

NFL's Jaguars pick Tyson Alualu

The Saint Louis grad is the 10th pick, tying the highest overall selection for a player from Hawaii

By Jason Kaneshiro • April 23, 2010



Tyson Alualu wasn't decked out in an expensive suit amid the glitz in New York.

A T-shirt, workout shorts and the company of family and friends in a church patio at Kuhio Park Terrace suited him just fine as he watched a life-changing moment unfold.

Alualu had dreamed of playing professional football since the third grade. But when the Jacksonville Jaguars made the Saint Louis graduate and former California defensive lineman the 10th overall pick in yesterday's NFL Draft, the moment eclipsed any of those fantasies.

"This way surpasses any dream," Alualu said as the celebration at Solid Rock Fellowship Assembly of God in Kalihi continued with volleyball and kids playing in a bouncer.

"Nobody saw it coming, nobody thought I would be in the top 10. It was just all God's plan on where I would go. I give it all up to him. That's exactly what was going through my head and in my heart, just giving God the glory."

"I'm proud of where I'm from, not having much and just being a testimony to the young kids here that anything is possible," Alualu said. "Just setting an example and putting that belief in their hearts and their minds that they can make it one day.

Alualu had been projected as a possible late first-round or second-round selection leading up to the draft. Kenny Zuckerman, Alualu's agent with Priority Sports and Entertainment, said he'd been tipped off that the Jaguars were interested. So when Zuckerman's phone rang, he recognized a Jacksonville area code and figured they were inquiring on where he thought Alualu might be picked.

Instead, a Jaguars official let him know the team was about to take Alualu at No. 10.

"Surreal, just awesome," Zuckerman said.

"For Tyson to go in the first round, we would have been thrilled. But to be in the top 10, he's got to be one of the biggest risers in the draft."

"I just want to be able to provide for my family and give back to my parents," Alualu said. "They've been so supportive of me throughout my career and the struggles they had to go through to put me here where I am."

Said Desire: "I don't think there's a word to describe how we felt. Blessed would probably describe it best because it's something we've worked so hard for all these years. It's been hard, it's been rough, but to see it finally all paid off, it's amazing."

Along with his physical gifts, Zuckerman attributed the high pick to Alualu's character.

"In this day and age, he's just a solid guy," Zuckerman said. "He's married, he takes care of his kids, he goes to church, he goes to a great academic school. He just does it the right way and he was rewarded for that."