



# TITANS DRAFT TRANSCRIPT

April 29-May 1, 2021



## OUTSIDE LINEBACKER RASHAD WEAVER MAY 1, 2021

### PRESS CONFERENCE WITH LOCAL MEDIA

#### **OUTSIDE LINEBACKER RASHAD WEAVER**

*(on how far he has come from a technical standpoint playing five seasons)*

I think from the lowest freshman technically to one of the best players in college football. I just think that is due to the coaches we had at Pitt. Coach (Charlie) Partridge is the best D-line coach in the country. He just teaches technique and it's all about technique in the run, in the pass and any time you are on the field you have got to be able to make plays in the technique. With that coaching and the way we play ball at Pitt, I think I put my technique to the top compared to any other college pass rushers.

*(on where he fits in a 3-4 defense)*

I never played inside except for at the Senior Bowl. I always played on the edge at Pitt. We were a 4-3 (defense). I think my redshirt freshman year I played nose (tackle), but that was in one of our pass-rush packages. After that year, I went back out to the edge, but I know I can do it. That's one thing about me, I am versatile. I can move up and down the line. Wherever they plan on seeing me at, I think they can see me standing up on the edge or if they need to knock me down there at the defensive end with my hand in the dirt. I think they know I have the ability to do either and I will be able to do either one they kind of point me towards.

*(on how effective it was to play last season to show his recovery from injury and erase any doubts)*

I think it was a must. I may be looking at, how this weekend went, an undrafted free agent, seventh round or something later because that tape from 2018, you know, I was making plays, but it's not good technically. It's not good technique there. I was just kind of going off natural skill. Before that 2019 season, I put in a lot of work because I didn't want to be that type of player anymore. I went down, so I just continued that work before the 2020 season. Coming off the injury, I had a lot to prove, then there was doubt with the season with COVID. One of our old strength coaches just said if you put the money in the bank, it will be there when it is time to pull it out. I carried the mindset through every day. I worked out and prepared my leg rehab or my technique and my skill set just preparing myself to be ready in 2020. When it was time to cash out and make those plays, all the deposits would be there.

*(on what he feels like the Titans are getting out of him)*

First, I am so excited. I am so thankful for them and Coach (Mike) Vrabel and the whole staff. They put the faith in me to pick me. I will be ready to come there and work and make plays and do whatever I am asked. When I got on the phone, I felt like they got the biggest steal in the draft. I thought I would be gone on day two, honestly, but some things just change. We are at this point now and I have been drafted and people dream of

this. I am so thankful for it. For them to pick me, I am excited, but I think they got a great value pick in me and I am excited to prove that to them.

***(on playing with Bud Dupree who formerly played with the Pittsburgh Steelers)***

Just from him being a previous (Pittsburgh) Steeler, I've always watched him and T.J. (Watt) and they are great pass rushers. Actually, when I was out in Arizona training, I got connected with Bud (Dupree) and we have the same financial advisor now and I have been out with him a few times. I text with him. He was out at EXOS where I was at recovering from his ACL. We would chat it up and talk and we have had dinner. Me and him are a little bit acquainted and I will definitely be trying to learn from him and pick his mind and maybe try to get on his nerves. I know he likes asking me questions here and there about ACLs. So, maybe if I help him, he will help me even more.

***(on what he learned from things not going as planned)***

I have talked about this a lot. I have always been a big 'it is what it is type of person' so I kind of hold the emotions down. I just deal with it and on to the next. I think with the ACL, I learned the most. Back with the Michigan situation, I was still young. I wouldn't say I had learned it yet. I just kind of went with the flow and was excited to be at Pitt and thankful that they wanted me. I was going somewhere where I was wanted, same way with the Titans. With the ACL, mainly, even this draft, it tested my patience. My work ethic and the desire to be great stayed the same through the rehab and the recovery. That wasn't hard for me just the patience and not being where I wanted to be at the time I wanted to be, just being prepared at all times so that when my time did come and it was time for me, I would be ready and be able to show that. For me, it is about patience and continuing to strengthen my patience.

***(on taking pride in making plays behind the line of scrimmage)***

Absolutely. Even with that I always set high standards for myself. The higher standards you set, if you achieve them you are looking at an elite status and if you fall a little bit short, you are still in great status. With that 14 (tackles for loss), I wanted more sacks. I should have had at least a sack every game and I had played nine games and I didn't have nine sacks. In college those sacks count as TFLs. I just see I could have had more, but I definitely pride myself in that. I feel like I can affect every play. Whether I am the one making the play, the TFL or the sack, or I am the one taking on blocks so someone else can go make the play. I just want to help the defense on every play and cause havoc for the offense and cause them to have to plan for me.

***(on where he is best as a pass rusher and where does he need to develop)***

I am best naturally on the edge and that's because that is all I have ever played. If I get reps inside or at the three or somewhere in practice, I think I would be just as good at that. I think that I have the versatility to play up and down the line. For me, I would say the biggest thing to work on, these tall guys, I have heard it from middle school all the way through college is pad level. It is consistency with my pad level. My pad level is low. When my pad level is low my get off is fine, I have a quick first step. I get back there and I win. It's when I get high and I look in the backfield and I try to see maybe a little too much is when it really doesn't look as good on film. So for me, it is just my consistency with my pad level.

***(on the challenge of getting on the field behind Bud Dupree and Harold Landry)***

That's why they picked me. I am excited to get behind both those guys and learn and push them. It gives me something to work for and if it was easy for me to step into then it would be a little different mindset. It just gives me something to even work for and it adds to the list to work harder for. It is just another task or hurdle to work toward and that is nothing I haven't done before, so I am excited for it and just excited again to be behind those guys and learn from them and be a part of this defense. Turn it around on the defense and the pass rush. That is why they picked up Bud Dupree and I feel like that is why they just drafted me.

***(on how Pitts' defense prepared him for how the Titans could use him)***

I think that it prepares us well. That is why I chose Coach (Pat) Narduzzi and Pitt. Everybody knew what he did at Michigan State and then again working with Coach Partridge. Those two guys I am just so thankful for and the position that they put that D-line in. Our defense was designed for us to make plays. Some defenses are made for the linebackers to make plays and the D-line just to hold gaps and stuff like that. Our defense, they want us to get back there. They will put us in situations to have one-on-ones. They will put us in situations have to blitzers to get one-on-ones. They expect us to make the play. We play man coverage, so they expect us to get back there so our DBs aren't running up and down the field five seconds because it will break down eventually. I think being in that type of defense where essentially if there's no D-line our defense isn't going to perform very well, but we had a good line these last couple of years. We have been in the top of every category so I think it just prepares me to step in on the Titans defense and put my best foot forward and no matter what I am asked to do, be able to do it.

***(on discussing playing against Tyler Vrabel with Coach Vrabel)***

You are going to get me in trouble before I even get there. So I had some meeting with J Rob (General Manager Jon Robinson), Coach Vrabel and Coach (Ryan) Crow and all of them. I think the second meeting I had was with Coach Vrabel and I brought it up to him and he just laughed at me. He may have cussed at me, but besides that it was a good little laugh. He said I had a good game. His son will be a good player. He is still young.

***(on where he is for the draft)***

Actually, I am down home in Cooper City, Florida. I am at my best friend's house. I have got the pool out here. All my friends and family, I have had my best friend from high school, his parents and brothers, three other of my best friends from high school and their parents, my mom and dad, sister, both sets of grandparents. My college best friend, Keyshon Camp, who is also my teammate. I live with him three years out of the four at Pitt. That's just my go to right there. Just to have all that love and support around me and everybody that has helped me get here through the great times and the bad times. It has just been great. I don't where I would be if it wasn't for them so I am just so thankful for them to be here. They have helped me throughout the pass few days. Day two was a little rougher on me, but I came back day three and they were all here waiting just like I was. None of them ever waived or left when the nights got long on day one or day two. I am just so thankful for them.

***(on the importance of being a run stopper)***

To me it is everything. Coach Narduzzi and Coach Partridge, especially Coach Narduzzi, preaches you have to stop the run. If you don't stop the run, you are not going to get sacks, you are not going to get at the quarterback, you are not going to get to do the fun stuff, stuff that gets you drafted, stuff that gets you paid

when you get in the league. Those type of things. Once you stop run, teams have to pass, so that was our mindset as a D-line. We weren't mad or shied away from playing against the run. We want to stop the run, get TFLs, stop teams that were highest in the NCAA is rushing and have their lowest average of the season so they would have to start passing, so we could just go out there and have fun. For me, I look forward in stopping the run. When you stop the run, you are taking the whole heart and soul from them because if they can't stop the run block they definitely can't stop you in the pass block. So, when you just shut them down, making TFLs and getting in the backfield and running backs that are used to being able to get six yards a carry are getting negative yards a carry it just makes the game fun. That's when you get up and celebrate with the whole defense and you get excited to start in the second quarter, third quarter or it gets late in the game when they can't run and you get after the passer that makes the whole game fun.

***(on his experience with the Michigan recruitment and getting to the NFL draft)***

Honestly, my whole life I always thought maybe I was a pretty revengeful. Like I said, I am a 'it is what is it is type of person.' After that freshman year in college, I was kind of over the Michigan thing. It's a business. NCAA is a business. They have got to do what they think is best for them. I was excited I was at Pitt because they wanted me. When they recruited me with a week left for signing, they made it known how much they wanted me. Looking back, I always say everything happens for a reason, so it wasn't meant for me to go to Michigan. Who knows? I may not be getting drafted if I went there. Nobody knew how it would have played out. I went to Pitt and had a great career, was an All-American and just got drafted to the NFL, so I just want to be thankful for that and not think about the people that weren't to high on me.