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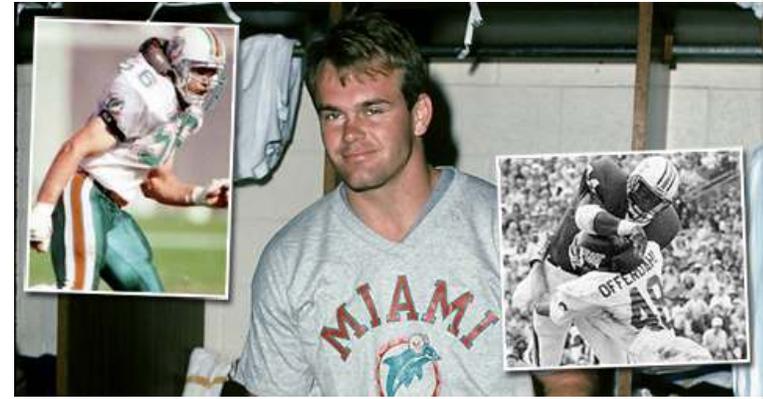
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Draft Memories: John Offerdahl



08:45 Thu 04-28-11 | by Andy Kent

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ALUMNI DRAFT MEMORIES



With the 2011 NFL Draft less than a week away, there is a lot of anticipation among the crop of college football players hoping to hear their name called by NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell. It's a moment these young men have dreaming about since they were little kids.

Leading up to the Draft, Dolphins.com will be reminiscing with some of your favorite former Miami Dolphins about what their draft day experience was like through an exclusive Q&A with Senior Writer Andy Kent. Today we catch up with John Offerdahl, linebacker, selected in the second round (52nd overall) of the 1986 NFL Draft out of Western Michigan.

What stands out to you the most from your Draft Day experience?

"I've got a lot of great Draft Day memories. Are you ready? My Draft Day Memory, John Offerdahl, 1986. Sports Illustrated did a front cover article on a who's who of Midwestern college players that could be diamonds in the rough. Jill Leiber was with me through the draft at my house and the moment we were watching ESPN and Bill Walsh called me up and congratulated me on the fact that I was going to be a San Francisco 49er. I was jubilant and I took the phone off the hook and we were watching ESPN and a half an hour to an hour later they finally got caught up to that draft position and they announced that the San Francisco 49ers have now traded down their draft choice. I said, 'Oh, shoot.' That's exactly what I said, 'Oh, shoot.' I put the phone back on the hook and literally seconds later (Coach Don) Shula was on the phone and said, 'Congratulations, you're now a Miami Dolphin.' I was like, 'I'll take Miami.' Little did I know that I would have had three more rings if I was a 49er but I was very happy to be a Miami Dolphin. That was almost the most foolish thing any draft choice candidate had ever done and that was me. And it was all recorded by Sports Illustrated so thank you Sports Illustrated for catching that fopa."

Where were you on Draft Day, at your family's house, on campus somewhere with teammates and coaches, out fishing or playing golf?

"I was at my house with my family. I played at Western Michigan and grew up in Wisconsin so I was very pleased to have the opportunity to go down to South Florida and play for a team with Shula and Marino. I really thought seriously, 'Man, I'm in the Super Bowl baby.' Little did I know I'd never get there. Sorry guys, but it was still a blessed moment. I got to come down with Jill Leiber from Sports Illustrated for my first

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rookie camp and that whole experience was unbelievable, just the ride of my life.”

What did you personally do in preparation for the draft to help your draft position as far as special workouts, etc.?

“I worked out on my own. To prepare for the draft we had a big bratwurst fry the night before so I was nice and ready. I had a lot of fat content in my tummy by the time I came down there to Florida. No, we did have the Combine back in Indianapolis and that was to prepare for the draft.”

Was there something about your interviews with prospective coaches before the draft that stood out?

“By that time they knew I was one of five kids with four older sisters and had a problem finding my own masculinity, so they knew all of those things. They prodded me plenty. I played the French Horn. I had four older sisters. My God don’t recruit that guy. He’s high risk.”

How did you celebrate being drafted?

“This is all documented by Sports Illustrated but I had family and friends amounting to probably 40 or 50 people. We stayed up the night before and played cards and all slept on the family room floor. We woke up the next morning, put ESPN on and got to watch the draft together, It was just a group of people that loved each other and I was really pleased to have shared that with all of my friends and in a way get it captured and documented by that Sports Illustrated article. So that was real neat for me.”

What was it like to know you were going to be coached by Don Shula?

“I was unbelievably excited. I know that two years earlier they had gone to the Super Bowl and they were destined to go back with the Marks Brothers and (Dan) Marino and the best football coach ever to coach in the NFL. I knew the best center ever to play in the NFL (Dwight Stephenson) was lining up against me. I was just really excited. I knew that the defense was weak though so I knew that I was going to be expected to play a lot to shore up some of the defense. But again all I can remember was that whole first year as a rookie from the time I touched down in Miami to the time that the last game was played in the Orange Bowl was just a storybook life for me that year. I ended up being Rookie of the Year in the NFL and started in the Pro Bowl so the whole experience was exciting for me, but it wasn’t easy. Our defense stunk. I was the only one to make the Pro Bowl on our defense and I was like, ‘Whoa, what happened to those Killer Bs?’ They kind of lost their buzz by the time it got to me but it was fun.”

What advice would you give to this year’s class of draft choices?

“It’s just a special time and one that you should embrace. Too many times I see these people screw up an opportunity of a lifetime when they’re in the crosshairs of greatness and it gets to their head and they blow it. So at the end of the day enjoy that moment but realize it’s just the beginning of another career and one that has high expectations for you to perform. Get ready, get serious and get nervous. As Coach Shula used to say to me, ‘Are you nervous?’ I’d say, ‘Absolutely,’ and he’d say, ‘You better be.’ You better be nervous, man. This is the game.”

The Miami Dolphins will be hosting three 2011 FINS ON THE CLOCK DRAFT PARTIES, presented by PEPSI MAX, on Thursday, April 28, at 7:30 p.m. at Sun Life Stadium, Duffy’s in North Palm Beach and Bokamper’s Sports Bar & Grill in Naples. Admission and parking to all events is FREE. For more information on the Draft Parties, please [click here](#).

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