seen. It's better than Flacco's, Russell's and any other recent QB to come out. Ryan has said that he can throw the ball 80 yards in the air and if you've seen him play, you'd know that's not too unrealistic a prediction. To combine with that unbelievable arm strength, Mallett has great accuracy (although inconsistent at times, when he's on his game, it's terrific) and touch on his deep ball. He throws a beautiful rainbow that gets to and drops into his receivers hands quickly and right in stride. What makes a 15 yard out unstoppable is not the velocity you throw it at, but the trajectory of the football; Matt Ryan, Drew Brees and Phillip Rivers have mastered this, despite not having great arm strength. Mallett has this ability along with the arm strength to compliment it. He also has a very mechanically sound, tall release. While his arm is incredible, he doesn't have much else. His pocket presence is inconsistent and needs serious work, his footwork is atrocious and mobility a liability. This makes his 6'7 frame more of a con than a pro. His decision making is not poor; most of his interceptions are because of over-confidence in his arm, which is fine. He'll learn with experience what he can and cannot get away with. The problem is that he is not able to make quick decisions which, combined with his lack of mobility and pocket presence, will be his downfall in the NFL. Teams are going to blitz him heavily and Mallett is not capable of adjusting to that and making the hot read; he has said himself that he does not like throwing the hot read pass and instead prefers to stick with the progressions of the playcall and throw the ball down the field. Mallett also has a lot of trouble diagnosis disguised pressure; and folks, NFL Defenses don't telegraph blitzes (unless they're coached by Paul Pasqualoni). Mallett also has serious character issues. The way he presents himself on and off the field is not attractive and there are serious drug allegations. The word “addicted” has been associated with them by many respected, national outlets. These rumors have not been thrown out there by an NFL team in the last few weeks; they were the reason that he did not enter the draft in 2010. What this tells me is that the allegations have some truth to them. If they did not have legs, he should have entered the draft last year and taken care of it with teams knowing that they would get to the truth. The fact that he waited a year means, (again, this is just my take), that he tried to slow down these rumors and take a year to get clean and avoid them. Miami has no patience for drug or character issues, so, I doubt Mallett is on their board. Even if the character issues prove false, Mallett will not be anything special in the NFL. I see him as Henne 2.0. He'll make some great throws from time to time and give some team false hope, but overall he doesn't have the skill set that a successful pocket QB must possess.”As you can see I'm not very high on Mallett, even though he is my 3rd rated passer. Still, the Dolphins are clearly doing their homework and are following the same pattern with him that they did Chad Henne three years ago, and Pat White two years ago.3 (79). Edmund Gates, WR, Albeline Christian – Both me and Tony Simmons (our Phinfever draft guru) are big fans of Gates, and so are the Dolphins (at least they appear to be). Miami has shown significant interest in Gates, and he fits the mold of what Ireland is looking for in a WR. A speedster who can come in for 20 snaps a game and provide vertical speed as well as be able to run drag routes, bubble screen, and other patterns that will allow for him to use his speed and after the catch ability. I'll be breaking down Gates along with the other top WR's later, so, you can scroll down to view my scouting report on him.3 (82). DJ Williams, TE, Arkansas – With this pick Miami re-unites the best QB-TE combo in college football. The Dolphins are reportedly in love with DJ Williams, and I can see why. He fits the mold of what Miami is looking for in a TE; a versatile, athletic pass catcher who is a willing blocker as well. I am completely buying into the rumors on this one. My full scouting report on Williams is below.4 (124). Brandon Fusco, OC/OG, Slippery Rock – I know many of you are thinking, “Brandon who? Slippery what?” Fusco is a very interesting prospect that has garnered interest from several teams, but none more so than the Dolphins. It is very hard to project where such a small school prospect will go in the draft, and it's highly possible that he could go as high as early round 3. I do think that Miami will find a way to get him though. The Dolphins made several trips to see him play this past season and have shown interest again this off season. Fusco won several awards the Division II level, including getting presented with the best offensive lineman award at the Sr. Bowl. Fusco has the size that you look for in an interior lineman at 6'4, 306 pounds and performed very well at the combine. I have not seen him play so I won't bother trying to give a scouting report, however, he is somebody that Miami is very interested in and I expect the Dolphins to target him at some point in Day 3, if not late Day 2.5 (146). Jah Reid, OT, UCF – Reid is another guy that has impressed this off season as well as garner a lot of interest from the Dolphins. With the uncertainty revolving Vernon Carey, and Nate Garner likely starting at LG next season, Miami is going to need to invest in some insurance at RT. Reid is a very underrated prospect and Miami will be lucky to nab him here in round 5. Keeping with tradition, I think Miami trades one of their 7th round picks for a future 6th or 7th rounder. That said they will make two selections in this round. I think that both of these picks will be front 7 players on defense. An OLB and likely a NT. Looking back at my mock, it's very unlikely that the Dolphins completely ignore Defense in the first 6 rounds. However, there is no doubt that the concentration will be to get speed on

the offensive side of the ball. A lot depends on what Miami will do in Free Agency if it does indeed happen before the draft, and if not what their plans are. It also depends on whether the Dolphins are able to trade for Carson Palmer, as I do believe that is Plan A regarding QB. If they are able to, I would replace Mallett in the 2nd round with Palmer. And now onto my WR/TE rankings and breakdowns…AJ Green and Julio Jones have no chance of being available to Miami at 15, so, I will not bother you with in depth scouting reports on them. To make it brief, AJ Green is Randy Moss with a little less speed and a lot less attitude. Julio Jones reminds me of Sydney Rice and Dwayne Bowe. Both will be very good receivers.3) Torrey Smith, Maryland – Smith is a playmaker, pure and simple. There are certain guys that find a way to play faster than they actually are. Josh Cribbs comes to mind; while he may not be a 4.3, 4.4, or even a 4.5 guy, Cribbs is the fastest guy on the field because of incredible instincts, heart, quickness and toughness. That’s Torrey Smith. He’s a versatile WR who can help in the return game as well. He’s got good hands, good quickness coming out of his breaks, very good after the catch, tough over the middle and is a very willing blocker in the run game, which is important to the regime. I think he fits the mold of what Miami is looking for in a WR perfectly, but is his late first round/early second round grade too steep a price?4) Titus Young, Boise St. – A mirror image of Mike Wallace. He has very good acceleration and straight line speed, but is not very shifty, which means that he is not a slot WR, but purely a boundary player, (like Wallace). This lack of versatility, combined with inconsistent hands, makes me doubt Young is in Miami’s draft plans. I do think that he will be a good WR and will have a similar impact that Wallace has had, in a similar role.5) Randal Cobb, Kentucky – Cobb is more of a do-it-all playmaker (think Brad Smith or Josh Cribbs) than a pure WR. He’s got great speed/elusiveness, good hands, toughness and is very versatile with the ability to line up out wide, in the slot, in the backfield, and also help out in the return game. If Cobb is there in the 3rd round, he could be too good to pass up. He’s the type of playmaker Miami is missing offensively and on ST’s.6) Edmund Gates, Abilene Christian – Gates is somebody who the Dolphins have shown tons of interest in all off season. He’s got amazing speed, quickness, elusiveness and acceleration. He has very good hands, is not afraid to go over the middle and has the skill set to play on the outside or in the slot. He can probably help in the return game as well. Gates fits the mold of what Miami is looking for in a WR, and in a lot of ways is a less exposed version of Torrey Smith (probably with more straight line speed). Interesting nugget: He’s from the same home town as Jeff Ireland. Hmmm…7) Austin Pettis, Boise St. – Pettis is an interesting prospect. He’s not going to blow you away with speed, quickness, size, or any other physical attribute. But he’s very smooth in his route running, has very good hands and shows ability after the catch. He makes things look easy, which I like. I think he can be a solid player at the next level.8) Jeremy Kerley, TCU – Kerley is a very good slot WR and punt return man. He’s got very good hands, quickness coming out of his breaks and has a very good understanding of route running. He’s got a limited ceiling, but is going to be a productive number 3 or 4 WR as well as punt returner in the NFL.9) Jeff Maehl, Oregon – A mirror image of Jordan Shipley out of Texas last year, Maehl is going to be a productive number 3 WR from day 1. He doesn’t have great speed or size, but he’s got very good acceleration, hands, route running ability and plays with a huge heart. I like Maehl and think he is one of the most underrated players in this draft. I’d be very happy with him in the 4th round.)10) Jerrel Jernigan, Troy – In short, Jernigan is a smaller version of Cobb. A versatile playmaker more so than a pure WR who can contribute on Special teams as well. On tape I have seen him drop some passes over the middle of field, which makes me suspicious of his toughness. His ypc average was under 10; not a good number for a “big play” receiver. I have my concerns about him, but if he proves me wrong with his toughness and if he is utilized the right way in the NFL, he’ll be a productive player, especially on 3rd down. Now just some brief stuff on the rest of my WR’s…11. Jon Baldwin - Great size and hands, but can he create separation? Could be next Marshall.

12. Greg Little - Tough evaluation, but huge upside. Great Size, speed, hands.

13. Greg Salas - Lesser version of Pettis.

14. Ronald Johnson - Never lived up to hype. A lesser version of Kerley.

15. Niles Paul - Some people think really highly of him. Not sure why. OK hands, above average speed.

16. Denarius Moore - Very underrated player...speedy, good hands, could make impact on STs.

17. Terrance Toliver - Didn't have a QB to throw him the ball. Very talented though. Tough to evaluate, so I'm going safe and under-evaluating, if that makes any sense...

18. Cecil Shorts - Scored about a billion TD's at DIII. Hard evaluation. Just going by the legend.

19. Leonard Hankerson - Not buying into him. Will not create separation at next level, still has iffy hands, doesn't have speed to stretch D. Just put him here to piss off all you UM fans;p.20. Tandon Doss, Indiana – Upset at myself for not doing any film work on him this off season. Don’t know anything about him, however he is regarded very highly by some, so, I had to throw him in here. And now the TE’s…1) Lance Kendricks, Wisconsin – Kendricks is going to be a stud in the NFL. He’s very smooth in his route running, has very good hands and is a very tough pass catcher. He’s also a very willing blocker and shows a lot of potential in that area. To me he’s the most complete TE in this draft, and he could be the next Dustin Keller.2) DJ Williams, Arkansas – Williams is not going to blow you away with height/weight/speed measurables, however he is very smooth and natural in everything he does, and is a very willing and tough blocker. He’s been highly productive throughout his career at Arkansas and DJ is also a very good character guy. I like him and think he’s going to be a solid player at the next level. He could be the next Chris Cooley.3) Virgil Green, Nevada – Probably the most athletic TE in this class, Green makes you think he’s a WR when he runs routes and catches the ball, but he’s also a surprisingly sturdy blocker. Green could go as high as the 3rd round and is a sleeper pick for the Dolphins given all the work they have done with his QB Colin Kaepernick. Could that have been a smokescreen hiding their true interest in Green?4) Julius Thomas, Portland St – Another Jimmy Graham story; Thomas stayed in school for an extra year to play football and it worked out well. Thomas is very athletic, has very natural hands and is actually a much tougher blocker

than anybody could have expected. He looked tremendous at the Sr. Bowl, and given how raw he is, it impressed me quite a bit. He's got huge upside and could get into the 3rd round.5) Luke Stocker, Tennessee ‐ To keep this brief, think Anthony Fasano. Tough, consistent blocker and average pass catcher.6) Kyle Rudolph, Notre Dame ‐ Rudolph is going to really struggle at the next level with his blocking; he's a very tall player who does not have very good bulk in his base and is not overly physical. He has good hands and good athleticism for his size, but I'm not sure he has enough to beat simple coverage with LBs and Safeties. I think Rudolph ends up being a disappointment in the NFL and is never anything more than mediocre.7) Rob Housler, FAU ‐ Housler is a very athletic TE who shows the ability to get down the seam and cause mismatches with LBs and Ss. The problem is that his hands are only average and his blocking is atrocious. Still, he's a local guy who Miami has no doubt done their HW and have plenty of information on, so, he is in play.8) Daniel Hardy, Idaho ‐ I found this guy by accident while I was watching tape of Nathan Enderle. Hardy is a very good pass catcher with natural hands and has good athleticism. He's also a tough, (although not great), blocker. He could be in play given the amount of attention the Dolphins have given Nathan Enderle.OK, that's it for this week. If you got this far, you might want to check the time. You're late for work!Be sure to tune in next week for my Offensive Line rankings, and hopefully Free Agency talk.GO PHINS!!!

Download the Free Phinfever Browser Toolbar

I really can't get along without the browser toolbar. It has all the important links on it. I'm not selfish, I even have all the other Dolphins fan sites on it. There's a lot of draft links, rss feeds, and a cool email program that lets you know when you have mail. And NO spam or spyware. It works for Firefox and Internet Explorer. So, enjoy!

Support Phinfever by buying what you need from our advertisers. They pretty much pay the bills for us. Thanks!

Looking for things to do in Miami FL? CTC has Miami football schedules, as well as college sports and NFL tickets, including Miami Dolphins football tickets and cheap Hurricanes tickets. (And fan CTC on Facebook for discount codes before you buy!)