What You Learn from The NFL Combine and Those Who Sat It Out.

The NFL Combine is “Invitation Only”. That has a deeper meaning to NFL wanna-be athletes. Say, you want to work for Facebook. They invite you to a job interview. You say, “Well, no thanks”. You risk a response in kind from FB: “Well, same back at ya”. FB may think, “Maybe he doesn’t have the grit, the “it” factor. Have a good life”.

So those who risk alienating a potential employer must have something that tells them sitting out the invitation to the Combine is worth the risk.

Ohio State Edge Rusher Supreme, Chase Young, took that risk. He told ESPN sitting out the drills was a “business decision”.

He likely said to himself “My body is my business and the asset they want. If I injure the asset, I lose millions.” Young also told ESPN that “anyone who really knows football” can see what he can do - as if to say, “the tapes tell you all you need to know. I don’t need to risk anything else”.

Young means the injury risk that Jeff Okudah took when he fell awkwardly during a Combine passing drill. He tried to continue, but ultimately decided against more on-field drills. If the fall, which included his head, had caused a fractured vertebra, the Okudah lifetime dream and multi-million-dollar career could have been over before it started. And despite CBS’s opinion that he is the best cornerback and cover guy in the upcoming draft, none on those plaudits would apply if that fall brought a major injury.

Notice as well that Xavier McKinney, appeared to injure himself after running his 40. McKinney did not run a second 40, which all other players were asked to do. McKinney did not participate in any additional on-field drills.

Now the punch line.

All of the above players are at the top of the draft food chain. Young had more QB sacks at Ohio State than either Nick and Joey Bosa, now former OSU and current Pro Bowlers. Okudah is widely considered the top cornerback in the draft and fourth best pick overall, while McKinney is viewed as the top-ranked safety.

So, if you are not among the best at your position entering the Draft, think twice about sitting out the Combine. If you think the sit-out strategy is best, think a third time.

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