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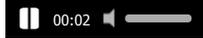
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WEDNESDAY, MAY 1, 2013

WHERE NO ONE HAS GONE BEFORE: THE 2013 QB DRAFT CLASS - PART 2

Chris Pine is an awesome Captain Kirk.



I mean, no knock on the Priceline Negotiator, William Shatner was of course great for his time back in the original Star Trek. No one unnecessarily rips a shirt while fighting aliens better than Bill Shatner as Captain Kirk. But no one kicks butt like J.J. Abrams' rendition of Captain Kirk. And for the first time, probably ever, people other than (1) males, (2) ages 12-55, (3) that didn't have girlfriends actually thought Star Trek was cool. Imagine that? Now that's a future I couldn't have predicted. Nor would I have predicted that in the future, everyone wears spandex onsies a la Star Trek: The Next Generation. I mean, wow, talk about unflattering for just about everyone. It would probably make Heidi Klum look terrible. Or maybe at least a little less awesome. And why did anyone think that was a good idea? Spandex is usually bad enough, but a onesie? Two year old babies don't even think that's cool. But I digress.

The other thing that I couldn't have predicted is how the 2013 QB draft class was going to shake out. Nothing happened as planned or anticipated. And all that Doug Marrone in Buffalo loves Ryan Nassib talk turned out to be one big smoke screen. I wrote before the draft ([LINK](#)) about who I thought the four best quarterbacks in the 2013 draft class were, and it's time to look back and see how they fit with their new teams.

E.J. Manuel - 1st Round - 16th Pick by the Buffalo Bills

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Geno Smith outperformed everyone's expectations

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I have to admit, I was shocked with this pick. I understand that E.J. Manuel has some great qualities as a mobile quarterback and allows Buffalo to move towards an option offense, but I really was expecting Nassib to be picked here. The Bills traded back, exactly as expected, and everyone thought the trade was so they could grab Nassib late in the first. Heck, Doug Marrone became Doug Marrone in part due to his work with Nassib at Syracuse. But that's what good coaches and GMs do, they pick what's best for their team, not who they like personally. But was Manuel really what's best for Buffalo?

Clearly, Manuel has the size, mobility and leadership qualities to really make a difference. But just being agile isn't good enough in the NFL. You need to be able to get through progressions, and that's one thing that Manuel had trouble with in college. And under pressure, Manuel tends to force passes to well covered receivers, something his questionable accuracy makes worse. I detailed a lot of this in my last article ([LINK](#)).

Ryan Fitzpatrick wasn't the answer in Buffalo, and after free agency, we thought that Kevin Kolb or Tarvaris Jackson might be what they needed. But Buffalo did not draft Manuel in the first round to sit on the bench. Clearly, Marrone wanted to start fresh, but passing on both Geno Smith and Ryan Nassib is a questionable move that can get him trouble if Manuel tanks. Manuel's upside is high if Buffalo actually goes to a spread option offense, which could also fit C.J. Spiller's skillset in the backfield (43 passes for 459 yards in 2012). In all likelihood, Marrone will start with Kolb or Jackson and give Manuel some time to get acclimated. It'll be interesting to see, though, once Manuel takes the reigns.

Geno Smith – 2nd Round – 39th Pick by the New York Jets



Everyone is familiar with the quarterback odyssey in New York. The Jets clearly had no idea what they were doing at quarterback last year. From the Mark Sanchez butt-fumble, to the ridiculous use of Tim Tebow as a "personal punt protector", to calling in Greg McElroy over Tebow, at times, it seemed that the Jets' objective was how best to surprise us with how inept they were at managing their quarterbacks. I'm no fan of Tim Tebow, in fact, just the opposite. But even I feel bad for the way the Jets systematically destroyed his career. With all this history, it's no surprise that new Jets GM John Idzik just wanted to move on from the craziness and start over from scratch.

So picking Geno Smith in the second round makes some sense. Although he was probably the most hyped quarterback in the draft, he's

an Elite 2013 Fantasy Quarterback?

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certainly not elite. I already noted all the criticism that Smith took from analysts and issues that he has ([see previous article](#)), but Smith can be a solid pocket passer with athleticism to avoid negative yards when plays go south.

Idzik won't want to repeat mistakes made by the past administration, and surely won't want his new quarterback imploding under the pressure. It's fair to guess that Mark Sanchez will start the season with a very short leash. Clearly, one more butt-fumble will shelve Sanchez for the rest of his stay in New York (if not longer). Rex Ryan doesn't have much room for error either, and all this pressure may push them to start Smith before he's ready. However, if the Jets adopt new offensive coordinator Marty Mornhinweg's West Coast offense wholesale, this might not be a bad thing for the Jets. Or at least it can't get any worse.

Matt Barkley – 4th Round – 98th Pick by the Philadelphia Eagles



Matt Barkley would have been a top 10 pick if he had come out in the draft last year. Heck, his name was spoken in the same breath as Andrew Luck and RGIII. What a difference one year makes. Now he's not even the third quarterback drafted, that honor went to Mike Glennon in the third round. No, Barkley wasn't drafted until the fourth round. And by the Eagles. That's Chip Kelly's Eagles, the same Chip Kelly that likes the West Coast offense. Whole lot of West Coast offense going around. And there's the rub. It seems that the Eagles took Barkley because he was a value, not because he fit the system. Kelly came out later and said he didn't intend to play a pure West Coast offense, but something of a hybrid with some pro-style offense. What? So Chip Kelly isn't going to do what Chip Kelly did to win all those games in Oregon? Not sure that I buy it. Either way, there's no arguing that Barkley was a real value in the fourth round.

Barkley also isn't elite, at least not based on his recent history, but a lot of the concerns from his 2012 season at USC was based on poor protection on the line (he lost his left tackle). However, he does excel at running a pro-style offense that depends on moving through progressions. But unless Kelly really is going to run a pro-style offense, these are skills that don't really matter to the Eagles. In fact, the Eagles already have Michael Vick, Nick Foles and Dennis Dixon, at least two of which will fit right in with Chip Kelly's system (and Dixon even played in Kelly's system in Oregon in 2007). I have my doubts, but anything is possible, and for a fourth round pick, the Eagles really can't be wrong.

Ryan Nassib – 4th Round – 110th Pick by the New York Giants



Here's the biggest quarterback surprise of the draft. We all thought that Nassib would be drafted by the Bills. Slipping to the fourth round wasn't surprising once the Bills took Manuel. Regardless, Nassib is the ideal development candidate. He progressively got better every year at Syracuse, and as I discussed previously, his numbers were impressive in 2012.

However, it's clear that the Giants don't need a quarterback. Eli isn't going anywhere. So it's also clear that the Giants took Nassib because he was a great value in the fourth round. If Nassib is lucky, he'll get some good development under Manning and David Carr, and be traded to a team that needs a starting quarterback in a few years. A potential trade chip might be the best value the Giants can get for Nassib. In the meantime, he'll probably have to get pretty comfortable with a clipboard.

Of course, we'll only really know how these quarterbacks will fit with their respective teams about nine months from now, when they get a chance to go through a full season. And we all know there's no way to travel in time. Unless you slingshot around the sun in a Klingon spaceship. Looking for whales. Because some giant ship that looks like a roll of aluminum foil wants to talk to whales. So unless all that happens, we're all going to have to wait to find out what happens. Foiled again. No pun intended. Aw heck, I just can't help myself, of course that was intended. Do you know how long I had to think about it before I came up with that pun? Looks like I'm on a roll...



By Ha Kung Wong (Twitter: [@Rhihan](#))



2 comments:



Anonymous May 1, 2013 at 10:56 PM

Because some giant ship that looks like a roll of aluminum foil wants to talk to whales. ??

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Hakung Wong May 1, 2013 at 11:20 PM

Exactly. Bam.

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