

NFL draft analysts expect Broncos to select a quarterback in the first round

By Nicki Jhabvala

Denver Post

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Three weeks ahead of the NFL scouting combine in Indianapolis, more than a month before the start of free agency and about two and a half months before the NFL draft, league analysts are expecting the Broncos to nab their future quarterback at No. 5.

In his second 2018 NFL mock draft published Tuesday, ESPN's Todd McShay predicted the Broncos will select Heisman-winning quarterback Baker Mayfield in the first round. Rotoworld's Josh Norris predicted the same last month.

In McShay's first mock draft, he had the Broncos taking Josh Allen — whom Bleacher Report's Matt Miller also expects the Broncos to select at No. 5.

And for variation, ESPN's Mel Kiper Jr. earlier predicted Denver to select Southern California's Sam Darnold, and Bucky Brooks of NFL.com has the Broncos taking UCLA's Josh Rosen.

There's a theme to this offseason for the Broncos, and it mirrors the one they had in 2016, when they traded up to draft Paxton Lynch, and the one they had in 2017, when there was uncertainty about their Week 1 starter.

Since Peyton Manning retired two years ago, the Broncos have been on a hunt for their starting quarterback and enter this offseason with an array of options, each differing in cost and potential.

Ask players, from Aqib Talib to Terrell Davis and Shannon Sharpe, and many believe general manager John Elway will spend big on a veteran quarterback, either via trade or free agency.

"He's up there kicking himself, banging his head on the wall like, 'I can't believe this. Two years in a row, I'm out of the playoffs,'" Sharpe told The Denver Post during Super Bowl LII week in Minneapolis. "He's going to be very aggressive. John Elway doesn't like losing."

But draft analysts have the Broncos selecting a quarterback, too. It could be in addition to a veteran. It could be instead of a veteran.

At the Senior Bowl last month, the Broncos coached both Mayfield and Allen, giving them a leg up in evaluating two of the four quarterbacks expected to go in the first round.

"It helps. There is no question," Elway said. "To be able to get into meeting rooms with them, get to know them as people, have the coaches be around them and see how they are in the meeting rooms — they learn a little bit about them as well as their football knowledge. It's important. It's definitely a plus to be around them for a week."

Later this month, the Broncos will head to the combine where those same four quarterbacks — Allen, Mayfield, Darnold and Rosen — will showcase their talent once more.

“At the end, hopefully by April 25, we have everything figured out and know which direction we’re going to go,” Elway said. “... This is all part of the process of trying to learn as much we can about everybody. As time goes on, we’ll continue to work on them and study each one of them. By the time we get to the draft, we’ll have them ranked and go from there. It’s all part of the process.”

Broncos Mailbag: Regarding stadium name, Mile High will refer only to elevation

By Mike Klis

9NEWS

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If we could get the pot industry to sponsor it, they could call the stadium Mile High.

Or has that already been suggested?

--Dennis DeJulio

Dennis -- As Dandy Don Meredith said to open a Monday Night Football broadcast: "Welcome to the Mile High City – and I really am."

Yes, Dennis, I believe your idea has been mentioned before, or at least similar versions of it.

The Broncos will keep "Mile High" as part of their house name but they will not go back to "Mile High Stadium." They continue to work on securing a corporate sponsor for the naming rights.

The pot suggestions are pure fantasy. First, a cannabis company is going to put up \$10 million to \$15 million a year to have its name on a sports venue?

Second, even if one did, the Broncos and the NFL would likely frown on it. There are some public relations considerations, as well as financial. Marijuana may be legal in the state of Colorado but it remains a banned substance by the NFL.

As the name search continues, the Broncos tell us they have continued to make loan payments on their home stadium. It seems like they keep the place painted and fixed up. Nobody is sitting in a broken seat.

And the Broncos are finally getting rid of the "Sports Authority Field" segment of the stadium name.

If they don't finish up a naming deal with a company by the start of the 2018 season, I think they should go with Broncos Stadium at Mile High as a temporary name.

But in today's sports economic climate, the Broncos need a naming sponsor so they can maintain the stadium and not go back to taxpayers and ask them to fund a new venue.

Hard to believe the stadium is going on 17 years old. As any homeowner knows, everything is in need of repair or replacement in the 15- to 20-year range.

Mike, enjoyed reading your bio online. Prior to about four years ago, my only football interest was being a cheerleader in high school some 50+ years ago. Now I am a diehard Broncos fan, know the players' names, most of the quarterbacks' names in the NFL and thoroughly enjoy watching the games.

Albeit, I am a woman with limited knowledge of what it takes for a quarterback to be great, but it is apparent to me that the offensive line just doesn't protect any of our QBs. Why does everyone always talk about finding new QBs, when our offensive line does not protect them to give them time to do what they need to do?

Bottom line, why don't we get a new line to protect our QBs?

Thanks for your time, have fun at the Super Bowl. Kind of want the Eagles with Foles win but, of course, who cannot cheer for Tom Brady and Gronk!

--Victoria Wood, Eaton

Victoria – You got your wish. The Eagles and Nick Foles won Super Bowl LII even though Brady and Rob Gronkowski played great.

The Broncos' offensive line gets plenty of criticism, but a prominent defensive coach once told me a weak offensive front is overrated. It's about the quarterback.

It seemed like Peyton Manning's offensive lines always had a hole or two. And he managed.

Having said that, the Broncos must address their offensive tackle position this offseason.

Donald Stephenson won't return at right tackle and Menelik Watson graded out poorly. Garrett Bolles had his ups and downs as a rookie left tackle and there's some talk he should be moved to the right side – although he would be a tad light as road graders go.

Here's the deal with offensive tackles, Victoria: Every team is looking for one. Many teams are pleased with one of their tackles. Maybe a handful have two quality tackles.

New England's Nate Solder (who hails from Buena Vista and the University of Colorado) and Miami's Ja'Wuan James are the two best free-agent offensive tackles available.

The top offensive tackles in the draft are Notre Dame's Mike McGlinchey, Oklahoma's Orlando Brown, UCLA's Kolton Miller and Western Michigan's Chukwuma Okorafor.

Just reading about the special teams' new coach (Tom McMahon). My question is what is the difference in catching kickoffs and catching punts. Usually it is two different guys. Why is that?

Ed Stoeckel, Greenwood Village

Ed—It's generally easier to catch a kickoff because the ball comes in end-over-end, has a lower trajectory and arrives three or four Mississippi before the defenders.

Returning a kickoff, though, is far more dangerous because of the high-speed nature of collisions. Kickoff returners tend to be bigger-bodied receivers or defensive backs.

A punt is tougher to catch because it will go higher, knuckle as it falls, and often arrives with a couple of tacklers in your face.

Returning a punt is less dangerous, though, because there is safety in the fair catch, and tacklers tend to attack from a stopped or lunging position.

Punt returning is to quickness what kickoff returning is to speed so punt returners can be smaller.

John Elway: Please, please, pretty please with sugar on top trade or cut Aqib Talib; the most annoying current Denver Donkey. I don't care how good he is at playing the game; he is a cruddy role model for kids that watch the team. He is a disruptive distraction. He doesn't deserve being a team captain, he doesn't deserve media attention, he is just plain annoying on so many levels. Let him become some other team's problem child.

--Matthew J. Nicholas

Matthew—Harsh, but I expect you'll get your wish. No. 3 cornerback Bradley Roby's salary goes from \$1.018 million in 2017 to \$8.526 million in 2018, which makes the 32-year-old Talib and his \$11 million salary vulnerable.

Roby will have to get better, though, if he is to become the player Talib has been for the Broncos the past four seasons. Talib made the Pro Bowl four times in his four seasons with the Broncos. The only other player who pulled off that feat was John Lynch, who is in the team's Ring of Fame.

But every time Talib publicly misbehaved – whether pulling a Moe Howard and poking Dwayne Allen in the eye, or accidentally shooting himself in his calf, or getting in on-field fights with Harry Douglas or Michael Crabtree – I would get texts from people stating, “get rid of that guy.”

My philosophy on people is there is good and bad in everybody; we are all individualized by nothing more than percentages. There is more good than bad in Talib. His family dominates his Instagram posting. His fights have come while protecting a teammate.

He does need to work on that temper.

Just finished 50 Greatest Players in Denver Broncos History. Enjoyed it immensely. I especially enjoyed reading about the players I grew up watching in the '60s and '70s — yep, I'm an old dude and wear a Rich Jackson jersey to the games. My family has had season tickets since the mid-60s. Mom has always been the biggest Broncos fan in the family and no longer attends games but never misses one on TV.

I have no beefs with your rankings but your book sure made me miss the old days walking through the mud on wooden planks to sit in wooden bleachers in left field of Bears Stadium.

What made it truly fun in those days is that all the season ticket holders actually used their tickets, so the people sitting around us were the same every game and those folks literally watched me grow up. I spent a good portion of my adult life in Arizona but moved back to Colorado in May of '13 and took control of our tickets.

Today, sitting in the lower east stands means being surrounded every game by away team fans. Not a fun experience. And I don't suspect we will ever again see fans throwing snowballs at the Jets' Johnny

Sample and Sample climbing through the chicken wire that was the only barrier between players and fans in an attempt to get at the fans. Fun times.

--Bill Bayne, Morrison

P.S. When you see John Elway, tell him thanks for this past Broncos' season. It made me feel young again! Just like those seasons in the 60s. :)

Bill—Why Elway oughta! Appreciate the endorsement. Anyone else interested in the book can click here: <https://www.amazon.com/Greatest-Players-Denver-Broncos-History/dp/1493029177>

I was a big fan of Joe Namath's Jets in the late 1960s and I so liked Johnny Sample, I read his book, "Confessions of a Dirty Ballplayer," in 1970.

He had 7 interceptions, one returned for a touchdown, during the Jets' Super Bowl III season of 1968, yet he never played another regular-season. Sample reportedly suffered a back injury in the next year's College All Star Game but he stated in his book he was blackballed by the NFL because of his outspoken ways, particularly on the subject of black player rights.

There were some great sports diaries published from 1968 (Jerry Kramer's Instant Replay) to 1970 (Jim Bouton's Ball Four, Sample's Confessions of a Dirty Ballplayer) and 1972 (Lance Rentzel's When All the Laughter Died in Sorrow).

Sample died of heart disease at age 67 in 2005.

ESPN's Todd McShay still has Broncos poised to fill biggest need

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN.com

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When it comes to quarterbacks and the Denver Broncos, ESPN's Todd McShay believes the Senior Bowl mattered and McShay believes the Broncos are still poised to use their first-round pick in the draft to get a new prospect behind center.

In his second mock draftInsider of the pre-draft season, McShay paired the Broncos with Oklahoma quarterback Baker Mayfield. In his first mock draft McShay had the Broncos selecting Wyoming quarterback Josh Allen with the No. 5 pick.

Both were at the Senior Bowl last month and on the North team, which was directed by Denver's coaches.

Mayfield said he went to Mobile to give the NFL's decision-makers an up-close look at him and that they could also try to get to know him a little bit. He said he felt the Broncos were prodding and poking in their own way to see how would respond to certain situations.

"See what I'm all about, see how I react to certain things," Mayfield said then. "Maybe see if I can handle the pressure, stuff like that. But it's an honor. If John Elway asks you to be on your team you don't say no."

Mayfield also called himself an "emotional player, I'll do what it takes to win, love being around my teammates, love leading and having responsibility."

Mayfield, Allen, Washington State's Luke Falk and Nebraska's Tanner Lee were the four quarterbacks the Broncos worked with on the North team who were at the Senior Bowl. Broncos coach Vance Joseph called the week's worth of work with those quarterbacks both "invaluable" and an "advantage" in draft preparations.

Todd McShay's 2018 NFL Mock Draft 2.0

By Todd McShay

ESPN.com

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A lot has changed in the NFL since we published our first 2018 mock draft in mid-December. The deadline for underclassmen to declare has officially passed, and the full draft order is nearly set after the Philadelphia Eagles defeated the New England Patriots in Super Bowl LII on Sunday.

With NFL evaluators digging more into college tape -- and several players having breakout performances at the Senior Bowl a few weeks ago -- our Mock Draft 2.0 has a very different look.

Here is our second projection of the 32 first-round picks in the 2018 NFL draft.

Note: All underclassmen are noted with an asterisk.

** The 49ers and Raiders are tied at Nos. 9 and 10, and the picks will be decided by a coin flip at the combine. For the purposes of this projection, we'll say San Francisco wins the toss.

1. Cleveland Browns

Sam Darnold, QB, USC*

I still believe the Browns need to address the QB position here, and any of the top four quarterbacks are in play now that Darnold and Josh Rosen have officially declared for the draft. This pick obviously changes (or is up for grabs via trade) if Cleveland lands Kirk Cousins in free agency. Between off-field issues for Rosen and his tools and intangibles on the field, Darnold should be the pick. I understand why Kiper went with Josh Allen in his first mock, but Darnold is a little safer. He's the best of the bunch at this point.

2. New York Giants

Josh Rosen, QB, UCLA*

New coach Pat Shurmur has publicly supported 37-year-old Eli Manning as New York's starting QB next season, so this pick remains the same as my last mock. The Giants could take Rosen as the heir apparent, but I wouldn't be surprised if a team traded with New York to get ahead of the Jets and Broncos in an effort to grab Rosen. Drafting Saquon Barkley to pair with Odell Beckham Jr. could be a possibility as well. The Giants have a lot of options.

3. Indianapolis Colts

Bradley Chubb, DE, NC State

Indianapolis has needs all over the roster but is one of the few teams in the top 10 that should be set at QB, assuming Andrew Luck comes back healthy. One of their needs is an edge rusher, and Chubb is the best one available. He's a grinder with a great motor and has played his way into being a top-10 pick. The Colts will be another potential team looking to trade back if someone wants to move up for a QB.

4. Cleveland Browns (via Houston Texans)
Saquon Barkley, RB, Penn State*

The Browns have a lot of needs (CB, WR, DE opposite Myles Garrett among them), but they have a real chance to finish off a home run draft in this scenario. With a new QB at No. 1, running back is also a need. Isaiah Crowell is a pending free agent, and Duke Johnson has one year left on his deal. Barkley is better than both players and is No. 1 on my list of the top 32 prospects. He's the best player in this draft.

5. Denver Broncos
Baker Mayfield, QB, Oklahoma

The Broncos have to accept that they missed on Paxton Lynch (No. 26 overall in 2016) and are still looking for a franchise QB. This is another potential landing spot for Cousins or another free-agent QB, but if Denver doesn't get one in free agency, it will likely use an early pick on a signal-caller. John Elway was at the Senior Bowl and scouted both Mayfield and Josh Allen. This will be a really interesting pick if both are on the board. Mayfield had an impressive week in Mobile and checked the biggest remaining box with his measurements (6-foot, 216 pounds, 9½-inch hand span). He's rising.

6. New York Jets
Josh Allen, QB, Wyoming*

Yes, it's a running theme -- this is another landing spot for Cousins. If the Jets don't sign him in free agency, Allen makes a lot of sense if Mayfield is off the board. There is a significant drop-off in talent after the first four QBs in this draft, so the Jets need to make sure they grab one here. Allen had an impressive performance at the Senior Bowl, showing off his arm and his mobility. There are still concerns about his accuracy and ability to make multidimensional throws consistently, but all the tools are there. And he has the prototypical QB build (6-4 7/8, 237).

7. Tampa Bay Buccaneers
Minkah Fitzpatrick, S, Alabama*

The Bucs were dead last in the NFL with 17 sacks last season, and the defense was been porous (31st in total points). They still need another edge rusher opposite Noah Spence, but drafting the best possible player is better than reaching for a pass-rusher here. Fitzpatrick is a shutdown cornerback with the versatility to play safety and can be plugged in immediately.

8. Chicago Bears
Calvin Ridley, WR, Alabama

The Bears desperately need playmakers on the outside for second-year QB Mitchell Trubisky and can't count on Kevin White to stay healthy. Ridley is the clear No. 1 wideout in this class, and while I don't think he's a true No. 1 NFL wide receiver, he's much better than his stats in a run-heavy Alabama offense indicate. Denzel Ward would be another consideration here.

9. San Francisco 49ers**
Denzel Ward, CB, Ohio State*

Well, things have changed a bit for the 49ers, haven't they? With Jimmy Garoppolo looking like a franchise QB, all of a sudden it's no longer a position of need for San Francisco. Instead, the 49ers can look to the defensive side of the ball and grab the best man-to-man cover corner in this draft. Ward lacks ideal starting experience at Ohio State but was exceptional this season and quickly rose up my board.

10. Oakland Raiders**

Tremaine Edmunds, DE/OLB, Virginia Tech*

The Oakland defense gave up 5.6 yards per play last season (27th), so help is needed. CB Gareon Conley, last year's first-round pick, is still an unknown after playing only two games in 2017, which means the secondary is still a question mark. But the Raiders also have a need at linebacker, and with the top two CBs off the board, they can choose between Edwards and Roquan Smith. Edmunds is a better fit for Oakland, as he can play off the line and rush off the edge. He's an athletic freak who will turn some heads at the combine.

11. Miami Dolphins

Quenton Nelson, G, Notre Dame*

Quarterback could be an option if one of the top four QBs is still available here. However, Miami has a glaring need at guard, both in the run game (29th in rushing yards in 2017) and to protect Ryan Tannehill. Dolphins fans won't be excited with this pick, but they would be getting one of the top five players in this draft. Nelson is one of the safer picks.

12. Cincinnati Bengals

Connor Williams, OT, Texas*

Cincinnati had a disappointing season, and the offensive line was a big reason why. Cedric Ogbuehi and Jake Fisher (out for the season with an irregular heartbeat) haven't played up to their draft potential, and Cincinnati struggled to protect Andy Dalton and run the ball. The Bengals should take the best offensive lineman available at No. 12. If they are comfortable with Williams' medicals, he's the most gifted left tackle in this class.

13. Washington Redskins

Roquan Smith, LB, Georgia*

After trading for Alex Smith and parting ways with Cousins, the QB position will no longer be an issue for the Redskins. Now they must shore up their defense and add weapons for Smith. Derwin James is a possibility here, especially with the uncertainty surrounding Su'a Cravens, but Smith is the best player on the board and would immediately increase the speed and athleticism on Washington's defensive front.

14. Green Bay Packers

Marcus Davenport, DE, UTSA

Davenport was one of the clear winners of the Senior Bowl. Not only were his measurements impressive (6-5 7/8, 259), but he was terrific in practice. He's still a work in progress and needs more of a variety of pass-rush moves, but he's already long and powerful. Green Bay needs more difference-makers on defense, and Davenport could be one.

15. Arizona Cardinals

Orlando Brown, OT, Oklahoma*

The Cardinals seem likely to add a quarterback in free agency, but if they don't and one of the top four QBs is available here, they'd have to consider taking him. If QB isn't an option, cornerback opposite Patrick Peterson and offensive line should be the two target areas. Brown would be an immediate upgrade at right tackle for Arizona. He's overpowering and a nasty run-blocker. Plus, it takes a \$20 cab ride to get around him as a pass-rusher.

16. Baltimore Ravens

Vita Vea, DT, Washington*

The Ravens are in dire need of offensive playmakers, but there just isn't the value at this point in the draft. What direction will GM Ozzie Newsome go for his final NFL draft? He has usually gone best player available, and that's what I see Baltimore doing here. Vea is a versatile defensive lineman who has drawn comparisons to Haloti Ngata and should put up some big numbers at the combine.

17. Los Angeles Chargers

Derwin James, S, Florida State*

James had a disappointing season at Florida State, but he would fit perfectly in defensive coordinator Gus Bradley's scheme. James flies around the field versus the run and is a good matchup piece in the passing game. I think he'll have a better pro career than he did at FSU.

18. Seattle Seahawks

Mike Hughes, CB, UCF*

Hughes is a little smaller (listed at 5-11, 185) than the Seahawks typically like for their corners, but he excels in press-man coverage. An outstanding talent, Hughes is capable of winning a starting job as a rookie. He has had some trouble off the field, but he has matured, and Seattle hasn't shied away from players with troubled pasts before. Cornerback is an area of need with Richard Sherman's future still up in the air.

19. Dallas Cowboys

Mo Hurst, DT, Michigan

I'm higher on Hurst than others, but he's a good value here in the mid-to-late first round. He's highly disruptive in the middle and would be a good fit as a three-technique in Rod Marinelli's scheme. With Jason Witten turning 36 this offseason, TE Dallas Goedert could be an option here as well.

20. Detroit Lions

Isaiah Wynn, OG, Georgia

An edge rusher would be ideal with Ezekiel Ansah a pending free agent, but I don't see a great value here. Detroit has plenty of needs on defense, but needs to keep Matthew Stafford upright to have any chance. Wynn developed into a dominant OT at Georgia and had a brilliant week of practice at the Senior Bowl when they moved him to guard.

21. Buffalo Bills

Rashaan Evans, LB, Alabama

The big question for the Bills is what they're doing at QB. Will they package this pick and No. 22 to move up for one? Buffalo missed on LB Reggie Ragland (a 2016 second-rounder who was traded to K.C.), but I think they go back to the well here. Evans is much more athletic than Ragland and really came on strong during the 2017 season for Alabama. He has great range in coverage and can play the run.

22. Buffalo Bills (via Kansas City Chiefs)

Da'Ron Payne, DT, Alabama*

Payne's sack numbers are underwhelming, but he's a disruptive interior player. Just turn on the national championship game film; it seemed like he was in the backfield most plays. I believe he can be an every-down defensive lineman in the NFL and get pressure on QBs frequently. He's also a playmaking run defender.

23. Los Angeles Rams

Billy Price, G/C, Ohio State

A plug-and-play starter, Price will help an improved Rams offense line on the inside. A four-year starter, Price has elite experience at both guard and center. An excellent leader, I would think he'd play guard for Los Angeles.

24. Carolina Panthers

Christian Kirk, WR, Texas A&M*

Kirk had a frustrating 2017 season but showed flashes of why he should be picked this high. The Panthers need to continue to put playmakers around Cam Newton, and Kirk can threaten defenses vertically and create with the ball in his hands.

25. Tennessee Titans

Dallas Goedert, TE, South Dakota State

It isn't a terrific tight end group this year, but Goedert is the best one in this class. He's still a little underrated and didn't get a chance to shine in the Senior Bowl, as he was injured on the first day of practice. You don't get too many two-way TEs coming out of college, but Goedert fits the bill. He's got a big frame (6-4, 260) with good speed and can play in-line or detached. He's another good, young weapon for Marcus Mariota.

26. Atlanta Falcons

James Daniels, G/C, Iowa*

The Falcons may look to the defensive line with Dontari Poe and Courtney Upshaw both free agents, but they could also upgrade their running game with Daniels. He played mostly at center for Iowa but does have experience at guard. He has very consistent tape.

27. New Orleans Saints

Harold Landry, OLB, Boston College

Wide receiver is a bigger need for New Orleans, but there's no value fit here. The Saints could use another edge rusher to pair with Sheldon Rankins and Cam Jordan. Landry is a bit undersized and battled through an ankle injury this season, but he has shown the ability to get home as a pass-rusher (he led the nation with 16.5 sacks in 2016). A hard worker, he uses his hands well and shows the flexibility to bend the edge.

28. Pittsburgh Steelers
Josh Jackson, CB, Iowa*

The Steelers still can use help on the outside, even after using a first-round pick on a CB in 2016 (Artie Burns). Jackson is a long corner and an absolute ball hawk who led the nation with eight INTs. His timed speed at the combine will play a big role in where he gets drafted.

29. Jacksonville Jaguars
Hayden Hurst, TE, South Carolina*

This may be a bit of a reach for Hurst, but he's a big (6-5, 250), athletic target who can contribute immediately. A former pro baseball player, Hurst has good ball skills and can help stretch the field for Leonard Fournette and Jacksonville's offense.

30. Minnesota Vikings
Mike McGlinchey, OT, Notre Dame

Minnesota came up short in the NFC Championship Game, but this is a very solid roster with good depth throughout. The biggest question mark is at QB, but that will be solved one way or another in free agency. Even after investing in the offensive line last offseason (Mike Remmers, Riley Reiff), the Vikings could use some more depth there. McGlinchey is a good player who played left tackle at Notre Dame but will likely be an RT at the next level. He's an experienced starter with great character. Minnesota has had success with Fighting Irish players in the past (Harrison Smith, Kyle Rudolph).

31. New England Patriots
M.J. Stewart, CB, North Carolina

Given his Super Bowl controversy, it certainly appears New England will part ways with Malcolm Butler. Spending an early pick on a CB makes sense, especially with Stephon Gilmore on the other side. Stewart is underrated and an experienced player, with adequate height (5-10) and very good top-end speed. He'll also support the run.

32. Philadelphia Eagles
Taven Bryan, DT, Florida*

After winning a Super Bowl with a backup QB, it's fair to say this is a deep roster. The Eagles have the luxury of drafting for value, and it's never a bad idea to add depth along the defensive line. A twitchy one-gap DT with the tools to continue to develop, Bryan is raw, but he has the athleticism to mold and good get-off quickness. He could work into Philadelphia's defensive line rotation behind Fletcher Cox and Timmy Jernigan.

Josh McDaniels changes mind and won't become Indianapolis Colts' head coach

By Michael Marot
Associated Press
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Josh McDaniels has backed out of a deal to become the Indianapolis' Colts new coach, a decision that shocked the franchise hours after it announced his hiring.

The Colts confirmed McDaniels' decision in a statement Tuesday night after reports emerged that the Patriots' offensive coordinator had opted to stay in New England with coach Bill Belichick.

McDaniels had agreed to contract terms with the Colts to replace the fired Chuck Pagano. A news conference had been scheduled for Wednesday at Lucas Oil Stadium.

The Colts said McDaniels informed them Tuesday evening that he would not sign the deal.

"Although we are surprised and disappointed, we will resume our head coaching search immediately and find the right fit to lead our team and organization on and off the field," the Colts said in the statement.

The Patriots and McDaniels' agent, Bob LaMont, did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

By spurning the Colts after they waited 22 days to hire him, McDaniels leaves the reeling franchise as the only one without a coach. New England defensive coordinator Matt Patricia left Belichick's staff a day after the Patriots' Super Bowl loss to become coach of the Detroit Lions.

The move by McDaniels was reminiscent of his mentor, Belichick, who resigned as coach of the Jets with a handwritten note less than a day after he was hired in 2000.

Although McDaniels never signed his contract with Indianapolis, his stint was even shorter. The team announced his hiring in on its Twitter account late Tuesday morning. Hours later, the Colts had deleted the tweet and replaced it with the statement about his withdrawal.

Pagano was fired Dec. 31 after the team finished 4-12 in a season without injured quarterback Andrew Luck.

McDaniels has long been considered one of the best offensive minds in football and a top-tier head coaching candidate, although his previous head coaching stint with Denver ended badly. He went 8-8 with the Broncos in 2009 and 3-9 in 2010 before he was fired with three games left in the season.

Within days of Pagano's ouster, Colts general manager Chris Ballard interviewed McDaniels during the Patriots' postseason bye week. Two weeks later, reports indicated the deal was all but finished and potential suitors, like the New York Giants, started hiring other coaches.

Panthers interim GM put on paid leave for harassment claim

By Staff

Associated Press

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The interim general manager of the Carolina Panthers has been placed on paid administrative leave after his ex-wife accused him of harassment.

Team spokesman Ryan Anderson confirmed on Tuesday that interim general manager Marty Hurney is under investigation by the NFL under its personal conduct policy.

The Panthers brought back Hurney to be their interim general manager in July after then-owner Jerry Richardson fired Dave Gettleman days before the start of training camp. Hurney was the Panthers GM from 1998 through 2012. He's credited for building the core of a team that reached the Super Bowl two seasons ago.

Hurney and two others were to be interviewed for the position last week.

Jeanne Hurney said her ex-husband was "extremely controlling and was verbally and emotionally abusive" during their marriage. They married in 1988 and divorced in 2014.

The Charlotte Observer reported that Jeanne Hurney withdrew her complaint, but her attorney couldn't be reached for comment Tuesday night.

Former Broncos WR Ed McCaffrey introduced as head football coach of Valor Christian

By Aric DiLalla
DenverBroncos.com
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Former Broncos star wide receiver Ed McCaffrey was officially introduced Tuesday as the third head football coach of Valor Christian High School.

"The timing's perfect," McCaffrey said. "First of all, I never thought this opportunity would even be available. I love playing the game — I've been playing since I was a kid. I loved playing in the NFL [and] at Stanford. I loved coaching. I coached Little League for 10 years. I probably learned more about coaching every position and team chemistry and personalities and dynamics doing that. But I've always loved the game. That's why I've stayed close to it. ... That's why I was a broadcaster. That's why I still am an NFL analyst — because I just love the game. It's been so good to me. I've been so blessed to play the sport for so long. And here at Valor, I feel called to serve where I can live a fulfilling life and give back to future generations.

"... High-school football, it's different than the NFL and college. A lot of these kids, they may not have played football until they show up here. Some have aspirations of playing in college or the NFL, others don't. But here in high school, so many of the guys I played with said it was the most fun and exciting times of their lives. So that's what we're trying to create here."

McCaffrey, who will be a first-time head coach, met his team during a meet-and-greet Tuesday evening. The Eagles compete in Class 5A.

The former Bronco has long held a connection to the private school.

Three of McCaffrey's sons graduated from Valor — including Carolina Panthers running back Christian McCaffrey — and his youngest son, Luke, is a rising senior and is expected to start at quarterback for Valor this fall.

"Honestly, it would've been better if it was a year from now," McCaffrey said. "Again, I never expected to be in this position. I was shocked that the position became available. It's something that I've always wanted to do. My sons know that, my wife knows that. I've purposefully stayed in the shadows and stayed in the stands to allow my sons to have their own high-school experience. Having played here and won a couple Super Bowls, I didn't want to cast a shadow on their experience. My kids are growing up now, though. Two are out of college — they're playing the NFL. One's in college, and Luke, ideally, we could've gotten him out of here before this became available, but I think this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I don't take it for granted."

Valor has also played host to McCaffrey's annual Dare to Play Football Camp, which gives children and young adults with Down syndrome the chance to play football.

McCaffrey, who spent nine years in Denver after beginning his career with the New York Giants, earned a Pro Bowl bid with the Broncos and was a key piece on two world-championship teams.

He remained heavily involved with the Broncos in the years that followed. Beginning in 2012, McCaffrey served as the color commentator on KOA-850 AM for Broncos games. McCaffrey stepped away from that role ahead of the 2017 season.

Who will the Colts interview?

By Mike Florio
Pro Football Talk
Feb. 7, 2018

As PFT reported earlier tonight, the Colts were bracing for the possibility of Josh McDaniels not signing the paperwork that would have made him the next head coach of the team. Three candidates are expected to be interviewed in the next 24-48 hours.

For now, it's not known who they are. Possibilities (in our view, with no inside information for now) include Chiefs special-teams coordinator Dave Toub, Eagles defensive coordinator Jim Schwartz, Eagles offensive coordinator Frank Reich, Eagles quarterbacks coach John DeFilippo, Bills defensive coordinator Leslie Frazier, and former Falcons and Seahawks coach Jim Mora.

Toub worked with Colts G.M. Chris Ballard in Kansas City. Many believed Toub would be the first choice to replace Chuck Pagano; ultimately, Toub wasn't even interviewed.

Schwartz, Reich, and DeFilippo currently have the shine of a Super Bowl championship, having beaten McDaniels and the Patriots. Schwartz and DeFilippo both interviewed for the Cardinals' job last month.

Frazier once worked for the Colts as an assistant to Tony Dungy, and Frazier surely would get the endorsement of his former boss. Mora's father coached the Colts before Dungy.

Then there's Dungy. He joked on PFT Live recently that he'd come back to coaching for \$20 million per year. And while he's been officially done for nine years, this could be the kind of situation that makes him at least think for a minute or two about a return, even though it remains highly, highly unlikely that Dungy would emerge from retirement.

City of Henderson approves sale of land for Raiders facility outside Las Vegas

By Curtis Crabtree
Pro Football Talk
Feb. 7, 2018

The Raiders checked another box on their list of to-do items before an impending move to Las Vegas in the coming years.

The city of Henderson approved the sale of 55 acres of property near the Henderson Executive Airport for the Raiders to build out a new facility to serve as the team's headquarters and practice facility. The site would be roughly 12 miles from the downtown site near the Mandalay Bay Resort selected to house the stadium the Raiders will play in after relocation.

"This is a huge win for our community and we are so excited that the Raiders' new home will be in Henderson," mayor Debra March said in a statement.

The Raiders broke ground on their new stadium in November. The Raiders will remain in Oakland in 2018 but the new stadium isn't expected to be ready until 2020.