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# A Passing Fantasy Issue 135

## NFLBP Player Newsletter 2005 Pre-season

ed Robert Crowther

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Thanks to Darren and Apple for their contributions this time, I hope to hear more from you all in the coming weeks. The address for contributions is:

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Or email at 'gameplan@crowther.info'. If you want to discuss Gameplan with other coaches have a look at the Yahoo! Group:

<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/gameplan>

### **SUPERBOWL REVIEW**

Oakland started with the ball but a great defensive play by St Louis on the first play resulted in an interception. The Rams wasted no time, taking three plays to register the game's first TD. The teams traded punts before the Raiders returned the favour, intercepting St Louis and driving for the tying score. Defenses were to the fore for most of the rest of the first half with neither team getting very far into their opponent's territory. Oakland had just managed to swing the field position battle into their favour when St Louis launched the decisive drive of the first half, 71 yards in 3:23 to score just before the two minute warning.

The Rams received the opening kickoff of the second half drove quickly down the field for another score. A good return for the Raiders left them in excellent position for an immediate reply but a pickoff at the St Louis 13 yard line put a stop to that. The Rams blew the game wide open on the following drive, scoring again on a 39 yard completion to extend their lead to three scores. In reply the Raiders put together their best drive of the day so far, starting from their own 13 they moved into field goal range before a timely sack set them back and they were forced to settle for three. The Rams responded with an 80 yard drive of their own, but they had no trouble getting into the endzone to put themselves even further

ahead.

With only ten minutes left the Raiders needed to score quickly to get back in the game, a 61 yard catch and run from Justin Fargas put them on the St Louis five and the ensuing touchdown kept their hopes alive. But the Rams' offense shut the door with an excellent 67 yard drive using up 6:38 and ending in yet another TD. The Raiders got the ball back with less than two minutes remaining and, although they drove deep into St Louis territory, they were never going to overcome a 25 point deficit.

MVP went to St Louis wide receiver Torry Holt who had 13 receptions for 261 yards and three touchdowns.

### **BUCCANEERS B\*LLSHIT Apple**

All the best laid plans blah blah blah. Troy and myself knew that the draft was going to be a fine line between doing the things we would like and things we needed to do, sadly one of our training issues went diddies up! And it's now looking increasingly likely that the team won't be in as good shape as we had hoped.

It's not all doom and gloom though.. quite the reverse it's just we really wanted the team to be spot on for game 1.

The draft went quite well & we have the LP's to train quite a few guys but we need to put the players into the right place first and we are going to run out of special actions before week 1 so i would imagine by week 3/4 we should be fine.

Nice to see Paul Gerner join the same division, he's a very good coach and another team that gives Williams a run for his money is OK by me :)

Over in the AFC another coach will be making his debut but not in the short term, rumour has it that Derek Barton (he of 4 straight superbowl wins in NFLN) will be making his ap-

pearance later in the season.

BP looks to be going from strength to strength and the addition of a few new faces can only bode well for this league, many thanks to Rob Crowther for producing a newsie for the league. I hope you all write in a few lines to make his job a lot easier.

### **DRAFT REVIEW** **Darren Birtchnell**

#### AFC EAST

The division champ Patriots didn't get a lot out of the draft in terms of player strengths, but I'm fairly certain Dave will waive the kicker and punter to use the LP's elsewhere. The WR in round 2 wasn't a bad pick, as the Pats don't have any holes on the roster. The Jets are another team with a good roster, so I'd guess the first round DL was a case of taking the best player available. The WR & DB were both solid picks, adding a little bit of depth where it was needed. Miami taking a LB with their first pick was maybe a bit unexpected, but they have two veteran LB's so maybe one is close to retirement? The WR was needed as they look a bit thin there and getting a 2\* DB in round 3 is good value, so you can't really argue. Buffalo didn't make best use of their picks in my opinion. They didn't need another RB, a DB would have been much more useful. The QB in round 2 is one for the future, as incumbent Drew Bledsoe is likely coming to the end of his career, but better value could have been gained in the 3rd round, rather than taking a WR, although this was a weaker area on the roster.

#### AFC CENTRAL

Cleveland have one of the smaller rosters in the league, but they don't have many holes in the squad, they tend to have slightly lower value players than some other teams. They did fairly well with their picks, seeing as they were drafting quite late, and Coach Hilliar will be confident of retaining the division title. Baltimore have the division's strongest roster and could well be poised to take it to the next level. They lost 2 O-linemen to retirement but replaced both in the draft, while the 3rd round WR adds depth to the receiving corps. Cincinnati got exactly what they wanted from the draft, in terms of the positions they drafted

for, although I would have been happier with a 3\* player. I've also coached up the O-line so hopefully that won't be such a weakness next season. Tennessee once again had top pick, and once again didn't make best use of it. The 2nd TE was not required, they would have been far better served drafting a DB, or maybe even a DL. In this ultra-tough division you can't see the Titans doing much again this season, unless a new coach comes in....

#### AFC WEST

All the teams here have strong rosters. Oakland have arguably the most experienced roster in the league and got great value picking a 3\* DB when they did. The kicker & punter could come in handy, but will Rob waive them to use the LP's elsewhere? Kansas City picked a good O-lineman but could have done with another one in my opinion, rather than adding to an already strong D-line. I'm still a bit confused why they have 2 good QB's on the roster, surely the strengths could be put to better use elsewhere? Seattle are another team with 2 QB's, although it looks as though 2nd yr man Trent

DiIfer will be leading them this season. Drafting a FB maybe wasn't ideal, but who else would they have gone for? Picking a DL and punter were good moves, so maybe the Seahawks will be able to challenge again this year. Denver drafted similar to Tennessee in round 1, the 2nd TE will probably just warm the bench. Back-up QB Beuerlein could well take over next season, so that wasn't such a bad pick, & taking a 2\* LB will help on defence. They'll still struggle to avoid finishing last again in another potentially tough division.

#### NFC EAST

The Redskins had a fairly good draft, the OL & DL filled gaps & the DB adds to an already strong looking secondary. They may have been better served adding depth elsewhere, but you can never have too many strengths in the secondary! Philly drafting a DL and TE were both wise choices, although I'm not sold on drafting a backup QB, especially when the starter is a 4yr 5\* guy, so maybe this is a case of taking the best player available. I wouldn't be surprised to see him waived for LP's shortly. The Giants could have selected a bet-

ter DB than they did, they don't appear to have a lot of speed in the secondary. The other picks only added to already strong looking areas, but the Giants offense wasn't great last season so they could help. Dallas are a team with a number of high value players but 1 or 2 gaps on the roster. They did OK with their draft picks, th O-line looks very strong now. However, the secondary would be a concern for me, maybe they will add to this sometime this season?

#### NFC CENTRAL

I don't think Detroit made very good use of their picks, which could be costly now that the Buccs and Packers have top-drawer coaches at the helm. The 3\* DL was unnecessary & while the WR will contribute, they should have got one earlier. The QB was an insurance pick in case 9yr vet Harrington retires, so we'll have to wait til next year to see if that was a good choice. Chicago would also have been better served drafting for the positions they did in a different order. The D-line could be a bit light, especially in a division with some big O-lines, and the RB & TE weren't exactly essential, so I'm not hopeful for the Bears chances this season. Tampa surprised themselves drafting Brad Johnson in round 1, but I have a feeling he'll be on his way very soon. The Buccs have 1 or 2 low value veterans on the roster, but veterans can be more effective & I'm certainly not going to argue with Apple when it comes to player selection! Goz arrived just too late for the draft & is now faced with picking up the pieces. Even with drafting a DB the secondary looks thin, if Brett Favre is healthy then I can see draftee Doug Pederson being shown the door. Drafting a DL wasn't the best idea either, but it could help provide cover in the long run.

#### NFC WEST

Well as we all know, the Rams have won the last 3 Bowls - and it turns out Martyn wasn't that happy with his roster! They drafted a replacement in the backfield for retiree Marshall Faulk and have finally got that 5th O-lineman. I'd have gone for a LB rather than DL, but drafting last you don't get much of a choice. The Niners roster is by far the weakest in the league, which would concern me if I was the coach. Drafting

2 LB's helped fill a massive hole left by retirements, but I'm not convinced by the DB. But coach Eden has shown he knows how to play this game, maybe he's got something up his sleeve to make up for the apparent lack of talent? Chris Stones took over just in time in Carolina, although he may not be overjoyed with the top pick. Having said that, there weren't a lot of spaces for him to fill and sometimes taking the best player available is the best option. I'm expecting some serious roster moves from Carolina over the next few weeks. New Orleans continue to have a massive O-line & small LB corps and secondary, you think they might have learned by now! The LB was a decent pick but the other two were not needed, so I fully expect them to be propping up the table come week 16.