

## Mayock Talks Te'o Draft Stock

Written by Sean Stires

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The 2013 NFL Scouting Combine begins this weekend in Indianapolis, and several former Notre Dame players will participate in preparation for April's NFL Draft. Offensive linemen, tight ends and kickers get the combine started on Saturday. Running backs, quarterbacks and wide receivers go through their paces on Sunday. Linebackers and defensive linemen have their workouts next Monday and defensive backs conclude the parade on Tuesday, Feb. 26.

NFL Network is the exclusive television provider of the event at Lucas Oil Stadium. Mike Mayock is NFL Network's lead draft analyst. Notre Dame fans know Mayock from his work as NBC's game analyst of Fighting Irish football broadcasts as well.

Mayock spent more than two hours on a national teleconference on Monday discussing both draft prospects and the draft needs of individual NFL teams. He shared his thoughts on several Fighting Irish prospects during his time on the call.

The player that has become one of the most polarizing since the Jan. 7 BCS Championship Game is Manti Te'o. The 2012 Heisman Trophy runner-up was once considered a lock to be a top-10 pick in April's draft, but the linebacker's NFL appeal is different now.

"People aren't buying into him like they used to," Mayock said of Te'o, whom Mayock ranks second behind Georgia's Alec Ogletree among inside linebacker prospects heading into this weekend's combine.

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Mayock sees Te'o going somewhere around the 20th pick in the first round. The reason for the slide is obvious. Te'o spent the better part of two weeks seeing his character being called into question last month after the revelation of the girlfriend hoax. While the facts of the matter eventually lined-up behind Te'o, he still admitted to lying about the relationship.

"I think there (are) two schools of thought," Mayock said of how NFL executives might view the whole matter. "One is most of us have made mistakes at age 21 and the kid's naive and it's embarrassing, but it shouldn't really hurt the kid, because it's not one of those major things where you say 'we can't have him on our team'. Some other teams will look at him and say 'wait a minute, he lied to his father, when he found out he had a chance to tell the nation and do you want a liar in your locker room?'."

"I think most teams feel the former and I know a few teams that have told me they'd be concerned about a liar in the locker room," Mayock continued. "At the end of the day what I really think happens is up until that story became public he had a plus, plus, plus intangible grade."

Those high intangible marks had NFL execs thinking of Te'o in rarified company. The 6'2", 255 pound linebacker was not seen as a player with many physical limitations, but whatever liabilities he may have had were vastly overshadowed by the way his presence seemingly helped will the Irish to a 12-0 regular season record.

"Was he going to become Ray Lewis," Mayock said of Te'o's perception before the scandal. "Could he galvanize a locker room? He had a huge intangible grade that would push his on the field grade higher. I think he's lost all that, and at best it's now going to be neutral. At best, what kind of player you are (and) where can we slot you."

Mayock believes Te'o's slot is "plus or minus 20", meaning somewhere around the 20th pick of the first round, which is owned by the Chicago Bears. Other teams picking in that "plus or minus" range: Dallas picks 18th, followed by the New York Giants at 19th. Cincinnati is 21st, followed by St. Louis, Minnesota and Indianapolis at 24th.

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One NFL.com mock draft has Te'o going to the Giants with the 18th pick. Another has him going to the Bengals, while a third has him at No. 26 to Green Bay.

While it was once Te'o that was projected as the top linebacker to go in the draft, many now see Ogletree as a possibility to go high. Ogletree has more true off the field issues than Te'o though. The former Georgia linebacker was arrested in Arizona earlier this month for a DUI charge. He also failed a drug test at Georgia last spring.

"If he was clean off the field I would be banging the table for a top-10 pick," Mayock said of Ogletree. "When you start talking about either medical issues or off the field problems you get a risk-reward scenario. Every team is different with how they assign risk versus reward."

Ogletree had 13 tackles in his last game at Georgia - a Capital One Bowl victory over Nebraska. He had 111 tackles and 11.5 tackles for loss for the Bulldogs during the 2012 season.

"I think most of the teams are going to look at him and say 'ok, multiple drug issues and now a DUI - we have to account for it somehow'," Mayock continued. "Some teams are gonna say he's off the board. I don't think a lot will, but some teams will. Most teams are gonna look at him and say - top-10 (talent, but) too much risk there. Until the kid gets to meet teams and teams get to look him in the eye and really spend time and grind him as a person they're just going to discount him now for a while."

One NFL.com mock draft had Ogletree going as high as the No. 8 overall pick to the Buffalo Bills. With Ray Lewis' retirement, Baltimore is in need of a Te'o/Ogletree type. The Ravens don't pick until 32nd though after winning the Super Bowl. Mayock said if either Te'o or Ogletree dropped to the Ravens they would "sprint to the podium" to pick either one of them.

Te'o led the Irish with 113 tackles and seven interceptions in his fourth and final season at Notre Dame. He had 437 career tackles and 34.0 tackles for loss. Te'o will still have a chance to sway the thoughts of NFL executives when he gets in front of them for one-on-one interviews during the combine process, and Mayock has advice for Te'o when that opportunity comes.

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"I would tell Te'o you better look people in the eye and I know you're going to be embarrassed and I know it's going to be uncomfortable all weekend plus all the way through the draft," Mayock said. "It's not going to be a comfortable situation, but don't be embarrassed. Be honest."

"I think he's a good kid," Mayock said of Te'o. "I think he made a mistake and he's naive and all that kind of stuff, but don't back away, admit what you did, look people in the eye, tell them your story, and let the tape do the talking for you."

**Tomorrow:** ISD will share Mayock's thoughts on Tyler Eifert and how he rates against Stanford tight end Tyler Ertz and San Diego State's Gavin Escobar. Those three are considered by most NFL executives to be the top three tight ends in this year's draft.

We will also have Mayock's thoughts on Braxton Cave, Zeke Motta, Theo Riddick, and Cierre Wood.