

PRO FOOTBALL

Bears turn boosters on late-round picks

But as ever, few figure to make it

By Don Pierson

In their dreams, the Bears drafted a smaller Richard Dent, an underrated defensive tackle, another Thomas Sanders and a speedy cornerback at the tail end of the National Football League draft that ended early Wednesday morning.

In reality, the Bears hope 5 of their 12 draft choices can stick with the team beyond training camp.

None of them is projected as an immediate starter. At least that's what the Bears hope. When a team wins more games in three years than any other in history, it doesn't have many holes to fill.

Player Personnel Director Bill Tobin and Bear scouts Jim Farmer, Don King and Rod Graves found four defensive linemen for coach Mike Ditka, and the last one—10th-rounder Dick Chapura of Missouri—could be the one that lasts, according to Tobin.

"It wouldn't shock me. He's a tough kid and excellent worker," Tobin said.

The 6-foot-3-inch, 275-pound Chapura had grades similar to fourth-round pick Sean Smith of Grambling and fifth-rounders Steve Bryan of Oklahoma and Will Johnson of Northeast Louisiana, Tobin said.

Chapura is more of a tackle than an end, and the Bears were seeking ends after failing to get their favorite, Cincinnati's Alex Gordon, in the first or second round.

Of the three ends, Johnson is the most intriguing.

"We might not have anything, and we might have someone very special," said Farmer, who scouted him. "His quickness reminds you of a Richard Dent."

Johnson is 6-4 and weighs 233, up from 219. Dent was only 226 when the Bears graded him for the draft.

"Johnson is not going to get as big as Dent is now [260], but he has excellent quickness. He's all over the field," Farmer said. "He looks like a slender Mr. America."

Johnson has "more potential" than Bryan, Tobin said, but Bryan is already "an excellent football

player."

Farmer said the brother of Atlanta Falcons' defensive end Rick Bryan might be able to play middle linebacker or center if he can't play defensive end.

The Sanders clone is Auburn running back Tim Jessie, an 11th-rounder who got lost in Auburn's all-star backfield of Brent Fullwood, Tommie Agee and Collis Campbell.

"He plays quite a bit similar to Thomas Sanders," Tobin said. "Mike wanted a halfback for training camp."

With the final pick in Round 12, the Bears took cornerback Eric Jeffries of Texas, who ran a 4.36 in the 40-yard dash. That's first-round speed. The difference is that Jeffries is a can-miss prospect. He runs better than he plays.

In the seventh round, the Bears took Archie Harris, an offensive tackle from William & Mary who is already in law school. Bear administrative chief Bill McGrane was impressed when he talked to him on the phone.

"He sounded like a guy you say 'Yes, sir' to," McGrane said.

Eighth-round linebacker Paul Migliazzo was overshadowed at Oklahoma by Brian Bosworth, who played next to him.

"He was the quarterback on the field until Bosworth started calling signals and became the big war moccasin," Tobin said.

Migliazzo has a grade similar to what the Bears gave back-up linebacker Jim Morrissey. He will challenge Morrissey and Dan Rains for back-up jobs, said Tobin.

Ninth-round fullback Lakei Heimuli [Law-KAY Hay-MOO-lee] of Brigham Young is of Tongan descent and grew up in Hawaii. That's why one scouting report described him as "a Mosi Tatupu type."

"He catches the ball well and is a tough kid who is familiar with a passing offense," Tobin said. "And Mike wanted a fullback for training camp."

The scouts and assistant coaches stayed up most of Tuesday night trying to sign 20 free agents before mini-camp May 11-14.

Agent sues 5 top picks in dispute on contracts

From Chicago Tribune wires

Norby Walters, the agent in the middle of an FBI investigation into reported threats against athletes, could have been in the middle of a financial bonanza.

He says that at one time he had agreements with seven of the 28 first-round picks in Tuesday's draft, probably a record for a single agent, according to the NFL Players Association.

He claims two are still under contract to him—Missouri offensive tackle John Clay [Raiders] and Temple halfback Paul Palmer [Chiefs].

Walters has filed lawsuits against the other five, charging they breached the agreements and illegally retained new agents. They are Auburn running back Brent Fullwood [Packers], Washington defensive end Reggie Rogers [Lions], Purdue cornerback Rod Woodson [Steelers], Pitt linebacker Tony Woods [Seahawks] and Clemson running back Terrence Flagger [49ers].

"I'm throwing up on my television," Walters said with a laugh soon after the first round ended.

"Isn't that amazing. For a guy to get seven first-rounders is really humongous. I'm some picker, aren't I?"

Walters said his standard contract calls for him to receive about 6 percent of the players' contracts as commission. His dealing with the players also had prompted investigations into whether NCAA rules were violated.

Walters has admitted paying some of the players, and court documents filed in the suits against Fullwood, Woodson, Woods and Flagger contain promissory notes for loans dated at various times before and during the 1986 college season.

The notes carry the signatures of the players. The Rogers suit does not allege that Walters made any loans to him, according to Michael Feldberg, Walters' attorney.

The FBI investigation is looking into whether Walters or his partner, Lloyd Bloom, made threats of physical violence against unidentified players who switched to other agents. The investigation also involves the beating in Chicago of an employee of a rival agent. Walters has denied making the threats or doing anything wrong.

Besides Vinny Testaverde, Tampa Bay Buc made two other interesting quarterback picks. On the last round, they took Mike Shula, son of Dolphins coach Don Shula and a star at Alabama under

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new Buc coach Ray Perkins. On the second round, they took Mississippi State's Don Smith, but they'll turn him into a running back.

Perkins said Mike Shula needs to get stronger, but that mentally he is as good as any quarterback selected in the draft. "He has some of the intangibles that make up a good quarterback, and I wanted to give him an opportunity to compete."

"I'm happy Mike got the opportunity with Tampa," Don Shula said.

On the Dolphins' final pick, they took Ohio State quarterback Jim Karsatos. Asked if he would have drafted his son if the Buc hadn't taken him, Shula said: "It would have been a tough situation for Mike to come in here. But I would have done it if I felt that was the way to go."

"If you can't laugh at yourself now and then, you're not much of a human being," LSU cornerback Norman Jefferson said after Green Bay selected him with the last pick [No. 335] in the draft at 2:05 a.m. Wednesday. "I'm glad I was drafted by the Packers. I was the only defensive back they took. I think I can play."

As the last player drafted, Jefferson has been invited to be the guest of honor in June at Newport Beach, Calif., for the 12th annual Irrelevant Week. He will receive the annual Lowman Trophy.

"It's a gorgeous bronze trophy. It features a football player, mouth agape, just dropping the football. It's a laugh, but it's a gorgeous trophy," said Betty Bottorf of Sports Depot, prime sponsor of the event.

Jefferson will be part of a boat parade, shake hands with Mickey Mouse at Disneyland and have a race named for him at Hollywood Park. "It sounds like fun," he said.

Bo Jackson opted for baseball rather than sign last year with the Buc as the No. 1 pick, so the reaction of the Kansas City Royals rookie was predictable after the Raiders took him on the seventh round Tuesday. "I'm going to get a big sign," Jackson said, "and write in big black letters, 'I AM A BASEBALL PLAYER.'"

Seattle GM Mike McCormack said he was continuing to talk with the lawyer or free agent quarterback Ron Jaworski after bringing the ex-Eagle to Seattle for a physical exam and a workout Friday.

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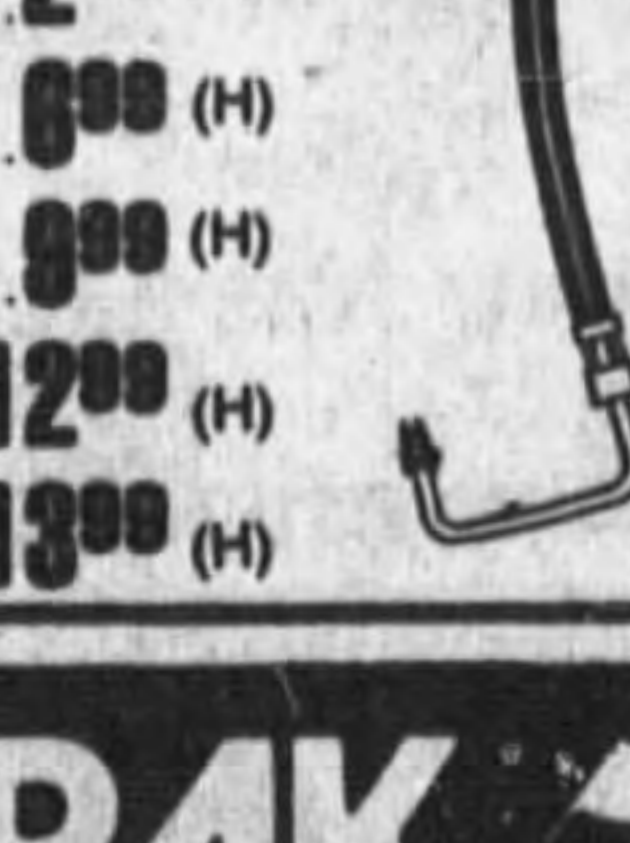


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