

Sports

Grading the NFL draft: 3 winners, 3 losers

Well, what an eventful three days, football fans. Just like every NFL draft, we have teams whose picks didn't make any sense, and others whose picks every round were logical. Here are the top three teams that I think did well, and the three teams that did not.

Winners

• Dallas Cowboys — first round, Pick 17: CeeDee Lamb, WR, Oklahoma; second round, Pick 51: Trevon Diggs, CB, Alabama; third round, Pick 82: Neville Gallimore, DT, Oklahoma; fourth round, Pick 123: Reggie Robinson II, CB, Tulsa; fifth round, Pick 146: Tyler Biadasz, C, Wisconsin; fifth round, Pick 170: Bradlee Antae, DE, Utah; seventh round, Pick 231: Ben DiNucci, QB, James Madison.

What made the Cowboys winners in this draft was how CeeDee Lamb was able to land in their laps without having to trade up for him. To pair him in an offense that contains Ezekiel Elliot and Amari Cooper will give Lamb an ability to shine in the slot receiver position

The Cowboys filled needs, including getting two men for their secondary as they will immediately make them stronger in coverage. Lastly, they were able to secure a new center in Tyler Biadasz in the fifth round from Wisconsin, after their starting center of the past seven seasons, Travis Frederick, opted to retire after being diagnosed with an autoimmune disease. Seeing how talented the offensive line has been in the past, they see something in Biadasz, and he will probably find his way on the field quite soon.

• Cincinnati Bengals — first round, Pick 1: Joe Burrow, QB, LSU; second round, Pick 33: Tee Higgins, WR, Clemson; third round, Pick 65: Logan Wilson, LB, Wyoming; fourth round, Pick 107: Akeem Davis-Gaither, LB, Appalachian State; fifth round, Pick 147: Khalid Kareem,



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DE, Notre Dame; sixth round, Pick 180: Hakeem Adeniji, OT, Kansas; seventh round, Pick 215: Markus Bailey, LB, Purdue.)

As the team with the most trouble this past season, the Bengals needed help everywhere. They weren't baited in trading their first pick, and they were able to get their quarterback of the future in Joe Burrow. Every pick after that really made sense.

Tee Higgins landing to them in the second round can give them the opportunity to prepare him as their top wide receiver with A.J. Green's tenure most likely over. What impressed me is grabbing both Logan Wilson and Akeem Davis-Gaither. It definitely shows how the Bengals are looking to go back to just a few seasons ago with a strong linebacking core. They do have a few seasons to grow, and I don't see them contending for any playoff positioning. However, to be rebuilding this is a great launching spot with a draft like this.

• Carolina Panthers — first round, Pick 9: Derrick Brown, DL, Auburn; second round, Pick 38: Yetur Gross-Matos, EDGE, Penn State; second round, Pick 64: Jeremy Chinn, S, Southern Illinois; fourth round, Pick 113: Troy Pride Jr., CB, Notre Dame; fifth round, Pick 152: Kenny Robinson, S, West Virginia; sixth round, Pick 184: Bravvion Roy, DT, Baylor; seventh round, Pick 221: Stanley Thomas-Oliver III, CB, FIU.

Many may be shocked with the Carolina Panthers having the third-best draft on my list, but what makes it appealing is their approach. As you can see above,



Chris Graythen / Getty Images-TNS

Top overall pick Joe Burrow, quarterback from LSU, helped the Cincinnati Bengals amass a solid draft.

they chose to focus solely on their defense, not picking a single offensive player, a first in the modern era. Derrick Brown is arguably the most NFL-ready guy on the defensive line, and Yetur Gross-Matos is a short-term project who will be ready quickly.

Picks after that filled in great needs, getting four guys in the secondary to bolster the coverage of wide receivers down field.

Losers

• Green Bay Packers — first round, Pick 26: Jordan Love, QB, Utah State; second round, Pick 62: A.J. Dillon, RB, Boston College; third round, Pick 94: Josiah Deguara, TE, Cincinnati; fifth round, Pick 175: Kamal Martin, LB, Minnesota; sixth round, Pick 192: Jon Runyan, OL, Michigan; sixth round, Pick 208: Jake Hanson, C, Oregon; sixth round, Pick 209: Simon Stepaniak, OT, Indiana; seventh round, Pick 236: Vernon Scott, S, TCU; seventh round, Pick 242: Jonathan Garvin, EDGE, Miami.

Let's just cut to the chase here about the Packers' draft. They have a quarterback who is a part

of the elite tier of quarterbacks. Aaron Rodgers had a couple of injury-plagued seasons, but he has been a model of consistency for the organization for quite some time now. So drafting a guy like Jordan Love as their first pick really made many scratch their heads, and then to follow with a running back after their current back, Aaron Jones, had a career year. Though they put forth effort in bolstering their offensive line, how they spent their first two picks is concerning to the Packer fan base. Are the days of the Aaron Rodgers era numbered?

• New England Patriots — second round, Pick 37: Kyle Dugger, S, Lenoir-Rhyne; second round, Pick 60: Josh Uche, OLB, Michigan; third round, Pick 87: Anfernee Jennings, OLB, Alabama; third round, Pick 91: Devin Asiasi, TE, UCLA; third round, Pick 101: Dalton Keene, TE, Virginia Tech; fifth round, Pick 159: Justin Rohrwasser, PK, Marshall; sixth round, Pick 182: Michael Owenu, G, Michigan; sixth round, Pick 195: Josh Herron, OT, Wake Forest; sixth round, Pick 204: Cassh Maluia, LB, Wyoming; seventh round, Pick 230: Dustin Woodard, C,

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The Patriots have had themselves an offseason to remember, and not in a good way. However, I wouldn't consider them a team that would be in a total rebuild mode. They went from one of the elite teams in the league, to now a team that has a place in the middle of the pack. This draft honestly left me desiring more. They did cover some needs at tight end and linebacker, but they never looked into another wide receiver at any point in the draft. This was a very deep class at that position, and they chose to focus on defense in the earlier rounds. Many were wondering why a new quarterback wasn't brought out of this draft, but I feel they are interested possibly elsewhere or in next year's draft.

• Chicago Bears — second round, Pick 43: Cole Kmet, TE, Notre Dame; second round, Pick 50: Jaylon Johnson, CB, Utah; fifth round, Pick 155: Trevis Gipson, EDGE, Tulsa; fifth round, Pick 163: Kindle Vildor, CB, Georgia Southern; fifth round, Pick 173: Darnell Mooney, WR, Tulane; seventh round, Pick 226: Arlington Hambricht, G, Colorado; seventh round, Pick 227: Lachavious Simmons, G, Tennessee State.

The Chicago Bears are one of the organizations I can never predict when it comes to the draft. They didn't have a first-round pick once again, but I am pretty sure they are still content with having the services of Khalil Mack on their defense. I do commend the pick of Cole Kmet, as they were in dire need of a solid tight end, and the signing of Jimmy Graham wasn't dependable.

But the Bears also had needs on the offensive line and they didn't address that until the seventh round.

Though they have a starting-caliber quarterback in Mitchell Trubisky, getting a quarterback in the later rounds would have been great, as his numbers haven't been great.

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