

Washington Redskins

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2010 NFL Combine: Sam Bradford's Weight Shakes Up Top Five

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INDIANAPOLIS, IN—It's been widely assumed for weeks that the top two choices off the board in the 2010 NFL Draft would be a pair of defensive tackles in Gerald McCoy and Ndamukong Suh.

But quarterback Sam Bradford from Oklahoma had something to say about that Friday.

Bradford is something of an enigma in this draft. He is a quarterback who would have likely been the No. 1 overall pick in the 2009 draft had he have come out after his 2008 Heisman Trophy campaign. He threw 50 touchdowns against eight interceptions in 14 games that season, amassing an astounding 4,720 yards.

But the knock on Bradford has always been his size. Standing at 6'4", 220 or so pounds, Bradford was too

light for his own good. Scouts had questions as to whether or not he could hold up at the NFL level, and those questions seemed to have been answered when he missed virtually the entire 2009 season due to a variety of injuries sustained when he was hit.

Friday morning here in Indianapolis came the weigh-ins for the 2010 quarterback class. The NFL Combine is essentially a way for teams to take these players out for a test-drive, but the weigh-ins are really like a cattle auction. Scouts and coaches are on hand as the players line up, shirtless, to be weighed and measured.

Bradford took his turn, and surprised the sleep deprived room (the weigh-ins start at 7:30am after all) by weighing in at 236 pounds, and every bit of it appeared to be muscle. This came after his surgically repaired shoulder was given a clean bill of health Thursday after rigorous testing by the NFL doctors.

Not only does the muscle gain represent a thicker Bradford who will be better prepared to take the pounding of an NFL quarterback, but it also speaks volumes about his work ethic. Adding that kind of bulk without adding fat in that time period takes an incredible amount of effort, and even then his body might not have been able to support it.

No one was more impressed than the St. Louis Rams, who own the top overall choice. The Rams are choosing in the top two for the third consecutive season, and took linemen with each of their last two choices; one on each side of the ball.

Though they would have been happy to select Suh or McCoy, you got the sense that they would have preferred to look at other positions; and no position in the NFL is more valuable than a franchise quarterback.

The Rams came away impressed Friday and assuming things went well with Bradford's interview with the St. Louis staff Saturday, things have likely changed at the top of the 2010 NFL Draft. Bradford won't throw until his March 26 Pro Day in Oklahoma, but there's little question that in a completely controlled environment Bradford will shine the way he's expected to.

With Bradford now the favorite to come off the board at No. 1, the Detroit Lions and Tampa Bay Buccaneers, both of whom are seeking an interior defensive line presence, will happily grab Suh and McCoy right off the board.

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There's been a huge debate as to whether the rebuilding Redskins would take their franchise quarterback or instead opt to rebuild their Swiss cheese line with the high choice. That debate generally included Bradford being available.

But now the only quarterback likely to be on the board is Jimmy Clausen. Clausen is widely acknowledged as the second-best quarterback in the draft, but is not considered to be one of the top 20 players in the draft. After opting to not throw at the combine, unless Clausen has a huge Pro Day, he will likely be chosen in the second half of the first round.

If the Redskins staff falls in love with Clausen, they have two real choices; trade down from their first round pick or trade up from their second.

While the Redskins aren't afraid of spending big, many franchises are hesitant to trade into the top five, given how much money is spent in guaranteed and bonus money for those players. Trading up from their second round choice would likely take their 2011 first-rounder, which could potentially be a top 10 pick.

No, the most likely pick for the Redskins at this point becomes a franchise left tackle, of which there are

three who could all be top 10 picks in Russell Okung, Anthony Davis, and Bryan Bulaga.

This should all be music to the ears of incumbent Redskins starter Jason Campbell, who received further good news earlier in the week when new head coach Mike Shanahan announced that he would tender Washington's starting quarterback, and expects him to be with the team in 2010.

The top five would then round out with the Kansas City Chiefs selecting S Eric Berry from Tennessee, who is expected to be an Ed Reed-like presence in an NFL secondary. Berry had previously been expected to be selected by Tampa Bay.



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