

Cardinals grab receiver, tight end on Day 2

By **DARREN URBAN**
TRIBUNE

The Cardinals' final day of the draft was quiet, not a surprise when the team had traded its fourth-round pick the day before and its sixth-round pick last August.

So the Cardinals selected Michigan wide receiver and return man Steve Breaston in the fifth round and Delaware tight end Ben Patrick in the seventh round, and there was enough dead time in between for vice president of football operations Rod Graves to get in a light workout walking the team's practice fields.

"Both of us would prefer to have more picks than fewer," said Graves of himself and coach Ken Whisenhunt. "You can get your eyes set on a couple guys you would like to have. It's kind of a nail-biting process."

Graves said the team will sign around 15 undrafted rookies and acknowledged they will likely try to get a speed running back in addition to some

cornerbacks, preferably with some speed.

"I don't think there is one position where we need a number of guys," Whisenhunt said. "The thing about this business is ... competition. Anytime you can get a young, hungry football player to compete for a roster spot, that makes us all better."

MANY HAPPY RETURNS?

Ever since missing on a chance to draft Devin Hester last season, the Cardinals were looking at possibly drafting a return man, which is why Breaston was attractive.

Whisenhunt said the team also wanted Breaston for his receiving skills, and Breaston did have 58 catches for 670 yards this season for the Wolverines.

But as a returner, Breaston can be electrifying. He averaged 12.6 yards a punt return and 24.6 yards a kickoff return in his career, although his averages took a dip as a senior.

Breaston said teams began to kick away from him. And

that was a notion Whisenhunt understood.

"If I was looking at him as an opponent, it would certainly scare me some of the things I had seen him do," Whisenhunt said.

With Anquan Boldin, Larry Fitzgerald and Bryant Johnson locks to make the team, and free agent special-teamer Sean Morey a virtual lock, the fifth receiver spot will likely come down to Breaston and holdover LeRon McCoy.

A LONG WAIT

One draft publication listed Patrick as the third-best tight end available in the draft, and he was stuck at the top of Scouts Inc.'s best players available roster all day Sunday before the Cards finally took him in the seventh round.

"That's one of those things that you keep asking, 'Why?'" Patrick said.

But the Cardinals were happy, since they would have given serious thought to Patrick in the sixth round if they had a sixth-round pick. Whisenhunt

said "we were holding our breath" Patrick would last until selection No. 215.

It's just another part of Patrick's journey, which led him to four offensive systems in four years at Duke before he transferred to play his final year at Division I-AA Delaware.

"I wanted to experience some things as far as having more support in the community and school, and I wasn't experiencing that at Duke," said Patrick, who graduated with a degree from Duke before leaving. "All in all it was a great decision."

EXTRA POINTS

The Cardinals will return to the field May 12-14 when the team will hold its lone mandatory minicamp of the offseason ...

Whisenhunt said rookies - including tackle Levi Brown - will not be handed starting spots "out of respect to the veterans who have been here working." That said, Brown is expected to eventually start, as should the second-round pick, defensive tackle Alan Branch.

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CARDINALS DRAFT PICK CAPSULES

Steve Breaston

Position: Wide receiver

School: Michigan

Ht., Wt.: 6-0, 193

Pick: Fifth round (142nd overall)

Career highlights:

Averaged 12.6 yards on 127 punt returns. ... Averaged 24.6 yards on 81 kickoff returns. ... Scored five touchdowns on returns, including four on punts. ... Also has 156 catches for 1,696 yards and 10 touchdowns as a receiver. ... Had career-best 58 receptions for 670 yards in 2006. ... Also rushed for 321 yards on 42 carries in college.

Scouting report: Can be an electrifying return man. Gets banged up and can miss practice time. Great speed but very raw as a receiver. Has trouble with physical defensive backs. Questionable hands as a pass catcher.

Quotable: "I think I'm a good, solid receiver. But I think with coaching I have potential to be a better receiver."



Ben Patrick

Position: Tight end

School: Delaware

Ht., Wt.: 6-3, 252

Pick: Seventh round (215th overall)

Career

highlights: After four years at Duke (redshirting the first) he transferred to Division I-AA Delaware. ... Caught 64 passes for 639 yards and six touchdowns in 2006. ... In three seasons with Duke, had 79 receptions for 781 yards. ... All-Atlantic-10 first team as a senior.

Scouting report: Smart and a hard worker. Needs to work on technique. Not explosive. Needs to work on blocking. Can play H-back as well as tight end.

Quotable: "I definitely think I'll be a valuable weapon to this offense once I get acclimated."



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