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Measuring up to the competition

The second day was the most demanding.

Group 7 was scheduled for a second urine sample at 6:30 a.m., which was 3:30 a.m. to me. I struggled to get downstairs to the testing area where our credentials were checked, and a courier escorted each player to the restroom and viewed the sampling.

They even watched to make sure that the sample came directly from the individual. The courier then boxed and sealed the samples and shipped them. We were then allowed to go back upstairs for some rest after we ate breakfast. At 10 a.m., our group met downstairs in the lobby and walked to the RCA Dome, where the Colts play, to undergo physicals.

Imagine having 30 physicals in the same day! We sat around in a waiting room for about 15 minutes or so until the previous group left the weigh-in area. We were instructed to strip down to our socks, and the NFL issued us shorts for this event. The room was completely filled with head coaches from most NFL teams as well as their assistants.

When one player's number was called, he walked to the front of the room and stood on the measuring platform to have his height measured, weight checked and so on.

During my career, many people looked at me as being small for my position, but when I saw some of the other wide receivers, I didn't feel bad at all. Some players looked like they hadn't lifted a weight before.

When my number was blurted out, I walked up to the measuring board and tried to ignore the eyes that were watching. I was measured and my height was blurted out, "5-10!"

Then I stepped on the scale and my weight was announced, along with my hand width, arm span and body-fat percentage. While

we were waiting to get physicals, we were given a 12-minute employment test to check our competency level and to buy some time.

The dreaded physicals awaited. There were six stations that housed five teams and required a sticker from each station to show

FOOTBALL



NFL Combine Report

by Pat Johnson

that one had been examined by that particular group. In the physical, each players' past injury history and new X-rays were examined, as well as the player's body. The process

took about five hours, four of which were spent standing in line and exhausted me tremendously. A group that gave me a physical lost an X-ray, and I had to go back to the hospital for more. This took about three more hours that I could have used for sleep.

I was reunited with my freshman position coach at Oregon, John Ramsdell, and Dick Vermeil, the head coach of the St. Louis Rams. They all wanted to know what I was going to run in the 40-yard dash.

I told them I would run faster than everyone else, but I wouldn't guarantee a certain time. After I told them that, I felt dumb, but I knew that I could do it.

Saturday

Testing day was what all of the NFL coaches wanted to see: Who was the fastest, who could jump the highest and farthest and catch the best. Group 7 had the premier receivers and quarterbacks.

I knew that if I tested better

than all of them, it would mean that they were no better than I was and that they were overrated. Scott Frost, E.G. Green, Jaquez Green and Brian Greise were a few of the players in Group 7.

I could see the tension and nervousness in every player's eyes before the event. Earlier in the lobby of the hotel, everyone in the group was completely silent and kept to himself.

The moment had arrived where the friendships had to subside for a few hours because potential millions were on the line.

I was so nervous the night before that I couldn't sleep. But I knew that all of the years of track competition in my career put me above nearly everyone. I just had to remember that and take advantage of the opportunity to show who was the best.

By the end of the combine, I wanted to make sure, through my interviews and actions — not hype and press clippings — to show the NFL how good of a football player I really am.

I was listed an inch shorter and 12 pounds lighter than I really am. Now I'm not considered too small. I jumped farther than anyone did. Now I'm considered very explosive and, above all, I tied for the fastest overall time in the 40-yard dash at the combines.

Now, I hope they will see me as an excellent prospect. My dreams of making it to the combine became a reality, and I feel that I made a long-lasting impression to everyone watching of who was one of the "real" top receivers.

I'm glad it's over, and I don't want to do it again. But I'm grateful to God that I had the opportunity.

Pat Johnson is a former Oregon wide receiver. This is the second of two stories by Johnson about his experience at the NFL combine, a testing session for NFL draft prospects.

SPORTS BRIEFS

Tulsa comes from behind to beat Ducks

The Oregon women's golf team shot a combined score of 14-over-par 302 in the final round of the Pioneer Electronics/Bruin Classic on Wednesday to fall one stroke behind champion Tulsa.

The No. 10 Ducks, which led the 18-team tournament after the first round of competition

on Monday, had two golfers finish in a tie for sixth place and one more tie for 11th after 36 holes of competition. The second round of the tournament was rained out on Tuesday.

Tulsa, which trailed Oregon by five strokes entering the final round, fired an eight-over-par 296 on Wednesday to defeat the Ducks by one stroke.

Stacey Rambin led No. 5

Tulsa with two-over-par 74 on Monday and an even par 72 on Wednesday to finish in a tie for second. Her 72 in the final round was the second lowest round of the day.

Pam Sowden and Kylie Wilson were the Ducks' top finishers. Sowden shot a final round 73 to move into a tie for sixth. Wilson fired her second straight 74 on Wednesday to also finish sixth.

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