

49ers Mid-Day Clips – February 27, 2017

Local Media

2017 San Francisco 49ers Mock Draft Monday 4.0

By Staff, 49ers.com

<http://www.49ers.com/news/article-2/2017-San-Francisco-49ers-Mock-Draft-Monday-40/f3751578-cb83-420a-b891-dadde7e3480a>

49ERS EXTEND ONE-YEAR QUALIFYING OFFERS TO PURCELL, BRADFORD

By Matt Maiocco, CSNBayArea.com

<http://www.csnbayarea.com/49ers/49ers-extend-one-year-qualifying-offers-purcell-bradford>

POTENTIAL FREE AGENT TARGETS FOR 49ERS

By Matt Maiocco, CSNBayArea.com

<http://www.csnbayarea.com/49ers/potential-free-agent-targets-49ers>

Scheme change could alter how 49ers value free safety

By Nick Wagoner, ESPN.com

http://www.espn.com/blog/san-francisco-49ers/post/_/id/23633/scheme-change-could-alter-how-49ers-value-free-safety

49ers tender a pair of exclusive rights free agents

By Josh Alper, ProFootballTalk.com

<http://profootballtalk.nbcsports.com/2017/02/27/49ers-tender-a-pair-of-exclusive-rights-free-agents/>

National Media

Arizona Cardinals use franchise tag on Chandler Jones

By Kent Somers, The Arizona Republic

<http://www.azcentral.com/story/sports/nfl/cardinals/2017/02/27/arizona-cardinals-use-franchise-tag-chandler-jones/98482476/>

Carolina Panthers place franchise tag on Kawann Short

By Jourdan Rodrigue, Charlotte Observer

<http://www.charlotteobserver.com/sports/nfl/carolina-panthers/article135250309.html>

Steelers place exclusive franchise tag on Le'Veon Bell

By Staff, ESPN.com

http://www.espn.com/nfl/story/_/id/18782751/pittsburgh-steelers-use-franchise-tag-leveon-bell

Andrew Hawkins released by the Cleveland Browns

By Mary Kay Cabot, Cleveland Plain Dealer

http://www.cleveland.com/browns/index.ssf/2017/02/andrew_hawkins_released_by_the.html#incart_river_index

Giants tag JPP, two years after tagging him the first time

By Mike Florio, ProFootballTalk.com

<http://profootballtalk.nbcsports.com/2017/02/27/giants-tag-jpp-two-years-after-tagging-him-the-first-time/>

Local Clips – Full Version

2017 San Francisco 49ers Mock Draft Monday 4.0

By Staff, 49ers.com

Opinions are starting to vary among NFL Draft experts. Most analysts have released new mock drafts ahead of this week's NFL Scouting Combine in Indianapolis, and the predictions are all over the map.

As the draft process began, the popular opinion was that the San Francisco 49ers would take a quarterback with the second overall pick. The last version of "Mock Draft Monday" had 9-of-11 experts pick the 49ers to go QB in Round 1. That percentage has dropped to below 50 percent this time around with only 7-of-15 analysts forecasting a signal-caller to San Francisco.

Here's the rundown.

Todd McShay, ESPN: DeShaun Watson, QB, Clemson

"His outstanding leadership skills and intangibles will help him during pre-draft meetings with teams, and he does have intriguing physical tools, including a good arm and athleticism."

Mel Kiper Jr., ESPN: Mitch Trubisky, QB, North Carolina

"Trubisky is my top-rated QB and the likeliest of the current crop to land here."

Daniel Jeremiah, NFL.com: Marshon Lattimore, CB, Ohio State

"The 49ers could address the QB position with this pick but Lattimore carries a much higher grade than any of the signal-callers in this draft class."

Matt Miller, Bleacher Report: Reuben Foster, LB, Alabama

"One team scout I spoke with this week said they ranked Foster as the No. 3 player in the entire 2017 draft class."

Peter Schrager, Fox Sports: DeShone Kizer, QB, Notre Dame

"I'm a Kizer guy as we head into the Combine. He's 6-foot-4, just 21 years old, and a gamer."

Charley Casserly, NFL.com: Jonathan Allen, DE, Alabama

"Allen is an excellent 3-4 defensive end who gives you an inside pass rush."

Rob Rang, CBS Sports: Allen

"The 6-foot-3, 292 pound Allen sandwiched between massive defensive ends DeForest Buckner and Arik Armstead could give the 49ers the dominant defensive line to compete in the NFC West immediately."

Dane Brugler, CBS Sports: Trubisky

"Despite only one season of starting experience, Trubisky has all the traits to be a successful NFL starter."

Chris Burke, Sports Illustrated: Watson

"Watson throws too many picks (17 this year) ... but so did Shanahan's most recent quarterback, Matt Ryan, who fired 19 INTs before Atlanta took him at No. 3 in 2008."

Steve Palazzolo, Pro Football Focus: Foster

"Foster was the nation's top-graded linebacker, earning a 93.3 overall mark, leading the way against the run at 91.7 and ranking fifth in coverage, at 87.3. With the ability to defeat blocks in the run game and stick with running backs in coverage, Foster's three-down versatility comes at a time when the league covets it more than ever in an era of spread-heavy offenses."

Dan Kadar, SB Nation: Trubisky

"New 49ers head coach Kyle Shanahan should be able to handle whichever signal caller the team rates the highest"

Chris Biderman, USA Today: Foster

"This Butkus Award winner would give San Francisco its much-needed replacement for Patrick Willis, adding leadership and swagger to the locker room."

Chris Roling, Bleacher Report: Trubisky

Walter Cherepinsky, WalterFootball.com: Allen

Charlie Campbell, WalterFootball.com: Allen

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Final Tally (15 total)

Trubisky: 4

Allen: 4

Foster: 3

Watson: 2

Kizer: 1

Lattimore: 1

49ERS EXTEND ONE-YEAR QUALIFYING OFFERS TO PURCELL, BRADFORD

By Matt Maiocco, CSNBayArea.com

The 49ers on Monday extended one-year qualifying offers to nose tackle Mike Purcell and linebacker Carl Bradford as exclusive-rights free agents.

Purcell appeared in 15 games last season. He started the first five games of the season at nose tackle and was a reserve for the remainder of the season. Originally signed in 2013 as an undrafted rookie from Wyoming, Purcell has appeared in 25 games over the past three seasons.

The 49ers claimed Bradford off waivers in December from the Green Bay Packers. He appeared in the final two games of the season with the 49ers and was credited with two tackles.

Bradford entered the NFL out of Arizona State as a fourth-round pick of the Packers in 2014. After being inactive for every game as a rookie, Bradford was among Green Bay's final cuts in 2015. He spent the season on the practice squad.

He appeared in four games for the Packers last year. The 49ers claimed him after he was waived in December.

Exclusive rights free agents are player who have fewer than three years of NFL service who have no outside negotiating power if a team extends a qualifying offer.

POTENTIAL FREE AGENT TARGETS FOR 49ERS

By Matt Maiocco, CSNBayArea.com

LYNCH STARTING HIS WORK EARLY

The NFL's free-agent signing period begins March 9, and the 49ers figure to be far-more active than they were a year ago under then-GM Trent Baalke.

In fact, new 49ers GM John Lynch has already added two veterans with NFL experience – players who had been released and were available to sign before the start of the new league year. The 49ers filled a need on the defensive line with the signing of defensive tackle Earl Mitchell to a four-year, \$16 million contract.

Here are five other players the 49ers could target when free agency begins:

RB CHRIS THOMPSON, WASHINGTON

Thompson, 26, was a fifth-round draft pick while Mike Shanahan was Washington's head coach and Kyle Shanahan was the offensive coordinator. He played in four games as a rookie as a return specialist.

He is a restricted free agent because he was cut prior to the 2014 season (when the Shanahans were gone). He was re-signed late in the season but is not accredited with an accrued season.

Thompson (5 foot 8, 195 pounds) is a nice fit as a third-down back in Shanahan's scheme to go along with Carlos Hyde. He carried 68 times for 356 yards and two TDs last season, but is a valuable pass-catcher out of the backfield with 49 receptions for 349 yards.

LB KEENAN ROBINSON, N.Y. GIANTS

He was a fourth-round pick of Washington in 2012, but sustained some injuries that set back his career. In 2014, he recorded 109 tackles in 13 starts in Washington.

Robinson, who turns 28 in July, had a strong season with the Giants last season. (New 49ers defensive line coach Jeff Zgonina was the Giants assistant defensive line coach last season.)

The 49ers need help at inside linebacker. Robinson (6-3, 238) had a strong season as the middle linebacker in the Giants' sub packages, but he could easily become an every down player for the 49ers.

WR PIERRE GARCON, WASHINGTON

Garcon turns 31 in August, but he showed he still has something left. He is coming off the second 1,000-yard season of his nine-year NFL career.

His best season came in 2013 when Kyle Shanahan was Washington's offensive coordinator. He caught 113 passes for 1,346 yards and five touchdowns. Garcon is a good complement to Torrey Smith, who would be the speed threat on the other side.

Garcon can also help mentor any young receivers the 49ers might select in the draft because of his knowledge of Shanahan's system.

QB MATT SCHAUB, ATLANTA

The 49ers will unquestionably be looking to add quarterbacks via all available options: free agency, trade and the draft. Regardless of whatever moves are made at this position, Schaub would appear to fit.

He turns 36 in June, so he would not be considered a long-term starter. He might not even be a short-term starter. But Schaub knows Shanahan's system. He had his best seasons under Shanahan with the Houston Texans.

He could be the backup to a veteran. He could be the backup to a rookie. He could even be the bridge starter until a young player is ready to take over. The 49ers need somebody for this role. Schaub and Brian Hoyer are the most logical options.

DE JABAAL SHEARD, NEW ENGLAND

Aside from quarterback, the 49ers' biggest position of need is pass-rusher. Since the club parted ways with Aldon Smith, the 49ers have not been able to generate any consistent pressure on opposing quarterbacks.

The 49ers have some good pieces for the defensive line with DeForest Buckner, Arik Armstead, Quinton Dial and Mitchell. But what they lack is a pass-rusher. Shanahan and 49ers defensive backs coach Jeff Hafley know Sheard from their time together with the Browns in 2014.

Sheard, who turns 28 in May, has 36 career sacks in six NFL seasons. At 6-3, 265 pounds, Sheard would fit the 49ers' scheme as an edge pass-rusher who is five years younger than Ahmad Brooks.

Scheme change could alter how 49ers value free safety

By Nick Wagoner, ESPN.com

SANTA CLARA, Calif. -- The free-agent market is scheduled to open March 9 and teams may begin negotiations with those poised to hit the market beginning March 7. We'll count down to that with a position-by-position look at what the San Francisco 49ers have in place, who is set to hit the market, what they might need and who might fit the bill.

Position: Safety

Under contract: Eric Reid, Antoine Bethea, Jaquiski Tartt, Marcus Ball.

Pending free agents: Marcus Cromartie (restricted).

What's needed: When former general manager Trent Baalke was running the show, this was a position the Niners clearly valued. They spent premium picks on Reid and Tartt, signed Bethea and drafted hybrid cornerback/safety Jimmie Ward in the first round. Those picks and signings have yielded mixed results, but the Niners aren't lacking in terms of overall talent at this spot.

However, with a change in scheme to new coordinator Robert Saleh's 4-3 defense, there could be a renewed focus on the secondary, particularly at free safety. Saleh forged his defensive philosophy under

Pete Carroll with the Seattle Seahawks, a philosophy that puts a premium on a free safety who can roam the back end in single-high looks and erase any mistakes made in front of him. Of course, that was easier to do in Seattle with the presence of Earl Thomas, perhaps the most dominant free safety in the league.

Seattle's other safety, usually Kam Chancellor when healthy, is often allowed to play closer to the line of scrimmage where he can make a difference against the run while also helping in coverage against tight ends.

As new coach Kyle Shanahan and staff evaluate their current roster, they will see players like Reid, Tartt and Bethea who would seem more suited to filling the Chancellor position than the Thomas role. Of course, the 49ers could adjust their scheme according to what's in place or even consider moving Ward back to a free safety job similar to what Thomas does for Seattle.

But if San Francisco decides to look at free safety options in free agency, there's only one who would qualify as a true difference maker -- and that's Kansas City's Eric Berry. Berry can play either safety spot and remains among the best in the league no matter what the Chiefs ask him to do. It's for that reason that Kansas City isn't likely to let Berry depart. The Chiefs again could use the franchise tag to keep Berry or sign him to a long-term deal.

Beyond Berry, there simply aren't many appealing options who a defensive coordinator would feel comfortable letting roam the back end alone on a regular basis. The more likely avenue if the Niners decide to put more of an emphasis on free safety is to look to the draft. The early read on this class lists talented safeties like Ohio State's Malik Hooker and LSU's Jamal Adams as top-tier prospects. Given the 49ers' recent investments in the position, such a pick probably wouldn't go over well, but if a top safety could have a Thomas-like effect on the Niners' defense, such trepidation would quickly vanish.

Possible fits: Eric Berry (Kansas City), Nate Allen (Oakland), Bradley McDougald (Tampa Bay), J.J Wilcox (Dallas).

49ers tender a pair of exclusive rights free agents

By Josh Alper, ProFootballTalk.com

The 49ers signed a pair of outside free agents in recent days with cornerback K'Waun Williams and defensive tackle Earl Mitchell representing a bigger dip into the market than they took all of last season.

We'll see if new General Manager John Lynch keeps that up when the new league year opens on March 9, but the 49ers have taken a brief break from bringing in new faces to make sure they hold onto a couple of players from the 2016 roster. The 49ers announced on Monday that they have extended exclusive rights free agent tenders to linebacker Carl Bradford and nose tackle Mike Purcell.

Exclusive rights free agents are ineligible to jump to another team once their current team extends a tender, so Bradford and Purcell will both be in the mix for roster spots unless they opt to stop playing altogether.

Bradford was a fourth-round pick by the Packers in 2014 and played two games with the Niners after being claimed on waivers last year. Purcell first signed with the 49ers as an undrafted rookie in 2013 and made his regular season debut the next year. He had 26 tackles and a forced fumble in 15 games last season.