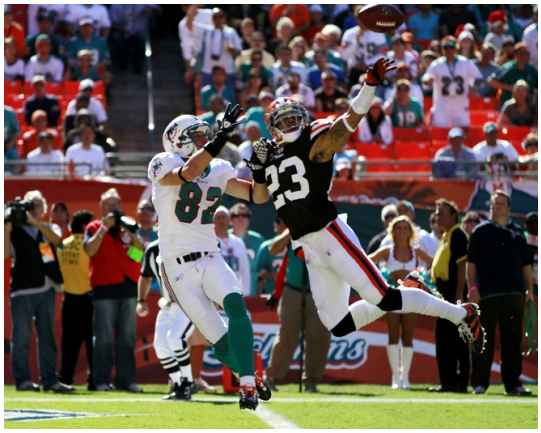

Let's continue our spin around the football field and take a look at the CB position. Based on what the team needs are (as stated by Mike Holmgren) I fully expect the Browns to take a CB in this year's draft. The question most people ask is at how highly do they value a CB after selecting Joe Haden last year and will they pull the trigger on a first round CB this year? Based on reports and other references the Browns have worked out and/or brought to the facility at least 9 CBs.

The Browns have worked out CBs that project to go anywhere from 1 (Patrick Peterson) to players projected to come off the board in much later rounds (Demarcus Van Dyke). Based on the reports the Browns have been bringing in guys in groups of two or three based on where they are projected to be picked. This tells me that they are basically looking at players with like grades to see how they compare in specific drills the team values while also comparing how good the later round guys perform in relation to the higher round guys.

To those who question if the Browns are serious about taking another CB in the early rounds this year I think they have a valid concern after Haden and Ward were taken with high picks last year to shore up the secondary. But when it comes to good CBs it is hard to pass on them. Another thing to consider is the fact that Heckert was working for the Eagles when they drafted Lito Shepard and Sheldon Brown in rounds 1 and 2 of the 2002 draft. The picks were even more of a shock to most because at the time they had Bobby Taylor and Troy Vincent playing at pro bowl levels.

The Eagles also took a safety in the second round that year making their first 3 picks all secondary personnel. If there is a CB Heckert likes he won't hesitate to pick that player and, if you happen to be like me and think Sheldon Brown can extend his career by turning into an extremely good safety, you shouldn't be shocked if a CB is taken again this year in the first couple of rounds of the draft.

The CBs noted below vary in where they're likely to be picked and how much they'll likely contribute early in their careers. The guys listed first will be guys that can be starting caliber CBs fairly early in their careers while the guys in the later rounds need time to develop or that can excel in areas that will make them good sub package players(nickel and dime). One other point to note when it comes to the guys I list as early round candidates is that I really think the only CB the Browns would take with the 6th pick is Patrick Peterson so I am not listing Prince Amukamara.

Early Rounds (1-2)

***Patrick Peterson- (6-0¼ 219lbs) LSU** Patrick Peterson is a guy most people have heard about because he oozes talent from every pore. Peterson can not only be your best defensive player, he can put points on the board every time he touches the ball whether it is on a pick or returning kicks. Big, strong, fast, aggressive, superb ball skills, natural instincts and tremendous explosion, these are all of the traits that make him the best CB prospect since Charles Woodson. He will be the first CB taken and it could be as high as number one overall. You would be hard pressed to develop a prospect on Madden that had more potential than this kid.

***Aaron Williams (5-11 7/8 204lbs) Texas** Williams is not a guy the Browns would take at 6 but he is a guy who they could take in round two. Williams is a bigger, aggressive CB in the mold of Sheldon Brown. He is has a thicker and a more solid build than the conventional CB build leading some to say he would be better suited for safety. He is a great athlete who can play either spot so I believe he will get drafted as a CB and get first crack there. I do see the concerns people have about him playing CB at the NFL level because when it comes to playing in space Williams tends to get lost in zone coverage. Often times that leads to letting WRs get behind him. He seems to be at his best when he is playing press coverage because he can use his strength and athletic abilities. That might be a problem in Cleveland because I don't think Defensive Coordinator Dick Jauron runs a lot of press man packages. I don't have any concerns on him playing the run because he fills fast and hard and is similar to Joe Haden in that regard.

***Jimmy Smith (6-2 ¼ 211lbs) Colorado** Smith is the classic case of high risk, high reward. He has all the skills you want in a corner; big, strong (24reps on the bench), fast, great ball skills, 32 ¼ inch arm length, willing and effective tackler, and physical at the line of scrimmage. He only allowed 11 completions in man coverage over his junior and senior year combined and because of this many compare him to Nnamdi Asomugha . The

biggest and most glaring problems with him are not between the white lines but rather maturity issues off of the field. He hasn't officially been in trouble since 2007 and he chalks those problems up to being young and immature but some don't trust that his maturity level has increased enough and wonder if they could have a Pac-Man Jones type of situation on their hands in Smith. Some teams have taken him off the board all together and most say they wouldn't take him in the first round. But when any team gets on the clock in the second and Smith is still there it will be ultra hard to pass on a guy with the off-the-charts ability he has.

Mid Rounds (3-5)

***Marcus Gilchrist (5-10 195lbs) Clemson** Gilchrist is a versatile DB and that is why he made my list. He has played CB and S and has performed well at both spots. He reminds me of a Mike Adams in the sense that he can be a good all purpose DB and can start at either spot if needed. He could develop into a starter if he improves his technique. Gilchrist fits the mold of what I think the Dick Jauron defense will need on the outside and those are guys who can tackle in space and play the run without hesitation. I think playing more zone combo coverage is in the Browns' future and guys like Gilchrist can play in space but still fire up and make tackles. The one area of concern for me is the stone hands Gilchrist has shown. He doesn't catch the ball well at all.

Curtis Marsh (6-0½ 197lbs) Utah St. Marsh has a ton of potential. He has only played CB for 2 years and before that he played RB. His technique and comfort level is not high but he has great size/speed ratio combined with good ball skills and long arms. He is really raw but with good coaching can develop into a starting CB in the league.

Buster Skrine (5-9½ 186lbs) Chattanooga Buster is tailor made for the slot. He is both fast and lightning quick and can match up against the small fast slot WRs. He is light in the pants but far from weak having put up 20 reps in the bench. He displays fast reactions and flies up to fill for the run, putting all of his 186lbs into a hit. That's a trait you have to see in your DBs. He won't put too many people on the IR but he won't back down either and he has the ball skills to make the pick when in coverage.

Davon House (6-0½ 200lbs) New Mexico St. House is a guy who was hampered by a high ankle sprain for much of 2010 but his size and ball skills combined with his 4.4 speed make him a good candidate for the potential starter tag. The thing I like about him the most is his ability to play both press man and off-coverages. He is not a big hitter in run support but he is willing and

effective when asked to hold contain. He shows great potential.

Late Rounds (6-7)

Byron Maxwell (6-0¼ 202lbs) Clemson Maxwell is a player some feel is best suited for safety and he may very well end up being just that. But I believe his size, aggressive run support (6 forced fumbles), and ball skills make him an ideal cover 2 corner. If you are a team who runs a lot of cover 2 he is your guy. He is a fast 4.4 guy and has long arms 33¼ but man coverage isn't his best attribute because his quick twitch and reaction skills are not really strong points in his game. I think he could start and excel in a heavy cover 2 scheme.

Anthony Gaitor (5-10 178lbs) FIU Gaitor is a small school CB who can immediately play in the slot. He has all the skills made for a CB to succeed at the NFL level when playing inside. He is not afraid or timid in run support though he just doesn't pack much punch because of his thin frame. If he can get bigger and stronger he has the ability to be an outside player. He just needs to add bulk and get more consistent with his hands. He has the potential to play with the big boys, because it seemed whenever FIU played against bigger schools such as Alabama he played his best football.

Biggest Upside

Curtis Marsh has the highest ceiling compared to the other CBs coming out in this draft. The kid is a super athlete with impressive size for the position and has only been playing CB for 2 years. The fact he has only played the position for 2 years is important because the position is one in which reps bread confidence. The more comfortable a CB is with their technique the faster they play. The faster they play the more plays they make on the ball which further fuels the confidence. He is a solid piece of athlete whom the right coach can carve out a really good CB.

Projected Pick

Marcus Gilchrist is a mid round CB I think the Browns could pull the trigger on. Gilchirst is a

player with all the tools to be a really good CB in the system Jauron will run. His cover ability, ability to play in space, and excellent run support skills can help him be a good Brown. He needs to try and soften up those hands but that may be something I can live with as long as he knocks the ball down.

Look, if Patrick Peterson is there they will not pass on him. Heckert has always valued CBs really high and if he falls to 6 I think the Browns pick him outright or trade down. Peterson is such a super prospect if he is available I don't think they will take someone else.

Sleeper

***Devon Torrence** is a guy that some will say I took the homer approach in selecting because he is a Buckeye. In reality I truly do think that if this kid sticks to one sport, he can be very good. This past season is the first year he has played spring ball and stayed with the football team in the summer instead of playing baseball and you could see the improvement.

Coaches will love him as an athlete and for the right price, relish in the opportunity to mold him. I think he is an ideal CB for a cover 2 type of scheme because he has natural aggression against the run and ,being an ex-WR, he has very good ball skills. The raw talent is there but he has held himself back by playing baseball in the offseason instead of becoming a better football player and because he came to school as a WR initially. He has a ton of potential if his effort is there.

Stay Away

Buster Skrine is a player that the Browns won't get proper value from if they also sign Eric Wright to the tender that they offered him because both Wright and Skrine would likely play in the slot. Eric Wright having a bad year doesn't turn me off to him playing as a 3rd CB in the Browns secondary. Wright is good in the slot despite the bad year last year and I surely would have more confidence in starting him over Skrine if an injury occurred.

*Indicates there has been reports on that player being on a Browns visit and/or been given a workout