

2009 NFL Draft Nears

Written by Josh Evans
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2009 NFL DRAFT NOW ONLY A WEEK AWAY



The days of Senior Bowl and the NFL combine in Indianapolis are now long and gone. Pro days for the draft prospects are wrapping up and NFL teams are now finishing up their draft boards. If the Detroit Lions, who hold the number one overall pick, decide on their choice and sign the player to a contract before the draft, much like the Dolphins did last year with Jake Long, we may only be a couple of days from learning the first selection. While the Lions can make their selection at anytime between today and the draft, the rest of the league must wait until next Saturday. Even though the Lions may officially be off the clock days before the draft, the St. Louis Rams, who hold the number two overall selection for the second straight year, may not begin negotiating with a player.

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The NFL draft is officially only seven days away, and the buzz is building about which players will end up where. For the Dolphins and the trio of Bill Parcells, Jeff Ireland and Tony Sparano, this will be a key two days in deciding the fate of the franchise. Last year under this new regime, the team struck gold with their picks. Jake Long, their first round pick, immediately stepped in at Left Tackle and was selected to the Pro Bowl as a rookie. Second round pick Phillip Merling, while not a starter, was a key player in the rotation at defensive end. He also made one of the biggest highlights of the 2008 season as he picked off Brett Favre in Week 17 and returned it for a touchdown. It was a key play that helped Miami clinch the AFC East Division title that day. Third round pick Kendall Langford was a starter at defensive end the entire season and was a strong contributor in stopping the run. He also recorded two sacks during his rookie campaign. Sixth round pick Donald Thomas was a force during Training Camp and preseason and earned the starting job at right guard. However, a foot injury in week one ended his season. Chad Henne, who was selected in the second round, is projected to be the starting quarterback starting in the 2010 season, if not sooner.

In addition to their draft selections last year, Miami also was fortunate to land two quality players as undrafted free agents. Montana kicker Dan Carpenter unseated veteran Jay Feely and converted 84% of his field goals. Hawaii wide receiver Davone Bess was the third string receiver for the majority of the season before earning a starting role after the season ending injury to Greg Camarillo. Bess finished the season with an outstanding 54 receptions, 554 yards and one touchdown.

Now, Miami embarks on yet another crucial draft and one that will either help continue the growth of the team or one that could set the team back. Who will Miami take? What positions are the greatest need? One thing for sure is that come next Saturday, barring a trade, Commissioner Roger Goodell will take the podium at Radio City Music Hall and say those exciting words we have all be waiting for, "With the 25th pick in the 2009 NFL Draft, the Miami Dolphins select....."

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