



# THE PLAIN DEALER

## Fans? disappointment centers on Mack

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Just minutes into the Draft Day Party at Cleveland Browns Stadium on Saturday, Andy Trent and Bart Bethel thought they'd been so clever.

Trent was wearing a green T-shirt that read "NEW YORK" in block letters, and "Browns" printed on masking tape below it. Bethel's white T-shirt read "Cleveland" scrawled on masking tape atop the name "JETS."

They'd meant it as a tribute to the transfer of much of the personnel of the Jets to Cleveland along with new coach Eric Mangini, but they looked downright clairvoyant after Cleveland swapped its No. 5 pick in Saturday's NFL Draft for three Jets players, their No. 17 pick and a second-round selection.

And so the two Columbus fans stood back to wait for news of whom the Browns would select. They'd be happy with an offensive player, they agreed.

"We got enough defensive players, now, through free agency and trades - courtesy of the New York Jets," Bethel grinned, pointing at his chest.

They waited patiently until the 17th pick arrived, then cheered when they learned Cleveland had traded that pick to Tampa Bay for the 19th selection.

And both friends - and the entire room - cheered in amazement when the Browns traded again, swapping the 19th pick to Philadelphia for the 21st.

But an entire room full of Browns fans groaned in disgust when NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell finally announced Cleveland had selected California center Alex Mack with its first-round pick. Three trades, four extra picks and almost two hours after the Browns originally were scheduled to draft, they finally chose an unexciting offensive lineman.

"We did all that for that?" Bethel wondered aloud. "You've got [Beanie] Wells, [Rey] Mauluga and [Clay] Matthews all on the board and that's who you take?"

An afternoon of potential and wonderment at the Browns' wheeling-and-dealing abilities quickly turned sour for fans. Soon after the Browns selected Mack 21st overall, most began filing out of the stadium.

Which was in stark contrast to how the room reacted to initial news that the Browns had traded their No. 5 selection - and avoided adding more controversy to an already contentious position by sidestepping USC quarterback Mark Sanchez.

"All they were going to do with the fifth pick is spend a lot of money," said Bob Hostutler, president of the Burnt River Browns Backers, a Concord-based stem of the Browns Backers that also held a Draft Day tailgate in the parking lot outside the stadium.

Browns fans were divided on whether they wanted the team to swap receiver Braylon Edwards in this draft

or before the start of the season, but seemed in unison in their discouragement with the selection of Mack.

"It's disappointing," said Paul Pietrantone, of Highland Heights. "I love him as a player, but they could have gotten him lower in the draft."

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