

NFL Network Media Conference

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Daniel Jeremiah



NETWORK

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for joining us on today's call with NFL Network analyst Daniel Jeremiah. I wanted to provide some information on a few NFL Network programming notes. Throughout the month of March NFL Network provides coverage of pro days from around the country with a special additions of Path to the Draft hosted by Daniel, Bucky Brooks, Rhett Lewis, and others.

Coverage of pro days this week includes Clemson and Texas on Thursday, March 11 at 5:00 p.m. eastern time and North Dakota State and Oklahoma on Friday, March 12 at 12:00 noon eastern time. Please follow @NFLmedia on Twitter for further details.

Additionally daily editions of Path to the Draft air Monday through Friday at 6:00 p.m. eastern on NFL Network beginning Monday, March 29, and finally NFL Network provides live coverage of the 2021 NFL Draft April 29 through May 1st from Cleveland, Ohio.

I will turn it over to Daniel for some brief opening remarks. Daniel?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: It's fun to watch you read that and see your face on Zoom as opposed to years past with just the audio. Thank you, guys, for jumping on here today. It's been a wild year in terms of the draft preparation as it is in every other area.

Very unique this year with watching tape of some guys from 2019, some players you've got to go back to 2018. They might have been injured in 2019 and opted out of 2020. It's been a challenge trying to get some of the information from the schools, as well, with the scouts not being on the road as much, really just kind of going to games.

It's definitely been a different experience this year, but I do think we have a really good crop of players for this draft class. I'm excited about it. We've got a bunch of quarterbacks which makes it fun. Another year of a deep wide receiver talent pool. I like where we are with the offensive line position, as well, with a lot of depth.

It's going to be fascinating to see what happens in free agency. The expectation is we're going to see a lot more names pop up over this week as teams try and get under the yet-to-be-determined salary cap. I can't remember a time this late in the process where there was less known, but it's going to make it a really fun spring here as we march towards the draft.

Again, thank you guys for joining us, and fire away.

Q. What is the white helmet behind you?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: That's App State. That's the all-Americana Appalachian State helmet right there.

Q. First, news today, Kenny Golladay, the Lions are going to let him test free agency, so firmly would put wide receiver at No. 7 in the mix for them. If you were the Lions, what receiver would you hope to land there, be targeting there, why? And then if you could just give me a word on Micah Parsons and what you think he'll be in the NFL.

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, I think there's four good options when you throw Parsons in there with the wide receiver group. To me it would be Ja'Marr Chase just because of everything he can do. I think a lot of times when you're watching receivers, you see guys with -- guys that can win with separation and quickness and you see guys that can win with physicality and kind of contested catches.

When you watch him at LSU in 2019, you see examples of both, where he can separate from people off the line of scrimmage, he can separate at the top of his route. He plays big to go up and get the football, and then after the catch he gives you that strength and physicality to break tackles.

He's to me the best receiver in the draft. I can't imagine that he would be there, but man, that would be a home run pick for the Lions if he was.

And then I wouldn't have any issues with the other two, either, from Alabama. I think it's kind of a flavor thing with Waddle and DeVonta Smith. Waddle gives you a little bit more juice, but DeVonta Smith plays plenty fast, as well.

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DeVonta Smith, is a pristine route runner. He obviously as everybody knows is real thin. He is really long armed and can go up and get it as well.

I just thought what you get after the catch with some of the shiftiness and then just the home run speed with Waddle is why I ended up with Waddle over Smith.

GPS stuff is going to be big this year because we haven't had as much verified numbers, and talking to some teams around the league, Waddle had the fastest GPS of any receiver any country. Your eyes aren't deceiving you when you watch him. He's freaky fast. All three of those guys would be good options for Detroit. I don't think they could make a wrong pick there.

I think with Parsons, the ability to do everything. Off the ball you can also rush him a little bit. As impressive as his range and instincts are against the run, to me it's what he does in coverage. You see him cover tight ends up there at Penn State. You see him cover backs. I would have loved to have seen him this year, but I get it, he put so much good stuff on tape in '19 that he made the decision that he did.

He would fit in with that versatility that everybody is looking for. But more than anything else, I think with linebackers right now, I'm sure we'll get into it with more of these guys, but I'm looking at guys that can really run and cover, and he can do it.

Q. Are you surprised the Lions are not tagging Golladay, and does the strength of the receiver class, do you think that plays into it?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, I think when you look at how deep this group is -- and there's some good free agents out there, as well, so I'm curious. Sometimes it's not just in a vacuum. We'll see what they do what they money they could've allocated there and if they are aggressive in other areas where they can get better.

They'll have -- all the way into the fourth and fifth round, there's going to be good wide receivers again.

Q. Kyle Pitts, what makes him such a special player? And I know you had him going to the Eagles in the last mock draft, why would that make sense for them?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Well, I think you can make a strong case he's the best player in the draft. I have him as the third best player right now. When I update it, and I've seen a lot more going through all these defensive players, I just watched all these corners, and I'm watching these corners with first, second, third round draft grades in the SEC and

they can't cover the guy.

You split them out, and I think if he was just in this draft as an X receiver, he's a top-10 or -15 pick if you've never even watched him put his hand in the ground. At that size, to be able to get in and out like he does is pretty rare, to turn guys inside out.

You watch Kelce and you'll see Kelce run those pivot routes where he's so efficient and doesn't waste any steps. You see the same thing with Pitts, and then he has a bigger catch radius to go up over the top of people and make plays. To me it's a match-up that's going to be in your favor every time you line up.

The defense can't be right against him no matter what you do. You put big guys out there he's going to run away from them. You put small guys out there he's just going to pluck the ball off their heads. That to me is what makes him special.

I was talking to somebody in the league the other day about this. I thought it was a really fascinating point. If you're the Eagles, for example, and you're looking at one of the top receivers versus Kyle Pitts - and I know obviously Goddard is one of the best tight ends in the NFL - but to me I would love to break the huddle with those two guys and force teams to try and figure out how to match up with them.

The point that was made to me by someone in the league, they said, the interesting thing is we look at receivers and tight ends. Look at the franchise number and look at the difference in money. I think there's a difference of like 6 million bucks.

So not only do you have a rare mismatch player that's hard to find, once you get to the second contract he's going to be extremely affordable compared to if you were going to take a receiver with that same pick. So you're getting the same level of impact without having to pay that same level of cost. To me I think that could be something that could be a tiebreaker when you're making that decision.

Q. I wanted to ask you about three quarterbacks, two in this draft, one from last year's draft, Fields, Trey Lance, and Jalen Hurts. Of those three, who right now do you feel has the highest NFL ceiling?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Ooh, that's a good one. I would say the highest ceiling would be Justin Fields just because his speed and athleticism -- Trey Lance is a great runner and I think Trey Lance is probably going to run in the high 4.5s, which is incredible; and Jalen Hurts is a really good runner.

But Justin Fields can be a home run hitter as a runner. Just his speed makes him a little different there.

You look at all three of those guys have strong arms. I think that Fields has the ability to do as much as the other guys in terms of throwing the football.

That to me would be kind of the tiebreaker in terms of where he can ultimately get, but I think it's close between him and Trey Lance in that discussion. Trey Lance, he reminds me of Steve McNair. I was around McNair late in his career with the Ravens and just the physicality that he plays with, the toughness -- he's got a little room to grow in terms of just pure accuracy, but man, I think those two guys are really, really interesting.

Jalen Hurts I had as my 50th player and I thought he had a chance to be a quality starting quarterback at the NFL level, but these two kids to me have a much higher ceiling. That would be -- if you're looking at ceiling, that would be probably the order that I would go.

I think Trey Lance and Justin Fields is kind of a toss-up.

Q. To stay on the quarterback topic for one second, I know you said you've struggled getting through Mac Jones' tape to make full sense of it, but what is it about his limitations in today's game that has given you pause or tripping you up at times?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, I mean, look, I go back and look at the things that I value at the position, and most people value when you look at accuracy, decision making and poise, he's outstanding, off the charts in those three areas. But he just doesn't have a lot of twitch, and you don't see a lot of twitch with him being dynamic in terms of being able to create or escape and then you don't see a lot of twitch power on the football. He's got good enough arm strength but he doesn't have a big power arm.

When you look around the league and you go, Okay, we just had a pocket passer win the Super Bowl, so this guy is a pocket passer, what's so complicated? Well, the pocket passers that are successful in the NFL right now are the older veterans who have 15, 20 plus years of experience and knowledge to be able to have the answers to the test, and when you're a young quarterback trying to find your footing, trying to begin that knowledge, it sure is nice to be able to use your athleticism in the meantime as you're trying to gain that experience and gain that knowledge.

I just -- when things aren't going to be perfect in front of him, I think he's going to have a little bit of a hard time. I was talking on the phone with Orlovsky the other day about this, and we both said, Look, we're going to know draft

night how that's going to work out because we're going to know where he goes and what's around him and we're going to be able to determine pretty quickly how successful he can be. And if he has the right pieces that's why to me New Orleans, if he could somehow get to the bottom of the first round and end up in a place like New Orleans I think he's got a great chance to be successful in a scheme that fits, good offensive line, and the pieces around him.

But I worry a little bit going to a team picking in the top half of the first round with a lot of roster holes, I don't know if he's going to be able to create and get away from some of the pressure he's going to be under.

Q. I wanted to ask you about Naquan Jones. What is it about his toolbox that would allow him to have a productive NFL career?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Give me the position one more time.

Q. Defensive line, defensive tackle from Michigan State.

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yep, there we go. Big guy, 330 pounds. Look, he's an interesting one. I'll go through my notes here. Naquan. Yeah, I thought he carried a little bit of extra weight, but he was a block eater. I thought there was some upside there if he could lean out. I thought you had some upside there as a passer because he's got quick feet, but he was on the ground a little bit too much getting cut.

To me I'd put him in kind of like the fifth round range is where I have him. But I'll be curious to see once he gets to his pro day, he was 328 I think is the weight that I had him at. I'll be curious to see at the pro day what he weighs and how he moves because I thought there was a little something there.

Q. Just wanted to ask you about what you see as the Rams' biggest needs. Obviously they don't have a first-round pick, but as we saw last year with Cam Akers, they've been able to find impact players in the second round. What do you see as their biggest needs, and based on guys who are just inside or just outside your top 50 prospects, who might they be able to look at there at 57? What direction could they possibly go there?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: I think when you look at them, I think trying to find more edge rush. You're always trying to do that. We'll see what happens in free agency. I would imagine they'll probably be in the market for that. And then you could look on the offensive line, both interior and at tackle.

Those would be the two places I would look. You're looking at guys that could make some sense, from an edge rusher standpoint, the first edge rusher I have outside my top 50 is a kid Payton Turner from Houston who's really interesting. He lost some weight a little bit coming into this year. He was pretty dominant at the Senior Bowl, 6'5", 270 pounds, and he can play with his hand down or up. He's got really active hands. He's got speed to power. He's an interesting player that's just outside my top 50 as a rusher.

That would be a name I'd give you there. And then when you look at -- as I'm getting a text here on Slater's workout from somebody at the pro day, so I guess his arms were 33 inches, which is good. Ran a 4.9 flat, broad jump 9.4. That is for everybody on the call that wanted to know what Slater did. That would be an interesting one.

When you go interior offensive line, just outside the top 50 kind of in that range, you look at somebody like Kendrick Green from Illinois is fascinating to me. He's played left guard. He's played center. He can bend. He's explosive. I thought he's somebody that had his best football ahead of him. He's listed at 6'4", 315 pounds, but he can really move. That would be one as an interior lineman I would keep an eye on just outside the top 50.

I admire your hard work, though. When you're covering the Rams during the off-season, that's dedication there.

Q. Daniel, I'm going to give you a few players. If you were the Eagles, you're on the clock at 6, and you've mentioned all the players, Pitts, Waddle, Ja'Marr Chase and maybe -- I think Smith would probably be for whatever reason, and any offensive or defensive linemen, who would you take at that position?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: I would take Pitts. I would. I think it's a no-brainer. I think -- we've talked about how high the ceiling is with him. I mean, I think he can emerge as the best tight end in the National Football League. He's that type of dynamic ability.

I think when you have Jalen Hurts and you want to see what he can do and now you've got Kyle Pitts and you've got Goddard, you've got two guys that can really uncover and you're going to have favorable match-ups right in the middle of the field if you want them, those can be some easy completions.

To me that one would make the most sense for them, and I think it would make their offense the most dangerous.

I have Ja'Marr Chase and I have the same grade with Pitts, but to me if you wanted to find a receiver, another receiver

to kind of come along with some of these other young guys you're hoping are going to develop, I think you've got better options for some of those receivers later rounds than you would at the tight end position. This Kyle Pitts is a rare dude, man. I would take him.

Q. If Pitts isn't there, who is your pick?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: I would take Ja'Marr Chase. Look, I get it, they went to the receiver position last year, but this guy is on a whole different level. This is a big time pure No. 1 wide out. I think they need to get some firepower and evaluate the quarterback. That would help you do that.

Q. In your latest mock you have the 49ers going offensive tackle as an insurance policy with Trent Williams' status yet to be determined. We know corner is an immediate need for the 49ers in this off-season. Say the 49ers do go O-line at pick 12, who are some non-first round-round cornerbacks that may align with what they are looking for?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, I think in that second-round range is a really good group of corners, some interesting guys. To me, look, I've had Greg Newsome from Northwestern as my 31st player. He just ran 4.31 according to a GM that just texted me from that pro day. So he's not going to be there in second round. He is probably going to end up going in the 20s when it's all said and done. But he is a really good football player.

Some options there in the second round, I think you look at Kelvin Joseph from Kentucky who's really, really fluid, athletic. He's got great ball skills. He's one of those guys that got torched by Pitts, but I'm not going to hold that against him.

You've got Aaron Robinson from Central Florida who primarily played inside there, but who's real tough, physical, aggressive. Easy, easy speed. I think you're going to see -- if you're looking for big corners, I think both the Georgia corners are going to go in the second round. When you look at Tyson Campbell as well as Stokes from Georgia, both those guys are big and fast.

Eric Stokes the other day, everybody saw the training; he was running like the 4.2s. So both those guys, one was a state champ in Georgia in high school, the other was a state champ in Florida. Those are big time size, speed corners that I think you'll see come on the board there in the second round.

That's a really good group of corners in round 2. And then after that it really starts to drop off on my list. For those

teams looking for corners, they're going to all go, so you'd better get on that ride early in the first or second round.

Q. Looking at Caleb Farley and Patrick Surtain, how do you compare their two skill sets?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, I gave them both the same grade. I ended up with Farley over Surtain. I thought Farley from Virginia Tech was just a little better in short area quickness. When you have to match up with some of the smaller guys I thought he was just a little more dynamic in those short areas.

Both guys are really good in press. Both guys can really find and play the football down the field. For Surtain at Alabama, you saw him go up against tremendous competition throughout his career. He's really been tested and he's played at a high very level.

I know there's some teams that have that order flipped, that have Surtain over Farley. I think it's a good debate, and I think at the end of the day you're going to be happy with either one of these kids because of the size, speed, toughness, and ability to play the ball they both have.

Q. Why is Joe Tryon a good fit for the Browns at 26, and is that edge position in your eyes the biggest need that their defense has to address, either in the draft or in free agency?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Well, I mean, I think you could look at a couple other places on that defense. You're still continuing to add corner depth. You look at the linebacker position, somebody can really run and cover at the linebacker position I think would be a place they could go. This edge rusher group is really, really tough to sort out and figure out because you've got a mixture of guys who were opt-outs like try on who didn't play this year. You've got like Jayson Oweh from Penn State who's going to run in the 4.3s as a dynamic athlete who didn't have a sack this year, so you've got to kind of figure that out.

You've got Kwity Paye from Michigan who is going to test like a freak at his pro day, but they moved him all around. I thought he was out of position a little bit. So you've got to sort through that.

Azeez Ojulari is a really good player on tape, and the more I've watched him, the more I've liked him. They could put him in the mix there. I think he's got a chance he could be off the board by that time, but we don't know how big he is. He is listed at 6'3", 240, so is he 6'2", 235? Is 6'3½", 250? There's a lot of questions on these guys is what I'm getting at.

With Tryon, he's got size, he's got length. He's got really active, good hands. He's a little bit stiff in the ankles. You see that when he gets to the top of his pass rush. But this is somebody that has the ability to collapse the pocket. Joe Tryon you could see go late in the first round out of Washington or you could see him go in the second round. I think teams are all over the map on these edge rushers.

Q. I'm looking at what Tristan Wirfs did, including in the Super Bowl tournament, just playing so well. Is there someone like that that you think could go this year that is able to be a very helpful player to a team as a rookie?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: On the offensive line or just any position?

Q. Anywhere, a difference maker -- rookies aren't supposed to be able to do that, I think, but he did.

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, man, he's a very dynamic player and somebody who -- his only issue coming out of Iowa was he would over set a little bit and he could get beat inside, and I don't think I saw him get beat inside once this whole year.

Someone who had all that athletic ability, all that power and strength and had a little bit of a technique thing he needed to clean up, and he did, so there you go and he's off and running.

If you're asking me for somebody that's going to go outside the top 10 that I think could be a Rookie of the Year type impact, I'll go to Kentucky and I'll go to the linebacker because Jamin Davis, who is listed at 6'4", 234 pounds, again, I keep telling you guys what these guys are listed at because we have no verified numbers on any of them. He looks so much like Darius Leonard when you study him, and you saw the impact that Darius Leonard had as a rookie coming in the second round.

I think this kid is going to find his way in the first round once he gets to the pro day and people get a chance to really put their eyes on him. But he's just got some wow plays with his range, with his ability again in pass coverage.

You watch the Tennessee game, that kid has got a 85-yard pick six in that game. He covers tight ends all over the field. He's quick to trigger. He's got really good eyes.

So he's somebody that -- I mean, I didn't honestly know who he was during the fall. Nobody had said anything to me about him, and then you're kind of going through and watching on tape and this guy just jumps off the screen. I

did find out from a couple buddies in the league, yeah, they weren't trying to get that one out, but you can't hide how athletic that kid is.

He'd be somebody I think has got like legitimate rookie of the year type ability that you don't hear talked about in the top half of the first round.

Q. Is there a team or -- sounds like he'd be good for a lot of teams, but do you see any teams sort of honing in on him?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Well, I mean, I think you look down at the back end of the first round you've got some teams that have some linebacker needs. We just talked about Cleveland. Man, he would be great there. He would be dynamic in Tampa Bay if they ended up losing Levonte David in free agency. You just plug him in and off you go. Linebackers that can run, cover, they fit everybody.

Q. Just touching on a couple of things you said earlier, I'm wondering with the opt-outs and the traditional combine getting scrapped and the data is just trickling in on these guys from pro days, do you think it's going to be a draft of mystery? I know the spring is going to be mysterious, but will the draft itself do you think be kind of throwing us some curves?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: I think so. I think there's -- we saw a little bit of this last year where it's difficult to predict because, look, group think is a real thing. When you get scouts that pal around together, we all -- we go to the same schools and you'd be at the same places watching the same players. Everybody ends up talking and you kind of end up getting some consensus on some players, and that also takes place when coaches and players and personnel guys get together at the combine and the All-Star games. We had the Senior Bowl, but there was no East-West game, there was no combine, so there's just been less gathering.

I think in some ways it's better because you get individual evaluations, but I can't remember more variance just talking to buddies around the league about specific players where the orders are so wildly different, and to me that's what makes it fun.

I think a lot of teams that I've talked to have really tried to shrink their draft board more so than years past. New England was famous for that, where most teams would have 150 players on their draft board, New England would only have 75, 80 guys. Like these guys are the guys that fit us. Maybe we pick them a little early but we know them and we're comfortable with those guys.

More teams I think this year are doing that. There's going to be some teams that are aggressive and gamble on guys they don't have as much information on and swing for the fences, but those are the teams that are very secure in their jobs. I think if you're in a situation where you've got to nail this thing, I think teams are going to be aiming for doubles, not home runs.

Q. I know you mentioned another deep wide receiver group, another deep offensive line group. I'm wondering about your evaluation on defense of this year's class, particularly the guys that would kind of counter the modern mobile quarterbacks and the modern offenses, the three-down linebackers, nickel backs, maybe the defensive tackle who can pressure the passer. Where does this year stack up do you think?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, well, start with the negative. It's probably one of the worst defensive tackle groups that we've had in the last decade. It's just not very good. I think there's a good chance we don't see a defensive tackle go in the first round. I would say just talking to people around the league, Christian Barmore is probably the one who's got a chance.

I like Levi Onwuzurike from Washington, but when it's all said and done, I think he goes in the second round. So it's not a great year for defensive tackles. You talk about being able to deal with all the speed, I love the linebacker group, off the ball linebackers. I think there's some guys that can really, really play with the way the game is right now.

We talked about Parsons. You've got Owusu-Koramoah from Notre Dame who's going to be a fascinating player who played like 210, 215 pounds, but just runs all over the place, makes all kinds of plays. You can deploy him in a lot of different ways, almost function as a strong safety, you can use him as a nickel linebacker.

You've got Zaven Collins from Tulsa who one buddy that I talked to in the league when I first watched him, he was like, What do you think? I said, Man, I really like him. It's hard big guys like that. He reminds me a little bit of Vander Esch coming out of Boise State, and this is an older scout.

He said, Man, I saw some similarities to Brian Urlacher when he was coming out of New Mexico. You're talking about somebody that's 6'4", 260 pounds that can really run and cover. If you want to have fun, go watch his 96-yard walk off pick six in overtime against Tulane. You'll see how athletic that kid is.

Nick Bolton from Missouri; we've talked about Davis from Kentucky; Jabril Cox from; LSU; Pete Werner and Baron Browning from Ohio State; Chazz Surratt from North Carolina. All those guys are modern-day linebackers to deal with these tight ends and athletic backs out of the backfield.

That to me is a really, really good group of off-the-ball guys.

Q. In New England, obviously the big question mark has to do with quarterback. Everything starts there. I was just wondering from your perspective who do you see as the best quarterback fit for the Patriots in this draft?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: It's a great question. You know, the hard thing about the Patriots is you've just gone from watching a Patriots team play 20 years with one style of quarterback and you watch them go in a totally different direction with Cam coming in there.

I don't know what direction Coach Belichick wants to go. Does he want to try and do a little bit more of a new school really mobile athletic quarterback where he can do some quarterback run stuff and then hopefully you get somebody that's just a little bit healthier than where Cam was with his arm and being a little bit more consistent as a passer.

I could see Bill Belichick having an affinity and a lot of fun with a guy like Trey Lance. Trey is going to need some time. The only thing that would hold me back on that is I don't know if he's going to be ready to do that right away. You'd have to be patient with him.

But when you talk to the folks at North Dakota State, this kid is incredibly intelligent, which we know the Patriots have always placed a premium on. He can direct fronts, he can do all the stuff at the line of scrimmage you need to do. He's a fantastic athlete and runner. He's got a power arm that fits in the weather in that division later in the year. He can play through that.

Gosh, this guy has been up in the Dakotas, grew up in Minnesota, so the weather thing would be -- he'd be very comfortable there. I just think all the character stuff I've gotten has been off the charts.

All those things line up with what Belichick has traditionally wanted on the team, it's just I think we're all guessing a little bit on what direction he wants to take the offense.

Q. How far up a move would they have to make to 15, or will he be at 15 in your view?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: You know, I think we'll know more as we kind of see the dust settle on some of these veterans and some of the movement that could take place there.

To me I've kind of looked at Trey Lance and I've looked at 8 to the Carolina Panthers as a really good fit for him. But if we see -- we'll see what the Jets do, but if for some reason the Jets decide to stick with Sam Darnold, that takes a quarterback out of their spot.

I saw the reports from Mort the other day about the Eagles being out of the quarterback business. Maybe they wouldn't have to go up that high if some of these quarterbacks start to drop.

We'll see what Atlanta does at 4, if they stick with Matt Ryan. Then we could start to see these guys drop. I think we're all assuming that all four of these quarterbacks are going to go in the top 10 and maybe even 5 with Mac Jones having some love around the league.

But it just takes one or two of these teams to find other options, and then the Patriots wouldn't have to go up quite as far.

Q. On Vera-Tucker from USC, wanted to know how he's progressed in your mind as his evaluation process has gone on? And what's the advisability generally of taking a guard in the first round?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Well, I don't think Indianapolis has any regrets, obviously. Quenton Nelson is a special player. But I think there's a lot of value. I think when you look at the way the ball is coming out and the way the ball is being played right now, being firm up the middle, we've always talked about it with the Saints with Drew Brees over all those the years, the value of having a firm pocket. To me that is a big deal.

And Vera-Tucker I think he's one of the cleaner players in the whole draft. He played left tackle and played it darned well this year. I think if you wanted to, he could hold up fine out there.

But I think he's got a chance to be a perennial all pro as a guard. He plays with instincts and awareness. He's strong to anchor down. He always is under control. He really did a good job working up to the second level this year. He can bend. Everything you hear about him is he's highly intelligent, great character. He's my 15th player in the draft, and when I do my update, he might even move up a little bit.

I just think to me if you're asking who are safe picks that are just going to be day-one starters and fill a role for the

next decade, I think this kid has got that type of ability and makeup. I absolutely think he's worth a pick in the top 15, and I think teams around the NFL really value this kid.

Q. Last year there were a lot of left tackles who were plug-and-play guys that played at a very high level. This year's class who's the top guy?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: That's a great question. To me when you look at last year's group I think it's better than this year's group. There might be some difference of opinion there, but I had Mekhi Becton last year, I had a huge grade on him. You look at Jedrick Wills and then you look at Wirfs, and then I had -- Georgia kid as my fourth one who went to the Giants.

So to me when I stack up this class, I actually have Rashawn Slater as the top tackle in the draft, and I just mentioned a little bit earlier his arms came in at 33 inches today, which is not great, but to me it's good enough that he can hold up a tackle, and he's just such a clean, clean player on tape.

You go back and watch him at Northwestern against Chase Young in 2019 and he more than held his own. His ability to recover and rework his hands in that game was really good. He can bend. He's one of the better guys.

And even comparing him to the group last year, if you look at just the ability to climb up to the second level in the run game and what he can do with his athleticism, I'd say he does that better than even the tackles in last year's draft. But he would be my top one this year.

Penei Sewell is right there behind him. They're very close. Sewell is a massive dude who's really -- it's interesting because he's very explosive when you watch him at Oregon in 2019. He's explosive, but he still needs to add some strength. In other words, you see him just drive off the ball, you'll see, man, he's quick, he's dynamic with how quick he can get out of his stance. He covers up speed rushers no problem.

But in pass protection sometimes you'll see guys kind of tug and pull him and move him around a little bit. He just needs to get a little bit stronger. But he was playing his -- he's a young kid at that point in time.

He's got a lot of upside, but if I was going to look at it from last year, I would take Becton, Wills, and Wirfs over the top two guys in this year's draft class. But I think all five of those guys are really good players. Last year I had Wirfs as the No. 3 guy and he ended up playing better than everyone else, so that speaks to just how good that group was last year.

Q. I know you've talked a little bit about the draft already, but specifically pertaining to the New York Jets, this is kind of a two-part question. What stands out to you about the options that the Jets have at the top of the draft? And more specifically, what areas can Joe Douglas attack in this draft with five picks in those first three rounds?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, I mean, they are -- it's going to be fun. I know Joe is going to have a lot of fun with this draft because he's got -- he has got an arsenal of weapons to use here to try and get this roster in better shape.

It starts with the No. 2 pick and starts with the evaluation of Sam Darnold and what they want to do at that spot. I went through and just kind of broke this down the other day because I wanted to see what it looked like.

So if you're the Jets, with that pick, which is going to be the biggest decision that Joe Douglas will make as a general manager for that team, you've got the stay with Sam and you've got the draft a quarterback plan. To stay with Sam, if you want to stay with it financially, Sam is I think 4.8 this year; let's round that up to 5 million. You've got 20 million would be the fifth year option; you've got 30 million would be if you franchised him the following year.

So the Jets have Sam under control there for those three years at 18.3 per year, which is a pretty reasonable number if you take into context the number we just saw yesterday.

But if they decided to trade Sam, you go and draft somebody which I would say would be Zach Wilson, you're looking at four years of control before you get to that fifth year option at 8.7 million per year. So you're going to save 10 million per year on average. You're going to get an extra year of control. So that's the financial difference.

Then with Sam, obviously you still get the No. 2 pick, which you could pick or trade off and get more picks. But if you decide to go with the Wilson route, you're going to get that savings in money and you're going to get whatever you get for Sam Darnold, as well, which I think could be pretty interesting.

When you look at the teams picking 8, 9, and 12, when you look at Carolina, you look at Denver, you look at San Francisco, I think all three of those teams could make sense as trade partners for Sam Darnold if they decided to go that route. I know people say, Well, there's no way they're trading a top 12 pick for Sam. No, but I think there's a way you could work something out there where you attach Sam with another pick.

To me I'd be trying to figure out a way where you could do Sam and pick 34 and see if that would do it, to get all the way back up there in the top 8, 9, or 12 position and now you're the Jets and you're dancing up there with those picks. Those are the two options they can make there.

In terms of the other areas of the roster they can address. I look at edge rush, I look at corner, and I think just having been around Joe, and you saw it last year with Mekhi Becton, he's always going to place a premium on the offensive line. So I think you continue to invest along that offensive line to help out whoever is quarterback, whether it's Sam or whether you draft a guy.

Q. With the quarterbacks up top, Fields and Wilson, I'm hearing a lot of discrepancies on those two. How are you evaluating Justin Fields and Zach Wilson there?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Look, I think both those guys are going to be really good players at the next level. I would say I don't think there's a debate in terms of who played better last year when you just watch all the tape. To me Zach Wilson played the best. But that doesn't necessarily mean it's a slam dunk he's going to be the best player.

So that's the challenge and the evaluation is you've got Zach who threw the ball better, somebody who made better decisions. But you look at what Justin brings to the table with his -- first of all, let's start with his toughness. We saw that in the Clemson game. That's nothing to be diminished there. He is extremely tough.

You look at somebody that can make those throws, make every throw, somebody that is a dynamic runner, obviously that's a big plus for him over Zach Wilson. But to me I think the reason why I end up going with Zach Wilson is really simple. It's just I thought he was a better decision maker and I thought he threw the ball more accurately.

But again, somebody is going to draft Justin Fields and they're going to mix in some design quarterback run game and they're going to let him get on the move and make things happen and we're going to continue to see him grow and develop, and I think he's got a chance to be a really good pro, as well.

Q. Could you expound on that Trey Lance/McNair comparison, what reminds you of Steve that you see in Lance?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, I think when you watched -- I was around Steve towards the end of his career, but when you watch him when he was younger, too, you'll see him

run and you'll see him -- he'll get hit by a linebacker at the 4 yard line and find his way into the end zone, and you see the same thing with Trey Lance.

Both guys came from a lower level of competition, both guys were dominant at that level. You look at the power arms to be able to drive the football down the field. You look at guys that their teammates really, really rally around and love, I just think there's a lot of similarities between the two.

Q. Colts obviously have a big hole to fill at left tackle with Anthony Castonzo retiring. Wondering if at 21 you see a tackle that could drop right in and start from day one or if that is something you think they would have to move up to get?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: No, I think there's some options there. Christian Darrisaw from Virginia Tech is interesting, who I think some teams will view him as a guard. Played left tackle there at Virginia Tech. He's got really, really strong upper body. He can latch and control guys, powerful guy.

He's really good in the run game. To me I think he'd be an interesting one.

Tevin Jenkins is 6'6", 350 pounds out of Oklahoma State. He's a fun one to study. Just a real tough, physical, kind of a violent player. And you look at the way they want to run the ball there in Indianapolis, he could fit in there, as well.

Jalen Mayfield is some -- I think teams are split on him. I liked him, out of Michigan. Played right tackle there. His tape is a little bit up and down, but he's got a lot of athletic ability and just needs to be a little bit more consistent, but there's a lot to work with.

Those guys to me would be interesting options that I think could have a chance to step right into the lineup and plug and play.

Q. You were talking about the differences in this draft with all the things that we don't know. Looking at all that stuff, the lack of medicals, the lack of measurements that you can trust, some guys didn't play, you weren't able to nose around on campuses and find out stuff about players the way you normally would. What's the biggest thing in talking to scouts and personnel people this year, what's the biggest obstacle to being able to evaluate as well as you normally would?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Well, to me I think the missed opportunities at practice from just a purely scouting

standpoint, because there's so many things you can pick up at practice. Not only what they're doing and just the practice but you want to see how guys work, how they interact.

I always go back to Andy Reid and his emphasis he always placed on guys with energy, and it's one thing to have a coach tell you that a guy is passionate, he likes football. You right that in your notebook. It's another thing to go out there at practice and see a guy bouncing around and leading every drill and kind of getting his teammates going. Those are the pieces of information that we just didn't get a chance to get this year. That to me is really a big challenge.

And then I know from a general manager level they're always going to have issues when they don't have all the medical information that they would like. The way I understand it on the medical stuff, sounds like 150 players are going to go to Indy for physicals sometime in April. The rest of these guys are going to be doing physicals locally, and then kind of like tell he dock type stuff.

That's different from getting your own doctors looking at all these guys, and then if you have any issues or questions or maybe it's a non-combine guy. You can fly that guy in for one of your visits and get another look at him. There's always going to be some GMs that are always going to be a little bit restless and a little bit uncomfortable on the medical front.

Q. In terms of the cornerback, you talk about how you want to get them in the first couple of rounds. Within those guys in the first two rounds, is there kind of a point of separation say between Farley and Surtain and that next tier starting with Jaycee Horn? Are they pretty balanced in terms of where they stand going into the first two rounds?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: I think as we get closer to the draft and based off what I heard today from Northwestern and from you saw the time there that was posted by -- gosh, why is his name going to escape me right now? Greg Newsome from Northwestern.

I think we're going to see four guys kind of separate from the pack. So you're going to have Farley, you're going to have Surtain. Those are going to be the top two. I think there's a little bit of a gap between those guys and then you get to Jaycee Horn. I think Greg Newsome is kind of quickly closing that space with Jaycee horn to the fact where I wouldn't be shocked if Newsome ended up going ahead of him.

I think it's those four guys, and to me there's a little bit of a

dropoff where you have some more questions on the guys after that big four.

Q. With the Steelers at 24 looking at running back, do you think there's any way Harris drops to them there? And if not, what offensive linemen are you looking at possibly for them at 24?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, I wouldn't just be limited to Harris. I'm getting ready to update my list. The next time I update it I am probably going to have Javonte Williams from North Carolina over Harris. He is a really good player. To me he would be a great, great fit with Pittsburgh. I wouldn't have any problems.

I know people kind of look at the running back thing one way or the other. When you're picking down there in the bottom of the first round and you've got a chance to get an impact player like Javonte Williams from North Carolina, to me I think that would be a heck of a pick.

He's just like Nick Chubb, and when you watch him you see it. When you talk to the coaches at North Carolina that have been -- they have some coaches there that have come from Georgia, and they say that the similarities are eerie, just they're all business, physical, great leaders, can catch the ball out of the backfield, can do a lot of different things. I wouldn't just limit it to him.

So there's some good options there at the running back position.

And then you were talking about tackles or what were you looking at for the other position?

Q. Center, tackle.

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, interior offensive line wise, it's not a great group in terms of the high-end guys. If you wanted to take a little bit of a risk, Landon Dickerson from Alabama. If he didn't tear his ACL towards the end of the year and didn't have some other injuries during his time at Florida State, I think he'd be -- he almost is just a perfect Steeler. He is physical and nasty. He's fun to watch. He's quick. He's a taller guy. He's 6'6", 326 pounds, but we've seen the Steelers coming off a pretty good run here with a tall center, so he'd be a great fit provided he could be okay with the medical stuff.

Q. This question is about the Falcons. If they happen to trade back and give up that No. 4 spot for someone who wants a cornerback, who would be some of the players given Terry Fontenot coming out saying they're going to do best player available in his first draft likely? And can Slater or Penei Sewell play

guard?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, for sure Slater can do it. He can slide inside and play guard. I think he's got five position flexibility. Some teams even like him as a center. Penei Sewell I think you're going to park him at tackle. I think you'd probably be wasting him to slide him inside. He's better suited to slide out there or stay out there at left tackle.

In terms of trading back, yeah, I would think they'll have opportunities to trade back if teams want to come up for quarterbacks, and then you start looking at best available player. The interesting thing is you've got all these wide receivers that are so highly rated, but that doesn't really make sense right now for where Atlanta is.

I'd probably keep an eye on somebody like Micah Parsons to just be an impact defensive player or you could get one of those two corners we've talked about who would be big-time talented guys to add to a young secondary who's got some good pieces.

Those would probably be the areas that I would look if they were to slide back a little bit. But when you look at the way the board shakes out, if you wanted to try and find an edge rusher, which is a need, you could make a strong case they could trade back twice. You know, trade back once for the teams coming up for the quarterbacks, and you might have somebody coming up for an offensive lineman.

You could probably trade back and get into the teens and then you could find your way to Kwity Paye from Michigan, Jaelan Phillips from Miami, one of those types of players. Maybe even stay right there, get the edge rusher Ojulari from Georgia. To me there might be a double trade down opportunity for them.

Q. With the guys who sat out this season, is Greg Rousseau the biggest guy who hurt himself by doing it, and who are some guys who their stock went up or down by not playing this year?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Well, I don't know if we can even say until we get to the draft and see what happens. Like Rousseau has some really good tape. He only had one year of it, but you're talking about somebody who's 6'7", 260 pounds who's got 15 and a half sacks in the ACC. He's got some accomplishments to work off of here.

I don't see how he falls out of the top 15 in any case. We'll see how he tests. If he tests well, he might be right back up there.

But I thought if he would have played, to get a chance to

see him when he was fresh in everybody's mind and he had another double-digit sack year in that conference, then I think you would say, Okay, this kid will be a top 5 pick, because you couldn't ignore it.

Maybe you could say that drops him down a little bit, but like a guy like Caleb Farley opted out and I still think he's -- I don't say a lock, but if he runs like we expect him to run, I believe he'll be a top 10 pick.

I think for the guys that opted out or that missed seasons with some of the guys at the lower level that they just didn't have a fall season, I think it maybe impacted them a little bit more.

There's a corner, Paulson Adebayo from Stanford who had kind of an up and down 2019, inconsistent, and then didn't get a chance to play this year. That would have been an opportunity for him. I think he's probably a third, fourth round pick. Maybe he could have vaulted himself up with a big year this year.

Spencer Brown from Northern Iowa is a big offensive tackle. They didn't have a season. He's raw. He needed more reps, but really athletic. He got a chance to go to the Senior Bowl, was a little bit uneven there, but man, that would have been nice for him to just have 13 games to go play to get better.

To me it almost impacted those guys more than it did some of these top tier guys. Ja'Marr Chase is going to go in the top 10, and he didn't play a snap.

Q. I wanted to ask you about process, not prospects. You've worked for three NFL teams. You know a lot of people in the industry, obviously. GMs always talk about taking the best player on the board, having the board set in advance. Do you find that it's harder, whether it's people you've worked for or stories heard from GMs to really truly stick to their board all the time in every round? And also can you talk about the process that teams use for distinguishing rankings, whether it's numerical, letters, and how when you get into the later rounds and you have different players at different positions how that might be all kind of in the same talent cluster, how they're separated?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Sure, that's a good question. Look, to me the biggest thing is you've got to have those decisions made beforehand. Like I never understood some teams when you're on the clock and you're trying to scramble around and you're like, what do you think, we've got this guy and we've got that guy, in the first round.

Coaches like this guy -- like when I was in Baltimore with



Ozzie Newsome and Phil Savage and Eric DeCosta, they had the top 150. It was printed out on a piece of paper that they had and it was literally paint by numbers. Guy gets picked, cross him off the list. You were going to be picking at 22 and we're going to take the highest guy that was on that list.

The debate was over. All that discussion had taken place. There's no chaos. There's no drama. All that stuff has been hashed out and you know exactly what you're going to do. And that's why people always say, Is it best player available or do you go by need? It's a little bit of a mixture, and I'll just say that because you have your draft board that goes horizontally where you have all the positions listed.

Well, I might have like the grading scale we had, so say I have a 6.7 grade on Waddle from Alabama, the receiver. Well, then I have a 6.7 grade on Farley from Virginia Tech, the corner. At that point in time, you know what, we need a corner more than we need a receiver. We've got the same grade on the guy so we're going to slot the corner above the receiver. So that's how you kind of break some ties there maybe more need based.

When you get yourself in trouble is when you have a linebacker that you've got a high grade on, a 6.7 and you say, but we needed a receiver or we needed a tackle who's at a 6.3 level, don't leap frog guys over their talent level. That's when you get in trouble.

Q. Why do you think some GMs, and we hear stories about it all the time, why do you think they have difficulty doing just what you said about sticking to that board and taking the best player available there?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Well, I think sometimes you can get -- you can have some blinders on a little bit and get a little bit narrowly focused in short-term and think, Gosh, we've got a game in a few months and I don't know who's going to be our left guard, and this guy is right here. This guy fills that immediate problem right now, so then I don't have to worry about that anymore.

Well, in fact you've got other rounds in this draft. You've got other options through other avenues to try and get players, and you're never going to be able to fill every single spot.

The last thing you want to do is make concessions and sacrifice great players for good players and then you end up with a team with no difference makers. That is kind of a challenge, but I give teams credit that don't fall into that trap.

Again, go back to the Baltimore time when I was there and

Terrell Suggs was the rookie of the year; didn't start a game. We had really good edge rushers and he came in on 3rd down. They drafted Todd Heap when they already had Sharpe. You draft Jamal Lewis when you already had Priest Holmes, on and on and on. You go through a million of those examples. Take the best player. Eventually it all sorts itself out.

But at the end of the day you don't want to have left a bunch of great players out there for the rest of the league so you can get somebody that can start at left guard.

Q. At 19 in your latest mock you have Washington taking a left tackle. Do you think they could go quarterback at that position, and if they don't at 19, do you see them taking a quarterback in maybe the second or third round like Kyle Trask?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: It's interesting, when you look at Washington I'll be curious to see what they end up doing because it feels like in a division that's really kind of up for grabs that they just won last year, to me they look more towards somebody that's plug and play.

If you're going to look inside the draft, I would say where they're picking Mac Jones would be one that would make some sense with how they want to play.

But more than anything else, I think them getting a veteran makes more sense than anything. Do they get involved in the Sam Darnold sweepstakes? I think that would make sense. We'll see what happens with some of these other maybe short-term fixes. If something shook free in San Francisco -- you hear rumors about that stuff. If I was Washington and something happened with Garoppolo, I'd be trying to get in on that, as well.

I think the team is pretty good right now. Defense is obviously great, and they're ready to win, so I don't think they want to kind of nurture and babysit a young quarterback. I think to me it looks more like they'd be going the veteran route.

But if they were going to pick a quarterback, to me, of the group, Mac would make sense there. And if they wanted to go for one in the middle rounds, I'll give you one: Davis Mills from Stanford is intriguing. He's had a couple ACLs, but this was the No. 1 quarterback in the country coming out of high school. He can really drive the ball. He's not as athletic as maybe he would have been without the injuries, but he's got poise.

He's obviously at Stanford. He's incredibly intelligent, and I thought you saw him get better throughout the year. He'd be one I'd kind of keep an eye on in the mid rounds, third

round, fourth round, somewhere in there.

Q. I know you've talked about Greg Newsome and how you think he's going to go in the first round. What do you think the range is for him, and what do you like most about his game?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, he's easy to watch. I mean, he's always in phase. He's always in position, what we like to call being in phase. You never see a lot of separation there with him in his assignments. He's really clean from that standpoint. He's so smooth. I think there was some questions about just how fast he was, and sometimes we see guys like that. Well, he's as fast as he needs to be.

I was talking with a GM the other day about him, and he said they were having their draft meetings, and he said, We all kind of questioned his speed and then we went around the room and we said, Do you have any examples of anybody running away from him? Well, no. I don't see anybody running away from him. Unfortunately didn't get to see him against Ohio State, so that would have been a good chance to test him there.

But he knows how to find and play the ball. He can play off, he can play press. The only thing to me with him is he's missed some games with injuries, and so you've got to make sure everything is good there from a durability standpoint, but size, length, speed, ball skills. There's a lot to like there. I think that looming question about the speed, he answered that with a punctuation mark today with what he ran.

What are the ranges for him? Fast corners that have all the stuff that he has, you're talking about somebody that potentially could go in the top 15, top 20. I don't envision any chance he gets out of the first round based off what he's run and how he's played.

Q. Any chance he slides to Cleveland at 26?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: I would -- let the rest of the spring play out, but I would say as we stand here today on March 9th, I would say that's looking doubtful.

Q. Wanted to ask you about Assante Samuel, Jr. And also some of the other Florida State prospects that you have highly on your board.

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Sure. I was around his dad when I was working with the Eagles, and you see the movement stuff is eerily similar. Just out of their pedal they look exactly the same. Just really good eyes to just plant, drive, anticipate throws. He's really, really comfortable and good in zone coverage. I love him there.

Some of the deep speed and just the overall explosiveness is a little bit of the question there. No question about his toughness whatsoever.

To me he's a little bit like last year when we had Winfield where you kind of could try and ding Winfield on his lack of size or this, that, or the other and be like, I don't know, this guy just grew up around the game. His dad was a great player. He's always around the football.

And we saw the Antoine Winfield, Jr., the impact he made with the Bucs. I think this is the same type of situation with Assante Samuel where you can try and nit-pick him and ding him. He's not the biggest, probably not going to be the fastest. He's just a really, really good football player.

So I think he's around two, middle late round 2 is where I kind of have him. Maybe round 3; a chance he slides down there, but I don't think he gets out of day two.

For some of the other Florida State kids, Hamsah Nasirildeen, the safety. Coming off the ACL only saw him in two games this year, but I liked him when he was lined up down low. He's an excellent blitzer. Really reliable tackler. You've got some upside with him to be able to use that size. He's 6'3", 213 pounds to be able to match up with some tight ends. He's an interesting one.

Marvin Wilson, I think was a little bit a victim of some of the expectations. He was such a high recruit, defensive tackle. Just you come in with expectations really high you're left a little bit disappointed, but he plays hard. I thought his hands were quicker than his feet. He's just not real twitched up or dynamic. I thought he was a little bit better in 2019. I think he's probably a fourth-round type pick.

A couple more guys, you've got Janarius Robinson and Josh Kaindoh, guys who can come off the edge, guys who have got some size and length. So those guys are more fifth round, sixth round type players.

And then you've got Tamorrion Terry, the wide receiver who's kind of a build-speed player who is kind of a wall off. Gonna win some 50/50 balls. Thought he did some good things in 2019, as well. Does have some drops over the shoulder, but I thought he was kind of a later-round guy in a really good wide receiver draft.

Q. If Denver doesn't go corner at 9, who are some other guys you think they could select there or if they trade down a few spots?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, I mean, look, the receiver group is loaded, so that wouldn't make as much sense

even though there will be some really good options there for them at that point in time.

You know, it would be fun to watch what Vic could do with Micah Parsons out of Penn State just because he can do so many different things and Vic could be creative with him. His ability to -- just really week to week you could change his role and how you want to use him.

I think he's got a chance to be a really good rusher, too, if you even just wanted to cut him loose and let him do some of that stuff. That would be one that would be kind of interesting there.

I think everybody just kind of looks at the corner position and just looks like an obvious spot there where they're picking, the talent that will be there, that that makes an awful lot of sense. I think they need a defensive tackle, but I don't think there's anybody worth taking up that high.

Q. Assuming Garoppolo stays and the Niners don't take a quarterback at 12 but want to back him up at 43 with a quarterback, who would logically still be on the board? And with the way quarterbacks are over-drafted, someone there at 43 must have some kind of fatal flaw. With the one or two guys that you think might be there, what would be their fatal flaw to explain why they would still be hanging around?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, the two guys I would have that are kind of outside the big five, so my 6 and 7 quarterbacks are Kellen Mond and David Mills. Kellen Mond is not the thickest guy. He's 6'2.5", 205 pounds. If you feel like you been watching him at A&M for the last 10 years if feels like and you've seen some mistakes and some inconsistency as a younger player, I thought he really got better and played well this year culminating with a great Senior Bowl week where he was MVP of the game.

But again, probably just the size would ding him and some of the inconsistencies as a younger player. But I like him, and I think he's got a quick arm. I think he's got a live arm. He can create and extend a little bit. Talking to the guys down there at A&M, they said when they would get on the plane after games he would be standing up in the aisle with Jimbo Fisher already watching the tape with him, so he was always dialed in, always around the facility.

My grade probably puts him more in the third-round range for that next group with him and Davis Mills. But as you said, guys get moved up at that position. That would be him, and then I talked a little bit earlier about Davis Mills, just some of the durability stuff would be an issue there and maybe not the most dynamic in terms of his ability to create, but he's got good size.

He's got a live arm. He's a really smart kid who's got quick eyes and makes good decisions. Those would be the two guys to me that are in that next tier. And then for me Kyle Trask is behind those guys.

Q. You touched on Patriots' quarterback options earlier, but they do have quite a few other needs, as well? What are some early round prospects, day one, day two guys that you could see them targeting in this year's draft?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, I mean, I think when you look at the tight end position is pretty interesting. To me like there's certain guys you watch -- I do this every year when you're kind of watching players, like, oh, this is a Patriots player, and I did that when I was looking at the tight end position this year with a couple guys.

Hunter Long from Boston College, who probably factors in the second-round range, who can play in line, you can move him around. He's a real physical kid, lots of contested catches. He's got size, highly intelligent. He kind of fits that mold there.

And then Tommy Tremble from Notre Dame who's the best blocking tight end in the draft who also is really, really explosive and dynamic and has some upside as a receiver. Just didn't get a lot of targets, didn't get a lot of balls. But really, really explosive. Some inconsistent hands, but New England going to shop at Boston College and Notre Dame seems about right at the tight end position.

So those would be a couple guys that I think make sense.

And then if you're looking at the wide receiver position, it hasn't been something they've really gone after a ton high in the draft over the years, and I think there's a couple players that can win in the middle of the field that kind of fit. When the Patriots are rolling, they have that guy that can really separate and make plays inside, and I think adding somebody to their group like an Elijah Moore from Ole Miss who you could use in the backfield, you can do a lot of creative stuff with him, he's fun.

And then I would also keep an eye and look at a guy like a Rondale Moore from Purdue. Even though he is undersized, you've got a lot of value, you can do a lot of different things, and really win with quickness.

Q. You are a bit of an outlier in ranking Slater over Sewell, but you do say that Sewell has the most upside of those guys. What is his ceiling and what is his floor, and if either of those guys is available at No. 5, should Cincinnati pounce?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, I think either one of them would be great, would fit really well in there.

Look, I have Slater over Sewell. I think he's more consistent. I think I know exactly where he is, but you mentioned that Sewell has got more upside. He's just bigger. He's a more powerful guy. When you look at kind of the makeup of the offensive line there in Cincinnati, I think you could make an argument for Sewell ahead of Slater just because of that.

In terms of his upside, I think he's got a chance to be a really, really good player. I've been around -- I've been spoiled. I've been around Jonathan Ogden, I've been around Joe Thomas, I've been around Jason Peters. I don't put him in that group. I don't think he has a chance to get to that level, even though he's a really young kid.

But I think he's got a chance to growing into being -- both these guys got a chance to be perennial Pro Bowl players, and Slater might end up having to kick inside. That's a great debate to have inside the building. I just know when I put my list together and you kind of put the positives and the negatives down.

With Slater there's not much negative to put down the paper. I just don't see anything that really concerns me. I think he's just going to be a really, really good player.

Q. What is your best-case scenario first two rounds of the draft for the Titans, who obviously need help on the edge and potentially at receiver and defensive line? And before you'll set me free, could you give me your quick expectations for Darington Edmonds in year two?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah Darington is explosive. I'm excited for him just to stay healthy and get an opportunity because I think he really complements Derrick Henry well. Get him to the perimeter, one cut and go, big-time juice. I'm hopeful that he gets a chance to stay healthy and have a good year for the Titans.

When you're looking at edge rushers, again, I talked about it a little bit earlier, it's an interesting group because there's some flaws with these guys, but there's also a lot to like.

To me, I'm higher on him than some others. I really like Ronnie Perkins from Oklahoma. I have him in kind of the 30s on my list, but I would have no problem if he went late in the first round because he just plays his butt off, man. He can play with his hand down or you can stand him up. He's got speed to power. He's got some ankle stiffness there, but real violent hands. He plays with great leverage.

He can hold the point of attack, which is a big deal there, as you know.

You add to that, when you talk to the folks about Oklahoma, they talk about he's the leader of the whole football team; he was the alpha of the alphas. Even as a freshman when he was there at Oklahoma when they had Kenneth Murray, who was lauded for his leadership, they said, this kid took on a leadership role when he was there when he was young.

He'd be one right there. I mentioned Ojulari earlier from Georgia. I think both those guys give you some edge rush, and I think that's probably about where they factor in, so those would be some interesting guys.

Then when you look at receivers, if you want to go in the second round and look at some wide outs, let's assume that they lose Corey Davis. So if you wanted to find another big receiver that could kind of function in that role, I think you've got Terrence Marshall from LSU who's around that range; you've got Rashod Bateman from Minnesota. Both those guys give you some of that size, that ability to play above the rim, down the field, and give you some run after catch, as well.

I think both those guys are really good player.

Q. In your latest mock you've changed it up a bit and you have the Saints grabbing Mac Jones at No. 28. I was curious if you could elaborate on the reasoning there. Is it because of Mac Jones as a player, something he provides specifically, or is it the current situation and grabbing the best quarterback available? And beyond that, if they didn't go quarterback in the first round, what's your read on what some potential targets might be?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: That's a good question. To me I think Mac Jones, if you could cherry pick one spot for him to be really successful, it would be New Orleans. I just think he fits in. We've seen this offense function like that with quick decision making, accuracy, being the hallmarks of what we've seen with Drew over the years and those successful offenses. That to me would be a great spot for him.

Now, we'll see what they do in the off-season. They've got to decide what they want to do at the position, what the options they have in the veteran market, including Jameis. So that could determine which way they go.

Just from a fit player and a team I thought he fit there so that's why put him there. If you look for other options maybe outside the first round, I've kind of mentioned, to

give you some different names, kind of in the back -- this would be more towards the back of the draft, but to me like I would love to see a little bit of a connection there with somebody like Ian Book from Notre Dame with Sean Peyton, just because he's tough, he's able to create, he can play on schedule, a little off schedule.

He's not a perfect player. That's why I'm not talking about him up in the top rounds, but somebody later on that you've got a chance to develop and do some good things with who's kind of highly intelligent, highly competitive, and fits kind of what Sean Peyton has always valued. That would be somebody that would be kind of a day 3 target for me at the position.

Q. You mentioned earlier how important GPS tracking is this season just because there's less testing available. Have you seen teams that were maybe slow to come around to it in the past using it more, and what's it been like using that more this year?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, I wish I had access to all of it. I can tell you that. It would make my job a heck of a lot easier. Not every team has all the information. Some teams have it more some conferences and not others. Some teams don't have hardly any of it. Some teams have everything. It's kind of like shrouded in mystery a little bit in terms of how they're able to access it.

But yeah, it's incredibly valuable, to the point where if you're talking about players, I would have a conversation and say, Well, I like this guy but I'll be curious to see what he runs. And you get back, Well, I don't care what he runs. I know he's in the 90th percentile of all running backs based off his top 4 GPS numbers from the fall. And it's like, Well, geez, that's a nice piece of information. That would really be helpful. I don't know that everybody has all of it.

I think teams are at different levels with it. I know one thing, if I was running a team I'd move heaven and earth to make sure I had access to all of that information, because I don't think there is anything more valuable than knowing in game pads on legit numbers that you can quantify.

And as we go forward, and I've said this before, once we got to the point where you have five to ten years' worth of data that we can use for context, I think it becomes even more than.

It's definitely here right now. We're behind soccer, definitely behind European soccer, but the NFL is trying to catch up as fast as possible.

Q. With Urban Meyer in Jacksonville, he's assembled

a front office and coaching staff that has a lot of people who was recently in the college ranks. How much do you think that can help with the evaluation process considering how different this year is?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, look, everybody always goes back to Jimmy Johnson and the success that he had in those drafts with the Dallas Cowboys because he knew those kids having recruited them and having coached a bunch of them and having coached against a bunch of them the value there. I think he's going to definitely know the kids for sure, and I think that can be a help for that whole coaching staff.

I would say the only thing that you've just got to caution against is maybe what you remember -- not allowing what you remember of a 17 year old junior in high school to cloud what you saw of a 22 year old junior in college.

That's where you've just got to be careful that you don't stay attached to what you saw of a kid. We see it all the time in free agency where teams will stay attached to their draft grades, and you're like, man, you just paid this guy a lot of money and you had big grades on him coming out of college, but he hasn't been that player in the NFL. You overpaid him.

That to me is just the only challenge is not to be married to any preconceived thoughts you had on these guys as younger kids.

Q. You've talked a few times about the sort of irregularities of the last year and how it's affected certain kids or prospects. What's the kind of class of player, kind of player who's going to be hurt most by the process from the fall to now? What type of kid do you just feel kind of bad for right now?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: You know what, I touched on it a little bit, but to me it's the kid that was the fringe late-round priority free agent type player that would have gone to the east west Shrine game and we would have been down there, the whole NFL would have been there, and every year I always pull out probably 10 guys out of that game that I'm like, Okay, man, I need to really go study this kid.

I didn't know much about him before we got down here, but he popped. We'll see some of those kids. Usually we will see three to five of them get promoted to the Senior Bowl, and then we get to see them go up against even better players. You see guys that kind of come through and really vault themselves up a couple rounds because you just didn't get a chance to see them.

That to me is a great example. To me looking at a guy like

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

Quinn Meinerz, the offensive lineman from Wisconsin Whitewater who doesn't have a season this year. His tape is -- he's playing a lower-level of competition even though it's a great Division III program, but his tape is okay. It's good. It's not great.

But he spends this whole year, he goes and trains with Duke Merriweather in Dallas and works like a madman, changes his whole body. Duke cleans up some stuff he was doing technique wise and they talk to Jim Nagy and convince Jim Nagy to invite him to the Senior Bowl.

This kid probably was a fringe like fifth, sixth round type pick. He gets the invitation to go to the Senior Bowl, completely dominates the whole week of practice. He is going to go on Day 2 now. I wouldn't be shocked if he went in the second round because he took advantage of that All-Star opportunity after missing the whole season.

Well, there's other kids we would assume, maybe not to that level, but guys who didn't get that invitation, guys who didn't get a chance to play in the other All-Star games and didn't get a chance to show what they've done for the last year.

Those are the guys I feel bad for, and some of these NFL teams are going to invite guys in after the draft as rookie free agents, and they're going to find some hidden gems throughout the league this year. I really believe that.

Q. As many as six Canadians could get drafted this year. That would be a record. Could you provide just a real quick comment and draft grade on each as I reel them off starting with Tennessee receiver Josh Palmer?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, I like Josh Palmer. I've got to work on it, though, because I want to call him James Palmer from my buddy at NFL Network and I've done that to him on TV a couple times, so I apologize to Josh.

To me he's like a third, fourth-round receiver who can really get vertical. He's one of the few guys who actually beat Surtain down the field this year, who had a touchdown against him. Really good Senior Bowl week. A lot of 50/50 ball wins. Again, I'd say probably third, fourth round for Josh.

Q. Oregon slot corner Jevon Holland?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: As a nickel as a safety he can do a lot of things. I think he's one of the three or four best safeties in this draft class. Didn't get a chance to see him this year, but somebody that's well thought of around the league. Takes good angles. He's a really good tackler.

He's good ball skills. I wrote down as a comparison he reminded me a little bit bigger version of Lamarcus Joyner when he was coming out of Florida State.

So just a good football player who I think is going to go probably mid to late second round, third round, somewhere in there.

Q. Oklahoma State running back Chuba Hubbard?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, ultra productive which Chuba, tough, physical, kind of -- I wrote down he's kind of a no-nonsense guy when you watch him run. He runs with a real low pad level. I don't think he has a tremendous amount of top-end, top-end juice, but you can use him in the screen game.

And again, once he gets the ball in his hands he's tough to get down; breaks a lot of tackles. I think he's a day 3 pick. I think you're probably talking about the fifth round would be where I would have him, could go a little earlier or a little later.

Q. Minnesota corner Benjamin St-Juste?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, big, long, athletic corner who showed up down at the Senior Bowl, and he's impressive when you see him on the hoof down there. Just a big looking kid. Somebody that I'll be curious to see what he runs. He just -- that would be the one question mark, just how much pure top-end juice does he really have.

But an interesting player. He reminded of Kevin King who I know everybody remember Kevin King getting beat in the playoffs this year, but Kevin King has been a solid player for the Packers coming out of Washington. He's kind of a classic Seattle Seahawk type corner.

Q. Iowa offensive corner Alaric Jackson?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, I'm maybe not as high on Alaric Jackson. To me he's a little bit of a later pick, somebody that's going to need some time and some continued development. I'll go through and find the rest of my notes on him here. Where is he? I have him more as kind of a sixth-round pick.

He's on the ground a little bit too much and I thought he had some issues with speed. Those were the two issues I had with him, so he was more of a later round pick for him.

Q. Lastly, Oklahoma State linebacker Amen Ogbongbemiga?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: That is the one that I still have left to

do. I've got every position done except I've got a couple linebackers left and I've got a couple safeties, so he's on the to-do list.

Q. Why is Javonte Williams a little bit of a late riser in this process? And for the Steelers picking at 24, do you think the value will be at running back with those three running backs there or do you think there will be more value picking an offensive tackle?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Well, I think that's TBD to see what ends up sliding down there. On Javonte, I loved him from the first tape that I popped on. I didn't hear much about him during the fall. They ran the heck out of him, him and Michael Carter their other running back at North Carolina that is another really good player who's probably going to go in the third round.

They had a great backfield. But the reason why I think you're starting to see -- continue the buzz to build on him, because to me he's a complete back. When you look at the combination of Etienne who's maybe a little bit undersized but has big time juice, big time speed, then you have Najee Harris who's 230 pounds. He has balance and can bang inside but can also get involved in the pass game.

This kid kind of gives you a little bit of everything. He's 220 pounds but he has big time burst and he's got really good vision, and to me while you're starting to see him pop up more, he's my 32nd player as I mentioned he's going to continue to go up because everything I keep digging on and finding out from the school and finding out from guys that have been around him and coached him and played with him is the kid's wiring is off the charts.

In a year where we don't maybe have as much information, when you get a kid who's got great tape, who's got high, weight, speed and now the character and the work ethic is off the charts, you bet on those kids.

Q. You mentioned Naquan Jones earlier. I was wondering about two other Michigan State guys, linebacker Antjuan Simmons, what your read is on them and your projections.

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Sure, I've done Brown, I haven't Simmons yet. Brown is a good player. He is going to be a day one nickel. Scrappy kid. Probably a little quicker than he is purely fast, but he's got excellent ball skills. I love what he does against the run. Inside he can work around blocks, play off blocks. He's got some like -- when you watch -- I watched -- you watch the tape and then you watch a cutup of his ball production, he's got some crazy interceptions, man, like really phenomenal ball skills.

I have him I think he's kind of like a fourth round type nickel that will come off the board. But as I mentioned a little bit earlier, I still have a couple linebackers to watch, so I haven't got to the other one.

Q. At 17 if you're the Raiders, would you be more comfortable taking Alabama defensive tackle Christian Barmore or offensive tackle Christian Darrisaw from Virginia Tech? And if you take Darrisaw, would you be okay moving him to the right side?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, I would go Darrisaw there. And yeah, I would be fine with him moving to the right side. This is an offensive line a little bit in flux right now, especially after today. But to me Darrisaw, plug right in. He's got the size, and to me you have the benefit with him, he's played left -- I think he can play right tackle, and absolutely worst case scenario he slides inside and he's a really, really good guard.

I think you've got a couple options there with him, but I would go in that direction over Barmore. Barmore is more -- he is a little bit of a boom or bust. There is a lot of ability there. You saw the good stuff at the end of the year that gets you fired up, and then I could point out some games in the early or middle part of the season where he doesn't look like the same guy.

Just a little bit up and down with him, but he's one of those ones if you hit, you hit big. I think the Raiders, where they are right now, I think maybe the safer approach would be the smarter approach.

Q. Obviously the Jags are going to take Trevor Lawrence with the first overall pick. However, what are some other needs you think they need to address on the offensive side alongside him? Any weapons in particular you think they should target with him or any offensive linemen they should get with him?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, look, there's more needs on the defensive side of the ball to me. I think there's actually some pretty good pieces in place when you look at the offense, backfield, when you look at receivers. I think trying to find a big time tight end would be nice.

I don't think -- obviously where they are at 23, you're not going to sniff Kyle Pitts. That one is gone. I don't think there is going to be anybody else worthy of going in the first round. So to me I think you could look at that outside the first round.

When you look at some of those other positions, I think they just franchised the tackle today, right, so he's not

going anywhere; Cam Robinson is coming back. You can continue to look along the offensive line, get you some security and some depth there later on.

I would look, though, with their second one, to me I think you probably look to the defensive side of the ball would make sense where they go there. Never have enough corners, never have enough edge rushers. Those would be a couple places I'd be keeping my eyes.

Q. I wanted to get back to the Eagles. You mentioned at No. 6 overall with Pitts or potential receiver. I think in a lot of ways Jeffrey said this is a transition, 37 is just as important. You know how that team likes to build on both sides of the football. They also need a corner, just a couple names maybe at 37?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, there's going to be some good options there for them. When you look at the corner position, I think we've hit on a couple of those guys, but when you look there at the top of the second round, I think those -- right around the range for the Georgia kids with Tyson Campbell as well as Eric Stokes there in the second round.

You look at some of those other positions there for the Eagles and where they could go. Let's assume they go with an offensive weapon there. I can't see them leaving the first two rounds without a big. Whether that's an edge rusher like a Joe Tryon from Washington there at the top of the second round, I think that one would make some sense.

I've talked about Payton Turner is an interesting player. It may be a little bit early from him out of Houston, but he kind of factors in there. Ronnie Perkins I think would be a home run pick there in the second round. Those edge rushers to me would make some sense there.

And offensive line-wise, when you get to that part, early second round, let me give you a couple names there. Look at Radunz from North Dakota State. I think he is going to end up moving inside to guard. He is my 44th player, so that's right about the same spot. I went and worked him out in L.A. the other day. He can move. He's an impressive kid who had a really good week at the Senior Bowl.

And then if you're looking at tackles, I wouldn't sleep on Eichenberg from Notre Dame as somebody potentially there. He's a little bit stiff, but really good football intelligence, really good hands, has played a lot of football there at Notre Dame. Those are a couple names I'd keep an eye on.

Q. In your opinion did Trey Lance make the right call to come out this year with Lawrence and Fields and Wilson and all these quarterbacks? Where do you think he'll end up? And any chance he slides out of the top half or maybe the top 20? Any chance at all of that?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: I mean, I think there's a chance, yeah. I could make a case in a perfect world if he knew what the future held and that everything looks like we're trending in the right direction health-wise that we were going to have hopefully a normal college football season next year.

I think if he had all those facts, you could make a case, Hey, let's go back to school. He'll be the first quarterback taken next year. But the other side of it is at the time when he made that decision there was so much uncertainty. His season wasn't going to happen, and you get a chance to -- you don't know is your facility going to be open at North Dakota State, are you going to be able to do anything, to practice for a whole year.

So I think with the circumstance the way it was, to just declare, get yourself an agent, go find a place you can train and work out, and I think he was with Quincy Avery, who's a really good quarterback coach. To have a plan in place and have some certainty, I think that probably went into the decision there.

I would argue if you're saying, Okay, you could have been the first quarterback next year, I don't know that I want -- is it all that great to go to the worst team? I don't know. Being the fourth quarterback, we're seeing Josh Allen, what he's done. If you look at Mahomes and Watson went to more established teams with some players and pieces in place, I don't think that's a bad thing.

If this whole thing ends up with Trey Lance being the 12th pick to San Francisco or he ends up going to the Washington Football Team, both those places have talent in place, good football teams, I think he would be happy with that decision.

Q. How outlandish would you consider the possibility of the Dolphins taking a quarterback at No. 3? Or how realistic would you consider it? Also, what was your scouting report on Isaiah Wilson when he came out last year, and is he somebody who's salvageable?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: I'll start with the last part. I wasn't a huge Isaiah Wilson fan. He was real stiff. I'm not talking about any of the issues or immaturity that kind of popped up this year. I'll pull up my notes for him last year while I've got you. He to me I thought was a little bit kind of

over-drafted there, so that was the first part of it.

But then the reason he's gone is not because of his ability. He's gone because of just not being in a good head space. Last year Isaiah Wilson was my 66th overall player. I thought it was a little bit of a reach there. Just false steps, poor footwork, a little bit top heavy.

I thought he was tight, more kind of an upper and wrestle guy. But the last note that I have here is Brian floor he is high school. He went to Brian Flores High School, so there you go. That's the connection there with him ending up in Miami.

What was the question, if they could go quarterback? Is that what you're asking?

Q. Yeah, how outlandish of a notion do you consider them picking a quarterback at 3?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: I don't think it's crazy. I think you do your homework on those guys. I think they know things good or bad on Tua that we don't have that information, so to try and predict what they would do on the outside would be tough. I would say it would be unlikely just not being inside the building because I still think Tua can play.

That's one thing, with so much opt-out tape to watch, in other words, guys didn't play this year so I've watched a lot more of 2019 tape doing other players, and I'm sitting there going, Oh, yeah, Tua was pretty good. We've all just decided that Tua Tagovailoa can't play. This kid was talented, so let's give him a chance.

So I don't envision they would take a quarterback. But yeah, sure, you've got to do your homework.

Q. I know you touched on the corners in this draft, particularly the second tier guys like Jaycee Horn and Greg Newsome. Assuming neither guy is there at 26 for the Browns, is there another guy that could be a first round option, or has that well kind of dried up after that? And considering where they are in the second round and also talking about the depth of the class as a whole at that position, is there a lot more pressure do you think that they would have to hope that some guy falls to them in the late 50s or else they might not be able to get like a true top-notch corner in this draft that they probably need?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: You know, it's interesting. Where Cleveland is right now, and you look at the team that they have, to me if you love one of those -- if you love Horn or Newsome, let's assume the first two guys are gone, you could make a strong argument that those guys are worth

trying to move -- if you can move a little bit and go get them to secure one of those top four guys, because I do think there is a drop-off after that.

I don't think there is another one there worth taking there late in the first round. Kelvin Joseph from Kentucky, I'm curious to see him run because he's got some ability. Got to figure out what happened at LSU. He was, I don't want to say kicked out of LSU, but wasn't allowed back at LSU.

So you've got to do your homework on the background there with him, but he's big and athletic. He kind of fits profile second round type pick. I don't really see another guy up there that would be worthy of a first-round grade, but that could cause you to move in either direction.

You either move up for one of those top four or there's a decent clump of those second round kids that you could move back for, so that would be the direction I would go. I don't think sticking and picking a corner would make a lot of sense.

Q. We talked about Kyle Pitts an hour and a half ago, and I wanted to ask a couple follow-ups. I don't know how much blocking he did at Florida, but how do you evaluate him as a blocker at the tight end position? Depending on how he does in that department, can you foresee a scenario where maybe he gets moved to receiver full time in the NFL? And finally, is there any concern about a player kind of coming back to play for his hometown team like Pitts would be doing in this case if he were to come to Philadelphia?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: To me the times you worry about guys coming back home are if they have any type of character concerns or they've had trouble, and by all accounts, everything that I've got on Kyle Pitts is that he's outstanding from a makeup character standpoint, so that would not be concerning at all to me. So I'll start there.

As a blocker, when you watched him in 2019 I thought he was willing, but I thought he was really flimsy and just got thrown around. As you can imagine, a tall, lean guy, he really struggled. I thought he was much better this year to the point where I thought he was functional. He's not a killer. He's not going to put anybody in the hospital as a blocker, but he's functional. He can wall guys off and you can use him there.

Teams to me, if you wanted to just primarily use him as an X receiver, no problem, he could do that right now and be really good at it. Sometimes I think it's kind of funny. Like I'd have to look it up, but like Gesicki with the Dolphins. He still has TE next to his name. I don't know how many times he was attached last year, but you might be able to count

them on two hands. He was always detached. To me I would be trying to use this kid that way, just flex him out and use him. Then some games you want to split him out, some games you want to use him in the slot. You can get him in line.

If you get them to go small, that is what is so great about him, is you get them to go small, yeah, he can hold his own and shield guys off as a run blocker. I would much rather be throwing him the ball. I will put it this way: Kyle Pitts will be much more popular in the quarterback room than he will be in the running back room.

Q. I have a question about the 49ers. If you're John Lynch, Kyle Shanahan, and the team, can you afford to pass up on a QB in the first round? Let's assume, play the hypothetical game. How would you view Sam Darnold as a potential bridge as one of these rookie quarterbacks sits behind him?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, to me I don't -- if you're going to make a move for Sam Darnold I don't think he's the bridge. I think you're hoping he's the building. That's what you're doing if you make that move.

And talent wise, to me where they are at 12, I guess there's a chance Trey Lance could be there. Mac Jones I think will be there. So those are your options there. But to me I think faced with those options or a trade that's palatable for Sam Darnold, I think I'd be tempted to go in the Sam Darnold direction because we've talked about the fit with him with Kyle Shanahan. I think would be a beautiful fit. The guys is 23 years old, 24 years old. He is still really, really young. That to me would make some sense.

I threw the numbers out there earlier. The next three years, 18.3 a year is a very affordable number. I don't know that -- the interesting thing if the Niners did do that is do you immediately trade Jimmy or do you need Sam to come in to beat Jimmy out? That would create an interesting storyline there.

But I would rather have Sam at that option, I think, than I would with what's likely to be there at pick No. 12.

Q. I want to have a conversation with you or have you unpack Zaven Collins. I know you touched on him slightly earlier in this call. Looking at him, I'm curious how you position the edge rushers in this class. You said there's still a lot of question marks, you're waiting on data, whether it's measurables or just guys not playing in 2020. Pivoting that same question to Zaven, what question marks do you have out about him because when I look at his measurables, they speak for themselves, when you turn on the tape he looks

like a guy who moves like players 20 or 30 pounds lighter, you mentioned his walk-off pick six. When you're evaluating guys, you look for those one of a kind unique traits, whether it's Mekhi Becton or Lamar Jackson in recent years. He seems like a guy who could fall under that umbrella. What are those question marks, and if you don't have a whole lot, then can you explain for what reason he would be outside the top 32 right now?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, I mean, well, for me he's my 24th player, so he's in my top 32 for sure.

If you want to talk about the negatives, the only concern is I would say when he's in the box, you'll see him maybe not immediately be able to seek and diagnose. So some of the stuff in that mud and the trash inside the box area, the instincts are good, not great, not like an elite level we've seen with Devin White or some top linebackers, Devin Bush, some of these other guys that have come out over the last few years.

What makes him so unique is this is a 6'4", 260-pound package that's doing all this stuff. He's very unique. That to me would be the only real question mark. He's really good in coverage. He reminded me when you think about comparisons of guys I've been around. I don't know if you guys remember this guy, but when I was with the Ravens we had a kid named Adalius Thomas who was a little bit shorter. I think AD was like 6'2", but he was 260, 270 pounds and he was a gunner on punt.

Some weeks Rex Ryan would have him line up over the slot receivers just to jam him. There is an NFL Films clip of him walking out over Chad Johnson and Chad Johnson going, What the heck are you doing out here, just to try and reroute him. But he was that type of an athlete. Some weeks you'd rush him off the edge. Some weeks he would rush inside. You could play him off the ball. I think Zaven Collins gives you a lot of different options with things you can do with him.

Yeah, he's my 24th player, and I think he's absolutely worthy of a first-round pick.

Q. Do you see linebackers grow into those instincts or is that something if you don't have it usually doesn't develop?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Well, you know, I just don't think I would play him inside. I think I would rather just remove him and let him be able to see, run, and chase and use all that speed to run stuff down from the backside. You can blitz him. You can use him as a drop defender. That to me is where he would be better fit would just be outside of all

that trash.

Q. Just in case -- I saw you had Greg Rousseau going to the Giants. If the Giants do decide to take a player who's not a wide receiver at 11, who would be available in the second or third round that you feel would be a good fit for them?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, as a wide receiver there's a ton of them. It's a really good group. Just kind of depends on what flavor you're looking for. If you want to be more dynamic and you want to be more vertical -- I mentioned Terrence Marshall from LSU and Rashod Bateman from Minnesota, but I'm really intrigued by Dyami Brown from North Carolina who, gosh, I think he averaged over 20 yards a catch. They used him on a lot of verticals and deep crossers. He's an over-the-top guy. He's not as polished working back downhill but he is somewhere they can get vertical. You don't get as much size with D'Wayne Eskridge from Western Michigan, but he's another one who's a home run hitter. Adds some kickoff return value. Really good at run after the catch stuff. Tough kid who's played corner. His tape as a gunner is phenomenal. He's a really tough kid who kind of fits that style there for the Giants.

And then I think another interesting player in like round 3, round 4, just as an overall offensive weapon, would be Demetric Felton out of UCLA who played running back, goes to the Senior Bowl, plays receiver at practices there, and was darned near uncoverable. Just really juicy, really explosive at the top of his route. Can make people miss in space. Just a really fun player. I think would be fun complement there to what they have.

Q. You have Jeremiah Owusu-Koramoah slotted to Jacksonville in your latest mock. How do you feel he can be utilized in the NFL defensively since he's so multifaceted?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, that's it. It just kind of depends on what you want to do, and that can be from a scheme standpoint. It could be from a week to week standpoint, just how you wanted to play him. There haven't been many guys listed at linebackers that dropped back and played safety in the NFL. Darren Woodson, you go way back, right, to one of those. But to me he can be a strong safety. He can be a nickel, kind of that big nickel and give you that. You can rush him some off the edge.

To me just his ability to just run and chase and make plays. As much as you're in sub defense nowadays, to me he's somebody that's just going to be a fun toy for whoever picks him for however you want to deploy him. You can use him as more of a blitzer one week, turn around, ask

him to cover tight ends the next week, turn around ask him just be a force player the next.

Positionless football is where we're headed. I think you break the huddle and you don't know where guys are going, what they're doing. It makes things challenging on a quarterback, and he's kind of one of those chess pieces.

Q. You've spoken about the Eagles and also your Jalen Hurts evaluation from last spring, but if you were in Howie's seat, would you go with Hurts this year or would you look for a QB in this draft?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, he's got a tough call. I mean, Jalen showed some good things last year. I think you're hopeful and excited about what you can see from him going forward. I think it really depends on how you evaluate these quarterbacks. To me if you have a significant gap between Jalen and what your options there at pick No. 6, might not be popular to go back to that well after all the quarterback drama, you can make a case, Well, let's just have a year of peace, let's take the best available player.

I would separate it by saying if Kyle Pitts is there, turn in the card. I don't know if it's 10 or 15 minutes, however long you get between picks this year, but don't spend all of it. Just send that card in and be done with it.

Outside of that, I think it really comes down to your evaluation. If you have a big gap between one of these quarterbacks and Jalen, I think you have to take the quarterback. That's just my opinion.

Q. I wanted to ask you about Michigan edge rusher Kwity Paye. You mentioned him a couple times. Obviously you said you think he's going to test off the charts. What do you see from him on tape? And then I wanted to ask you about Michigan receiver Nico Collins. Do you think him opting out of the season helped or hurt his draft stock?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, I'll start with Kwity. Kwity is interesting because Don Brown moved him so much and moved him all over the place, a lot of times in a zero technique, head up over the center, and they just kind of run games with him.

But he is strong and explosive. You know the test numbers there. When everybody sees them it's just ridiculous how explosive this kid is going to jump and run and all that stuff. But to me when you have an explosive player like that I like it when they give him a runway. Give him some distance, kick him out there in a wide nine, let him have that runway where he can generate all that speed

and power and collapse the pocket.

So you see some of these things. You see him beat uptight ends. But the way they kind of play, it's almost like they're asked to play run to pass as some of these teams do. Instead of just pinning your ears back and get upfield, he's trying to play off blocks, Oh, okay just pass and then try and have a secondary rush.

I think this kid is going to be a better pro than he was in college when somebody cuts him loose. I'm excited to watch him, and then I would have loved to have see Nico Collins. Again it's such a deep receiver group. He did some good things down at the Senior Bowl. He's got some -- for a big guy he's got good route tempo. He's got a really good feel. But to me it was a little bit of stiffness was a little bit of a concern there, so that's one thing you keep an eye on, and just wanted to see more of him.

They had so many different guys they were getting the ball to, I wanted to see more of Nico Collins, just didn't get a chance to see it this year. I would say he's probably about a fourth-pound pick when it's all said and done.

Q. To harp back on the Jalen Hurts situation with the Eagles, and I know you have an affinity for Pitts, but in terms of Pitts, Ja'Marr Chase, DeVonta Smith, Jaylen Waddle, is there one player on the board that can maybe bring out the most in Hurts' skill set, and if so could you tell us why?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, I'll take the guy that's going to score the most touchdowns, and that's going to be Pitts. I love all those players. They're all really good options. Ja'Marr Chase I could make a strong case for him and he would really help with what he can do after the catch. But to me the best match-up on the field is an athletic tight end versus the linebackers and safeties that are going to try and cover him. I watched some of the best corners in the SEC couldn't cover this kid, and now we're going to ask linebackers to try and match up with him? Not going to happen.

To me that's going to give Jalen Hurts a lot of easy completions. You're going to get down in the red zone and he's going to have him and Goddard, guys that can play above the rim and go make plays, finish drives, win on 3rd down, win in the red zone. I mean, I don't know, I don't know what would be the hangup there. To me it's Kyle Pitts all day long, turn in the card. And I think Jalen Hurts should be elated if that's what ends up happening for the Eagles.

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