



CINCINNATI BENGALS

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NFL DRAFT — ROUND 5

LOU ANARUMO

Defensive coordinator

What did you like about Josh Newton?

"(There's) a lot to like. (He) plays inside, plays outside, played a bunch of games at nickel (cornerback). He's had over 30-plus tackles in three consecutive years (and), I believe, seven interceptions in his career. (He) was first team All Big-12 in 2022. So, great kid, great football instincts, awareness — I like everything about his game."

Do you see him potentially getting here first to see what he can do or is playing inside where his strength lies?

"Again, he can do both, so we'll give him the opportunity to do both and we'll see where it fits us and him the best."

Were you pleasantly surprised he was still there?

"Yeah, and (it was a) great value pick, as we were talking about upstairs, for where we're at, so we were very happy."

He was a captain at TCU. Is that coincidental that several of your draft picks were college team captains?

"Well, it's nice when it comes along with a good player, for sure. We're conscious of it. We're aware and again, as you mentioned, it's I think the third one on defense so far, so that's a good thing."

What gives him the ability to make so many plays on the ball?

"Some of those guys just have a knack. They're always around the ball. They're aware. He gets PBUs (pass break-ups), he can affect the game in a number of different ways and again, I think some guys just have a knack for it."

You obviously to have a lot of speed with your corners. How does he measure up?

"I think he's good there. I don't think that he's deficient in any part of his game physically, so (I'm) looking forward to seeing what he can do and again, just trying him out in both spots and go from there."

He's obviously played in a lot of big games, especially in the 2022 season. What did you see from him in those games?

"Well, that's the other nice thing, right? You're getting a great kid, you're getting a guy that, as you just mentioned, has played in the highest level in college. So, it just helps when they come here and you're in bigger games and bigger situations that (they) have kind of already done this. It definitely helps."

What were the conversations like with him before the draft?

"He was real good. (Secondary/cornerbacks coach Charles) Burks did a great job with him communicating. I sat in on a Zoom, and again, he can really talk the game. (He's a) smart football guy, good football awareness. As I mentioned, that kind of comes through when you talk to the guy. He's just an overall good human being, which is always good to add."

The troops were thinning at cornerback as a lot had been taken, but it's a deep draft at corner. Did you think he would still be there for you?

"As you mentioned, they're like trends. They start going, there's a run on this, there's a run on that position. Corners traditionally — you go back to the first round, I don't know the last time there wasn't a corner taken in the top-20, I don't believe. That's got to be some kind of a record I would think, because there's usually on the average of somewhere between six and eight corners in the first round, typically. You just don't know. You're holding your breath as these picks go off, and the guy that we wanted was there so we were able to get him."

You have a lot of young guys in the corner room. Would you like to add a veteran presence at corner?

"I just think we'll see after today finishes out. You never say no to some things, but I feel good with where we're at right now."

Do you have any ability to announce the plan with Dax Hill? Where are you guys at with that?

"That's something that we're continuing. I love the guy, I love everything about him, but we're going to see and stretch his sea legs,

and see where he's at when he gets back here, and put him in a number of different spots, and see what fits him best and us."

You said he can play inside and outside. Do you look for that versatility and having that box checked pretty early?

"It always helps with that. It's great from what we can do with the guys from that standpoint, but also, guys get hurt. If there's an issue during a game or during the season where a guy can do multiple things, it just makes it that much easier."

You mentioned the number of tackles he had. How important is that when you're evaluating a guy?

"I think in our division it's important. It's important for any team in our league, but specifically for us in the AFC North, and what we have to deal with week in and week out. It's high on our list of things. We don't want any guy shying away from contact, and certainly he doesn't."

JOSH NEWTON

Cornerback; Texas Christian

What was it like to get the call from the Bengals?

"Really, it was relief. Being in the draft, you can't get caught up in certain things. You've got to be patient and wait my turn, and I got the call."

Where did your game improve the most after going to TCU?

"In all aspects. I got better as a player, as a thinker, as a leader, as a cornerback, as a defensive back. I just got better in all areas of my game, really."

Lou Anarumo said he likes that you can play inside or outside at cornerback. Are you comfortable at both?

"I don't give a damn what I play in the league."

You'll play anywhere?

"I'll play anywhere."

What do you think you do best?

"Honestly, I like outside — the outside money. If I had to pick, outside. I'm trying to be a Swiss Army knife. I'm not trying to be in one spot. I want to be used in multiple ways."

How do you make so many plays on the ball with a lot of pass breakups and interceptions?

"I feel like having a receiver background, just not panicking when the ball is in the air. Just having a receiver mindset and when the ball goes in the air, it's mine. That's really it."

What kind of competitor are you in the secondary?

"Ultimate."

How would you characterize that?

"Kobe Bryant."

As in the Mamba?

"Yeah, that's the only Kobe Bryant."

What was the most unique aspect of the defensive scheme at TCU?

"It was really corner and secondary friendly. Our rules and stuff were simple. Man is man and zone is zone. It was really simple."

Did you meet with the Bengals?

"Yeah, I did."

What stood out from your time with the Bengals?

"First of all, they reached out. I'm just a big, humble guy, man. My story, I'm just very appreciative. My meeting with them, it was great. It had to be great enough for you all to pick me."

What do you know about the Bengals defense and the players here?

"I know Mike Hilton, I know D.J. Turner and (number) 91 (Trey Hendrickson), the big D-line that you all have. I know you all have (Cam) Taylor-Britt, (number) 29. I know a couple guys in that secondary."

What do you think about the defense?

"I think it's on its way to being one of the top defenses in the league this year."

Josh, how do you think playing in big games has helped you?

“That’s the only way you’re going to play in the big league. It helps a lot. It helps you thrive. It helped me thrive in the bigger moments.”