

Chargers General Manager Tom Telesco Day 2 Draft Availability Friday, April 29, 2022 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

On S JT Woods' nickname of 'Heartbreak Kid':

"I don't know who gave him that nickname, but it kind of fits a little bit, right? He was a big play guy for them. He turned the ball over a lot and made a lot of big plays for them."

On Woods' positional versatility:

"He's a unique player. Like [S] Nas [Nasir Adderley], like [S] Derwin [Jamrs Jr.], he's a safety with a lot of cover ability, with his length and his speed. He shows a little bit of corner movement, so we kind of see him as a defensive back. As you guys know, when we're in five DB [personnel], six DB, it can be any combination — it's not just necessarily three corners and two safeties or four corners with two safeties, you can go with three safeties. The fact is that we have some of these guys that can really cover, and that's what JT can do. JT, he's long and he is fast — like, legitimately fast, football fast. He has really good ball skills, turns the ball over, plays aggressive, really good feel for the game. He's a really interesting player."

On Woods' 'unique' size matched with skillset:

"It is unique because of his height. He's over six-foot-two, so he has long legs, long arms. Big-time track athlete in high school, sprints and hurdles — enough that he was a hurdler at Baylor, so that kind of tells you how fast he is because Baylor has a big-time track program. But, as you see him, you can see how fast he plays. You notice it right off the bat. Sometimes, guys were longer legs, it takes some time to build, and then you see the speed — he gets it going immediately. A unique player because of his size, his length and his ability to really cover a lot of ground from that safety position."

On if his tackling skills are a concern:

"He is aggressive, tough. The rest of the test will come along a little bit, but he's certainly more than willing to the point where he probably has to pace himself down a little bit. But, he can cover a lot of ground. Part of tackling, too, is getting into a position to get there, and he covers a lot of ground to the perimeter. He can erase some big runs that come out. Plus, we see him also with special teams ability, too, with his speed and his aggression."

On if the club was 'targeting' defensive back today:

"We weren't targeting a specific position. He was just a player that we really liked. He has that unique skillset in the secondary. It was just kind of blinking to us up there."

On if Woods 'will compete for a starting spot' within the secondary:

"Obviously, with our first-round pick, you can kind of see what his role is going to be. From here on out, these guys that come in are going to compete and try to earn a job some way, somehow."

On if Woods played on special teams in college:

"Yes, certainly early in his career."

On balancing between drafting ‘at a position of need’ or for the ‘best player available’:

“Once you’re out of the first round, the positions of need — trying to fill needs in the third through the seventh round, that’s not always realistic to do. Needs constantly change, so it’s not something that we’re really looking at. Best player available, we have players ranked, but, obviously, it’s very subjective. You aren’t really filling immediate needs once you’re into this part of the draft.”

On if Woods could potentially ‘cross-train’ as a corner:

“He’s a pretty good safety. I think, when you see him, you’ll see his middle of the field [skillset]. He has really good vision and eyes. He breaks on the ball quickly, especially going back. He has really big-time speed. Our safeties have to be able to cover, which all of our guys do.”

On if he could potentially be a returner on special teams:

“No, but a gunner, quite possibly. He does have pretty good return skills, once the ball is in his hands. I wouldn’t rule it out, but it wasn’t something that we were thinking about in terms of actually returning a kick or punt. As far as covering kicks and covering punts, definitely.”

On if Woods’ ability to cover tight ends ‘stood out’ to him:

“Yes, no doubt.”

On if Woods covering tight ends ‘frees up’ S Derwin James to ‘move around more’:

“Well, it would be hard to gameplan today for whoever we’re going to play. I mean, it’s the draft. But, certainly, when I say he’s a unique player, part of that is being able to try and handle a tight end.”

On if it ‘felt weird’ not picking in the second round:

“Yes, it took forever. It did. You see all of those good players go off, but we did put [OLB] Khalil’s [Mack] draft card up on the board in our second-round spot that we took him. He’s the oldest player I’ve ever drafted, and the most expensive, but I think he’s going to pan out just fine. We knew that going in, so you kind of sit and watch and kind of wait to take it. It is what it is.”

On Woods ‘covering the slot’ at Baylor:

“A lot of these guys, we’ll get them in here and we’ll just kind of let them develop and see where it goes. His skillset is pretty unique.”

On Woods also playing wide receiver during his time at Baylor:

“He’s a versatile player, but we’re going to keep him as a safety for now and let him play there. He’s a good athlete. In high school, he played, I think, running back, receiver, all of the defensive back positions and ran track. So, a good athlete.”