



BIG STARS, AWESTRUCK AND THE MEDIA SPOTLIGHT:

(Or Just Another Day in Southern California.)

The stars shone in Southern California: two Heisman Trophy winners and seven first-day draft picks worked out for NFL scouts... and a few thousand fans, more than 200 USC recruits, and a swarm of media. Some of the old guard from the NFL didn't approve of the festivities — they miss the days when they could talk more freely with the players and get a feel for their personalities. But Coach Pete Carroll loved it because it showed the high school recruits that playing for USC means playing on a big stage.

FANS,



1.
pro day: (*prō dā*) *n.*
an event, often held at a major university, where NFL scouts and coaches gather to watch prospective players run, cut, jump, lift weights, and go through position drills. Though many players are invited to the NFL combine, some elite players want to work out in a familiar environment with their teammates.

REGGIE BUSH

 SPARQ RATING:

95.10

Broad Jump: 10-8.5	40: 4.33
Vert: 40.5	10: 1.47
QuickReact: 0.25	Bench: 24



Saint Reggie.

HERE, THERE, AND EVERYWHERE. MR. DO-IT-ALL MIGHT SPELL SALVATION FOR THE SAINTS

At Pro Day, this year's Heisman Trophy winner did absolutely nothing to shed his image as the quickest, most elusive player in the NFL Draft. After looking chiseled at weigh-in, he amazed the crowd with a 40.5-inch vertical jump and an impressive broad jump. But then it got interesting: Normally the crowd roars its appreciation, but they fell completely silent as Bush stepped up to the line to run the 40. A lot of projected first-day draft picks don't want to run the 40 (paging Mr. White!) because there's a lot to lose. But Bush wanted one last workout with his teammates. It blew the crowd away. A 4.33 40-yard Dash ranked in the 99th percentile among all players since the 2000 NFL Combine, and only two players beat his 1.47 10-yard split (DB Deion Branch of the New England Patriots was the fastest).

On draft day, Bush went No. 2 overall to the New Orleans Saints, whose fans gathered outside the Superdome to watch and chant his name. "We're going to turn this program around and bring something special to this city," Bush said. Things are looking up down on the Bayou, with Drew Brees at QB, plus the thunder to Bush's lightning, Deuce McAllister. "Get ready," Bush said.



Justice Served?

OFF-THE-FIELD ISSUES TAKE A BACK SEAT TO JUSTICE'S MIND-BOGGLING ATHLETICISM

It's not always the slender receivers or the stocky running backs who display true athleticism. USC's trainers warned us that Justice would be the story of Pro Day. Sure, the guy displayed some serious strength while opening holes for Reggie Bush and USC TD record-holder LenDale White. And yes, Matt Leinart is only alive today because Justice laid down the law protecting the QB's blindside. And so when he knocked out 38 reps on the bench press, we were impressed. But when he posted a vertical of 39 inches? Twice? Do you know how much force it takes to launch 320 lbs. of offensive tackle 39 inches into the air? No other offensive tackle at the NFL combine did it, let alone a player north of 300 lbs.

On draft day, off-the-field issues and a full-year suspension scared off teams in the first round, but Andy Reid's Eagles know a phenomenal value when they see it. In the second round, they traded up six spots to get Justice, who they felt should've gone in the first round. And who did they trade with? The Titans, who used the Eagles' pick to snap up former Trojan LenDale White.



WINSTON JUSTICE

✦ SPARQ RATING:

103.42

40: 5.03 <small>(pulled up with a tweaked hammy)</small>	Vertical Jump: 39"
10: 1.78	Shuttle: 4.43
Bench: 38	Power Ball: 60'



Hollywood's Finest.

LACHEY HEART-BROKEN AGAIN: LEINART MOVES EAST TO HEADLINE ALL-PRO ARIZONA CAST

Leinart probably put it best when asked why he didn't run the 40: a running quarterback he is not. But on Pro Day, the 2004 Heisman Trophy winner showed quite a bit of explosiveness, posting a very athletic 37-inch vertical jump. And while the Golden Boy may seem the prototypical pocket passer, his numbers last pre-season show he's got some athletic grit: A 60-foot Power Ball throw and a nimble 4.24 shuttle.

On draft day, the ownership and management of the Tennessee Titans won out over Leinart's former coach Norm Chow, choosing QB Vince Young. Which sent Leinart to a dream offense with one of the best dual-purpose backs in the NFL, Edgerrin James, and two of the best young receivers in the NFL in Anquan Boldin and Larry Fitzgerald. Wait, did we just describe Arizona as a "dream offense"?

Vertical Jump: 37" 40: 4.85


Power Ball: 60' L Drill: 6.92

Near/Far: 29/42 Shuttle: 4.24

A man with dark hair, wearing a black t-shirt and white shorts, is running with a red Wilson football. He is looking to his left. The background is a clear blue sky. The image is framed by a black border at the bottom, which appears to be a railing or fence.

MATT LEINART

74.01

 SPARQ RATING