

## Miami takes OLB Jelani Jenkins with their first pick in the 4th round.

Contributed by Tony Simmons  
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Miami used their 1st 4th round pick, #104 to take OLB Jelani Jenkins out of Florida. Athletic and agile with good balance and slips blocks and flows to the ball carrier. Good closing speed and can drop into zones, run with running backs and tight ends and can make plays on the ball. He lacks ideal size and durability has been an issue for him while at Florida.

{youtube}0SXCVI5lJJE{/youtube}

{youtube}c8JUaXAvL8s{/youtube}

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### ESPN INSIDER

an ideal weakside linebacker who holds up well in space and excels in coverage. He has a great feel for throwing lanes and does a great job of reading quarterbacks' eyes. He also shows ideal range against the run. However, he has issues taking on and shedding blocks. In addition, Jenkins has had trouble staying healthy, and those durability concerns likely pushed him into the third round.

How he fits: The Dolphins have made a nice transition from a 3-4 scheme to a 4-3, and they really want versatility to play a lot of sub packages. They are decent right now with their OLB starters, but their depth isn't good enough. They don't have enough developmental guys, and where Jenkins could likely make his early mark is in those sub packages, especially versus the pass. That is a real strength of his, and that's not necessarily the case for the guys ahead of him.

### OVERALL FOOTBALL TRAITS

Production 3 2009: Redshirt  
2010: (13/11) 76-4.5-22011: (12/12) 75-6-2 2012: (9/8) 29-5-2  
Career: 7 PBUs, 3 INTs, 1 FF and 1 FR Height-Weight-Speed 3 Slightly shorter than ideal with a linear frame. Did not play at combine listed weight of 243 pounds. Has toothpicks for legs. Arm length (32.2) and hand span (9.3) are right on the average for OLBs attending the last five NFL combines. Timed top-end speed is right around average but appears faster on film. Durability 4 In 2011, missed Vanderbilt game due to injury. In 2012, missed four games due to multiple injuries (hamstring, foot and thumb). Played with a cast for a portion of the season. Is undersized and needs to improve bulk, strength, and flexibility to hold up better physically in the NFL.

Intangibles 1 Earned a spot on 2010 SEC Academic Honor Roll. Good student. Intelligent young man both on and off the field. A standout sprinter in high school track. Also flew to Los Angeles as one of five national finalists for the Watkins Award, awarded annually to the 'Premier African-American Male Scholar Athlete'. Son of Maurice Jenkins and Stephanie Hall. Maurice is a successful architect in Washington DC and Stephanie played basketball at Howard and is a black belt in karate.

### OUTSIDE LINEBACKER SPECIFIC TRAITS

Instincts/Recognition 3 Can be a quarter count late diagnosing run. Takes too many false steps vs. misdirection. Has very good natural cover instincts. Does an adequate job reacting to routes but diagnoses quicker when he can read QBs eyes and react. Take-on Skills 4 Aggressive and tough. Not a soft player, despite trying to avoid too many blocks. Will fire through gaps and attack lead blockers aggressively when he decides to do so. But knows physical limitations in a phone booth, as he loses too many point-of-attack battles due to below-average size/strength. Tries to slip too many blocks and winds up leaving scheme vulnerable too often. Will occasionally take on blocks with the wrong shoulder, also leading to gap-assignment breakdowns. Bottom line: to take game to next level he must improve strength and master the art of taking on blocks and sifting through trash.

Range vs. Run 1 Need to study 2011 tape to see his true speed and range. When healthy, shows very good quickness, burst and lateral agility. Great effort. Flies around the field. Will pursue from the backside. Has very good straight-line speed and closing burst for the position. Frequently slips through creases and disrupts or makes plays in backfield. Tackling 3 Closes quickly and makes some impressive hog-tie type tackles. Does not shy away from contact. Will attack bigger ball carriers head on. Is tough and aggressive. But needs to be a bit more efficient in this department. Too high at point of attack too often and falls off of too many attempted tackles, as a result. Also leaves feet too early at times. Occasionally will lead with shoulder and fail to wrap up. Also takes too many poor angles.

3rd Down Capabilities 1 One of the most naturally fluid and athletic cover

linebackers in this class. Decisive in coverage. Quick feet. Very good body control and balance. Fluid hips. Very good burst out of pedal and straight-line speed. He can match up on-on-one versus most almost all RBs and most TEs. Is physical enough when necessary underneath and does a solid job of rerouting receivers. But shows good overall feel for space and leverage in zone coverage. Ball skills are average at best. Better in coverage than as a pass rusher but does flash burst and adequate instincts when sent on blitz. Goes all out but needs to develop counter move when reached. Gets washed easily.

## NFL.COM

## OVERVIEW

As five-star outside linebacker recruit, Jenkins was first-team all-state in Maryland. Highly sought after, Jenkins chose Florida over Notre Dame, Penn State, USC and Stanford. Jenkins was named the Maryland Gatorade Player of the Year in both 2007 and 2008. As a senior, he traveled to Los Angeles as one of five national finalists for the Watkins Award, awarded annually to the "Premier African-American Male Scholar Athlete";

Jenkins took a redshirt in his first year in 2009, as he only appeared in two games and made just two tackles. In 2010, Jenkins appeared in all 13 games, and registered 11 starts. He spent time at middle linebacker and weak-side linebacker. On the season, he totaled 76 tackles (4.5 for loss), two sacks, and one interception. In 2011, Jenkins started 12 games (he missed one due to injury). He recorded 75 tackles (6 for loss), two sacks, six pass breakups, and one interception, which he returned for a touchdown. Jenkins dealt with injuries his redshirt junior season, which limited him to just nine games. His medical issues included a lingering tweaked hamstring, and surgeries on his right foot and hand. Jenkins had 29 tackles (5 for loss), two sacks, one interception, and one punt block.

## ANALYSIS

## STRENGTHS

Showcases good speed, moves well from sideline to sideline. Good burst. Athletic. Works well in pursuit, able to track ball carriers and then make tackles. Possessing good blitzing ability. Best trait is his ability to cover. Can run with backs and tight ends. Easily flips hips, and turns his head to find the football.

## WEAKNESSES

Does not possess ideal size or length. Not very strong at the point. Will get latched onto blockers when they get inside his frame. Needs to use his hands better and be more aggressive in shedding blocks. Medical concerns.

## NFL COMPARISON

Nick Roach

## BOTTOM LINE

When healthy, Jenkins is a dynamic athlete who possesses great value with his ability to cover. However, he's had a hard time staying healthy, and struggles when run at.

## SPORTING NEWS (TSN)

## QUICK TAKE

(from Cleveland) The

Dolphins stay in-state to find their potential starter at weakside linebacker. Jenkins is one of the better coverage 'backers in this class.

## SCOUTING ANALYSIS

Jenkins fits as a potential starting weakside linebacker, even if he is a tad shorter than ideal. He close to the football in a hurry, runs well and had plus quickness to the point of attack.

Jenkins plays with high energy and effort, flying to the ball with reckless abandon. He improved his play recognition in 2012, trusting his eyes and allowing instincts to take hold. He shows little, if any hesitation in reads and is quick to follow run flow. He can close and fill running lanes to meet ball carriers at or behind the line of scrimmage.

Unlike most weakside linebackers, Jenkins is not allergic to contact with blockers. He initiates contact. Jenkins struggles when runs are directed his way, potentially limiting him to a role in which he attacks from the backside with his closing speed. He could play an inside in a 3-4 defense, but he must improve his hand usage at the point of attack.

Jenkins is an excellent open-field tackler, showing the burst and wrap technique to finish tackles on the perimeter. In coverage, Jenkins has closing burst to break and get his hands on the football, but doesn't direct routes with much physicality or contact. He gives too much space to receivers, making it difficult to drive and break up the throw.

The biggest concern teams have with Jenkins is his lack of durability and injury history. He struggles with hamstring tweaks, missed four 2012 games with a broken thumb and the final game with a broken right foot.

Because of his inability to stay healthy, Jenkins will slide into the fifth round. — Alex Brown, Optimum Scouting

## SPORTS ILLUSTRATED (SI)

## POSITIVES

Jenkins is extremely

quick and maintains that quickness throughout a play. He is very physical and will fight until the end of the play. He goes

sideline to sideline extremely well and can cover a lot of ground in zone coverage. He has the speed and explosive burst to recover if he loses a step in separation. He is a strong and fundamentally sound tackler.

#### NEGATIVES

Jenkins needs to improve his playing strength so that he can take on and shed blocks more consistently. He needs to improve his play vs blockers if he is going to be productive against the inside run. While he can cover very well in zone coverage, I feel he needs to improve his hip turn if he is going to be a high end man coverage linebacker. Having missed time in numerous games due to injury and Florida's bowl game due to a broken bone, Jenkins ability to be a durable NFL player is a major question mark.

ANALYSIS Jenkins is a versatile LB who would be best in a 4-3 defense as an OLB, but could also play in a 3-4 scheme as an ILB. He has the ability to get moving at the snap quickly and explode to the ball extremely well. He tackles very well, will hit you hard and is a very physical football player. He is extremely competitive and you will always see him fighting to make a play on the football. His m/m coverage skills could improve as I feel he needs to become better at turning his hips so that he can react quicker to the receiver's routes. He is very good in the zone as he has the quickness to react well to plays and he does not over pursue on any plays as he is very patient. Overall, Jenkins physical skill, ability to makes plays against the run in pursuit and strong coverage skills warrant a second round pick, but if he comes out early for the 2013 NFL Draft he will likely slide lower than that. His struggles staying healthy will likely lead to him being a third round pick at best, which is why I believe he should stay in school another season.

#### SCOUT.COM

Jenkins battled a hamstring issue and broken hand this past season, which impacted his playing time, therefore production. Still, this kid is a very good linebacker who's athletic and fast. He can run and chase plays down. He's better at that then when things come his way.

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