

NFL Network Media Conference

Thursday, April 21, 2022

NFL Network Analyst Daniel Jeremiah

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for joining us on today's call with NFL Network analyst Daniel Jeremiah previewing the 2022 NFL Draft.

Before I turn it over to Daniel for opening remarks and questions, I wanted to provide some details on NFL Network's coverage of the 2022 NFL Draft in Las Vegas.

NFL Network provides more than 80 hours of draft week coverage beginning Sunday, April 24th. Live coverage of the 2022 NFL Draft kicks off with first round Thursday, April 28, at 8:00 p.m. eastern time with Rich Eisen, Daniel Jeremiah, Charles Davis, Stanford head coach David Shaw, Kurt Warner, Joe Klatt, Ian Rapoport, Melissa Stark, and various NFL Network reporters stationed across the league.

Coverage continues with rounds 2 and 3 Friday April 29, at 7:00 eastern time with Chris Rose, Peter Schrager joining Eisen, Jeremiah, Davis, Rapoport, and Stark.

Coverage concludes with rounds 4 through 7 Saturday, April 30, at 12:00 noon eastern time with Eisen, Jeremiah, Schrager, Rapoport, and Rachel Bonnetta.

On Wednesday April 27th at 8:00 p.m. eastern time, Daniel reveals his final mock draft of the year on NFL Network.

And finally, for all media who will be on-site in Las Vegas, we will be holding media availability with Daniel, Charles Davis, Joe Klatt, and Stanford head coach David Shaw on Wednesday, April 27th at the Caesar's Palace pool from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Pacific, and at the NFL Draft Experience on the clinic field from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Pacific.

If you would like to attend, please email me at Andrew.Howard@NFL.com. Daniel?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Thanks, Andrew. Appreciate you guys all jumping on here today. It's always my favorite time of the year. It does feel like Christmas a little bit with all the excitement.

I think Vegas is going to be awesome. It's going to be a great atmosphere. In the draft itself there's so little that's known at this point in time. It's kind of fun not even knowing who the first pick is going to be.

We don't know where these quarterbacks slot in and where they'll end up going. It provides a lot of intrigue. We might not have those star-stars that we've had the last couple years up at the top, but I don't believe we're ever had more intrigue than we do this year with this draft.

Eight teams having two picks, it adds another layer to it, as well. Really looking forward to getting out to Vegas. I think it's going to be a memorable draft. It's going to be a lot of fun.

With that, I'll open it up to questions and we'll get rolling.

Q. Two-parter here. You know the Eagles and their history in the first round; there are certain positions that Howie has never addressed, safety being one of them. They have clear need there. Do you see them maybe considering the lack of talent at the position, addressing it there? And if not, who do you see second or third round as possibilities? And I know a lot of time is spent looking at the prospects, but in terms of Jonathan Gannon's scheme, do you feel because of the way he plays that maybe the need isn't as great as it was previously with Jim Schwartz or Jim Johnson?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, good questions there. To me you can look at how they play. I think one of the things with Gannon, I see it with Brandon Staley out with the Chargers, and those guys are really close, that I don't necessarily marry them to one scheme specifically.

I know what they've traditionally done, but I know that they can adjust around the guys that they have.

I still think there's a lot of value with a versatile safety that can be a match-up player. You can use him different ways to help you disguise what you're doing.

Kyle Hamilton is fascinating in this one. He's my fourth overall player. When I do my update he'll be my fifth, so I haven't really dropped him that far. That would be a tremendous value in my opinion for them if they were to have an opportunity to pick him with one of those picks, if he were to drop down there.

I would have no problem with that. I know they haven't historically done that, but I could make a strong case that's a need and that would be a home run pick in my opinion.

If they wanted to wait and go a little bit later on, obviously they're flush with a lot of picks here. When you look at pick 51, I think there's a chance that you could see a Brisker there from Penn State.

You know, that next group, Pitre is probably a nickel and a safety. He can do a couple different things out of Baylor would make some sense there.

If you wanted to go around beyond that, you could go back to Baylor and get their other safety in J.T. Woods, who I think is going to be a stud. He's just real tall and rangy. He ran in the 4.3s. He's got a ton of ball production. I had six picks this year.

So there'll be options for them if they want safety if they want one there in one or if they want to wait. I think it's a pretty deep group.

In terms of other things they could do with those picks, I wouldn't rule out receiver for the third year in a row. I don't think they see London. I don't think they see Garrett Wilson.

But I do think they have a good shot of seeing either Olave or Jameson Williams, and I think that would be a good pick to add to their mix that they have there in corner. I wouldn't rule out that, as well, if somebody like a McDuffie were to get there.

Q. Somebody is going to have to take the first offensive lineman off the board; it might be the Giants for the second time in three years. How do you stack them? How do you think the Giants stack them? And are you assuming like most of the rest of us that they're going to take one of them?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, it's difficult with them, because if you look at where they came from with Joe Schoen and Daboll, to me you look at Buffalo, they didn't invest a lot of high resources in that offensive line.

They got a bunch of functional players and then they surrounded them with real difference makers at skill positions obviously led by the quarterback there.

If you're looking at their history in terms of what they could do, doesn't necessarily point to them being locked in on an offensive lineman.

Now, if you look at the needs of the roster, I think they need to get better there, and I think it could marry up with where they're picking with the fifth pick.

I think there's a chance if it goes one way or the other, they could have their choice.

For me, I like Ekwonu. I know teams around the league are a little split around him because he's kind of raw in pass pro. But it's all there. It's all in his body. He's a dominant, dominant run blocker who I think has some inside-outside ability.

The interesting thing with him and with Evan Neal -- and teams are split in terms of who the best guy is - they've both played inside and they've both played tackle. They allow you to get your best five on the field.

I would go Ekwonu first and then Evan Neal, and then I would go Cross. Now, there's a lot of buzz and sometimes it's hard to tell when you're talking to friends in the league if the buzz is coming from them or if it's coming from it being in the media and them kind of repeating what they hear in the media.

But there's been a lot of connection between Charles Cross at Mississippi State and the Giants. I don't know how much to buy into that or to believe that, but that would be the third name I would think there.

For me he's the third guy, but I know in terms of pass protection he's pretty polished.

Q. I think there's been so much discussion about the Chiefs trading up higher in the first round, but I'm just wondering from your perspective if they stay at 29 and 30 where you feel like the talent is right now with cornerbacks and defensive ends?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: You know, I actually like where they're positioned. You talk to other GMs around the league, I think that's kind of actually the target area, is kind of that late first, early second. It's kind of the sweet spot of this draft.

I know there's been scuttlebutt about them trying to potentially move up, but I like where they're positioned.

In terms of areas that they could go, you think about the receiver position. Treyton Burks, does he get there? That would be an intriguing option.

Andy Reid talked about them being a little bit bigger with what they've done. That would be kind of an intriguing option from that standpoint.

Corner, there will be some big corners to choose from. The two they'll probably be staring at -- actually I would say three. Andrew Booth from Clemson. He's coming off an injury. Had hernia surgery. Probably would be gone by now if he'd be able to stay healthy through the whole process. But that would be the first name I would keep an eye on.

Kyler Gordon from Washington would be the next, who I know he ran in the low 4.5s, but he plays so much faster than that and can really find and play the ball. That would be the second one.

And then Kaiir Elam from Florida would be the third.

I think those three corners -- maybe all three of them are there. I think there's a good chance two of them are, and I think there's a lot of upside with all three of those guys that would be good fits there and good picks for the Chiefs.

This is a division, as you know, that's just loaded up with this arms race in the off-season, and I don't know if it's possible with the quarterbacks and playmakers if you can have enough pass rushers and enough corners.

They're in a pretty good position to be able to address that where they are right now.

Q. You mentioned the unpredictability of the draft at the top. Where do you think it rates kind of historically how unpredictable things are right now? And is there really a chance that no one who touches the football can go in the top 10, no receiver or quarterbacks? Is that really possible?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: I will start with the first part of it.

I don't know that I can remember a year with more uncertainty. The year with Baker Mayfield going one, what was that, '18? That one was unpredictable. We kind of went into that process and it was Josh Allen potentially, it was Sam Darnold, and then Baker came out of left field and ended up being the first pick.

There was some unpredictability there. I would say this is along those lines, but even more so than the top. I talk to teams, and the great example is somebody like a Karlaftis in this draft from Purdue. There's teams that think he's one of the top 15 players, and then there's teams that think he's not worth a first- or second-round pick. That's how all over the board teams are on some of these guys.

So that's where to me it's different than any other draft. I do believe we see a skill player go in the top 10. To me there's too many teams that have young quarterbacks and have needs for playmakers.

The Jets kind of are one that stands out to me. I guess I would be surprised if the Jets left those first two picks, 4 and 10, and they had the pick of the litter at No. 10 with all the wide outs still left, I would have a hard time believing that they don't walk away with that guy if that's the case.

Q. Is this a year where there just aren't top 10 wide outs, or is it just such a deep position that teams feel they can fill it later?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: I absolutely believe there are top 10 wide outs because I had Garrett Wilson as my fifth player in my final update which comes out next week. I moved him up a spot. He is my fourth highest rated player in this draft.

Drake London is my seventh highest rated player in this draft. I feel like they're two of the 10 best players. It just comes down to do these teams want to do that early.

Depth has worked against wide outs recently where teams have -- look, the evidence is out there for all the hits in the second and third beyond and even beyond, but I think seeing the cost of these wide outs and what it's going to take to procure one of them on the open market, and that number gets north of \$20 million. You look at somebody like Justin Jefferson who obviously is a great example, where he was picked in the draft, his average per year is like \$3 million a year.

So you get cost control on a player like that at that price for four years plus a fifth year option versus having to go the veteran route and having to pay that huge, huge number to get a premium guy.

If not pay him, then you've got to trade a bunch of assets to go get him. To me I think that's why this year we see wide outs get pushed up a little bit more maybe than in years past. I think we'll see six of them go in the first round.

Q. Every year we see these instantaneous draft grades. Curious from a talent evaluator's perspective, what's the difference between a good and bad draft and how soon does a team know if they have the draft they really need?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Look, there's some years you're going to know right away. I think we can all agree the Bengals had a good draft last year just because of what they got out of Ja'Marr Chase right out of the chute.

Sometimes you're going to know right away, but in terms of like the collective of your picks, the goal, the teams that I was on, usually the aim was if you could get three starters in the draft, that's a really good draft.

You're talking about over a three-year process. So within three years if you had come out of that with three guys who are solid starters, guys you're not looking to replace, winning players would be another phrase you'd hear, that's a really, really solid draft.

You get four? Man, you're cooking with gas when you get four. If you look at a lot of the Super Bowl teams, usually you can go back and identify kind of that -- Seattle was a great example. I think they had four or five guys, ended up being key, key players on their team out of one draft, and they built a championship team off that one draft.

If you can back that up -- if you go back to back years with three or four quality starters, you're really on to something there.

But that usually is the goal, to come away with three, and anything above that you're really cooking.

Q. Going Patriots here, when you consider where they are as a team right now in the big picture, from your view, how significant is this draft for them and maybe what do you see as some options for them at 21 if they stick there?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, I mean, look, this is a team in my opinion that's got a really solid foundation. Obviously it's a championship foundation for a long time.

But I just feel like the way the division is going, the way the conference is going and the way the league is going, that they've got to get some more dynamic players, some more difference making players.

That to me is kind of their challenge in this draft and being more explosive offensively.

Obviously Jameson Williams would be a home run pick. That would be somebody they would have great info on with Nick's connection there to Bill.

That to me would be a fun one. I think you look on the defensive side of the ball, if you want to talk about a real playmaker on defense, I know linebacker, off-the-ball linebacker has been a little bit undervalued recently.

But, man, Devin Lloyd, for all the different things he can do, he kind of just feels like a Patriot type player with the size, the length, the versatility, the intelligence, the leadership. All that stuff kind of screams Patriot to me.

Those are kind of a couple examples, but I just think, again, faster, more dynamic, more explosive has got to be an area they've got to look at in this draft.

Q. The Eagles are in an interesting situation; the fans here in this town are nuts most of the time anyway, but they want a wide receiver because that's sexy, that's jazzy. But in the grand scheme of things, Devonta Smith and Dallas Goedert are going to catch the bulk of the passes. In your opinion, do the Eagles really go or should they go more for offense or defense if it's at a skill position on offense rather than defense?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Well, first of all, they're all riled up because of you. It's all your fault. No.

Look, I'm kind of an old-school purist on this stuff. Again, I think it just comes back to the time in Baltimore, which is just true, honest, best player available. When you look at the Eagles you can really kind of look at a lot of different areas.

I think offensive line, you're not in a dire straits there by any stretch because you have that front line group, because you've also got some depth behind them. But if we remove that, I could make a case if you have the highest grade on the receiver you could still take one.

I think I'm not telling tales out of school here, but I don't know that you're counting on Jalen Reagor what be a key part of this thing going forward, what he's shown, so I don't really even look at that.

So you've got really kind of one big-time -- what you hope is a big-time receiver; you could use another one.

The defensive line, you've got some depth there, but you also have age. So if there's a rusher or a defensive tackle that's your highest rated player, like a Devonte Wyatt, whether that's a Jordan Davis or what have you for the interior guys.

I don't think you're going to see Jermaine Johnson. I think he's going to be gone. But if you have a highest rated player there, you could go there and then corner.

Again, I love Slay; he's big time. I think Avonte Maddox has a nice role. But I think finding another corner, finding a safety, I just think they're in a position the best thing they can do is just take the best available player. They're going to have a place for him.

Q. Don't you win with defense, with the way the situation is? I know offense is a big part of the game, but ultimately don't you have to get to the quarterback?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, but when you look around this league right now and you see -- if Patrick Mahomes and Justin Herbert and Aaron Rodgers and Josh Allen and these guys are on their game, I don't care how great your defense is, you'd better be able to score 28 points or you're not beating them.

That to me is still -- it's a challenge. You've got to go out there and score points. They've invested a lot in the line of scrimmage on both sides, so I wouldn't rule that out at all.

But I'm just saying you get into these games now with these young talented quarterbacks, I call them cyborgs, you'd better be able to score some points.

So that to me I think is a little bit antiquated from just we're going to have the roughest most rugged defense in the world, because even with the way the rules are right now and the talent at the quarterback position, you're going to have to be able to score some points to match them.

Q. Could you envision a scenario where all of the top 3 offensive linemen are going off the board by the time the Panthers pick at 6? And my second question: If Cross is there at 6, do you feel like given the Panthers' needs, do you feel like he's a guy that you have to pick there?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Well, it's definitely a screaming need. But as I just kind of said, I'm more of a best-player-available guy. For me just how I have the players rated, Cross wouldn't be in my thinking there with the sixth pick.

Do we see those other top two linemen go off the board? Yeah, it's conceivable. You could see Houston do it and you could see either the Jets or the Giants. Those three teams, you could make a case that the top-two guys could go there.

But to me, if one of the top-two guys gets to Carolina, slam dunk pick, you just take the tackle and you plug him and play him and you move on.

I think in their perfect world they'd probably be able to get out of six, get some extra picks. They don't pick in round 2 or 3. So to give themselves more kind of shots at it, that would be the best outcome.

I just don't know that you're going to find a trade partner. If you're stuck there, if you can get one of those top two tackles, I would do it. If those guys are off the board -- look, I could see them taking Cross. It's a big need, and some teams are really, really high on him. I wouldn't be surprised if he went there.

If it was me personally, I probably would go in another direction and just take the best available.

Q. Do you think it's more likely that both Ikem Ekwonu and Evan Neal are gone by 6 or one could be there?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: I think one is going to be there. Houston is a true wildcard to me. They could go in any direction. You always try and talk to friends around the league, try and get a gut on a team, and usually your buddies will tell you, I think this player matches them or that player, maybe a couple guys, a couple options.

I mean, Nick does a great job of keeping his cards close to the vest, because nobody in the league has any clue where Houston could be leaning or what they're going to do. That to me is the true wildcard.

But I do, I think there's a good chance that one of those top-two guys does get to Carolina.

Q. Commanders question for you. At 11, if they were to go wide receiver, who do you think is the best fit opposite of Terry McClure, and who do you think they could possibly get there if -- or who do you think they would go if London and Garrett Wilson are gone?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: To me those are the top two wide outs in the class. There's two schools of thought with wide outs. Coach Billick used to always say it and we used to talk about it all the time on the podcast, which is you kind of build out a basketball team of receivers you want. You know, guys with different skill sets, different sizes, different speed, all that stuff. You just wanted a basketball team.

And then kind of with the Shanahan system, you kind of see more of we want guys that are interchangeable, you can play every spot, and you're kind of real, real versatile in that way. Two different schools of thought around the league.

To me, Drake London would give them something that they don't have, just giving them that big frame. He'd be a great fit there, physical; just love everything about his game.

I have Garrett Wilson as the top wide out. I can't imagine he'll be there. There's a chance London is there. If both those guys are gone, McLaurin already kind of gives you more of a kind of a complete receiver. I think there's been a healthy obsession with speed in this league, so I would probably come down to Olave and Jameson Williams.

I would lean to Olave just because I think he's a more complete receiver. I think he's a little bit better route runner. So that would be where I would lean.

And I guess there's nothing wrong with going back to Ohio State. When you hit on one there, you might as well go get another one.

Q. Two-parter on the Ravens. Do you see this as a particularly high stakes draft for Eric DeCosta and the Ravens given the amount of picks they have in the first four rounds and the amount of holes they have to patch, especially on defense? More specifically, how do you see Trent McDuffie as a potential fit for them at 14?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, we used to do a thing in Baltimore, and they still do it today, with red star players. You put the red star on the guy that you just want in the building. Might not be the best player in the draft, at his position, might not be the best player at his school, but he's somebody that fits the culture. He's tough. He's intelligent. He's competitive.

To me Trent McDuffie is a red star. He's a red star guy. Just everything about him, the way he plays, everything I hear about him from an intangibles standpoint. I would think he would be a good match. They've got bigger corners that they've had over the years, but I think he's kind of a DNA match for how they play.

The other one to me, Jordan Davis, I just can't see them passing on him if he were to get there, because just they collect these guys, these big, big, physical line of scrimmage players on the offensive and defensive line, the rare ones, especially it's easy to sell SEC guys in that room.

That would be one that would kind of make sense to me.

And in terms of the overall draft, they're positioned with seven picks in rounds 3 and 4, and we went back and looked at this. Jack did great job with the research on this stuff, and Bill Smith, as well. When you go back and look and look at some of their key drafts and you go see in 2018 you get Orlando Brown and Mark Andrews, two Pro Bowlers; you go back to 2013, Brandon Williams and Kyle Juszczyk, two Pro Bowlers.

That's only been done five times in the NFL since 2012 in terms of getting two Pro Bowlers in the same draft in rounds 3 and 4.

It's only been done five times in the whole league. The Ravens have done it twice. So they're very confident about what they can accomplish in that part of the draft.

Q. At 25, your last mock was a month ago; what do you think about the best option for the Bills at 25, and how much trade-down action might there be at 25?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, I mean, I think for all the potential inaction up at the top of the draft, I think we could see a lot of action towards the bottom, especially as it pertains to the quarterbacks.

I think that's where the value is. If you can get back in, get the fifth year, take a flier on one of these guys, I think we could see some action there and see some movement there.

I'm sure the Bills have a good opportunity to make a move there if they want. In terms of where they could go, I think corner, continuing to look there -- this is a wide receiver group that's in pretty good shape, but I wouldn't put it past them to add to those riches if they have the right guy there.

A name I would keep an eye on, somebody like Jahan Dotson I think would be a fun one to just plug in there just to be an embarrassment of riches.

Breece Hall, the running back from Iowa State, to me is by far -- would be the best running back on their roster if he were to go there. I think you've got an offense that's going to go out and get a bunch of leads with how explosive they are, I think getting somebody that can finish the game, I think Breece Hall gives you that ability.

When it comes to the value of the position, the devalue of the position, whatever you want to call it, my thought process on running backs is I don't have a problem taking those guys in the first round, provided your team is ready to win right now and they're all meaningful carries.

In other words, you're a bad team and you take a running back high. If we assume that they've got a short shelf life and you're going to get a five-year run out of those guys, you're wasting two of those years or you're wasting two years of carries on a bad team.

The Buffalo Bills have a team that's a championship caliber team right now. You draft a running back, every single one of those carries you would think for the next four or five years is going to be a meaningful, valuable carry.

I could make a strong case that that would make a lot of sense with Breece Hall there for them at 25.

Q. A couple of questions about the Lions. At 2, a lot of edge rushers being mentioned there. Just kind of curious who you think might be the best fit for the Lions. And then you mentioned at 32, some teams may slide into the first round and try and get that fifth year. Do you think the fifth year option is worth taking a quarterback at 32 if you're the Lions? And if not quarterback, maybe who are they looking at at 32?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, I mean, I think it's definitely worth it there in terms of getting that extra year. That's a real deal. I know a lot of these deals are getting done earlier, but it just provides you with leverage. Provided you have the grades on them.

Don't take a guy you've got as your hundredth player up there just to get the fifth-year option. But if you've got the grades that support it, I've got no problem with a team doing that to go up there and get that accomplished and a quarterback and take a shot on him.

So in terms of the Lions up there at the top of the draft, Aidan Hutchinson to me is the run the card up if he gets there.

If Travon Walker goes one I wouldn't think it wouldn't take long. It's too easy of a fit there. It's a need. He brings everything that you want on the field and then you kind of add that other element with the leadership and what he could bring to a team that's trying to get the corner turned here.

I think he's somebody that has the experience of getting that done.

So I think that would be a home run pick. Travon Walker, if Hutchinson goes one, I think Walker would make some sense for them.

Again, real rugged, physical player. Be kind of ironic, because if you look for players that have gone in the first round with some of the limited production that he has, maybe kind of one of those upside picks. The Lions with Ziggy Ansah is probably as good an example as any and was a really, really good player. That would be another one.

And I think the wildcard for them, I know we've talked a little bit about Sauce Gardner potentially. I would not rule out stingily as maybe the wildcard pick, even having taken Okudah recently. Everybody knows about the injuries there.

But to me, if you're just chasing upside and you want to say, if we look back in three years who could be the best player in this draft and you want to take a swing, maybe you trade down a little bit if you can find a partner.

If not, to me stingily is intriguing as we come down the home stretch here. If you're thinking about a home run type pick, I wouldn't rule that one out.

Q. Daniel, if you're the Cardinals sitting at 23 and there's Karlaftis and there's Mafe, the two maybe back-end corners, receivers like Burks or Dotson, where do you think they would lead? Where would you tend to go?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, no, that's a good one. For me, it's easier to answer what I would do. I would have Karlaftis. He's my 18th player amongst that group. He's a polarizing player, and I said earlier, some people are really down on him. He's not super, super twitched up and bendy, but he just is a real rugged player who can power through and he can really kind of get on half of a man as we like to say and kind of work that edge and just be very disruptive.

So I know his sack numbers aren't huge, but to me I just think he's a rock solid player. He would be my first choice.

Burks would be shortly thereafter. I think he would be fun in that offense because you get the ball in his hands and let him go, make those corners try and tackle him, 225 plus pounds out there in space. He's a great scheme fit in my opinion. I would love to see in that fit, in that offense.

And then the corners to me would be a little bit behind that. Mafe you mentioned, as well. Mafe would be behind Burks for me, and then you start getting into Booth and Gordon would be kind of those groups of corners.

But Karlaftis just for me would have the highest grade. In terms of for them you'd have to try and figure out what they feel is their priority right now. Christian Kirk goes out the door, you bring A.J. Green back but you don't think he's going to be there for a long period of time, you could make the case for the wide out there.

You don't have Chandler Jones, either, so you could make a case either way in terms of what they're going to do, but I would think Karlaftis or Treyton Burks would be two good options.

Q. I just wanted to quickly ask you about the Steelers and the quarterback possibilities for them. It seems like the ones I see them linked to the most are Malik Willis, Kenny Pickett, and Desmond Ridder; but not seeing Matt Corral match with them as often. Is that a factor of him maybe just not going as high as No. 20, or is there some reason he's maybe not a fit for them and what they want to do?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Well, Corral is pretty interesting because he's got a lot of explosiveness. He's got the quickest release in the draft. He can really move around. You've seen what he can do as a runner. I think the concern with him, and I think teams kind of share this, is you're excited about the talent, you're excited about the arm and the athleticism. It's just he's not the biggest guy in the world. He's 212 pounds and he plays so reckless that you just kind of wonder how he would physically hold up over time.

I know having worked for a couple teams in that division, everybody knows it's a rugged division. You usually try to find strong, rugged players at that position, and to me that kind of looks like a guy like Malik Willis would be intriguing there.

It's going to require some patience for sure, but again, a tough, rugged player who kind of matches that division a little bit.

And then Kenny Pickett, he's a little bit bigger. He's not huge but he's a little bit bigger than Corral, and obviously somebody they'd be a little bit familiar with. He's my No. 1 quarterback. I've kind of stuck with him through this whole process. If it was up to me, looking at that team and the best fit, I actually would probably lean towards Kenny Pickett.

Q. You spoke about the receivers earlier, but I was just wondering how you think this receiving class compares to the last couple years, and why do you think receivers these last few years have been more apt to be able to have immediate contributions as rookies?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, that's a good question. I think this is a really solid group. I think this top six or seven guys I really, really like.

Now, there's not a Ja'Marr Chase. I would have a higher grade on Ja'Marr Chase than anybody in this group. Devonta Smith I would have a higher grade. Same with Jaylen Waddle. I would probably take those guys over anybody in this group.

But I really like this group, and I think it's, again, got those six or seven guys that you really like there at the top.

I don't think the depth into like the fourth round and beyond is as good as some of the others we've seen, but I think up until that point it's pretty good.

The reason why we've seen these guys not only have -- every year we continue to see these numbers, but these guys are having more success early than ever before. I just attribute it to the fact that every high school in the country just about is running a spread offense, they're throwing it all over the place.

These kids are playing 7-on-7 year-round. They're going to colleges where they play with four and five wide outs so they get on the field early.

They get a lot of experience. They catch a lot of footballs, and the NFL wisely a few years back, maybe seven or eight years back, realized to get these quarterbacks and receivers on the field early, because you've got to play them, you're not going to have the job security that you used to. You've got to get them out there and get them going.

They've simplified things and made it easier for these guys to have an impact right away. For what it used to be, kind of a coin flip on first-round receivers with the hit rate, it has gone way up over the last few years.

It's been pretty consistent with these guys being solid, solid players if not more than that right away.

Q. On the topic of receivers, I've got two day-two, possibly day-three receivers I wanted to get your projections on. One is Romeo Dobbs from Nevada and the other is Calvin Austin from Memphis.

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, fun players. Start with Romeo. That was a deep-strike offense with him at Nevada. It was fun to watch. They get him vertical a lot. A lot of deep posts, tracks the ball really well. He's got a little bit of tightness to him, a little bit of stiffness there.

But I thought he can get over the top and he can track the ball well.

The other issue with him was just a little bit tight and then he had what I would call face-up drops. Guys track the ball over the shoulder really well. Sometimes when you're facing the quarterback and you're squared up you have some drop issues. That's what his thing was.

And then you go with Austin, like that dude is just a blur. He's fun. He's fun to watch. It's legit track speed, and it shows up when you pop on the tape. Some guys it doesn't match. This is a 4.32 and he plays to 4.32.

My comparison for him was Jakeem Grant when he watched him coming out, that type of juice. It's instant. There's no buildup to it. It just happened right now. He's going to run by people at the next level, as well.

He's got a little bit of feel in terms of as a route runner. Sometimes you get these little fast guys that they have a hard time starting and stopping. He's got a little fuel as a route runner.

The issue shouldn't be a surprise at 5'7.6", a little under 5'8", not a lot of contested catches there. He's going to lose those battles. He is going to be a role player. I think probably you're looking at that probably in that fourth-round range is where guys like this go.

Q. And then on a more big-picture level, with the COVID eligibility year that opened the door for so many guys to stick around last year, I'm curious how that has changed your perception of maybe day three and undrafted free agency for this year's class overall, not just receivers but for everybody?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, I know -- look, every year I try and get 400 players done for the draft, and usually I get to about 350 or 360, and then I'm just -- it's a mad scramble to try and find some more guys to get to that 400 number.

This year I kind of got to 400 pretty easily, and I'm sure there's -- as there always are, there's going to be a few guys that get picked that aren't among those 400.

It's going to be a really good kind of sixth, seventh round and priority free agent year to get those guys. I'm glad that they gave those kids an opportunity because it was -- that would have really been a bummer for them to kind of miss out on that year and then it would have been hard to make teams, I think, for those guys last year.

Good for them to get that opportunity to go back, play a little bit more. We have a couple older guys in this draft than we've had recently, but I haven't talked to too many teams that have thought that was that much of an issue to preclude them from taking them where they have them rated.

Q. I have a question about a couple of probably second-round guys I wanted to get your opinion on. One is Chad Muma, the Wyoming linebacker, and the other, Trey McBride, the tight end from Colorado State.

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, two really good football players. Muma is one of my favorites to watch. I've had an interesting discussion with a bunch of scouting buddies about kind of stacking a few of these linebackers, and Muma is kind of riding in that conversation with Troy Anderson from Montana State as kind of these big, rangy, athletic, off-the-ball linebackers.

So for me, he's got incredible instincts. He ran 4.63; Troy Anderson ran 4.42. You would give Anderson the edge being a little bit faster, but Muma is so quick to see things, to kind of key in and diagnose as we like to say. He's just always around the football. He trusts his eyes. There's no hesitation to his game. He's got timing and bursts as a blitzer. Outstanding in coverage with his instincts.

There's a lot of similarities there with Logan Wilson, obviously same school.

I think he's going to go probably in the 30s, 40s is probably when he comes off the board. I think he's going to be a great player.

And then Trey McBride, so top tight end for a lot of people in this draft; he's No. 2 for me. He's right up there. He can be a true wide tight end. Hand in the ground he'll be able to block you and hold up in the run game. He's above average in that department. He's got outstanding hands. He has a lot of those contact catches, really, really, really tough catches the ball in traffic.

He's not going to get a lot of separation. He's not going to run away from a lot of people. He ran 4.56 which is an awesome time for him. I didn't always see that speed kind of on the field, but he's an easy one to like. He's going to be a solid starter for a long time.

Q. Daniel, you kind of alluded to this earlier, but there's been a lot of talk this year about how it might be harder for other teams to trade out of the top 10 to pick up more picks. I know last year you spoke

Dave Gettleman making a trade into existence, but I wonder if you envision Joe Schoen finding much of a market for either one of his picks?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Well, I would imagine he's going to try. To me the other side of it is just when you look at where their salary cap is and you look at having to pay two top-seven picks, I don't think that's something you'd have a strong appetite for either at this point in time.

I'm sure there's motivation to get out of there. Again, it takes somebody to come up. I would imagine in this draft because of some of the depth in that first round that you would probably take 75 cents on the dollar in terms of the trade chart to get out.

You'd be fine taking maybe a little bit less than you normally would because normally people are coming up for quarterbacks. I don't see that happening. That's when you get guys to really pay a premium and you can get an incredible return. I don't see that being the play this year.

I think 5 or 7. I would think there would be a strong effort on his part to try and get one of those and get the heck out of there. Just got to find a willing partner.

Q. The Giants obviously just hired Wink Martindale. I'm curious what kind of edge rushers do you think they're going to be looking at or who fits the mold that would be available in the top 10 there?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, to me the kind of rugged guys, edge setters that are suggested. Jermaine Johnson makes a ton of sense to me with them. He's big, now. He's big and long, and he's got some juice coming off the edge. That one kind of would make sense with matching what they've traditionally had where Wink has been.

I wouldn't rule out, though, with Sauce Gardner, because that's a player that I think Wink would fall in love with just with the range that he has. He's just so good at finding and playing the football and taking it away. I would think that would be a favorite there for Wink.

Q. I had a couple questions about some guys who might be I don't know where you think exactly. I guess that's part of my question. But Travis Jones, the UConn D-tackle, how much of a difference did the Senior Bowl make for him, and what do you think of him overall? And then the other guy I was curious for your breakdown is David Bell of Purdue.

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, interesting on Travis Jones. I was talking to a team that just had him in and we were discussing him. Yeah, because the tape was good from the fall. It wasn't as good as he was at the Senior Bowl. He put on a show down there.

It's hard to find guys that are that big and that powerful and that athletic. He followed that up with an outstanding combine. He's probably helped himself through the process as much as anybody has.

To me, if you go back again and just go back to the tape, you'd probably be a little bit disappointed, want him a little bit more, want him to dominate a little bit more, but you know it's all there, it's all in his body. I think he's probably going to come off the board -- maybe he sneaks under the bottom of one, but probably somebody that goes in that early second round when it's all said and done.

And then David Bell didn't run the 40 time that he would have liked. I'm sure it's been well documented, well reported, but he's a good player. He's got outstanding hands. He wins a ton of 50/50 balls. More smooth than explosive. He's not going to be real, real dynamic from that standpoint, but he's got a huge catch radius.

He can really catch the football, and he's tough and physical after the catch. In a group where we've got, again, a solid group of wide receivers, I think you probably see him in that -- I would say to me I would guess the high-water mark is probably the third round, kind of that sweet spot for him.

But I wouldn't be surprised if somebody got a little bit of a bargain there in round 4.

Q. For the Broncos at 64, who are a couple of defensive players that maybe could fall in a best-case scenario for the team?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, so you look at the Broncos, and you kind of look at the safeties, I think, the corner safeties. You want to just add some DBs here to the group to continue to add on there.

Gosh, it'll be interesting to see who could fall. Those guys, corners especially, continue to get pushed up.

Roger McCreary is a fun one out of Auburn. I like him a lot, but he's not real big. He's got short arms. But just a really, really good player, smooth. He can really compete, which is my favorite quality about him, especially you watch him against Penn State, against Dotson, you watch him against a Burks at Arkansas. Just a really tough, kind of gritty player.

That could be one I could see potentially being there. If you wanted to kind of continue to add to that defensive front, you look at some interior defensive linemen that could slide down there in that range. What are they picking here? They're picking 64, right?

So 64, Perrion Winfrey would be a name I would keep an eye on from Oklahoma. He's 49th, but that's reasonable. DeMarvin Leal from A&M is another one who has that inside-outside versatility. Those guys would kind of be in that range if you're looking for interior players.

And then if you're looking for an edge rusher in that range, Nik Bonitto would be a home run. He actually -- he's not Von Miller but he kind of plays like Von, like a poor man's Von. He can really bend at the top of his rush and can do some nice things off the edge. So he's my 43rd player.

I think I'm a little higher on him than the rest of the league, and I'm okay with that, but that would be a heck of a pick.

Q. Eric DeCosta talked about how the draft is a luck-driven process and we've seen how that's influenced their desire to trade down and get more picks. When you talk with execs on other teams, is that kind of mindset about the draft being something of a crapshoot common, and if there is this pronounced philosophical divider on the league, what do you think accounts for that?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, look, it's a very honest answer. But I think there's a lot of truth to it. I do think that every draft has some players that come in clear packaging, where I feel like you know exactly what

you're getting. There's not a lot of them, and not saying they're all the best players, but some of them are just more clearly defined than everybody else.

Outside of that, the vast majority of these players, it's going to be largely dependent on where they go, how they're used, how they're coached, who they're with. I think there is a lot of logic behind trying to get as many bites at the apple as you can, or using those resources to try and find those clear packaging players. That can be guys that are in this draft class or trading those picks for veterans like the Rams have done, and you know exactly what you're buying.

I think the moral of the story is when you have all these picks, you give yourself a lot more options. I think there's a lot of wisdom in that.

Q. Kind of going off that question, with the number of teams who have traded their first-round pick this year, are you seeing across the league that teams are valuing their draft picks differently, or is there a change going on in the league because of that mindset that was just mentioned about DeCosta?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: No, I think that especially when you're a team that's got a chance to be a really good team and you're making the assumption that these are going to be late-first-round picks, I think if you looked at the difference between pick 28 on a yearly basis and the player you could get at pick 60, the odds probably aren't all that different in terms of being able to hit.

So if I can take what I hope is going to be a late-first-round pick and acquire a sure thing that I've seen apples to apples, I've seen him play well at this level against this competition, I know exactly what I'm buying, I think that's smart. I think there's something to that.

The problem is you've just got to be careful that you don't miscalculate and you end up trading what could be the next franchise-changing player, which is a top-5 pick or a top-10 pick, and you have a team that's not necessarily ready to win right now.

You've got to know where you are in the process, and you've got to be smart about that. But yeah, the Rams are the poster child for it.

I think the other part of that equation is, to kind of marry that up with what DeCosta was saying, is if you don't have a first-round pick, then you've got to situate it, how you kind of game the system is through the comp stuff and you can let guys walk and get comp picks so that you have a lot of picks in those third, fourth, fifth rounds and then you have an opportunity there to get some cheap starters and you get more bites at it.

There's a lot more that goes into it than that. I think the other aspect is make sure that if you're trading picks you're getting premium -- not only premium players but premium positions, because you're going to leave yourself roster holes, and it's easy to find safeties, linebackers, guards. You can find those guys in the third, fourth round and you can plug them in and you can be fine. But if you're trading for premier player, non-premium position and you're a pass rusher short or you're a corner short, you're a left tackle short, it's awful hard to find those impact players in the middle rounds at those spots.

Q. So it's less about the league changing its value on picks and more about GMs understanding the context and the position that they're in?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: A hundred percent. I think you've got to know where you are. I think there's great examples of that, of knowing when you're a seller and when you're a buyer in terms of when that right time is. So no, I think that's a key part of it is knowing exactly where you are in your process.

Q. I wanted to ask you about one of our local guys, EJ Perry. Obviously not a lot of players from Brown have entered the NFL through the draft. What are his chances of being drafted and what have you seen from him and heard about him leading up to next week?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, I compared him to Colt McCoy. That's who he reminded me of. A lot is going to be made about the hands. He's got small hands. But this guy is a playmaker. He can really run. I thought he played with poise. The East-West game he was good, did some good things down there.

To me he's kind of that -- we used to call him kind of a change-of-pace backup. You used to have the pocket passer starter and maybe you want a little more athletic backup that could get you out of a game, keep you competitive if he had to start and play a couple weeks. But now we're seeing a lot of starters that can really move around like that, as well.

But he's a fun player to watch. You've got to be highly intelligent going to Brown, so those guys usually make really good backup quarterbacks.

Q. Two questions about the 49ers. One, for obvious reasons, do you see a Deebo-esque wide receiver in the first round? And then also, I don't mean to suggest the 49ers in any way have figured out the draft, but they have had success, notable success in the mid to late rounds with Kittle and Greenlaw and DJ Jones and Elijah Mitchell and Fred Warner. From what you know of them, can you say, well, this is why, these are some things they do or their process explains why they've had maybe more success than most outside the first couple rounds?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, I think there's a couple good things there. Number one, if I was trying to find kind of the most -- I feel like every year everybody tries to find the next Deebo and it doesn't exist. He's a unicorn. So it's been hard to pull that off. So if you're asking me in the first round, I don't think there is anybody up there.

I really like Treyton Burks. He's a stud. He reminds me more of AJ Brown probably more than Deebo. Maybe like Deebo from the standpoint you can put him in the backfield and pitch him the ball and do some of those things, but kind of a different urgency to him. I think Deebo had a little more explosiveness initially, suddenness we say, and I'd say there's a little more buildup there with Treyton Burks.

But I think the versatility to play in a couple different spots exists. To me the most Deebo-like player, and it would definitely be Deebo-like, he's not the same talent, but Velus Jones from Tennessee is kind of that guy that's really, really sturdy and strong and explosive, like real, real, real fast, somebody on jet sweeps, you see it in the kick return game with him, as well. Just get him the ball and let him go.

He would be kind of that guy. Where he goes in the draft, he's a little bit older, but he ran 4.31. I think he probably goes in that third-round range, but he's kind of the most Deebo-like player in this draft.

And then why they've had success, I think there's a couple reasons for that. Number one, I think John Lynch has done a phenomenal job and they've got a great staff there. Adam Peters is someone I respect as much or more than anybody else in this league. I've known him -- we kind of started similar time scouting and he's worked his way up and he's been around a lot of championship teams. He's a stud.

They've got a bunch of other guys like that, as well, so they've got a great staff.

I think when you have continuity with the personnel department which they've had the last couple years, when you have continuity with the offensive and defensive schemes which they've had, it's a lot easier to hit on these picks because you know exactly what plays for you and you know what you're looking for, and you're not constantly having to churn through different schemes and different philosophies and you lose some guys and they don't fit. Like they know exactly who they are, and that makes the process a whole lot easier.

Q. Chris Olave, another San Diegan. It seems to me this guy -- you follow this almost deeper than anyone. He seems to be mocked to like 10 different teams even though he's not generally a top-10 guy. Why is that? What is it about him that could make him attractive to so many teams in the first round?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, he's a fun player to study. I think the reason why you see him married with so many different teams in all these mock drafts is that he fits. He's a silky smooth route runner who can do so many different things. He tracks the ball really, really well. He's incredibly smart.

Their coaches down there rave about him. They love him. He just needs to get a little bit stronger. That's kind of the one knock on Chris. But he's been doing it since he got there, whether it was blocking a punt against Michigan as a freshman. He's always found a way to make plays.

Everybody is kind of wide receiver obsessed this off-season, I think, so you can make a strong case with some of the movement that we've had that a lot of these teams are in the wide out market, whether they're trying to support a young quarterback or replace somebody who left. There's a lot of teams in the wide out market, so that's why you're seeing a bunch of these guys mixed in there, and Chris to me, he has a little bit of size to him, he's got outstanding speed. I don't know a team that wouldn't want to have him, that he wouldn't fit. I think that's why you see him kind of mocked in a lot of different areas.

Q. If you had to pick a spot, which team is going to get him?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: For Olave, I'll go with the Philadelphia Eagles. They go back to the wide receiver well for the third year in a row. They've got two cracks at it, so I up my odds from that standpoint. But I would say I like him with Philadelphia. If not to Philadelphia, I like the team that's picking right behind them, the Saints.

Q. With the Vikings at 12, I'm wondering what you think is the ideal scenario for them in the first round? Is it a corner, a receiver, trade-back? What do you think for Minnesota who obviously has a new GM?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, for me the ideal situation would be somehow if Derek Stingley were to fall to you there at 12. I would have thought that was a legit possibility a couple weeks ago before the pro day.

After the pro day where he showed he's back healthy and moving around well and talking to teams that he's visited, and he's been impressive going through that process. I mentioned this on TV the other day, but this was an injury that he had that was really bothering him during training camp, and this is something that -- the information that I had kind of just got over the last couple weeks, the fact that he didn't have any contact at all before the UCLA game, it kind of held him back. His foot had been bothering him. They didn't want him to get hurt and he did not play well at all in that game.

That was my first exposure to him this season, and I kind of questioned whether he really wanted to be out there. He was kind of going through the motions. He was a little bit non-competitive at times, and it really bothered me.

Then you find out later that he got shut down a couple weeks after that, but that had been something he had been dealing with that whole time. It was backed up by all the medical stuff. He was just unable to push off that foot.

What ended up being kind of a negative thing initially, I actually give him kind of some credit for now, just going out there and trying to compete when he wasn't right.

I think teams have all that information, and you go back, and while he wasn't great in '20, he was good, and he was phenomenal in '19. In a draft like this where there's a lot of kind of unknowns and not a lot of sure-thing players, he allows you to dream on the upside, and I think he'd be a home run pick at 12, but I'm to the point now in the process where I don't think he gets out of the top 10.

Q. Given that the Eagles have Fletcher Cox going into the last year of his contract, Devonte Wyatt and Jordan Davis seem like fits for the team. How do you think they fit into the Eagles' scheme and how tough is it to evaluate them given that Georgia's defense has so many players that are among the top 50, 100 players on so many boards?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, you know, the Georgia thing is fascinating. I haven't seen anything like this in a while. I know Alabama has put out a bunch of really good classes and Ohio State has done the same thing, but just the sheer numbers of these Georgia guys, and they still manage to somehow have some studs that are still there that weren't eligible for this.

Jordan Davis, a lot has been made about the play time and not playing on 3rd downs, but when you really dig in and look at all the numbers, when you see him and Devonte Wyatt, they've got a player in Jalen Carter who's probably going to be a top-5, top-10 pick next year, these guys just kind of all roll through. They had a bunch of guys that they could play in there, Travon Walker among them.

I don't really care about that. I just know that Jordan Davis, he's a freak. To be that big and that athletic and to make that many plays on the other side of the line of scrimmage is impressive. Devonte Wyatt is even a little bit more explosive.

I think either one of those guys would fit what they want to do. They read a little bit more up front than they did in the previous coaching staff. They don't just let them just pin their ears back and go.

I think both those guys are capable of doing either thing. You want them to stack blocks and play at the line of scrimmage, they can do it. You want to let them get on an edge and get upfield, they can do that, as well. I think both those Georgia kids are versatile players that would fit for sure.

Q. Sort of a question about the quarterbacks in the first round in that people talk about Carolina and Seattle's examples of teams that maybe could draft a quarterback, and yet both of those situations seem like they might be better suited to go get one of the vets available like Baker Mayfield or Jimmy Garoppolo. How do you assess veteran versus going a rookie for those teams?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, I think again, you kind of look at where you are. I was talking to a GM this morning that he was kind of making the case if you look at Carolina's options, he thought that Baker Mayfield was probably the most attractive of all the different options that they would have, whether it's in this draft or going the veteran route. It wasn't Cleveland, it wasn't Andrew Berry, so I didn't want you to think I'm doing his bidding for him. But that one kind of makes some sense there.

My thing on this quarterback class, I think there's some good players here, but I just have the thought that keeps coming back in the back of my mind that man, what you don't want to do is take a quarterback this year and then a year from now at this time be saying, oh, my goodness, we're right back in the quarterback market again, like is this guy really good enough. That to me kind of lingers in my head when these teams are forced to make this decision whether to go with one or wait.

All these teams have done a good job one way or the other of having options on campus currently inside their organization. They've got guys that can line up and play and have experience. I don't think they're going to be forced to take one of these guys.

But yeah, it's a really, really fascinating discussion when you look at this class and where these guys could go. I know some people think we could see a run in the 20s. I know there's still talk that maybe we see one go in the top 10. So it's a lot of unknown.

Q. A lot of teams could take receiver in the first round; how do you weigh the value of those receivers versus guys you could get a couple rounds later like a John Metchie or an Alec Pierce?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, those are good options, and we've seen it over the years, these second- and third-round picks. Tyreek Hill obviously wasn't a first-round pick, Davante Adams wasn't a first-round pick; we saw what they just fetched.

Yeah, there's always going to be those good players out there. I just think right now the hit rate is pretty high in the first round, and you get an extra year of cost control with that fifth-year option. If you really like one of these guys, just take them. I think there is a little bit of gap this year between those top six or seven and that next wave. Sometimes they kind of blend together, and this year I think there is a little bit of a separation between those top guys.

I think you'll see them fly off the board. I really do.

Q. Jets question here. First of all, the obvious one is what do you think they do at 4? And then big picture, with Joe Douglas, he's kind of been setting up this draft for years by trading players and

accumulating assets and now the future appears to be here now with this draft, having so many picks. How big is this draft for Joe?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, I mean, I think he would probably say the same thing. I think it's everything. It's huge. He's got to hit it in this draft and he's got the resources to do it, not just to -- even stick where he is. He's got opportunities to move around one way or the other and kind of put the master plan together here. This is going to be the draft to piggy-back last year.

I think the early returns from that group are pretty positive. The quarterback is TBD, but I think when you look at Elijah Moore, you look at the two Michael Carters and some of the things they got in that draft, Vera-Tucker is going to be a stud. I think they've started off well with that one and now they've got to hit it out of the park with this one.

It's huge. It's important in terms of what I think they'll do or what I would do. I think you always are best served when you kind of stay best available.

For me in my updated list that'll come out next week, I moved Sauce Gardner from No. 3 to No. 2 for me. Aidan Hutchinson is one. I don't think you'll see him. For me personally Sauce Gardner if he's there at No. 4 I'd turn the card in and get myself a real difference maker, and then you come back at 10 and if there's a Jermaine Johnson there, that's an opportunity for you. If not, I would hope that you'd get a shot at one of those wide outs with Drake London being my second option and Garrett Wilson being my first option.

But they've got to get difference-making players. They've got to get playmakers on this team. They've done a pretty solid job of building up kind of a foundation piece, but now you've got to get guys that teams fear. They've got to go get some of those guys in this draft.

Q. As we see wide receivers signing the kinds of contracts they've been signing this off-season, do you think that teams will reach for them in a way that maybe quarterbacks have been reached for in the past just because the tremendous cost benefit if you manage to get it right?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Well, I think that the cost benefit part is accurate. The difference is the quarterback pool every year is shallow. Last year was rare where we had five, and even if you add Davis Mills, ended up being six guys. Normally a quarterback you're looking at one, two, three guys that are viewed as starters, whereas receiver it's a much different pool. So I think you have the grades to support it.

I can go back a couple years ago and for various reasons why they dropped, but D.K. Metcalf was my 16th or 18th player, he went at 63 or wherever. AJ Brown went like 20 spots after I had him personally rated.

Every year it seems like I feel like teams are getting these unbelievable values and people say, oh, yeah, the second and third round is the sweet spot. I'm going, these are first-round players that they're getting in there. These are some of the higher rated players in the draft.

I think what's going to happen is there's going to be a little bit of a correction there and you're going to see these receivers going more closely to where they're slotted and where they're graded. I don't think

teams are going to be pushing them down as much as they were in the past knowing that they can just afford to wait. It's too expensive to go get one of these veterans.

If you've got a guy you think can be a premier player, I think we looked it up the other day, I think Justin Jefferson was like \$3 million a year on his rookie contract. That's a difference of \$19 million savings if you can get one of those.

Q. I want to get back to the Buffalo Bills for a second. I know that you mentioned cornerback and that's obviously their most pressing need. If they do end up staying put at 25, how important do you think that the fit would be, getting a guy that can kind of fit their system? They like to play a lot of zone, cover two. Also, Brandon Bean hinted yesterday that they might be taking more than one. I don't think that would be a surprise to anyone. As far as guys that might be values in the second, third, fourth rounds, what would you see there, too?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, look, obviously you'd like to have guys that can do everything at the corner position. With where they're picking and you kind of look at those guys, Andrew Booth, Gordon and Elam would probably be the three that I would have there.

Ironically, Roger McCreary, who I mentioned a little bit earlier, who doesn't have that length that you would like, he actually is probably the most similar player to Tre'Davious White. Now, he's not quite as gifted, but he's a similar type player in terms of he can play press, he can play off, he's got really good awareness and ball skills.

That to me if you're just talking pure fit, maybe that would be McCreary, and maybe he's there at 57 when they pick in the second round. That could be an option for them there.

I think when you kind of go down a little bit lower in the draft, I think they pick 89 in the third round, somebody like a Damarri Mathis from Pitt is a good football player, would be a good option.

One of my kind of sleeper players in this draft is a guy out of Fresno State in DaRon Bland. He was a transfer from Sacramento State, and a six-foot corner, 200 pounds, he ran in the 4.4s. He's got some ball production and a real physical player. I think he would be somebody that Coach McDermott would really like. Non-combine guy, I think he probably goes in the fifth round. Maybe there's a chance he goes in the fourth round, but there's a lot of guys like that you can find later on in this draft.

Q. Would it be inconceivable for them to go edge rusher again even after signing Von Miller and using their first two picks last year?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: No, I don't think that's crazy. I've never met a coach or a GM who said we have too many pass rushers. This is a team that's going to be playing with the lead just about every week, and having waves of defensive linemen you can roll through there, most teams want eight guys, eight quality guys you can just roll them all through. So even though they've invested a lot in the position, yeah, I would never rule that out.

Q. The Browns' first pick is scheduled to be at 44. What would be a couple of successful scenarios for them? I'm thinking D-end and receiver.

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, for D-ends at 44, there's good options. This draft goes pretty deep in that area.

Boye Mafe, I think there's a chance he could get there. I love Arnold Ebiketie; I know he's a little bit older but he is a stud. He's one of my favorite players to watch, kind of a leverage rusher, transfer from Temple. But he's got great hands. He's a fun one to watch. I think he'd give them some good pass rush there.

You get a little something different with a guy like Bonitto from Oklahoma, who again, has a big-time fast ball off the edge.

One of the more polarizing players, we haven't talked about him yet, but Drake Jackson from USC, a lot of teams like him in that range, kind of in that second-round, middle-second-round range, because this is somebody has got a lot of traits, long, rangy. His weight has kind of fluctuated. He was heavier early on, then he tried to drop a lot of weight, now he's put it back on, so he's kind of yo-yoed there, but he's somebody that can really bend and is explosive coming off the edge.

Those would be kind of the edge rushers. What was the other position?

Q. Receiver, they don't have a No. 2 right now.

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, so when you go to the receiver group, you can go to North Dakota State, and somebody that we've talked a lot about, I feel like we talk about him every day on TV, but Christian Watson is right in that range. He's my 45th player.

George Pickens from Georgia has got a ton of ability. He's missed time with a knee injury. I'd want to see a little more consistency there, but he's a fun one.

John Metchie, if you were saying, okay, who's the closest thing to Jarvis Landry, as he's moved on, I think John Metchie would probably be that guy from Alabama.

Q. Can you explain or expand as to why it would benefit the Panthers or other teams interested in Baker Mayfield to wait until after the first round to seriously explore trading for him? And following up with that, would Carolina be better suited with Baker Mayfield or one of these rookie options? I know you laid out what that GM you spoke with said, but I was wondering if you had an opinion on it.

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah. In terms of the timing of it, from Carolina's standpoint, I guess you could say there's benefit to not showing your hand in terms of the draft, in terms of what you're going to do. I think if the Carolina Panthers made a trade for Baker Mayfield today, I would guess that every general manager in the NFL would say they're taking a tackle with that pick, so at least it kind of keeps them from showing their hand a little bit if they were to wait, so I can see that.

I haven't retired yet as the president of the Sam Darnold fan club, but obviously it's been challenging serving in that capacity the last couple years. Again, he's shown some glimpses, played well at the beginning of last year and kind of fell apart. If you're asking me over their track records, what you've seen from Baker would be better than what Sam has put out there. I can't argue with that logic if they were going to try and go get Baker Mayfield, and when I stack Baker up with this class, especially if you've got to win games next year, I think I would lean towards Baker on that front.

Q. My question is Jags related. It has to do with the wide receiver position. It seems like the Jags could wait to go with a receiver until round 3 instead of one of the first two rounds. That being said, people have jumped on the Alec Pierce hype train. Would you talk about him, and could you also talk about any other receivers that fit that X receiver type of mold that could be available on Day 2?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, so to me, Alec Pierce, I'll give you a few names along with him. So you've got big-time sprinter speed. He's just real strong and powerful in what he does. You can watch the Notre Dame game, you can see the big-time catches, kind of those wild catches.

He's one of those guys, in scouting a lot of times we use the phrase "quicker than fast." He's the opposite; he's faster than quick. He's got big-time speed. Some of the subtleties getting in and out, that's going to be a little bit more of a challenge with him at the break point.

Along those lines, kind of a big X, Jalen Tolbert from South Alabama would be another one. A little over 6'1", 194 pounds, ran in the 4.4s. He's got a little more stop-start quickness to him. He's got really good hands in terms of going up and getting it and winning those 50/50 balls, but he has some concentration drops on occasion. Those are going to kind of rear their ugly head there.

Those are kind of a couple interesting X receiver options there for them kind of outside those first couple rounds to me that would be good fits.

Q. My question has to do with the value of a quarterback on a rookie contract. Obviously if you look at the Eagles, you have Jalen Hurts and everything says he's still going to be the guy this year. But is there a value for teams to kind of take a chance on a quarterback in the draft knowing that if this guy doesn't work out in three or four years you can cut bait and go with another rookie quarterback as opposed to let's say paying for somebody like Baker Mayfield or some of the guys the Eagles could have traded for earlier like Russell Wilson and Deshaun Watson?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, I think a lot of it, again, comes down to where you are in the process. We've been talking about the Panthers. Matt Rhule needs to win right now, so he's not thinking about two, three years down the line. He's thinking about who can help me win the most games next year.

When you kind of stack Baker up with this class, I think that could lead you in that direction. Whereas if you're new at a job or you've got security, you can afford to kind of take your shot here.

Obviously if you're picking up there at the very top, those decisions become a lot easier. But when you're kind of in no-man's land and you're kind of debating whether to take that quarterback at that point in time, I think it sure helps when you're new someplace and you've got a little bit of a leash there or if you've established yourself and you've got an opportunity there to be a little bit patient.

There's no doubt a benefit to having that rookie deal to be able to kind of really invest in the rest of your roster, but I always tell anybody, if it's close, if you think it's close, you're going to 100 percent go with the rookie over the veteran because it's not the rookie versus the veteran, it's the rookie and the three to four other players you're going to be able to fit in that same salary structure versus the veteran. That's when that decision becomes a little bit easier.

Q. I wanted to get your assessment of Maryland safety Nick Cross and where you see him falling in the draft.

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, there's a lot of buzz on him. He had an incredible workout. I would not be shocked at all if he found his way into the second round. He ran 4.34. He's somebody that moves around. You see him kind of as that free safety. They use him in two-high stuff; he plays high and he can drop down.

The knock on him was I thought instinct-wise he was maybe a count late at times versus some of those other safeties, but he is a fluid mover, he's an outstanding blitzzer, and I thought he was an effective tackler. He's not going to knock your block off, but he's a real effective kind of a low drag tackler. He's a good player.

I have him kind of in my third-round range, but I would not be surprised at all if he found his way into round No. 2.

Q. I wanted to ask, what do you think is his professional outlook? Do you see him as someone who can be a starter in the NFL?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, I do. I do. I think when you can cover, when you've got the athleticism to be able to man cover is huge right now at that position as a safety, it gives you options. He can play, as my buddy Bucky likes to say, he can play on top of the Christmas tree; he can be that ornament playing out there as the post safety. No, I think he's going to be a good player.

Q. You mentioned Christian Watson in passing earlier, that he's sort of the talk of every day. I wonder how he has gone from North Dakota State wide receiver relatively unknown outside of your industry heading into the Senior Bowl to where we are now?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, I watched him ahead of the Senior Bowl, so the grade that I gave him came before that process started because you could see the speed on the field. I didn't need to have a verified speed to know that this guy was intriguing, and then we talked about him all during our coverage in the Senior Bowl week. He was 100 percent deserving to be there, and I thought he had a really good week down there and elevated his stock.

Then he goes to the combine, does what he does there. He's a fascinating story. The obvious question you ask him is how the heck do you end up at North Dakota State, especially when you're from Florida, but it just happens. Guys fall through the cracks. He was a late bloomer. He grew late. He's just one of those kind of great, great recruiting jobs by North Dakota State. I think he was at Plant High School in Tampa. That's not a route that's often taken.

I thought myself going from El Cajon, California, to Boone, North Carolina, was unique, but he's got me beat.

Q. Where has he settled at this point for you and where might he fit?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, to me he's in the 40s. I have him -- I think he's 45 on my list, 44, 45. I have him kind of in that top of the second-round range, but again, with the run on receivers and some teams

picking down there at the bottom with a need, yeah, he would not surprise me if he snuck his way into the bottom of round 1.

Q. Fair to say his route running needs some polish? Is that a knock if there is one?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: No, I don't think he was asked to do a lot of those things. He was a real vertical player for them, but then he went to the Senior Bowl, and that's the cool thing about that setting is you get a chance to watch these guys in one-on-ones kind of work through the whole route tree. And for a bigger receiver, he could really bend and sink and get in and out of breaks. He's a real fluid athlete.

It's one of those things you've always got to be careful just because somebody doesn't do something doesn't mean they can't do something. So when he was asked to do it at the Senior Bowl, I thought he did a really nice job.

Q. As far as injured players, how do you account for them in your evaluation, and specifically with Jameson Williams and David Ojabo, how does that affect how you would draft them?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, I think they're interesting scenarios. Obviously I'm not a doctor, but I would think that their recovery over the years has been proven a little bit more on the ACL versus the Achilles. So I feel a little bit more comfortable with that.

I think Jameson William has had a lot of time between that injury and now which helps with the evaluation with your doctors and all those things. I really don't think his draft stock is going to be greatly impacted at all. Everything I talked to from scouts that were at the Bama pro day, obviously he didn't do anything, but just in visiting with him and seeing him move around and everything they got from the combine, the medical and the recheck, he's going to be fine. I don't think it impacts him. I wouldn't be shocked if he ended up being the first wide receiver off the board, I wouldn't be totally floored. I know some teams have him there. I don't think it has as much of an impact on him.

Ojabo is different just because, A, it's an Achilles and a little bit more severe, and it was later in the process at the pro day. There's not as much time between the injury and when you've got to make that decision.

I would imagine he probably goes in the second round. It's a deal where we've got eight teams with two picks in the first, so maybe somebody views that as a little bit of a luxury pick, but I don't know as much about where he is in the recovery process. I just know if I was his agent, I would be sending the tape from the Rams and Cam Akers and what he did in the playoffs so soon after his Achilles and saying, yeah, we're on that plan. That's what I would be trying to push.

Q. Looking at the 49ers, no one knows what's going to happen with Deebo Samuel at this point, so if the 49ers say where they are at 61 they probably need a safety or an edge rusher to go opposite Nick Bosa, who do you see there, and if they do trade mid-round first round, who could they pick as a wide receiver?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, so if they stay where they are you kind of look at those edge rushers. 61, there's some interesting names still out there. I think you kind of look at their big, collapse-the-pocket edge rusher types, Alex Wright from UAB is intriguing at 6'5", 271 pounds. They kind of used him a little

bit inside and outside, but he's real, real explosive. He plays a little bit high but he's an intriguing, intriguing player. That one would be kind of interesting to me.

A little bit shorter version of him, I have rated higher is Josh Paschal from Kentucky. He's a three-time captain, first of all. He's a great kid. He was a phenomenal leader and worker, all those things are off the charts, and he's got heavy, heavy hands. He can collapse the pocket, as well. Doesn't have big-time, big-time burst and get off, which they usually like a lot there, but he'd be a good option there in terms of the value of that pick.

The wide outs, if they were there, I'll give you that group, and then if they were to trade back up I'll give you the next group. But if they were picking there at 61, you start looking at -- if you wanted big-time speed, Danny Gray I think could be a little bit early for him out of SMU, but he's real explosive. We've talked about George Pickens, we've talked about John Metchie. Those guys are really good players.

I would love Skyy Moore for them, but I think he'll be long gone from Western Michigan. Same with Christian Watson.

Those are some of the names there. If they went up, I just think it would be fun to watch Treyton Burks in their offense. It would be fun to see how Kyle would use him creatively just because he's big. He kind of has kind of a unique quality to him with how big and strong he is, and he can really get going once he builds up his speed.

Q. In your latest mock draft you had Washington stealing Kyle Hamilton at No. 11. Do you still foresee Washington going defense at that spot even if one of those top four wide receivers is still on the board? And would Hamilton be an absolute must-draft in that scenario if he does slide?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: Yeah, for me he would, and I know teams have different varying opinions I should say on the value not only of safeties, but when you take into account that maybe he didn't run as fast as everybody would have hoped with Hamilton. But again, he's my fifth player. I couldn't pass on him at that point in time. Whatever the knocks are, this is just too good of a value.

The only receiver I would take over him if he's there would be Garrett Wilson. That's it. I would take Kyle Hamilton knowing you've still got other options here. You'll be able to find some guys.

You're not desperate at that position. They've got wide outs. They've got some talent there. To me I would probably just sit there and take best available.

And at pick 47 if you don't get your receiver there, we just kind of mentioned and went through some of those names with the Christian Watsons and maybe a Skyy Moore type could be there.

Q. We had Howie Roseman here in Philadelphia yesterday and he mentioned how good this linebacker class is. We know he's not taking one in the first round, but who are some guys that you think maybe in that 51 where they pick in the second round down to the 83rd pick and the 101st pick in the third round? Who are some guys in that range you think might fit and why?

DANIEL JEREMIAH: I love this group of off-the-ball linebackers in that range. This is a group right here, let me give you some names. So Lloyd is going to be gone, Nakobe Dean is going to be gone, even

though he's probably going to drop a little bit in this draft. Coy Walker from Georgia is going to be gone, so take those guys out of the mix.

This next group here is all going to factor in that range in the draft. They're going to go on Day 2, and it's Christian Harris from Alabama; it's Troy Anderson from Montana State; it's Muma from Wyoming; it's Leo Chenal from Wisconsin; it's Channing Tindall from Georgia. Those five guys -- and I could even go a little bit deeper than that with Brian Asamoah from Oklahoma and D'Marco Jackson from App State. These guys can all run. These guys are all 4.6 or better.

The ones that would probably intrigue me the most are Anderson and Muma, just because Anderson is 6'3½", Muma is almost 6'3", just under 6'3"; Anderson is a 4.42 guy, Muma 4.63. They have tremendous range and length.

When you look at kind of what teams are looking for in a modern linebacker, the two examples that everybody points to are Darius Leonard and Fred Warner. They're both really, really long. They're really rangy. They can blitz. They can cover. That's what teams are trying to find.

You think of length, I think people think about getting off blocks and using your length that way. It's also just you're crowding throwing lanes. If you think about the NBA and just how they went through that transition, what, probably 15 years ago, I'm dating myself, but just became length obsessed. You just want to get as many long athletes on the field as you can, and those are some intriguing linebackers from that standpoint.

THE MODERATOR: That concludes today's call with NFL Network analyst Daniel Jeremiah. Thank you to everyone for joining.

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