

Redskins maneuver for Arrington

Penn State linebacker looks to go early in Saturday's NFL draft

NEW YORK (AP) — The Washington Redskins have maneuvered their way up in the NFL draft with one player in mind — LaVar Arrington, this year's "next Lawrence Taylor."

But the Skins' best laid plans could go awry with one sentence from commissioner Paul Tagliabue: "With the first pick in the 2000 NFL draft, the Cleveland Browns (or New York Jets) select linebacker LaVar Arrington of Penn State."

Sure, with the second and third picks Washington can take Courtney Brown, the other prime-time Penn State defender and Chris Samuels, the Alabama lineman who can be their left tackle for years to come.

But Brown is a defensive end, of which Washington has plenty: Arrington adds the impact linebacker the Redskins need to help 35-year-old owner Dan Snyder achieve a real Super Bowl to go along with the ones he won in his fantasy leagues.

Thus the intrigue of draft week. It started in earnest Tuesday when the New York Jets agreed to send disgruntled wide receiver Keyshawn Johnson to Tampa Bay for the Bucs' two first-round picks and either Bert Emmanuel or Reidel Anthony. The deal will go forward if Johnson and the Bucs can agree on a contract before noon Saturday, when the draft starts.

That would give New York, which already has two first-round choices, the 13th, 16th, 18th and 27th picks, perhaps enough to trade up with Cleveland to No.

1 for Arrington or Brown.

"If someone came to us with four first-round picks, we'd have to do it," Dwight Clark, Cleveland's personnel chief, said last week, probably tipping his hand too soon.

"If it were three, we'd have to think about it."

Brown and Arrington, who have supplanted Florida State wide receiver Peter Warrick at the very top, visited the Browns together last week.

"He looks like a great prospect. But the bus station is filled with guys who were once compared Lawrence Taylor."

— Bill Parcels
Jets G.M.

Cleveland was thought to be leaning toward Brown. But Clark came out of the meeting gushing about Arrington the same way he gushed about his buddy Joe Montana after making The Catch that won the 1981 NFC title. The Jets probably want Arrington, too — Bill Parcels, who remains the team's general manager for now, coached Lawrence Taylor.

"He looks like a great prospect," Parcels said. "But the bus station is full of guys who were once compared to Lawrence Taylor."

That's what makes draft

tricky — everybody lies or

Two years ago, Indianapolis

lian kept everyone guessing

whether he would take Peyton

or Ryan Leaf with the first

Manning and says now — stars

and Leaf struggles — he was

always No. 1 in his league

The prize for most truthfully

ably goes to Buffalo's John

before the 1997 draft said he

an instant if Antonio

fell to 23rd, where

picked. Smith fell to

Buffalo jumped.

This year, Snyder

underlings in Wash-

notably coach Nor-

and personnel direc-

Cerrato, have to be

nervous.

"We like four

we're happy with

them," Cerrato said

to Arrington, Brown

and Warrick. "When

land takes, we're going to

two outstanding football

Still, Warrick and Samuels

dropped in some scouts' esti-

Warrick because he ran 40

4.5 seconds at his private

Samuels because he showed

weight at his.

Some draft analysts have

er Plaxico Burress of Michi-

falling out of the top 10, altho-

most likely to go to Pittsburgh

But no one really knows.

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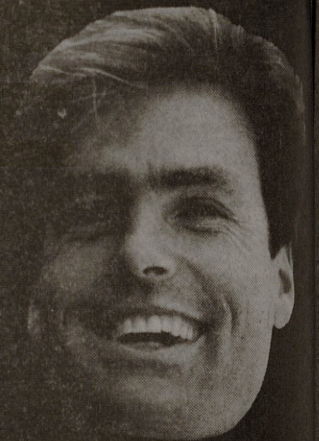
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