

## Assessing Ireland's Trades

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This is the first of possibly several articles looking at how Ireland did trading draft picks.

Discussing Jeff Ireland is a hot button topic with Dolphins fans. Some want to see him gone immediately. Others want to see how things work out with 2013. At the end of the day how the team performs will decide what happens with Ireland and how fans perceive him.

There are a number of elements that make up how a GM shapes a team: free agency, the draft and the salary cap. Each of these has their own sub-elements. For example, the draft is made up of the picks made, how they perform, how those picks fill needs on the team and the trades he makes involving draft picks.

For those who do not know, back in the early 90s Jimmy Johnson assigned a value to each draft pick. He used this in assessing and making trade offers. The idea caught on and is used by every NFL team. Here is a link to a sample, which I refer to the "traditional" draft value chart. Each team uses something slightly different. There has been a lot of noise for a few years now that it is needs to be updated. I am sure some teams have updated it. For the purposes of this write up I will use the one in the link. The next write up will discuss some of the more recent thought on draft values.

Ireland made 6 trades involving the 2013 draft. I will discuss each of them individually and then as a whole. I will point out the elements of the trade and use the draft value chart to assess it, but will let you decide how good or bad a trade was when involving a veteran player.

Trade 1: Miami sends Vontae Davis for #54 (2.22) This trade was done prior to the 2012 season. You can decide yourself if Vontae Davis was worth more or less than a 2nd rounder.

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Trade 2: Miami sends Brandan Marshall for #82 and a 2012 3rd round pick This trade was done prior to the 2012 draft. Again, you can decide yourself.

Trade 3: Miami sends picks #12 (1.12) and #42 (2.10) for pick #3 (1.3) Based on the "traditional" draft value chart, pick #12 is worth 1,200 points. Pick #42 is worth 480 points, for a total of 1,680 points. Pick #3 is worth 2,200 points. The difference in points is huge: +520, or the equivalent to pick #38 (2.6) Ireland stated the he "believed" Oakland was looking to trade down and he actually came in with a lower offer (presumably pick #54). Oakland came back with #42 and the deal was done. By this comparison, Ireland robbed Oakland badly. Score a big one for Ireland!

Trade 4: Miami sends pick #82 (3.20) for picks #106 (4.9) and #109 (4.12) Pick #82 is worth 180 points. #106: 82 points. #109: 76 points. A net difference of -22 points, or equivalent to pick #173 (6.5). Having a sense of how far you can safely trade down and still get the guy you want is very important. But trading down without getting value back is not a good plan. One has to think Ireland traded back with the intention of trading back up, as that is what quickly happened. But overall, this was not a good trade.

Trade 5: Miami sends picks #109 (4.12) #146 (5.13) and #224 (7.17) for pick #93 (3.31) Pick #109 is worth 78 points. #146: 33. #224: 2. That's 113 points in exchange for #93 (128 points). Net +15 points or pick #191 (#6.23). This was almost as good a trade as the previous one was bad.

Trade 6: Miami sends pick Devon Bess, pick #111 (4.14) and #217 (7.11) for picks #104 (4.7) and #164 (5.31) Pick #111 is worth 72 points. #217: 4.6 points. That adds to 76.6 points, plus Devon Bess sent in exchange for 111.8 points (#104=86 points plus #164=25.. The net difference in points is +35.4 which is what you would have to assign to Bess in this case. 35.8 points is roughly equivalent to pick #140 (5.7). So if you are happy with a high 5th round pick for Devon Bess then you should be happy with the trade. I think that is about the expectations of what you could get for Bess so I

will rate this trade neutral.

Overall I think there are two ways to look at the overall of these trades.

1) Adding up all of the positives and negatives of trades 3 through 6 (this excludes the trades of Marshall and Davis. Again, you can decide for yourself), Ireland netted +550.2 points and traded away Bess. 550 points is equal to pick #35 (2.3). Looking at it this way, that is some wheeling and dealing! Ireland's multiple trades netted us more for Bess than either Marshall or Davis.

2) If you look at the trade up to #3 on its own, the other three trades netted +30.2 points. So in this case you traded Bess away for pick #153 (5.20). In this view, Ireland had one great trade and about fair value for Bess, freeing up some cap space and playing time for younger guys.

Even if you look at the moves as one great trade and nothing else, I believe you have to call the trades a success. If you make one great move a year, you will be in fantastic shape.

Were the players selected smart picks? Did they fill needs? How will those picks pan out? These are separate issues and ones that I will not attempt to judge here.

Next

Anyone who follows the draft knows that the "traditional" chart has issues. As a follow up on this, I will assess Ireland's trade performance using an updated version of the draft value chart that takes a very different look at the value of each draft pick.

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