



**QUOTES**

• 714-540-7100

• CHARGERS.COM

• @CHARGERS

JOSH.RUPPRECHT@CHARGERS.NFL.COM | SKIP.POWERS@CHARGERS.NFL.COM | JENNIFER.ROJAS@CHARGERS.NFL.COM | JAMAAL.LAFRANCE@CHARGERS.NFL.COM  
BROCK.ANDERSON@CHARGERS.NFL.COM | LAUREN.MEYER@CHARGERS.NFL.COM

## LOS ANGELES CHARGERS 2019 NFL DRAFT FIRST DAY AVAILABILITY

Thursday, April 25, 2019 | Hoag Performance Center | Costa Mesa, Calif.

### GENERAL MANAGER TOM TELESKO

#### **On DT Jerry Tillery:**

"He fits on the interior defensive line. His size, his length — he's 6-6 and 300 pounds with a very athletic build — has long arms, is very flexible and runs well for a big guy. He has some inside pass-rush ability. That really jumped off the tape to us, his movement skills for such a big man. It's nice getting somebody inside with some length and size to try and push that pocket a little bit with our edge rushers [DEs] Joey [Bosa] and Melvin [Ingram III] — kind of work in on that defensive line."

#### **On Tillery's experience:**

"That's a positive in a high level of competition. He played a lot of good teams and a lot of good football. He's been coached very well by [Notre Dame Head Coach] Brian Kelly and his staff. That's all an added plus."

#### **On if he expected Tillery to be drafted earlier:**

"No, I kind of felt like he'd be right in our area. I kind of felt like that. He's a gifted man at that size. It's hard to move. His change of direction, his foot speed, for a guy at that height and that size — we're lucky to have him."

#### **On Tillery's shoulder injury:**

"He did [have surgery in March]. He had it right after the combine. It's something that he played with last year for a good portion of the season and then he went through his regular combine-prep work. He did his combine workout and then had the surgery right after. Everything looks good. He's on track. When he's healed up, he'll be ready to go, but we're not too concerned about it."

#### **On if Tillery had a pre-draft visit to the team:**

"I don't confirm those."

#### **On Tillery's background:**

"He's a very smart person. He has interests off the field. We don't shy away from that. I don't mind players having other interests off the field. All of these guys, they play football right now for their career, but football doesn't last forever, either. We did a lot of work on Jerry. He loves to play the game. He loves football. He knows this is his primary job, but yeah, he has interests off the field. [Head] Coach [Anthony] Lynn doesn't shy away from that. I don't shy away from that at all."

#### **On the research on Tillery:**

"We did a lot of work on [Tillery]. We kind of felt like Jerry would be in this area. We did a lot of work on him."

#### **On if Tillery's injury dropped him in the draft:**

"You'd have to ask some other teams. I don't think so just because of the type of surgery it was. It's kind of common. I really don't know. With our doctor and everything we've seen, we're pretty comfortable with it."

**On medical research before the draft:**

"You'd be amazed how much work we do on the medical side. Not just us, everybody. The amount of work that we do on the medical with our doctors, doing research and talking to other people — each player is unique. Each of their injuries are unique, so there really isn't one that you can just compare to another. The good thing is with doctors, they see these injuries every day. They can look at them, they can look at the surgery, they can look at everything and kind of see where it is. A lot of these players coming out of college, they've had injuries and had surgeries. We feel very comfortable with this one. Believe me, we're very conservative with that. We do a lot of work on the medical. I think it's a big part of the draft process that people don't see. It's a big part of our process. That kind of goes into — if you take a player, if you don't take a player or maybe where you take them in the draft, you see where the risk is — but for us, Jerry didn't fall into that category."

**On if Tillery had a medical check following surgery:**

"He did, yes."

**On filling a need with the pick of Tillery:**

"It was just the way it lined up, like you said. When you're picking at 28, you're not going to have a wide variety of players that you're picking from and have the same talent level. Jerry, for us, was very high on the board. We feel very good with [NT] Brandon Mebane, and [DT] Justin Jones is a starting defensive tackle in this league. We feel great about him, but depth is very important. The skillset that Jerry brings is very important. He gets some push up the middle. The fact that he can still win with his feet, with his quickness and his length to make the quarterback — kind of shrink those windows up front. We have two edge pass rushers that get up the field and move around, so to try and tighten that pocket up a little bit. Jerry does a good job of that."

**On if the team considered trading back out of the first round:**

"We did a little bit. It was pretty quiet. When we got a couple picks before, I think we got one call, but there wasn't a whole lot of interest of anybody coming up. Quite honestly, since we had a first-round grade on Jerry Tillery, unless it was something really, really good, I don't think that I would have moved back. I'd just sit there and take that player."

**On if there were any other players on the board with a first-round grade when the team went on the clock:**

"He was it. He was it, which I give our scouts credit. They saw him, they liked him. They had him in the right spot for us. Everybody's board is a little bit different, but also, knowing that with the 28th pick that we got a guy that we feel is a solid first-round player. You don't always get that at the 28th pick. I told everybody, 'We may have to a guy on our board that is the top of the second round player with the first pick if we can't trade out.' I had no problem with that at all, but it worked out that Jerry was there — and we took him."

**On the scouts' familiarity with Tillery:**

"Yeah, he's played a lot of football. He was a Notre Dame, obviously. Honestly, our guys travel the country the whole year looking at football players. There aren't a lot of guys that we haven't seen a lot of, to be honest with you, unless they played at a small school."

**On Tillery's role:**

"As far as exactly what his role will be, we'll kind of let that play out in training camp. Certainly, interior defensive line. Defensive end? Yeah, I guess he could probably take some snaps out there. Probably more of a defensive tackle."

**On the impact of the staff's relationship with Notre Dame coaches:**

"Our scouts have great relationships there. Our director of college scouting [Kevin Kelly] lives in Indianapolis. He spends a good amount of time in South Bend [Ind.]. He knows that staff really well, so that's always a help."

**LOS ANGELES CHARGERS FIRST-ROUND SELECTION DEFENSIVE TACKLE JERRY TILLERY**

**On his reaction to being selected by the Chargers:**

"Oh my gosh. It was just like the whole year, a whole college career coming to fruition at that moment. All the work I've put in — this is what I wanted. This is what I wanted to be. This is what I wanted to do. To find out that I'm going to get to do it in L.A., I could not have been happier."

**On if he was aware of the Chargers' interest in him:**

"I knew that they were interested, but I approached each interview, each visit the same. It was really special."

**On rehab from shoulder surgery in March:**

"It's really going well. I'm doing my physical therapy every day. I'm on a plan and I'm doing it every day. My shoulder is getting stronger. My range of motion is there. I feel like I'm ahead of schedule with how these things usually rehab, and I'm excited. I'm excited for the future. I'm excited to get back to playing football again."

**On timetable for potential return from injury:**

"I've been told that four months after my date of surgery I'll be cleared for full contact. I was in Vail [Colo.] last week, on [April 18] believe, for a re-check with my surgeon and they told me that my range of motion is better than they expected. My strength is better than they expected, so I think that my rehab is going really well. I've been told four months from March 6 when I had my surgery, I'll be cleared for full contact."

**On if the timetable to return is basically training camp in July:**

"Yes, exactly. Exactly. I fully plan and expect to be ready to compete by then."

**On his skillset:**

"I think it starts with my traits — my size and length and athletic ability. I've been blessed to have those, but I put them to use and I've worked to become a great technician. My pass-rush ability and using my leverage and strength to stop the run. I think those together make me a great defensive lineman."

**On if he expected to be drafted higher:**

"I went into this thing with no expectations. I thought whichever team believed in me, I was going to commit my everything to [them] and it happened to be the Chargers at 28. I couldn't be happier about that happening and I'm excited to get to L.A."

**On if you talked to Chargers DE Isaac Rochell:**

"I did. Yeah."

**On his conversation with Rochell:**

"He told me what the [Chargers'] defensive line room is like. He wants to play with me and how good this team is and how close we are, and I think we can win a Super Bowl together."

**On how much having Rochell's familiar face will help him in the transition process:**

"That will be an invaluable resource to have someone who's done this before, with whom I have a really close relationship to do this thing together. I'm excited for it. I'm ready to make this happen. I'm ready to win some football games."

**On his personality:**

"I think I'm someone who's really well-rounded. I use my skills and life experiences — I put them to good use. I think I'm someone who can adapt in any situation, any circumstance. Everything I've done, all the experiences I've had up to this point have really helped me."

**On his passion for football:**

"The people that say things, they don't know. They don't know Jerry Tillery. They haven't seen me working in practice. They don't know everything I've put in to what I do. I'm going to show them. I'm going to show them pretty soon."

**On if he played under a microscope for four years at Notre Dame:**

"Yeah, I was. That goes with the territory, with going to a school like Notre Dame — [like] playing in a market like L.A. I think always being aware of what you do and how important what you do is, behaving, acting accordingly. I think all those things are really important."