

Some brief thoughts on the Senior Bowl

Contributed by Tony Simmons
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The Senior Bowl was played yesterday in Mobile, AL, and there were certainly some players and performances that caught my eyes yesterday. The NFL Network normally shows the practices during the week, but I don't think they did this year, or if they did, it was on while I was at work. Either way, I did not get a chance to see any of the practices this year.

That being said, let's take a brief look at the game and some players that caught my eye that the Dolphins might have some interest in.

Probably the most dominant player in the game was BYU DE Ezekial Anash. He finished the game with 7 tackles, 1 sack and a forced fumble. At 6'5 1/4, 274 lbs, he plays with power, speed and a motor that you love in a player, and was even a factor on special teams and he had a couple of tackles on punt coverage. He had only played 2 years of organized football and this past season was his 1st as a starter. If he blows up at the combine, which I think he will, and you combine that with his performance in this game, there is a good chance he could get into the top 10. If he is there for Miami at #12, he is going to be hard to pass up and is a prime candidate to be the Dolphins 1st pick. Props to our board member swerve13 for putting me on to this young man. I was familiar with him and had heard the talk about the kid, but swerve put up a mock draft with him as the Dolphins 1st round pick, and I took a closer look at the kid.

A few other edge rushers that caught my eye was OLB/DE Cornelius Washington of Georgia. He got consistent pressure the entire game and he has the size and speed you like at 6'4, 264 lbs. DE Datone Jones of UCLA was a constant force also and has nice size at 6'4 1/8, 284 lbs.

Miami has a need at cornerback and a couple of kids that I like were Bledi Wreh-Wilson of Connecticut, Robert Alford of Southeastern Louisiana, BW Webb of William & Mary. Wilson in particular was impressive to me, as he is a bigger CB at 6'0 5/8, 192 lbs. Good feet, hips and cover skills. Jordan Poyer of Oregon State is also a very solid cornerback.

Switching to the offensive side of the ball and the big uglies up front, A couple of offensive linemen stood out to me. Eric Fisher of Central Michigan help cement his place in the top 10 of the draft with a very good week of practice and a solid game. 6'7 1/4, 305 lbs, he has the size you like and probably could stand to add a couple of pounds, he has the looks of a very good OLT. Oklahoma OLT Lane Johnson looked good, as the former TE did a nice job in pass protection in the game. 6'6 1/4, 302 lbs, with very good feet, he could easily fit into the zone blocking scheme the Dolphins employ.

A couple of kids I think the Dolphins could have interest in in Round 2 & Round 3 are OG Larry Waterford of Kentucky and OT/OG Kyle Long of Oregon. Waterford is a big, powerful man at 6'3 1/4, 333 lbs, but he has the feet to possibly play in the zone blocking scheme the Dolphins employ. He was a bulldozer in the game yesterday, and would be a kid that can come in and provide instant depth, if not possible win a starting position. Kyle Long is the son of Howie Long, and he showed his versatility in the game yesterday as he played at both OLG and OLT, and looked good at both positions. He has the nice size at 6'6 1/8, 304 lbs, but his arm length is only 32 1/8. That will be a concern for some teams, but I still like what I saw and would look at Long at OLT, if the Dolphins plan to keep Jonathan Martin at OLT.

RB is a position where the Dolphins have some depth, but if they do not re-sign Reggie Bush, they could look to bring in a similar style of explosive back as a change up. Oregon Kenyon Barner has the same type of skill set as Bush, but probably is a better inside runner coming out of Oregon. Good out of the backfield in the pass game, and explosive, homerun type speed. He had 7 catches in the game yesterday. Andre Ellington of Clemson is another explosive RB that fits that bill and Mike Gillislee of Florida had a nice game and is a very good RB.

WR is a definite position of need for the Dolphins, and while the more talented kids are juniors, you have some seniors that looked good and show some flash yesterday. WR Marquise Goodwin of Texas looked good yesterday and has explosive speed. He is the type of receiver that you line up in the slot and isolate him on a nickel CB, and let him go to work with his quickness and speed. Big play kid that looked good out wide as well. Markus Wheaton of Oregon State had a solid game and he also has very good speed. Connor Vernon of Duke looked very good and reminds me of Brian Hartline, but with better hands and not quite the speed. I like the thought of Miami getting a premier wide receiver in free agency, then drafting perhaps a kid like Clemson DeAndre Hopkins in the 2nd round and a burner like Goodwin in the 4th round. Miami is looking for playmakers and there are some nice ones out there.

Next big step for the kids now will be the Combine in February. Can't wait.