

Chargers Head Coach Brandon Staley Draft Availability

Thursday, April 27, 2023 ⚡ Westfield Century City ⚡ Los Angeles, Calif.

On the selection of WR Quentin Johnston and Johnston's outlook:

"We're very excited that we drafted Quentin Johnston. As for his forecasting and where he is going to fit in, I know that we are really excited to have him. He comes into a wide receiver room that as is as good as any in the NFL. There are so many good mentors for him in that room with two of the best receivers in the game with [WR] Mike Williams and [WR] Keenan Allen. Then, a young receiver, [WR] Joshua Palmer, who we think is fantastic. All Quentin needs to do is come be himself, that's why we drafted him. We're excited to have him. The big thing is just getting him in our building and having him be a part of the team. How that takes shape, there is a lot of time between now and when we play to define all of that. But, we're super excited to have him."

On S Derwin James Jr. mentioning that he wanted to the team to select a 'dawg' and if Johnston 'fits' that description:

"That sounds like exactly what we want. That sounds like me, sounds like [General Manager] Tom [Telesco], [Owner and Chairman of the Board] Dean Spanos. That sounds like a guy that we want. That fits the description. When you guys meet Quentin Johnston, you're going to know why he's here, just like when you guys met [G] Zion Johnson last year and the year before when you met [T] Rashawn Slater. When he walks in a room, you're going to feel him right away. He's an outstanding young man. He had an outstanding college career, meant a lot to TCU. It was a really fun evaluation to go through with our coaching staff, with our personnel department. Like I said, we're really glad that he's a teammate of Derwin James."

On which element of Johnston's game he is 'most excited about':

"He's a weapon to score the ball any time that he touches it. There are very few receivers in the game who are threats to score the ball whenever they have it. He can do it in the deep part of the field, outside the red line. He can do it after the catch — he was second in college football in yards after the catch, but he's also an outstanding player outside the red line. He's six-foot-three, 210-plus pounds, over a 40-inch vertical, 11-foot broad. He's not a build-speed player, he's very sudden. The fact that he can score the football from anywhere is very attractive. I think what you saw at TCU, he elevated that entire football team. I thought, in the three biggest games of the season — in the Kansas State game, the Michigan game and the Georgia game — I thought that he was the best player on the field, and that's saying a lot because there were a couple of first round picks tonight on all of those teams that they were playing against. He's a captain, has outstanding makeup. We're really fired up about it."

On if Offensive Coordinator Kellen Moore was in the draft room tonight for Johnston's selection:

"Yeah, all of our coaches were. Our entire coaching staff is involved in that process. Our defensive coaches watch offensive players, too, to kind of cross-check it. This is a guy that we had really strong grades on. There's a really high opinion of him. I know that our defensive coaches thought this guy was fantastic, a tough cover. When we were evaluating the defensive players in the draft, Quentin just kept showing up, and that wasn't just this year, it was in years prior, too. This guy was fantastic. I think that he is going to be a great fit for our team. He really adds a dimension that, I think, can make us really exciting on offense."

On if it was Johnston's speed that 'stood out' in the evaluation process:

"Not just speed, just play-making. A lot has been made about speed, but it's being able to make plays with the ball in your hand. I think what he gives us is the run-after-catch element that is real. Like I said, for him to average 8.9 yards after the catch, that's an element of our offense that we needed. He fits the mold of a pro receiver playing outside the red line. What that forces defenses to do and how they play you, when you have legit people that can play outside, that really tilts the coverage, lightens the box inside, and then creates more room for the guys on the interior, like Keenan [Allen], like Gerald [Everett], like Austin [Ekeler]. A very unique player. To add someone of his caliber with the type of production, and then, a captain, we're very excited about the pick."

On Johnston's traits that 'stood out' in the evaluation process:

"The production on the film. In every game, this guy is scoring the football. He's a threat to go from anywhere. For a big guy, he's not a build-speed player. This guy can catch a hitch, he can catch a hinge outside. When he catches it, he is very sudden. I think he surprises people because he is a bigger guy and they're thinking, maybe, 'Hey, maybe I have a chance at this.' But, then, he moves like a much smaller player with the ball in his hands. He's pulling away from guys. Against Michigan, [Michigan DB] DJ Turner, he was 4.2-something DB and [Quentin] catches a shallow-cross and goes 70-plus yards for a touchdown in the Fiesta Bowl. You're seeing that all over the movie. I think that's really exciting. We're excited to add him to our group."

On his communication with QB Justin Herbert tonight regarding the selection of Johnston:

"I just texted him. You know Justin [Herbert], he doesn't say a lot [*laughter*]. He's excited. The great situation for Quentin is to be able to come in and learn from Mike Williams, from Keenan Allen, guys who have accomplished so much, and Josh Palmer, I think it's just a great opportunity for him to come in and learn the game and not have a lot of pressure on him. But, then, there's a great opportunity with our quarterback, with our offensive line, with our skill players. There'll be enough touches for everybody."

On Johnston's ability to gain yardage after the catch:

"His ability to play outside the red line and play above the rim outside, and then inside, being able to really take it a long way — when you can throw something short, whether it's a speed sweep, something short, whether it's a hitch, shall-cross, slant, and then being able to take it a long way, we felt like that was a winning edge for him. You've heard me talk about scoring the football and how that's something that I think really separates Mike [Williams] from a lot of the rest of the receivers in the NFL is that he can score it, and I think that this guy can do the same thing."

On Johnston's Combine interview:

"There are some times when you don't learn anything from those interviews, and then there are some times where you just have a feeling from a guy that, 'Man, I'd like to join up with him.' I think there are some times when a guy leaves a 15-minute interview and you look at each other and say, 'Yeah, that's one of us,' and that's how we felt. All it is a feeling. Then, you have to dive deep into the player. But, it's one of those impressions that he made on us where there's just a focus, there's a maturity, there's a pride, I think, in what he did for TCU. There's a humility for being such a special player. He kind of reminds me of our guys. We have two \$20 million receivers who are as humble as any in the NFL. So that really stood out to us. As the General Manager Derwin James said [*laughter*], he is a dawg. He is a guy that in the premium games, he was playing at a premium level, and you need that from your players, from your weapons. When the lights are the brightest, that you're showing up, and he did that at TCU."

On what he learned about Johnston following the Combine:

"Just in passing, I saw a lot of the Fiesta Bowl, I saw a lot of that game. What stood out to me was probably what everybody else saw that day. I think that I was attracted to his play style in that game because I have a lot of respect for Michigan's defense. Just seeing TCU, a smaller school, be able to go play like that and win that game, I think that gets your process started. There are some times when you can just catch a game and maybe you didn't know a lot about a player and you just catch a performance, and you're like, 'Yeah, let me dive into this.' To keep going further, what he meant to that program, being a captain, and I think talking to other TCU players in the draft process — because they had a really good team, there's a reason why they went to the [CFP] National Championship Game, [TCU Head Coach] Sonny [Dykes] did a great job coaching that team — but when you talk to the players in the TCU program, what Q meant to that team, I think says a lot about his makeup. That's another quality that we think is really going to separate him from the rest."

On if Johnston's drops last season 'played a factor in his evaluation':

"I just think that the overall production of the player, there's are very few guys that are that size and speed that have that type of productivity outside the red line, and then after the catch. We felt like, in assessing him catching the football, there are a lot of catches outside the red line with guys contested all over them that not very many people could make. There were a couple of drops on the in-breaks and stuff like that, but it wasn't a concern for us. There are no perfect players, all of these guys have something. We just really feel strongly about this guy, just the totality of his skillset, height-weight-speed, the character. We're just really happy that he's a Charger."

On Johnston's physical tools:

"I think the way that the college game is being played, you're seeing less and less of these guys at that type of size. This is a big man's game and it always will be. When you have a big guy like that, that does not move like a big guy, he moves like a much smaller person, because he's got the quickness in the short area, but then he has the power that you're looking for — both power outside and the power after catch. These guys are hard to find. When you factor in all the physical skills with the production, because this guy's one of the most productive college players out there, and then his makeup, we just felt like it was a good decision."

On if he was 'surprised' that a wide receiver was not selected prior to No. 20 overall:

"It's the NFL Draft, I don't know if I'm surprised by anything. In the NFL, anything can happen. I'm sure, over the rest of the draft, that will be no exception."