



Cornerback Nathan Vasher (31) is among the talented players the Bears have drafted in the fourth round since 2002. —TOM CRUZE/SUN-TIMES

“Alex ran a 4.9 40. Vasher was perceived as small and slow. Orton was not a real good athlete, and Ian had questions about his speed. What they all had, though, they were highly productive and very passionate, highly competitive.”

JERRY ANGELO

Will to work hard

Orton called his slight a raw deal. Had he been picked in the second round, it would have meant a difference of more than \$1 million, but it's not the money that he was hung up on.

“I was kind of shocked with team after team taking quarterbacks I felt like I was better than,” he said. “It was a frustrating day and a day where you just didn't know what the hell was going on.”

“Guys in the fourth round aren't guaranteed to make the team. Right away, you're just trying to secure your job and make sure you have one for the year.”

The knock on Brown back in 2002 was his intensity. Teams didn't know whether he had it. Some thought he was too small. Some thought he was too slow. But come the fourth round, those 33 sacks for Florida, including 13 as a senior, screamed for attention.

“Alex was sticking out at us,” Gabriel said. “To use one of Jerry's terms, he was like a beacon light. I came in [Sunday] morning, and [area scout] Phil Emery was high on Alex. I said, ‘Jerry, we've got to take this guy.’ I literally had a dream about drafting him.”

Brown had only bad dreams in the one hour of sleep he got after the disappointment of the first three rounds. He was happy when the Bears called, but he had an overriding feeling of disappointment that he had lasted so long.

“I was motivated to prove the Bears didn't make a mistake by picking me and the other teams did by overlooking me,” he said. “Carolina with [Julius] Peppers and Indianapolis with [Dwight] Freeney, they're very good. The other teams that got ends and didn't pick me [next], I think they should have chosen me.”

“The draft is tough to evaluate, though. I realize that.”

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again. He was faster and might have been helped out even more by Ballard fudging the time a little.

The Bears haven't asked him to enter any track meets, and he became their first cornerback to reach the Pro Bowl in more than a decade when he did it last season.

“I guess your measurables are a little more important to GMs around the league,” said Vasher, who has 13 interceptions in two seasons. “But there was no way I was going to let anyone else put a level of value on me. I knew what I was worth, I knew what type of player I had been throughout college and I knew what type of player I could be in the league.”

“I felt like I had a lot to prove because a lot of teams did pass on me. But you can get hardworking guys who can play in the later rounds.”

Plenty of hidden gems

The most productive fourth round in the last 25 years came in 1996, when in a span of 12 selections linebacker Donnie Edwards (Kansas City Chiefs), defensive end Phillip Daniels (Seattle Seahawks), running back Stephen Davis (Washington Redskins) and right tackle Jon Runyan (Houston Oilers) went off the board. Middle linebacker Earl Holmes (Pittsburgh Steelers) was picked at the end of the round.

Three years later, there was another strong crop. The Bears grabbed linebackers Warrick Holdman and Rosevelt Colvin, former Super Bowl MVP Dexter Jackson was chosen by the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and wide receiver Brandon Stokley (Indianapolis Colts), cornerback Kenny Wright (Minnesota Vikings) and quarterback Aaron Brooks (Packers) also were selected.

For the Bears, it's not a matter of waiting until late Saturday to see who is left and develop a game plan for Rounds 4 through 7. They divide prospects on their board into three categories — A, B and C. A players are projected for the first

two rounds, B players for the third and fourth and C players for the final three rounds.

They already have forecast who might fall to them with the 120th overall pick next Sunday, and the board will be reassessed when the third round ends. Holding the 23rd pick of the fourth round, though, it won't be like in years past, when they were ready to pounce at the top of the round.

“In the past, we had made up our mind that if Alex or Kyle was still there, they were the guy,” Gabriel said. “Will we be able to do that this year? Maybe not. We'll have a list and hope that somebody sticks there.”

FOURTH AND STOLE

Brad Biggs takes a look at the best of the fourth round from the last 25 drafts:

Year	Team	PLAYER	Pos.	School	Biggs says
2005	Bears	KYLE ORTON	QB	Purdue	Won 10 as rookie
2004	Bears	NATHAN VASHER	CB	Texas	Pro Bowl 2nd season
2003	New England	ASANTE SAMUEL	CB	Central Florida	2 Super Bowl rings
2002	Bears	ALEX BROWN	DE	Florida	Pro Bowl alternate
2001	Indianapolis	RYAN DIEM	G	Northern Illinois	Manning protector
2000	Green Bay	NA'IL DIGGS	LB	Ohio State	Fixture for Packers' D
1999	Tampa Bay	DEXTER JACKSON	FS	Florida State	MVP of SB XXXVII
1998	San Francisco	LANCE SCHULTERS	SS	Hofstra	Made trip to Pro Bowl
1997	Tennessee	DERRICK MASON	WR	Michigan State	Great hands
1996	Washington	STEPHEN DAVIS	RB	Auburn	Legendary workhorse
1995	Cincinnati	SAM SHADE	SS	Alabama	Always showed up

Year	Team	PLAYER	Pos.	School	Biggs says
1994	Minnesota	MIKE WELLS	DT	Iowa	Run-stuffer for Bears
1993	Bears	TODD PERRY	G	Kentucky	Solid before leaving town
1992	Phoenix	JEFF CHRISTY	C	Pittsburgh	Steady with Vikes, Bucs
1991	Houston	MARCUS ROBERTSON	FS	Iowa State	12-year starter
1990	Miami	SCOTT MITCHELL	QB	Utah	Threw 32 TDs in '95
1989	New England	MICHAEL TIMPSON	WR	Penn State	Better before Bears
1988	Green Bay	CHUCK CECIL	SS	Arizona	Big-time headhunter
1987	New England	RICH GANNON	QB	Delaware	Took a while to get shot
1986	San Francisco	CHARLES HALEY	DE	James Madison	Elite pass rusher
1985	Buffalo	ANDRE REED	WR	Kutztown	Canton-bound soon
1984	N.Y. Giants	GARY REASONS	LB	N'western State	Starter on SB winner
1983	Bears	TOM THAYER	G	Notre Dame	Played in USFL first
1982	New Orleans	MORTEN ANDERSEN	K	Michigan State	Scored 2,358 points
1981	Bears	TODD BELL	SS	Ohio State	Ferocious hitter late