

Thoughts on Ryan Tannehill/Dolphins approach to 2012 Draft

Contributed by Tony Simmons
Sunday, 08 April 2012

A lot of good things have happened to Ryan Tannehill the last few months, starting with the decision of Southern Cal's Matt Barkley and Oklahoma's Landry Jones decision to return to college for their senior season. Before those individuals made their decisions, Tannehill was rated 5th in that group and slated to be a late 1st round, 2nd round projection going into the draft.

Now, Tannehill, coming off a strong Pro Day is on the verge of being a top 10 pick in the 2012 NFL Draft, with Cleveland a possibility at #4, and if he get's past the Browns, the Dolphins at #8, with KC and Philadelphia showing some interest as well. The question that has been raised is whether Tannehill is a legitimate top 10 pick or is he a reach.

Here are clips from an article that Charlie Casserly, former GM for the Washington Redskins and now TV personality for the NFL Network and CBS wrote about Tannehill in an article he wrote for the NFL Network on March 28.

" In December, I surveyed a dozen teams on Tannehill's draft value. The consensus: He was worth a second-round pick. Just to clarify, draft value is what a team feels a player's ability is worth, not necessarily where he will be drafted. Without having a feel for the complete draft board when you are evaluating a particular player, you resort to draft value. This also refers to where you would like to draft a player, not where you need to draft him.'

" I watched four Texas A&M games from this past season. Overall, there are many things to like about Tannehill's game. He has a strong arm and can plant his back foot to throw the ball with velocity into tight spots. He throws a nice deep out, which is a true test of arm strength. He also displays good movement, both in and out of the pocket; he can slide to avoid the rush and also has the ability to make plays in the open field. He has experience in a pro-style offense. I have seen him read through his progressions and go to secondary receivers. The accuracy is above average, but there's certainly room for improvement." "In fact, I like Tannehill more than some first-round quarterbacks taken during this period. I think he displays better decision-making and accuracy than Josh Freeman, more experience at a high level than Joe Flacco, a stronger arm than Christian Ponder and more precision than Jake Locker.

Is the eighth overall pick too high for the Miami Dolphins to scoop up Tannehill? No, not based on the comparisons I have drawn. Quarterbacks are drafted higher than they are rated because without a franchise QB in this league you have little chance to be successful."

This is the one thing that I think is key for Miami and will give them a chance to draft Ryan and have success, as this comment from Charlie speaks volumes.

I like Tannehill's raw skills, though he will need time to develop. I don't see a special QB, but a player who can be a solid QB in the NFL. In Green Bay, Joe Philbin oversaw the development of two quarterbacks: Aaron Rodgers and Matt Flynn. Both played very well when given the chance, but they had another thing in common: They were both given time to develop. Tannehill will need that same time to refine his game.

This is were I believe the Dolphins have a big advantage over Cleveland. The Browns need a QB that can come in right now and be an impact player. The consensus is that Tannehill will need a year to develop. The Dolphins have QB Matt Moore and David Garrard, and while neither QB is obviously elite level quarterbacks, they are competent and you can win games with either guy.

I have mocked Ryan to the Dolphins at #8, and will continue to do so, as I believe the Browns will pass. Could the Browns pull the trigger on Ryan at #4, sure. But in the end, I think he get's to Miami. NOW, could the Dolphins also pass on him based on the thoughts stated above, they could also. The Dolphins have holes to fill, but in the end, I believe the Dolphins will take Tannehill at #8 if he is there. He is a talented quarterback who has a chance to be the Dolphins quarterback of the future.

We are now less than 3 weeks away from the 2012 NFL Draft, and my juices are flowing and I am getting excited for the draft to get here. I also have some thoughts on what the Dolphins will look to do and how they will attack this draft, beginning with the defensive side of the ball.

One area that has to be addressed, and early will be a pass rush compliment to OLB Cameron Wake. The Dolphins have showed a tendency to double down on picks in areas that need to be addressed, and I expect that to happen here.

Now, switching to the offensive side of the ball, the Dolphins will look to draft an ORT for sure I believe, but the area were

I think they look to double down again will be wide receiver after trading away talented but troublesome Brandon Marshall. The wide receiver position is deep in this draft, so the Dolphins can get into 2nd or 3rd round and still be able to find quality, talented wide receivers.

I can see the Dolphins taking a cornerback in this draft even with the signing of CB Richard Marshall, as you can never have enough talented defensive backs in a passing league. The Dolphins will also look to play a lot of quarter coverage, which means the Dolphins will employ 4 defensive linemen, 1 linebacker and 6 defensive backs. I believe the signing of SS Tyrell Johnson means the Dolphins will not look to draft a safety, as the safety draft class is very weak to begin with.

Will the Dolphins look to draft a TE or OG in this draft, that could be the question that has to be answered? 2011 draft pick Charles Clay will now be moved to tight end, and I think he can be a player that can flourish in the West Coast offense and he really came on towards the end of the 2011 season. The Dolphins also signed OG/OT Artis Hicks during free agency, so they could feel as if they have enough depth at OG not to draft a player. Also, Vernon Carey is still available and the Dolphins still could look to bring him back at a team friendly contract. I also believe Vernon would like to finish his career as a Dolphins, as Miami is home for Carey.

Here my latest mock draft for the Dolphins, which is ever changing.

- 1) Ryan Tannehill, QB, Texas A & M, 6'4, 221 lbs - Dolphins OC Mike Sherman was his coach with the Aggies.
- 2) Vinny Curry, DE, Marshall, 6'4, 266 lbs - 26.5 career sacks, 49 tackles for loss
- 3) Bruce Irvin, OLB, West Virginia, 6'3, 245 lbs - 22.5 career sacks, 29 tackles for loss, explosive edge rusher.
- 3) Marvin McNutt, WR, Iowa, 6'2, 216 lbs - 170 catches, 2,681 yards, 28 touchdowns
- 4) Ryan Broyles, WR, Oklahoma, 5'10, 192 lbs - 349 catches, 4,586 yards, 45 touchdowns, coming of ACL injury.
- 5) Tom Compton, ORT, South Dakota State, 6'4, 317 lbs
- 6) Chris Greenwood, CB, Albion, 6'1, 193 lbs, 13 career interceptions
- 7) Desmond Wynn, OG, Rutgers, 6'5, 303 lbs