

Mike O'Hara: NFL Draft report

## TACKLE SHOP: Staley's speed wows scouts

Central Michigan offensive tackle sits out Combine workouts because of a hamstring injury, but he impresses during campus Pro Day.

The scouts learned one more valuable detail about Joe Staley in his Pro Day workout.

Staley can perform under pressure.

Staley's stock rose another notch in his workout at Central Michigan University on Thursday. Staley was timed in 4.79 seconds for the 40-yard dash. That's off the charts for an offensive tackle.

Staley did not hurt his status.

Staley was delighted, and a little relieved, with his workout.

"It came out awesome," Staley said in a telephone interview the next morning.

Awesome, indeed, especially considering the circumstances.

A slight hamstring injury kept Staley from doing any running and agility drills at the Combine workouts in Indianapolis last month. Staley was pumped up to show off his greatest asset — his speed — and was disappointed he had to skip the workouts.

There was another downside to not running at the Combine: Staley's Pro Day workout became an all-or-nothing proposition. There was no fallback for an off day.

"I didn't get to run at the Combine," Staley said. "I was nervous going in. I thought about all that — it was a one-time deal. Once I got out there, I was fine. It was huge. All 32 teams were out there."

Staley has gotten national attention for his development at CMU. He entered school as a 225-pound tight end and grew into an offensive tackle. He is up to 305 pounds, on a 6-foot-6 frame.

Staley's speed and quickness are unusual for an offensive tackle.

Staley is the only other tackle in this year's draft who was timed in less than 4.90. Running a time less than 5.0 is rare for a top tackle prospect.

Thomas was timed in 4.92 seconds and Brown in 5.40 at the Combine. Allen Barbre, a late-round prospect from Missouri Southern State, was timed in 4.84 seconds.

In the 2006 draft, only Eric Winston of Miami (Fla.) broke five seconds (4.94). D'Brickshaw Ferguson of Virginia, drafted fourth overall by the Jets, was timed in 5.04. In 2005, Alex Barron of Florida State did 4.82, and Khalif Barnes of Washington did 4.92.

In 2004, Robert Gallery of Iowa — drafted second overall by the Raiders — was timed in 4.98.

And in 2003, Jon Stinchcomb of Georgia leaned his eyebrows across the finish line in time to register a 4.99.

The draft begins April 28, and Staley's calendar is filling up. Next week, he has personal interviews with the Jets, Patriots and Chiefs.

The Lions expressed an interest in Staley at the Combine. Line coach Jim Colletto and his assistant, Mike Barry, were at Staley's workout.

Staley is enjoying the process. It's like being recruited.

"This is awesome," he said. "You only get to go through this once in your lifetime."