

ARIZONA CARDINALS
HEAD COACH KEN WHISENHUNT (KW)
GENERAL MANAGER ROD GRAVES (RG)
DISCUSSING 31ST OVERALL PICK- RB CHRIS WELLS

Opening Statement:

(RG): “We’re happy to announce our first round selection of the 2009 NFL Draft as running back Chris Wells out of Ohio State. We’re excited to have Chris – we had Chris in for a visit a couple of weeks ago and we feel like he’s not only a talented player, but just an outstanding person. He’s had a great career at Ohio State and we feel he brings a lot to our football team and we’re certainly happy to have him.”

(KW): “It’s funny, when he came in here a couple of weeks ago and he was leaving, the last thing I said to him was, ‘now, when we draft you, Chris, do you want me to call you “Chris” or do you want me to call you “Beanie”?’ And his response to that was ‘Beanie’ – so we actually selected Beanie Wells with the pick at 31. If you could have told me going into this draft today we would have had a chance to get him with our 31st pick, I would’ve been very excited. So needless to say, we’re very pleased. He’s been a very productive running back in a very good conference. I think his yards-per-carry average is almost close to 6.0, throughout his career, which is pretty outstanding. He’s a big back with some speed that I think will fit in nicely with some of the things we’re going to do with him. So we’re excited to have him.”

On being concerned with his durability:

(RG): “No we’re not. Obviously we had a chance to evaluate that at Indianapolis and we had further evaluation of it when he was here and it did not present itself as a major concern for us.”

(KW): “I think one area we’d like to comment on about that – is he’s played a number of games in a physical conference and even though he’s had some nicks, and a lot of players who play this game obviously do, he’s been productive and played a lot and hasn’t missed a lot of time. To me, that’s a sign of toughness and that’s one of the things we felt good about in this process with him.”

On how he will fit in with Tim Hightower:

(KW): “I think he’s a good fit with Tim. I think we know a little bit more about Tim and the things he does well and Chris is a very powerful, inside-runner that has excellent speed. I think that 237 pounds, obviously a guy that has averaged, like I said, almost 6.0 yards per carry – as far as what he can do – I think he does a number of things well. As far as an inside, power runner, which we saw him do at Ohio State – certainly that aspect is something we’re excited about.”

On adapting to a pass-oriented offense:

(KW): “I think the blocking aspect for young running backs coming into the league is something that they all have to work on and that was one of the things we’re not concerned about – he’ll get a lot of coaching in that area. But as far as how much he plays

early and what he does, especially in some of our sub packages, is going to be a function of how he does in those kinds of things. Catching out of the backfield – I don't anticipate that being an issue – just based on what I saw him do at his workouts and what I saw him do in college, even though there wasn't a lot of that because of the running game and the style they operated with."

On worrying all three of the top running backs might be gone by pick 31:

(RG): "The first thing is, we thought very highly of all three backs that went and obviously that was a direction we had focused on, but we were also prepared to look in another direction if we needed to and we felt good about the options there. We had an opportunity, we did have several teams give us a call about moving back, but we felt like that would be a very solid pick for us and one that could help us improve in that area and so we decided to stay right there and make the selection."

On when in the first round they realized Wells might drop to 31 and whether they considered moving up to select him:

(RG): "No, we didn't. There were still some very good players on the board and obviously we really liked Beanie, but there were also a couple other significant running backs, or at least one, that we had our eye on, in addition to a couple players at different positions. I think we began to get the idea around pick 20 that there could be a very good player for us sitting there and there was no need for us to move at that point."

On Edgerrin James' status with the team:

(RG): "We're going to get through this weekend and sit down and evaluate where we are with our entire team. We're going to consider what personnel moves we can make – and it's not just at one position – we're going to evaluate our football team based on the outcome of this weekend. We'll evaluate all of that next week."

On whether any teams called regarding a possible Anquan Boldin trade:

(RG): "No. The conversations, with respect to Anquan, have been light. We have not really received what I would consider serious interest in him up to this point. Our focus has really been on trying to work something out with him and that's really where we are."

(KW): "I think it was surprising there wasn't more interest, but like I said going into the draft and Rod said, we want Anquan on the football team – he's a good player. We felt coming out of this that we're excited that Anquan is going to be with us and that we want to get a deal with him that works for both parties. That's what our focus has been, that's what our focus continues to be. There was a tremendous amount of speculation over the last day and a half about demands – what we were looking for and lowering our demands – but lets be realistic, we never had any demands. All we said was we were willing to listen and that we were going to look at all options that were best for our team, with the idea being we wanted Anquan with us. Nothing is written in stone – nothing is to say something can't happen, but like we have talked about since a year ago, Anquan is a very good football player and an important part of our football team and that's how we're proceeding forward."

On whether it'll be possible to make a deal with Boldin this year:

(RG): "I think what's not really possible is for us to give a definite timetable at this particular point. But, as coach indicated, it's our goal to ultimately try to find a deal that works for both sides and we're going to stay focused on that. As we indicated earlier, we decided to open this process up, but it was only an option that we were taking a look at. We're excited about him as a player and we're looking forward to eventually trying to get something in place with him."

On whether there were any calls today about Boldin:

(RG): "We did get some interest today, but nothing that we thought was really any considerations we would consider."

(KW): "Some of it was more just feelers, I think. I think some of it was because there were some reports out there that we had dropped our demands and people were trying to verify that was the case and we said that it was not the case. That was not something we had discussed. I think it was mostly other teams just doing their diligence just to find out."

(RG): "We kept reiterating to the few teams that called that our position was to listen. We were not ever taking a proactive move with respect to a trade, but we were certainly willing to listen and in just about all cases, we didn't get a response back."

On being surprised by the lack of interest in Boldin:

(KW): "I think there's been so much publicity about what he's worth and obviously there's a lot of people speculating about the value of a trade and the type of player Anquan is that there wasn't more interest than there was. But I can't speculate as to whether it was a contract or what it was. Like I said, I've never changed my thoughts about Anquan and what he means to our team and what type of football player he is."

On continuing to upgrade the running game in the draft:

(KW): "I think we're always looking to improve off of being the 32nd-rushing football team in the league – but I'll say this – if we can continue to score points like we have been doing and be in the top five in the league on offense, that's something that's important. Who knows where it could come from – I'd never say we wouldn't address this position via a later pick in the draft or even with another player that becomes available at another point – that's how we operate on all our positions, not just the running back position. The one thing I will say, for sure, is we are going to continue to improve on our running game and we've got nowhere else to go but up."

On who called Wells:

(KW): "Jerry Hardaway had him on the phone today. We always do that with our picks, just to verify information. We did that with not just Chris, but with the other picks we were considering."

On who called Wells to tell him he was an Arizona Cardinal:

(KW): "All of us talked to him."

On what they said to Wells:

(KW): “We said, ‘do you still want us to call you Beanie?’ We just said, ‘we are very excited to get you and you made a great impression on us when he came out for a visit and we’re excited about the type of player you are and we’re looking forward to you being a part of this team.’ He was very excited, I think he enjoyed his visit out here and he likes, obviously, our style of offense and thinks he can do some things to help us.”

On what Wells said to them:

(KW): “It was loud. It was loud on the other end, so I think they were excited.”

On Wells being a big-play element the team has lacked:

(KW): “If you just look at the highlights, even from the draft footage, I would have to say yes. Looking at a lot of tape on him, I think he does – he’s shown the ability to break some long runs. There’s one run in particular, he stops in the backfield and shakes off a tackle and then makes a long run. To me, that does give an element of a breakaway threat and especially what was intriguing to me, was it was done from in the line – it wasn’t an outside run where he just outran everybody. Nothing is for certain in this league, but a guy with his size and his speed, that has shown that he can be productive in a number of areas, is certainly very exciting for us.”

On whether they feel the first pick could have gone any better for them:

(RG): “I tell you what, we’re very excited right now. I think coach indicated a little earlier, if we had known at the beginning of the draft we’d be sitting here with Beanie Wells, we would have been very, very satisfied with that. So from that standpoint, we’re delighted that it fell the way that it did and that he’s our selection.”