The Mink is off to another trip to Chicago to attend the NFL draft with cousin Obey.  We annually match wits with the best NFL draft experts including Mel Kiper, Mike Mayock and Todd McShay.  Unfortunately, we do not get paid for it, but we have a pretty good track record of picking the results.

Let’s get the most important question out of the way before we begin **“ADRIAN PETERSON WILL NOT BE TRADED”**

**DRAFT NOTE: The trade that may occur looks to be for the right to draft Marcus Mariota, QB from Oregon. Lets take a swing and say Chip Kelly and the Eagles best the Chargers and trade QB Sam Bradford, LB Mychal Kendricks, and 2 #1 picks for the right to draft him at #2.**

This draft is again one of the deepest drafts in recent memory due to the record number of juniors declaring for the draft – 74 in total (last year there was a record 98 Juniors declared for the draft). Each year more and more juniors are declaring for the NFL draft which improves the depth of the draft. As a result, you can get first round talent in rounds 2 and 3. The top end of this draft offers “blue chip” prospects but there is a drop in talent after the first 10 picks. This draft is extremely deep at most positions. Teams will receive value in all rounds of the draft this year. In some cases, teams will be able to draft some starters in rounds 2-4 due to the depth of this draft.

We expect movement in the first half of the first round, particularly the top ten. A lot of teams are looking to trade down that are not in the top ten – the question is “are there enough teams willing to trade up”. If there are enough teams willing to trade up, we could see a lot of movement in the first 10 picks. Many teams covet the top edge rushers, top wide receivers and the top two quarterbacks in the draft (likely to go 1-2 in the first round). As a result, it will be very difficult to pick the specific player and team in the first round due to the movement expected.

**DRAFT NOTE: One more item to note before we move ahead; we are taking La'El Collins, OT, LSU off our Day 1 & Day 2 board to due to some legal concerns. He would have been a first round pick in the 20’s but until he gets cleared the best guess here is a day 3 pick.**

The strengths of the 2015 draft include:

1. Wide Receiver – Last year’s draft was an incredibly good one for wide receivers, with five going in the first round and another seven in the second round. This group will challenge the group from 2014 in terms of depth and talent. We could have as many as 6-7 wide receivers go in the first round. In terms of this year’s draft, this is an extremely deep draft with several blue chip prospects. You will be able to get great value in rounds 2-4 in this draft. There are several blue chip prospects at wide receiver. The cream of the crop is Amari Cooper from Alabama. He is a tremendous playmaker that is extremely explosive. He is the most pro-ready receiver in this year’s draft class and is a complete wide receiver. He put up tremendous production and led the SEC in every receiving category last year. Cooper will be drafted in the top 5 with Oakland as a potential destination at number four. The next wide receiver drafted in the first round is Kevin White from West Virginia. He has excellent size at 6’4” and showed off his athletic ability at the combine by posting a 4.35 40 yard dash. He is a matchup problem for defenses and has the highest upside of any receiver in this draft. He has been compared to Larry Fitzgerald and if he lives up to that comparison some team will be pleased. Davonte Parker will be the next receiver taken. He provides a large catch radius and is extremely productive in producing yards after the catch (YAC). He may be reunited with his college teammate Teddy Bridgewater. Other potential first round picks include: Breshad Perriman, Central Florida Jaelen Strong, Arizona State Dorial Green Beckham, Oklahoma and USC’s Nelson Agholor. Perriman is a big, strong receiver with a rare combination of size, top-end speed and explosiveness (comparisons to Julio Jones and Dez Bryant). Green Beckham possesses Randy Moss like talent at 6’6” but has off field issues. If he can put the off field issues behind him and focus on football, he could be the most dynamic player in this draft. Strong is a complete wide receiver that does not provide you with awe-inspiring characteristics but will make some team very pleased that they drafted him. Agholor continues USC trend in creating NFL wide receiver talent – he has big play potential and he was extremely productive at the college level. In addition, teams will find WR talent in rounds 2 – 4 due to the depth of this draft including prospects such as Phillip Dorsett, Miami Devon Smith, Ohio State, Rashad Greene, Florida State, Sammie Coates, Auburn.
2. Edge Rushers (DEs) – This may be the best class of edge rushers in the last 10 years. This is an extremely deep draft for defensive ends (edge rushers). There are several blue chip prospects in this year’s draft class, but the draft is deep with talent that will allow teams to bolster their defensive lines in the first three rounds of the draft. In today’s NFL, there is a high premium placed on edge rushers and their ability to create pressure on the quarterback. We project that 4-5 defensive ends may go in the first round including: Dante Fowler, Florida, Shane Ray, Missouri, Randy Gregory, Nebraska, Vic Beasley, Clemson and Bud Dupre, Kentucky. All five of these players will immediately upgrade a team’s ability to get to the quarterback. Both Ray and Gregory have off field issues that may impact where they are drafted. However, they may be the best two pass rushers in this draft. Gregory is good against both the run and pass and may be a steal if he falls due to his off field concerns. Ray reminds us of Robert Mathis from Indianapolis – if he can fulfill this comparison he will be a great edge rusher in the NFL. Dupre and Beasley are the most athletic of this group. Their combine numbers are off the charts and if they can translate athleticism into results they will make a huge impact for the team that drafts them. Fowler is the most complete player in this group and will probably be drafted first. He was an extremely productive player for Florida in the SEC. He can play in either a 3-4 or 4-3 scheme and plays the run and pass equally effective. This position group will have an impact in the NFL in 2015.
3. Offensive Tackle – This is a deep offensive tackle draft with three blue chip prospects that could go in the top 15. There could be as many as 4-5 Offensive Tackles taken in the first round with three legitimate “blue chip” prospects. This year’s class is led by tackles Brandon Scherff, Iowa, Erek Flowers, Miami, La’el Collins, LSU, TJ Clemmings, Pittsburgh, DJ Humphries, Florida, Andreas Peat, Stanford and Cedric Ogbuehi, Texas A&M. We believe Scherff will be the first offensive lineman taken in this draft due to his intelligence, athleticism, tenacity and versatility. As a senior left tackle, Scherff won the Outland Trophy (most outstanding interior lineman). He is extremely athletic and he is an outstanding in run blocking. He will be a Pro Bowl left guard/tackle in the NFL for the next decade. Flowers has prototype size for an NFL left tackle and has it all – size, experience and athletic ability. He is the most pro-ready left tackle in this draft. He possesses a Big, athletic frame carrying more than 320 pounds with ease. He is a mauler in the run game. Needs to improve in pass protection at the NFL level. Collins from LSU may offer the most upside of any tackle in this draft. As a senior in 2014. Won Jacobs Blocking Trophy as the top offensive lineman in the SEC. He projects as a right tackle in the NFL due to his run blocking. He is a Big-time finisher in the run game but needs to learn how to pass protect at the NFL level. He does however have the question of his dead pregnant girlfriend. Clemmings was named second team all American last year. Long, athletic frame. Former high school basketball player with great foot quickness. Moves like a tight end in space with an ability to zero in on targets and finish them in the screen game. Elite change-of-direction talent and knee bend. Can peel off his block to pick up a delayed blitzer. Humphries won the Anthony Munoz Award given to the nation's top high school lineman in 2011. Excellent run blocker that has a nastiness to him. Needs to learn how to use his hands better at the NFL level. Peat was voted second-team All-American by The A.P. He was an Outland Trophy semifinalist in 2014 and started the final 27 games of his career at Stanford. Big and powerful with a right tackle's play strength and demeanor, but enough foot quickness to protect on the left side. Peat has the physical tools to be an upper-echelon run blocker with pass-protection ability, but he needs to improve his technique in order to protect with consistency. Peat has been well-coached and is one of the most game-ready offensive linemen in this year's draft. Other offensive linemen that could go in the first three rounds include: Jake Fisher, Oregon, Ty Sambrailo, Colorado State, Jeremiah Poutasi, Utah, Daryl Williams, Oklahoma, AJ Cann, South Carolina, Laken Tomlinson, Duke, Tre Jackson Florida State, Arie Kouandjio, Alabama. Cann is widely considered by many to be the best guard prospect in this year’s draft and should be gone by the second round.
4. Running Back - This is an extremely deep draft of running back talent that will offer value through round – many coming from the Big Ten conference. However, there are only two blue chip prospects that will go in the first round – Melvin Gordon of Wisconsin and Todd Gurley of Georgia. Gurley with his combination of size and speed is the best running back prospect since Adrian Peterson. An ACL injury last year does not seemed to have hurt his draft stock significantly. Gordon was the most productive back in College football last year and draws comparisons to Jamal Charles in the NFL. They will both be picked in the first round reversing a recent trend where teams have devalued the running back position. Other running backs that could go in the first 4 rounds include Tevin Coleman, Indiana, Duke Johnson, Miami, Ameer Abdullah, Nebraska, Mike Davis, South Carolina, David Cobb, Minnesota, TJ Yeldon, Alabama and Jay Ajayi, Boise State.

The areas highlighted above will provide great value in the first day of the draft including rounds, two, three and four because of the depth of these positions.  Several teams have needs at Offensive Line (Guard/Tackle), Wide Receiver and Defensive Ends (Edge Rushers) and we see these positions dominating the first 50 picks of the 2015 draft. Edge Rushers (DEs) and wide receiver are particularly deep in this draft.

 The strengths of this year’s align well with the Vikings needs. The Vikings needs going into the 2015 draft include in priority order:

1. Wide Receiver
2. Cornerback
3. Defensive End
4. Offensive Guard
5. Linebacker

The Vikings had a playoff caliber defense last year but need to surround Teddy Bridgewater with playmakers. The return of Adrian Peterson should help. We do not see the Vikings trading AP during the draft.

We see the first 10 picks like this (assuming no trades):

1. **Tampa Bay – Jameis Winston, QB, Florida State.** Nothing to see here. Winston has been rumored to go No. 1 for months. It makes sense for Tampa Bay to take a hard look at all options; we just think this is where the Bucs will settle. He's big, durable, strong-armed and has both a high football IQ and an ability to read, anticipate and process at a very high level what defenses are trying to do. However, we do think Mariota is the best quarterback in this draft and will be a difference maker at the next level. Winston comes with too many off field concerns for a number one pick and there is a change he will be a bust. The Bucs will take him
2. **Tennessee - Marcus Mariota, QB, Oregon.** This pick may be traded but Mariota will be taken with the number 2 pick. Yes, it could be Tennessee, but it could be a handful of other teams if a deal gets done. (San Diego, the Jets, Chicago, St. Louis ... many have been named as possible fits.). We believe he is the best quarterback in the draft. He has prototypical size (6’4”), high football IQ and possesses tremendous athleticism. He reads defenses well and can make plays with his feet if the pay breaks down (4.5 40). The biggest difference between Mariota and Winston is Mariota does not make mistakes and Winston makes a lot. He has the fewest interceptions for a full-time starter in college football over a two year period in the last 20 years. Interceptions and turnovers is the difference between winning and losing in today’s NFL. Mariota will be the better quarterback in this draft at the NFL level.
3. **Jacksonville - Leonard Williams, DT, USC.** Leonard Williams is the best player in this draft and the Jaguars have many holes to fill. If Williams, the No. 1 player in the draft, is still here at No. 3, we think the Jags have a pretty easy decision. It doesn't matter if you love every starter on your defensive line -- Williams is an impact talent early in his career, and a player who will make any defense better because there's no scheme you can put him I n where he won't succeed.
4. **Oakland - Amari Cooper, WR, Alabama.** A few things can happen here. This is a possible trade-up spot given the Raiders could certainly add a good wide receiver further down the board, and could also target the pass rush later. It's also a fit for Kevin White or Leonard Williams if either is available. We think it's going to be hard to pass on the sure thing that Cooper is. He is the most pro-ready receiver in this draft and fulfills a glaring weakness in Oakland – they lack playmakers. He's a true No. 1 receiver, a supremely gifted route runner who doesn't do it with just smarts, but with 4.4 speed and the ability to set up defenders and then run past them. He gives Derek Carr a weapon that he desperately needs to improve in his second year.
5. **Washington - Dante Fowler Jr., DE, Florida.** Fowler's combine really sealed his status as a top-10 pick. Washington needs help in the front 7 to improve the overall defense and Fowler fills this need. He is the most complete defensive end in a deep draft class. Fowler was not overly productive but you did see consistent flashes of a player who, were he able to add more elements to his game as a pass-rusher in particular, has star potential. Fowler will improve the Redskins ability to rush the passer, which is what the Redskins desperately need as they continue to build this defense into a more formidable unit. Better secondary play typically starts up front.
6. **New York Jets - Todd Gurley, RB, Georgia.** The Jets have not had a consistent running game for a long time. A lot of the blame last year was placed on Geno Smith but a better run game improves the overall offense.Gurley is the best running back prospect since Adrian Peterson and if he is able to recover 100% from his ACL injury the Jets will get a very dynamic offensive player.Gurley certainly could qualify as the "best player available" at this spot on the board. The Jets can take him knowing he doesn't have to be an impact player in Week 1, and create an opportunity for him to be a stud for them as he reaches his full potential when at 100 percent.
7. **Chicago - Danny Shelton, DT, Washington.** The Bears defense was awful last year and they really need to shore up the middle of the defense starting with the defensive line. They lost several DT to free agency and if they do not add talent here it is likely they will get shredded again in 2015. Shelton is the best defensive tackle in this draft and the Bears desperately need to upgrade this unit. He's not as disruptive as sack and TFL totals indicate, but he can eat up double-teams at the point of attack and make others around him better. He has great awareness and will occasionally simply discard blocks and make the tackle himself.
8. **Atlanta - Vic Beasley, OLB, Clemson.** Atlanta needs productivity from a pass-rusher, and I think new defensive coordinator Richard Smith will know how to get Beasley going in the same way Denver was able to get Von Miller going. They had the fewest sacks in the NFL from their edge rushers. Beasley is a pure pass-rusher who can get to opposing QBs regardless of what system you're employing. Beasley had 44.5 tackles for loss over the last two seasons, and while we don't think he's an every-down player, he's going to come in ready on Day 1 and improve Atlanta’s ability to get to the quarterback.
9. **New York Giants - Brandon Scherff, OT, Iowa.** The Giants offensive line is in need of a significant upgrade. Last year, they did not run the ball consistently nor did they protect Eli Manning. The Giants were in the top 5 in sacks allowed last year. Improving the ability to run the ball and protect Manning will lead to offensive efficiency and explosive plays. Brandon Scherff immediately upgrades the Giants offensive line. Scherff is a possible starter immediately at right tackle, and is a clear upgrade at either guard spot. It might not be exciting for the fans, but for immediate impact this could be the best pick to make.
10. **St Louis Rams - Kevin White, WR, West Virginia.** White has the deep speed and size the Rams need in the passing game. He has excellent size at 6’4” and showed off his athletic ability at the combine by posting a 4.35 40 yard dash. White has a rare combination of size and speed and presents matchup problems for defenses and has the highest upside of any receiver in this draft. He has been compared to Larry Fitzgerald and if he lives up to that comparison the Rams will be pleased with this pick. White gives the Rams a much-needed threat in the passing game regardless of who plays QB, and the value is good here.

We see the remaining first round as follows starting with the Vikings:

1. **Minnesota - Trae Waynes, CB, Michigan State.** TheVikings could look at a receiver here, but with the top two off the board in this scenario, Waynes becomes a pretty decent value as the top cornerback in the draft. We believe Waynes is the best cornerback in this year’s draft. The Vikings have a need here and Waynes has the range of skills that add up to a guy who can help out early in his career. He solidified his position as the top cornerback by having a great combine running a 4.35 40. He has excellent size coupled with outstanding ball skills. He is a complete corner that will be extremely successful at the next level. He will be an excellent cornerback in the NFL for many years and would be a great complement to Xavier Rhodes. The Vikings are in decent shape up front, but they lack both depth and size at cornerback, which is no fun in this division. Again, you're facing Aaron Rodgers, Matthew Stafford and Jay Cutler on the schedule six times a year, so depth at cornerback is essential, not just nice to have.
2. **Cleveland - DeVante Parker, WR, Louisville.** The Browns have added Dwayne Bowe, but he'll be 31 in September and is more name value than anything close to a No. 1 receiver at this point in his career. We expect the Browns to pick more than one receiver and getting Parker here is a good place to start. We do think he has a chance to be as good as any receiver in this draft. Parker will beat defenders to the ball on high-point catches with his size, leaping ability and catch radius, and he's underrated as a threat to add yards after the catch on short throws. He'll help a QB look better.
3. **New Orleans - Randy Gregory, DE, Nebraska.** There's no question that Gregory has seen his stock slide in recent weeks, as the question of how dependable he can be off the field gets tacked onto the question of whether his size will be an issue. But with two first-round picks, a bet on getting the best out of Gregory isn't a bad one to make right here for the Saints, because he's got so much talent. He offers length, and explosiveness that shows up on tape and in combine drills. Gregory has a lean frame, which concerns some talent evaluators, but he is a lot better against the run than his frame might indicate, and if he can stay on the field we think he has a chance to be a star.
4. **Miami - Breshad Perriman, WR, Central Florida.** Perriman is rising on many draft boards and is likely the fourth receiver selected. The Dolphins need to add playmakers for Ryan Tannehill. Perriman is a big, strong receiver with a rare combination of size, top-end speed and explosiveness (comparisons to Julio Jones and Dez Bryant). He is an explosive player on tape and then lived up to that by running sub-4.3 two separate times at his pro day. Perriman has good length but will also prove dangerous after the catch. He will immediately upgrade Miami’s wide receivers and give Tannehill another option that will make the Dolphin’s offense more dynamic. Can’t see son of former U of Miami product dropping below Dolphins and its area of need after trading Mike Wallace, signing Greg Jennings and cutting Brandon Gibson. It makes too much sense.
5. **San Francisco, Arik Armstead, DE, Oregon.** Justin Smith isn't coming back, and Darnell Dockett is 33 and coming off a season in which he landed on IR with an ACL injury. Ray McDonald is also gone. They need to add depth and talent along the defensive line. Armstead fills an immediate need and offers a lot of potential for the future. He's physically ready to help day one but needs to improve his technique to contribute at the next level. He will provide depth and be a rotation player in his first year.
6. **Houston - Bud Dupree, OLB, Kentucky.** Houston needs to add other playmakers in their front 7 not named J.J. Watt. The drop-off between Watt and others on the Texans' roster is bigger than they'd like to see at this point. Dupre is moving up draft boards due to his outstanding combine performance and his rare combination of size, speed and athleticism. He can play in both a 3-4 and 4-3 alignment in the NFL and provides position flexibility. Adding a high-upside athlete and edge rusher with the size and athleticism to move around the front seven is a good pick for Houston. Dupree has produced, and against top competition. He has all the tools and traits to become a premier pass rusher at the next level.
7. **San Diego - Malcom Brown, DT, Texas**. San Diego needs to add a running back here so the pick could be Gordon. However, we believe they will choose to improve the interior of their defensive line and select Malcom Brown. Brown is a two gap run stopper that San Diego desperately needs. They were not a good run defense last year and it starts in the middle. Brown isn't a complete product yet, but he's one of the better run-defending defensive tackles in this year’s draft.
8. **Kansas City - Jaelen Strong, WR, Arizona State.**  To say that Kansas City has a need here is stating the obvious. Last year, the Chiefs wide receivers did not catch a touchdown pass. They added Jeremy Maclin but they need more playmakers on offense. At slightly under 6-foot-3, Strong also has a 42-inch vertical, a number that shows up on tape as he wins on balls in the air. Strong also has underrated speed and will run by cornerbacks who don't respect it. Great pick for Kansas City.
9. **Cleveland - Andrus Peat, OT, Stanford.** Since the Browns selected a WR with their earlier pick it makes sense to get more OL help for Johnny Manziel or anyone else they decide to play QB. Peat does offer the Browns big-time upside as a player who can become a very good NFL left tackle and the ability to start elsewhere on the O-line right away. There's a chance he's off the board in the top-10 range, so he's a great value at this stage.
10. **Philadelphia - Marcus Peters, CB, Washington.** The Eagles need to add talent to their secondary and from a talent standpoint Peters is the best cornerback in this draft. You just can't overstate the value of depth at this position. Peters has some question marks -- he was dismissed from the team at Washington this past season -- but if it's purely a question of talent, he's a potential steal at this point in the first round. He's more than just a good player; he's the kind of talent that can turn bad throws into points for the defense.
11. **Cincinnati - Shane Ray, OLB, Missouri.** The Bengals need to add playmakers that can get to the quarterback. They reunited with Michael Johnson but they need to add more. Although Ray has off field questions he is too great a value here to pass up. Ray reminds us of Robert Mathis from Indianapolis and if he can live up to that billing the Bengals will be very pleased with this pick.
12. **Pittsburgh - Landon Collins, S, Alabama.** With the retirement of Troy Polamalu the Steelers need to add an impact safety. Collins is a safety who does his best work when he's near the line of scrimmage. He has great instincts and tackling ability as an extra defender against the run, and he's the kind of player who can fit seamlessly into the Steeler’s defensive schemes. This is a great pick for the Steelers and Collins will help fill the void created by the Polamalu retirement.
13. **Detroit - Cedric Ogbuehi, OT Texas A&M.** The Lions need to upgrade the talent along their offensive line and the guess here is Ogbuehi who tore his ACL during the season is going to slide into first round for someone and would be heck of a pick for the Lions late in round 1. They were simply average as both a pass- and run-blocking unit in 2014. The Lions simply can't take full advantage of the weapons they have on offense if they don't improve up front, and Ogbuehi can be an immediate help.
14. **Arizona - Melvin Gordon, RB, Wisconsin**. Arizona has been mentioned as a potential destination for Adrian Peterson and there is a definite need there. We think they fill this need through the draft and select Gordon. Gordon has the explosiveness that you need from an RB taken this high -- he's a true game-breaker -- but he's also proved durable. There's always a value question for a running back taken this high, but we can all agree Arizona is built to contend for a deep playoff run if the team is healthy at QB, and Gordon simply makes an offense better now.
15. **Carolina - D.J. Humphries, OT, Florida.** For the last several years the Panthers have struggled along the offensive line. They have made a few moves to improve what was a terrible offensive line in 2014, but in terms of overall talent they really aren't significantly improved. Humphries has handled some of the top pass-rushers in the SEC, and has a chance to provide immediate help where the Panthers need it most. He lacks polish, but he plays with relentlessness, and he also profiles as a player with the upside to stick at left tackle in the NFL and help protect Cam Newton’s backside.
16. **Baltimore - Kevin Johnson, CB, Wake Forest.** The Ravens are in need of adding talent and depth to a secondary that was not very productive in 2014. Johnson can play right away and add depth and talent to a Raven’s secondary that needs it. A standout on a lousy team throughout his college career, Johnson has good length for the position and moves and mirrors as well as any cornerback in the draft. He can make man-to-man coverage look easy at times, and he's an active run defender.
17. **Dallas - Byron Jones, CB, Connecticut.** The Cowboys need to find a replacement for Demarco Murray but it is their defense that is the most pressing need. We believe Dallas needs to start with the secondary. Dallas lost several games last year because their secondary simply could not cover the opposing receivers. We like the versatility that Jones can offer them as a corner that can be moved around and also play safety if that's where they need him. This is one of the best athletes in the draft, but with Jones, it's not just about the workouts, because everything you see at the NFL combine is also evident on tape. He has great football instincts and projects as an outstanding cornerback at the NFL level.
18. **Denver - Cameron Erving, C, Florida State.** Denver does not have many needs but they need to solidify the Center position as they had multiple starters there last year. Erving is a remarkable story as a player who actually increased his draft stock when he moved from left tackle to center, where he was absolutely dominant down the stretch for the Seminoles last season. The Broncos have the quarterback, and they have the weapons, but to remain Super Bowl contenders they need to solidify the interior of the offensive line, and it's hard to do any better than Erving at this point. He's a versatile offensive lineman and the kind of player who will help Denver keep the title window wide open.
19. **Indianapolis – Ereck Flowers, OT, Miami.** The Colts have been active in free agency, but the offensive line is a weakness they need to address in the draft. Andrew Luck is going to produce points for them, but they won't maximize what he's capable of if they don't improve their pass protection and create more of a push in the run game. Flowers has a big, athletic frame carrying more than 320 pounds with ease. He is a mauler in the run game but needs to improve his pass protection technique at the next level. Flowers will immediately improve the Colts offensive line.
20. **Green Bay - Jalen Collins, CB, LSU.** The Packers lost a lot of depth in the secondary due to free agency. As long as Rodgers is there, they will produce points. The defense is what is holding them back from another title run. They should spend this entire draft on defense. They need to add cornerback depth given the QBs and pass-catchers they face six times a year in the NFC North, it's not a position where you can be short on depth without being exposed. Collins is a high-upside play as a cornerback as he offers good size, length and athletic ability. He can play physical but also turn and run with the fastest wide receivers in the league. The pick makes sense here.
21. **New Orleans - Nelson Agholor, WR, USC.** The Saints addressed the pass rush earlier in Round 1, and now they can dip into the depth at wide receiver in this class and get an experienced, underrated pass-catcher who can come in and play right away. The team is without Jimmy Graham and Kenny Stills, Marques Colston is now 31, and Brandin Cooks will be coming back from an injury. Agholor is a very good route runner, has good hands, and is quietly an explosive athlete who can set up defenders and create space underneath or beat defenses over the top. This is a deep wide receiver class, but the Saints should get someone with early-impact potential, and Agholor fits the bill.
22. **New England - Eddie Goldman, DT, Florida State.** The defensive line in New England isn't the same without Vince Wilfork. A player like Goldman has the opportunity to more closely replicate the kind of run-stuffing ability Wilfork gave Bill Belichick for so many years. He's not going to be winning with quickness and chasing quarterbacks around, but Goldman can eat up blocks and hold the point and help the Patriots keep opposing offenses from assuming they can line up and overpower the Patriots in the run game. He's also a really good value at this point

In terms of the Vikings, they will be able to take the best player in the draft due to the fact they have a very good returning team and have very few holes to fill. We see five alternatives that could unfold in the first round:

1. Take the best cornerback – the top two corners are Trae Waynes, Michigan State and Marcus Peters, Washington. Both cornerbacks will be available at pick number 11. We believe the best cornerback in this draft is Trae Waynes of Michigan State. He solidified his position as the top cornerback by having a great combine running a 4.35 40. He has excellent size coupled with outstanding ball skills. He is a complete corner that will be extremely successful at the next level. He will be a Pro Bowl cornerback in the NFL for many years and would be a great complement to Xavier Rhodes. Peters is a big, physical corner that has all the tools to succeed at the next level. However, he was kicked off the Washington team this year and brings off field concerns. If a team can see beyond these issues and get Peters to use his God given ability to perform, they will have a true shut down corner added to their defense. Zimmer loves his corners.
2. Take the best wide receiver – The Vikings have a need to surround Teddy Bridgewater with playmakers. The trade for Mike Wallace, the return of Adrian Peterson and the return of Kyle Rudolph’s health should help. However, they need to do more here. There are three playmakers at the wide receiver position that will be drafted in the first 12 picks – Amari Cooper of Alabama, Kevin White of West Virginia and Davante Parker of Louisville. Two of these three playmakers have a successful history with Bridgewater – Cooper was Bridgewater’s high school teammate and main wide receiver while Parker was Bridgewater’s top target at Louisville. Cooper led the SEC in every receiving category and is the most pro-ready wide receiver in this draft. If he is there, this pick is a no brainer. We believe Cooper will be selected in the first 5 picks. Parker on the other hand will probably be there at pick number 11. His large catch radius, ability to run after the catch and familiarity with Bridgewater makes Parker a strong consideration at pick 11. White possesses a rare combination of size and speed – he is 6’4” and ran a 4.35 40 at the combine. He has the most upside of any receiver in this draft but only played one year at West Virginia. White is option at number 11 but likely will be gone by that pick.
3. Take the best Defensive End (Edge Rusher) – Edge rushers/DEs in this draft may offer the best talent in the last 10 years. Drafting Randy Gregory or Bud Dupre will continue the rebuilding of the defensive line with young talent. This move would provide the Vikings with an excellent rotation of three quality defensive ends (Griffen and Robison). Gregory was widely considered to be a top ten pick but his draft stock is falling due to a failed drug test. He may be the most dynamic and dominant edge rusher in this draft providing Zimmer with tremendous flexibility in the front seven with Barr, Griffen, Greenway, Robison and Floyd. Dupre is moving up draft boards due to his outstanding combine performance and his rare combination of size, speed and athleticism. He can play in both a 3-4 and 4-3 alignment in the NFL and provides position flexibility. He will be available at pick number 11 and provide the Vikings another dynamic player that can rush from the edges, which is critical in Zimmer’s defensive schemes.
4. Take the best Guard/Tackle – Brandon Scherff is the most versatile lineman in the draft. He will fill the immediate void at left guard and could potentially play tackle later in his career. A starting left tackle at Iowa, Brandon Scherff has the athleticism and technique to play any position along the offensive line. Scherff is a powerful mauler in the run game. A productive college left tackle with the skill set to be an All-Pro at guard, Scherff compares easily to Zack Martin. Martin was better in pass protection coming into the NFL, but both are high-quality, versatile blockers. If he is available at pick 11, the Vikings will take him. We believe he will go in the top 10 and not be an option for the Vikings.
5. Take the Best Linebacker (if they move down) – If they trade out of number 11, a playmaking linebacker could become an option. In this scenario, there will be one option they would consider. Shaq Thompson is a three down linebacker from Washington and is one of the best defensive playmakers in the draft. He fits Zimmer’s scheme and provides flexibility to use in both defending the run and pass. Some project him as a safety or a linebacker. We project him as a playmaking linebacker that can play all three downs. If they choose Thompson, he would pair with Anthony Barr to provide the Vikings front seven with two dynamic defensive playmakers for the next decade.

The Vikings could trade out of pick number 11 and get more picks later in the draft. We think they will stay put and draft the best player available using one of the first 4 options highlighted above. Brandon Scherff will not be there at pick number 11 but if he is the Vikings will take him. We think the choices will come down to Trae Waynes, CB, Michigan State, Randy Gregory, DE and Davonte Parker, WR, Louisville. We believe the Vikings will continue to add playmakers to their defense and select Trae Waynes, CB, Michigan State. Waynes will provide the Vikings with an outstanding cornerback tandem for the next decade. Waynes will team with Xavier Rhodes to provide the Vikings one of the best cornerback tandems in the NFL. Zimmer is a former defensive backs coach that loves his corners. His defense requires two cornerbacks that are capable of matching up with the other team’s best receiver due to the schemes he deploys.

They will then target guard, wide receiver, defensive end and linebacker in rounds 2.

In terms of the Vikings, we see three alternatives that could unfold in the second round (depending on what they do in the first round):

1. Take the best wide receiver available. This could include: Dorial Green Beckham, Oklahoma, Phillip Dorsett, Miami Devin Smith, Ohio State, Rashad Greene, Florida State, Sammie Coates, Auburn, Tyler Lockett, Kansas State.
2. Take the best offensive lineman (Guard) available. This could include: Lake Tomlinson, Duke, AJ Cann, South Carolina, Tre Jackson, Florida State, TJ Clemmings, Pittsburgh
3. Take the Best Middle Linebacker available – Denzel Perryman, Miami, Benardrick McKinney, Mississippi State, Eric Kendricks, UCLA and Stephone Anthony, Clemson. Paul Dawson, TCU.
4. Take the best Defensive End available. This could include: Trey Flowers, Arkansas, Nate Orchard, Utah, Owamagbe Odighizuwa, UCLA, Jordan Phillips, Oklahoma.

We think scenario it will come down to a choice between (depending on their first round choice): Denzel Perryman, LB, Miami, Dorial Green Beckham, WR, Oklahoma, Lake Tomlinson, G, Duke and AJ Cann, G, South Carolina

Based on our projected first round pick of Trae Waynes, our pick is Dorial Green Beckham, WR, Oklahoma. The Vikings have done their homework on this kid and they are going to take a risk just like Randy Moss in 1998. Green Beckham has Randy Moss like talent and this pick will provide Bridgewater another dynamic playmaker. Perryman is another great option but Audie Cole impressed enough in his last start with 18 tackles to provide the coaches confidence at middle linebacker.

This draft will continue to infuse young talent on both sides of the ball for the Vikings. They have one of the youngest teams in the NFL and they will continue to build young talent. This is a pick that fills a need while at the same time fits into the best-athlete-available mantra the Vikings have maintained. If they choose Davonte Parker in the first round, the Vikings will then look to add a cornerback in the second round which could be Jalen Collins, LSU, Byron Jones, Connecticut, Kevin Johnson, Wake Forest, PJ Williams, Florida State or Josh Shaw, USC.

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Options in round 3 that the Vikings could draft:

1. **Damarious Randall, S, Arizona State:** The Vikings are very high on Randall and have met with him several times. He is an outstanding athlete with good speed. He can play in the box and displays toughness and a nose for the ball. He totaled 177 tackles during two-year stint at Arizona State. He is excellent in run support and provides the range and cover ability required in today’s NFL. Senses throws underneath and breaks on them early. Took two interceptions for scores. Good hands -- played some wide receiver in junior college and was also an explosive returner while there. Randall is considered undersized for the safety position and some teams have him projected as a cornerback. Randall has a nose for the ball, tackles in space well and provides the range and cover ability that is coveted at the NFL level.
2. **Jarvis Harrison, OG, Texas A&M:** Started 38 games during his time at Texas A&M. Missed first two games of 2014 after conditioning concerns following offseason shoulder surgery. In 2014, had starts at both left guard (5 games) and left tackle (2 games). Sat out spring practices due to shoulder injury. Started every game in 2013 and every game in 2012 on offensive line that led the way for Johnny Manziel's Heisman run. As a redshirt freshman, started five games (4 at left guard and 1 at right guard). Played just two years of football in high school while also playing basketball and competing in track and field. He is an outstanding athlete that is light on his feet and possesses the talent, technique and physical traits to be a high-end NFL starter. Needs to keep his weight under control at the NFL level.
3. **Sammie Coates, WR, Auburn:** Finished his career with a yards-per-reception average of 20.9. In 2014, named second-team All-SEC and was a Senior Bowl invitee. Dominated in loss to Alabama with 5 receptions for 206 yards and 2 touchdowns. In 2013, started 12-of-14 games he played in and averaged 54.1 yards per touchdown reception. Big, fast and raw. Vertical wide receiver with the ability to hit big plays and have dominant games. Coates must be coached to trust his quarterback and run through his deep routes in order to reach his potential. He has early round traits and late-round receiving skills right now, but the upside will be hard to pass on and could pay off in a big way.
4. **Jay Ajayi, RB, Boise State:** Only player in FBS history with 1,800 yards rushing and 500 yards receiving in a single season. Tied for second in school history with 50 career rushing touchdowns. Set school records in rushing yards and touchdowns. In 2014, named third-team AP All-American and first-team All-Mountain West. In 2013, named first-team All-Mountain West. Played in 11 games in 2012 averaging 6.68 yards per rush. Ajayi's running style and body type are very similar to LeShoure's coming out of college, but LeShoure didn't have the football character to make it in the league. Ajayi features an improving stiff arm and physicality that has become his calling card. Ajayi has the ability to play all three downs while mashing in short yardage and near the goal line. Scouts have been quietly circling Ajayi as a second-tier running back who offers good value on the second day of the draft.
5. **Marcus Hardison, DT, Arizona State:** Selected honorable mention All-Pac-12 in 2014 after leading team with 10 sacks and 15 tackles for loss. Selected to play in 2015 Senior Bowl. Before enrolling at Arizona State for the 2013 season, spent 2011, 2012 at Dodge City Community College, where he had 96 tackles and 7 sacks. Played some quarterback in high school before moving to defensive line. A defensive end turned three-technique in a 4-3 defense with outstanding initial quickness off the snap and the hands and feet to be a disruptive, upfield player against plodding guards. Hardison needs more muscle in his lower body and is unlikely to fit defensive schemes looking for stack-and-shed interior defenders. Hardison has starting potential and might be able to come in as a situational pass rusher early on.
6. **Quentin Rollins, CB, Miami of Ohio:** After four years of basketball and with a semester of eligibility left, decided to give football a shot in 2014 after being away from the sport since high school. Named 2014 MAC Defensive Player of the Year and first-team All-MAC. Finished the season with seven interceptions, including a pick-six against Ohio. Participated in the 2015 Senior Bowl. Rare start-stop-start suddenness. His ability to change gears instantly gives him a chance to develop into a talented cover cornerback. With more work on technique and overall discipline, Rollins has the physical tools to become a very good NFL starter.
7. **Ronald Darby, CB, Florida State:** In 2014, selected third-team All-ACC, allowing just 41.9 percent of passes thrown his way to be completed. In 2013, played in all 14 games with 9 starts. Had a pass breakup against Auburn in the BCS National Championship Game. Selected 2012 ACC Defensive Rookie of the Year and tied for the team lead with eight pass breakups that season. Cover corner with average size and outstanding speed. Has shown the instincts to play off coverage and the athleticism to play press. It is a bit of a concern that scouts and even opposing coaches have commented on Darby's toughness, but he doesn't have very many missed or broken tackles on his docket and his cover skills should be prioritized over his run support regardless. He clearly has starter's ability at the position.
8. **Eric Rowe, CB/S, Utah:** Tall cornerback with long frame. Has the ability to disrupt wide receivers off the line of scrimmage and can mirror them out of their release. Jams and disrupts shallow crossers. Will throw his body around in run support if needed. Solid tackler. Attacks ball at catch point and makes it hard for receiver to finish the catch. Was a three-year starter at free safety before moving to cornerback this year. Rowe won't be for everyone. Scouts have concerns about his deep speed and he's not a guy who can match and mirror in coverage. However, Rowe will be a nice fit for defenses looking for a long defender with disruptive downfield traits.
9. **Mario Edwards, DE, Florida State:** Started 13 games and selected first-team All-ACC in 2014. Did not play against N.C. State after suffering a concussion the previous game (vs. Clemson). Selected third-team All-ACC in 2013 and missed two games with a hand injury. Had a sack in the BCS National Championship Game against Auburn. Only true freshman to start on defense in 2012 after replacing injured Tank Carradine. He's a 3-4 defensive end or a 4-3 defensive tackle who has to make a living playing the run. Edwards failed to reach expectations while at Florida State and ended his career as a core defender rather than dominant force. His "level of ability" is higher than his current level of play and could continue to be the case unless he finds more passion and effort from snap to snap.
10. **Adrian Amos, S, Penn State:** Selected honorable mention All-Big Ten 2012-2014. Started all 37 games over last three seasons with Penn State. Played in 12 games as a backup in 2011. Amos checks all the boxes when it comes to strong football intelligence, a willingness to digest tape and cover skills. The biggest question is whether or not he can fit with a coordinator looking for playmakers and chance-takers. He must prove that he can play with greater overlap. Amos' scheme versatility is a big plus, but I wouldn't ask him to play inside the box very often.
11. **Preston Smith, DE, Mississippi State:** Recorded 5 tackles (one sack) in the 2015 Senior Bowl. Started all 13 games in 2014 and led team with 15 tackles for loss and 9 sacks en-route to being selected first-team All-SEC. Had an interception return for a touchdown against UAB. In 2013, played in 12 games (11 starts) and made 44 tackles, including 6.5 for loss (2.5 sacks). Selected Most Outstanding Defensive Player of the Liberty Bowl in win over Rice. In 2012, played in 13 games and led team with 4.5 sacks. Made 11 starts in 2011. Smith has been a solid, rotational defensive end for Mississippi State, but nothing too special. When studying tape long enough, you see traits and potential. With his long arms, plus hands and ability to play the run, Smith could be an interesting prospect inside or in a hybrid 3-4 front. As a 4-3 defensive end, he lacks the twitch to be an impact player.

Options in round 4 that the Vikings could draft – this is where you start to build your team:

1. **Anthony Harris, S, Virginia:** Selected team captain in 2014. Started all 12 games en route to being selected third-team All-ACC. In 2013, selected first-team All-ACC with eight interceptions. Set a school record with five consecutive games with an interception. Productive three-year starter with above-average instincts and football intelligence. Was an interchangeable safety, playing both deep and in run support, but lacks the bulk, physicality and sure tackling to make a living in the box in the NFL. Harris has some coverage limitations in man, but his skills will get him drafted and should also earn him a starting spot fairly quickly.
2. **Stefon Diggs, WR, Maryland:** Selected second-team All-Big Ten in 2014. Started 10 games, but missed three with a lacerated kidney that he played through in the immediate aftermath of suffering the injury. Suspended for first of the three games he missed after making contact with an official prior to Penn State game when a tussle ensued after Maryland's team captains wouldn't shake the hands of Penn State's captains. Missed six games in 2013 with a broken right fibula. Selected second-team All-ACC return specialist in 2012 and finished second to Duke's Jamison Crowder for ACC Rookie of the Year. As a freshman, tallied 1,896 all-purpose yards, which were second most in a single season in school history. Doesn't possess the strength or long speed to make a living as an outside receiver, but he can be an extremely effective weapon from the slot as a pro, turning short third-down throws into first downs. Diggs can make things happen when he has the ball in his hands and could become a consistent, productive weapon for the right offensive coordinator.
3. **Jordon Hicks, LB, Texas:** Participated in 2015 Senior Bowl. Selected second-team All-Big 12 in 2014, leading the Longhorns in tackles with 147. Started first four game of 2013 season, but missed the rest of the year with a torn Achilles. Granted medical redshirt exemption. Started first three games of 2012 but missed final 10 after suffering hip flexor injury and took a redshirt. Played in all 13 games in 2011 despite missing spring practices with fractured foot. Selected honorable mention All-Big 12 in 2010. Hicks sticks to the script and "plays through a straw" -- seeing just what is in front of him -- but he has the necessary size, speed and athleticism to stick in the league. Hicks is an improving player who will live in the film room and might end up over drafted on the upside potential.
4. **Tyrus Thompson, OT, Oklahoma:** Started 29 games, including 13 at left tackle in 2014, of the 44 he appeared in. First-team All-Big 12 selection in 2014. In 2013, missed two starts with an ankle injury. Saw multiple starts at both right and left tackle in 2012. Thompson has NFL size and flashes NFL potential, but he doesn't play with the consistency or effort that NFL scouts want to see from him. There will be teams that drop his grade due to football character, but tackles that have traits and upside usually get drafted earlier than their draft grades call for.
5. **David Johnson, RB, Northern Iowa:** Played in 2015 Senior Bowl, gaining 43 yards rushing while adding a touchdown, a pass reception for 16 yards and 82 kick-return yards. Selected first-team All-Missouri Valley Football Conference in both 2013 and 2014 and became first player in school history with three consecutive 1,000-yard seasons. Selected third-team FCS All-American in 2014 while breaking 15 school records. In 2012, selected second-team All-MVFC and totaled more than 100 rushing yards in each of his final six games. Selected All-Newcomer MVFC and honorable mention All-MVFC in 2011. Redshirted in 2010. Johnson lacks the short-area quickness to be a consistently effective every-down running back, but he has good size, speed and hands, so he will be a factor. Johnson has been impressive this offseason, and if a team is looking for a rhythm runner with a good pace and hands to threaten out of the backfield, then he is the guy.
6. **Za’Darius Smith, DE, Kentucky:** Selected Defensive MVP of East-West Shrine Game and was a late addition to Senior Bowl roster. Played in all 24 games at Kentucky after transferring from East Mississippi Community College, where he was selected second-team NJCAA All-American in 2012. Effort-oriented power end with a willingness to battle and fight at the point of attack. He's not big enough to play end in a 3-4, so he'll have to become an above-average run thumper as a 4-3 power end.

Options for Vikings in the Second Day (Rounds 5-7):

1. Ryan Russell, DE, Purdue
2. Geneo Grissom, DE, Oklahoma
3. Daryl Williams, OT, Oklahoma
4. Shaquille Mason, OG, Georgia Tech
5. Jamon Brown, OG, Louisville
6. Terry Poole, OG, San Diego State
7. Richard Ross, TE, Old Dominion
8. Kennard Backman, TE, Alabama-Birmingham
9. Cedric Thompson, S, Minnesota
10. Devin Gardner, WR, Michigan
11. Christian Covington, DT, Rice
12. Lyndon Trail, DE/OLB, Norfolk State
13. Bobby Richardson, DE, Indiana
14. Jake Ryan, LB, Michigan
15. Jordan Richards, S, Stanford
16. Quandre Diggs, CB/S, Texas
17. Darryl Roberts, CB, Marshall
18. Kenny Bell, WR, Nebraska
19. Xzavier Dickson, DE/OLB, Alabama

Sleepers:

1. Zack Zenner, RB, South Dakota State
2. Gerald Christian, TE, Louisville
3. Kyle Emanuel, DE, North Dakota State
4. Edmond Robinson, Newberry

We really like the kids from the Dakotas. Both are great talents from small schools.

The Vikings have picks in every round this year and have 7 total picks. They can fill find depth needs in several areas in this draft. Most notably, the Vikings needs are:

* Wide Receiver
* Cornerback
* Guard
* Defensive End
* Linebacker

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We will update our readers with a post-draft report after the draft.

Mink and Obey from Chicago!