

Texans fill needs with eight-man 2012 NFL Draft Class

Written by Yolande Y. Lezine, Sports Editor
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The Houston Texans have completed another successful NFL Draft for the books. After drafting Illinois linebacker Whitney Mercilus in the first round, the Texans shifted their roles to the offensive side of the football.

Houston drafted two wide receivers in Ohio State's DeVier Posey and Michigan State Spartans Keshawn Martin. They also got three offensive linemen in Miami(Ohio) guard Brandon Brooks and Ben Jones, and Purdue Boilermakers tackle Nick Mondek. Texas A&M Aggies kicker Randy Bullock and Nebraska defensive end Jared Crick were the other additions selected in the draft.

Former Houston Cougars record-setting NCAA quarterback Case Keenum was signed as a undrafted free-agent by the Texans.

Coming off a 10-6 season and their first ever AFC South title, the Texans did not feel like they had any major needs entering the draft. They did need depth at the outside linebacker, wide receiver and offensive line positions.

"I feel very good about our draft class, not only adding quality talent to our football team, but a lot of passion," Texans head football coach Gary Kubiak said. "I think our team is about a group of guys that play very hard week in and week out. When you look at this group, that's the first thing that stands out to me. I'm very excited to get started with them, and I feel very good coming out of the 2012 NFL draft."

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Mercilus, a 6-4, 261 lb. outside linebacker, was selected as the 26th overall pick. He had 16 sacks and nine forced fumbles at Illinois, and the Texans were so high on him that they traded up to get him.

The Texans had the 58th overall pick in the second round; however, General Manager Rick Smith traded it to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers along with a seventh-round pick in exchange for a third and fourth-round pick. With the 68th pick, the Texans drafted Posey, who started 29 games at Ohio State. Posey was suspended for 10 games in 2011 but had 113 catches for 1,676 yards in his sophomore and juniors seasons combined. He ran a 4.37 40-yard dash at the NFL Scouting Combine.

Brooks, was the Texans next pick at No. 76 overall, a pick acquired from the Philadelphia Eagles in March as part of the DeMeco Ryans trade. He was a four-year starter in college and ran a 4.98 second 40-yard dash at his pro day.

On the third and final day of the draft Houston picked Jones at No. 99 overall. A four-year starter and three-time team captain at Georgia. Martin was selected as the 121st overall pick in the fourth round. He was an all-purpose threat at Michigan State. Crick, a 6-4, 280 lb. was the Texans third pick of the fourth round at No. 126 overall. He recorded 19 sacks combined in 2009 and 2010; however, he tore a pectoral muscle that sidelined him for most of his senior season.

In the fifth round, the Texans drafted a kicker for the first time ever. Bullock won the Lou Groza award in 2011 as the nation's top kicker after going 29-of-33 on field goals at Texas A&M. The team wrapped up the draft with Mondek in the sixth round at No. 195 overall.