

**ARIZONA CARDINALS
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR BILL DAVIS (BD)
DISCUSSING 95th OVERALL PICK- S RASHAD JOHNSON**

On why the team selected Johnson with this pick:

(BD): “He is a tall, rangy, athletic ball-hawk, which we love. Nick Saban (Head Coach of Alabama) told us that he is one of the smartest players he has ever coached, which means a lot because Coach Saban is secondary oriented; defense oriented. For (Johnson) to be one of the smartest that (Saban’s) been around, as far as football intelligence, instincts, range, and all those things. The young man is a leader. We loved his interview at the combine. He was very mature, very articulate. He was a walk-on at Alabama. I believe he started out as a running back and they moved him because of his athleticism and range. We have been excited about him since the second round on and we were hoping he would fall to us. We really picked the best available player for us even though we have depth at that position. What we do here in Arizona is we take our starting safeties Antrel (Rolle) and Adrian (Wilson) on third down and they moved down into the box into the nickel and dime position. We always have two extra safeties play about 50 percent of our total snaps when we go to our dime package on third down and two minute drills. Depth at safety is something you are always coveting. We love ball skills in our secondary and I think we have that across the board right now, which hopefully will equate to more turnovers and interceptions and getting our hands on the ball. All the guys we have back there can catch and run and understand the defense. He is coming in here to compete like all of the rookies. No rookie comes in and has a first or second spot. He starts at the bottom and he has to pass up the veterans that are in the house. If he doesn’t, he doesn’t. He doesn’t get ordained anything because he’s a draft pick. I think (Head) Coach (Ken) Whisenhunt has shown that over the years. You have every opportunity that everyone else has, but at the end of the day, the best men will stay; the best men will play.”

On the fact that Johnson enjoys playing special teams:

(BD): “That is another positive of him being here. He is an outstanding special teams player. That is really the role of these rookies. (Cody) Brown is coming in at (Outside Linebacker) and we have veterans at OLB. Both of them are going to come in and they better be difference makers on special teams and big contributors in that area as they learn the NFL position of safety or outside backer. This first year’s role, the expectations is great special teams and do all you can in your positional role and we’ll see where it takes us.”

On if Johnson could be a special teams return man as well:

(BD): “I don’t know if he has return ability. Coach Spencer will have that down. I know he can go inside at the slot in our dime packages. He has played some nickel and underneath, so it gives us some flexibility with keeping Antrel (Rolle) back all the time and maybe this young man pops underneath, or vice versa. He is a versatile, intelligent athlete. That’s what we love about both of the defensive picks we have. They are intelligent. They have good character. They are highly athletic. So, that combination is kind of where we are trying to build this team. If you have smart, tough, talented players

that will play together, then we have a shot of consistently being at the top of the division.”

On if the 5’11”, 205 LB Johnson may have slipped this far because he is undersized:

(BD): “Probably. He is 205, which I think Adrian is 220, 215, somewhere in there. And Antrel is a little higher than that. With our weight program and our off-season program, he’ll put on the five or ten pounds. That is all you are looking at with him. You don’t want him to drop speed to gain weight. I never say, ‘you have to be at this weight,’ because everybody’s body is different. You don’t want their speed to drop. You want them to get as much weight and get as physical as they can be without losing speed and athleticism because you have to be able to stop and restart and be an athlete in this league. The field is too littered with great talent.”

On how much more he thinks the team will go with defense the rest of the day:

(BD): “Hopefully all day. Depth at all positions makes you better. Competition, that is the thing. Competition at all of these spots; that is human nature. These players know, the veteran players know, as soon as we are done with the first mini-camp and they have seen the guy, the ‘new puppy’ at their position, they know if he can play or not. Last year (CB) Dominique Rodgers-Cromartie came out there and everyone said ‘Oh boy, this guy can play.’ Just by watching his movement skills. They also see the other end. When they see a young man come out that doesn’t push them, they can exhale a little bit and relax. But when somebody is there in the shoot ready to take your spot, you are always at your best. That is human nature. That is what the New Englands and the Pittsburghs and the perennial powerhouses do. They have depth at positions; competition. You always fight like heck to make the team and keep your spot.”