

NFL SCOUTING COMBINE

Indiana native proves winning isn't everything

By CLIFF BRUNT
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

INDIANAPOLIS
A quarterback's value typically is judged by wins and losses. But Vanderbilt's Jay Cutler has NFL decision-makers thinking a bit differently at this year's NFL Scouting Combine.

Cutler never had a winning record in college or played in a bowl game, but the 6-foot-3, 226-pounder from the southern Indiana town of Santa Claus has used raw talent and toughness to overcome that. He is considered one of the top quarterback prospects in the draft, behind Texas' Vince Young and Southern California's Matt Leinart.

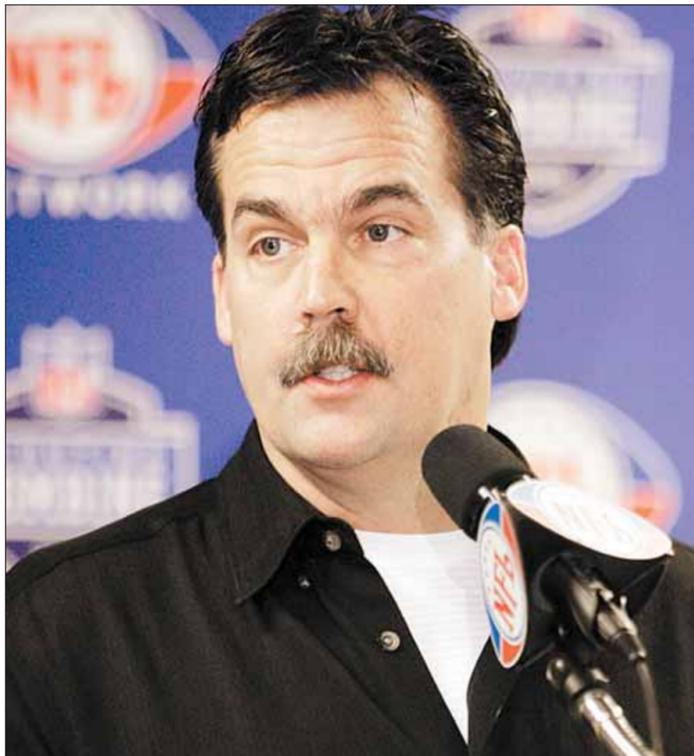
After deciding to return for his senior season, Cutler was the AP's Southeastern Conference offensive player of the year in 2005. He passed for 3,073 yards and 21 touchdowns and in his final game led the Commodores to their first victory against Tennessee since 1975.

Tennessee Titans coach Jeff Fisher coached Cutler in the Senior Bowl and watched him play in the Titans' backyard in Nashville. He said Cutler could have excelled in a higher-profile college program.

"You're projecting here. You're dealing in hypotheticals here," Fisher said. "What if Jay would have played at Southern Cal, with the athletic ability and those kind of things? What kind of success would not only Jay have had, but the Trojans had, and vice versa? Jay had a great career. The Vanderbilt program was put back on the map, so to speak, this year."

He didn't have the monstrous offensive line Young had, or exceptional skill players around him like Leinart had in Heisman winner Reggie Bush and possible first-round pick LenDale White.

"I got it done without a lot of guys around me," Cutler said. "It's nothing against those guys; I love them. But it's not like I was surrounded by All-Americans."



Tennessee Titans coach Jeff Fisher talks to reporters at the NFL scouting combine in Indianapolis on Friday. Fisher said Indiana native Jay Cutler could have excelled at a higher-profile college.

"It's a long road to get here, especially at Vanderbilt."

Cutler chose Vanderbilt because the Commodores allowed him to play quarterback. Other schools wanted him to play safety or didn't notice him at all.

"I'm from southern Indiana, a small town; I think the Purdues and Indianas weren't really recruiting my part of the state," he said. "But I had a great career at

Vanderbilt and have a lot of friends there." Cutler might go from carrying an entire program to holding a clipboard and waiting his turn to play.

"It's a touchy issue," he said. "Being a quarterback, being a competitor, you want to get out there right away and help your team. On the other hand, there's a lot of pressure on a quarterback, and you've got to contend with the speed of the game."

Top veteran quarterbacks face uncertain futures

The Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS

Green Bay's Brett Favre, Tennessee's Steve McNair and Minnesota's Daunte Culpepper face uncertain futures with their teams.

Officials with the Packers, Titans and Vikings all say they're proceeding like their stars will be around next season.

Favre triggered retirement rumors after the Packers stumbled to an uncharacteristic 4-12 finish. Ted Thompson, the Packers' general manager, said he's not rushing the 36-year-old to make a decision, though he'd like to know soon enough so he can adjust if necessary.

"No, we've not tried to establish any sort of timetable," Thompson said. "He's played a long time, and I think it's important for him sit down and think it through

to make the best decision for him.

McNair, 33, has been the face of the Tennessee franchise since 1997, when he became a starter in his third year in the league. The former MVP has played through injuries for much of his career, and there are also questions about his contract.

The Titans face a deadline in March of either paying \$50 million to extend the quarterback's contract through 2009 or a \$1 million fee that would take his deal through 2006. He is scheduled for \$9 million in base salary for 2006.

"I'm confident that we'll get things worked out with Steve," Titans coach Jeff Fisher said. "I said that all along. We've got some paperwork to do, and we've got some time yet to do it. He can still play at a high level in this league, and I expect it to be for us."

The Titans have the third overall pick

in the draft and could use it on a quarterback.

"We have to look at the future as far as the quarterback position is concerned," Fisher said.

"That doesn't mean that Steve's not coming back or that he can't play a couple more years, but we're at the point now where we have to address it," he added.

After a dynamic 2004 campaign, Culpepper injured his right knee in October and missed the rest of the season.

Rumors have been circulating that the Vikings are trying to trade him, but team owner Zygi Wilf assured Culpepper that Minnesota has not spoken to other teams about a potential trade.

New coach Brad Childress said he's going to continue as if Culpepper will be a Viking this season.

BASKETBALL GOLF

INDIANAPOLIS

Fever send veteran center to New York

The Indiana Fever sent veteran center Kelly Schumacher to the New York Liberty in a sign-and-trade deal on Friday.

Packaged in the deal was a trade of first-round draft picks, which moves Indiana from 12th to ninth in the April 5 WNBA draft. The Liberty will drop from ninth to 12th.

Schumacher, a first-round draft pick of Indiana in 2001, was a restricted free agent. She played more games than any other player in franchise history (159) with 28 starts. She averaged 4.0 points and 2.0 rebounds for the Fever last season as she played in all 34 games, starting 14.

CARLSBAD, Calif.

Campbell edges Tiger at Match Play Championship

Chad Campbell beat Tiger Woods 1-up on Friday in the third round of the Match Play Championship, winning when the No. 1 player in the world missed a 12-foot birdie putt on the 18th hole.

Campbell will face U.S. Ryder Cup captain Tom Lehman in the quarterfinals. The 46-year-old Lehman beat 2005 winner David Toms 4 and 3.

In other matches, David Howell beat Phil Mickelson 3 and 1, and Geoff Ogilvy edged Mike Weir in 21 holes.

FOOTBALL

LUBBOCK, Texas

Texas Tech's Sharp to resign at end of season

Marsha Sharp, the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame coach who won an NCAA title at Texas Tech and turned the school into a perennial national power, said Friday she is resigning at the end of the season.

The 53-year-old Sharp made the announcement near the end of a season marked by health problems and Tech dropping out of the Top 25 for the first time in more than a decade.

"I knew the time was right for me," said Sharp, who said her health is fine and she's "good to go" after heart tests last month.

INDIANAPOLIS

Brock signs 5-year deal to stay with Colts

Defensive lineman Raheem Brock signed a five-year contract Friday that makes sure one of the Indianapolis Colts' most versatile defenders stays off the free agent market.

Brock was set to become an unrestricted free agent March 3.

"He's extremely happy that coach (Tony) Dungy and Bill Polian expressed that they wanted to have him back and we wanted to get it done," said Kevin Pompey, Brock's agent.

Pompey would not release financial details of the contract but called it a fair deal for both sides.

AUTO RACING

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla.

NASCAR suspends young driver for life

Driver Shane Hmiel has been suspended from competition for life by NASCAR after failing a third substance abuse test.

"Shane failed to fulfill the prescribed rehabilitation program scheduled by NASCAR," NASCAR spokesman Ramsey Poston said Friday. "As a result, Shane has forfeited his opportunity to compete in any NASCAR-sanctioned events."

Asked if there is any possibility of Hmiel racing in NASCAR sometime in the future, he said, "No, it is a lifetime ban."

Hmiel, the 26-year-old son of longtime crew chief and team official Steve Hmiel, was first suspended in September 2003 after failing a test. He completed a required rehabilitation program and was reinstated for NASCAR competition in February 2004.

PRINCESS LAKES & MORGANTOWN SIGN-UPS

CAL RIPKEN BASEBALL AND ASA SOFTBALL
Ages 4-12 (May 1 Cutoff) Ages 4-14 (Age as of Jan 1)

TUESDAYS		SATURDAYS	
Feb. 21	6-8 pm	Feb. 25	10 am-2 pm
Feb. 28	6-8 pm	Mar. 4	10 am-2 pm
Mar. 7	6-8 pm	Mar. 11	10 am-2 pm

Where: Morgantown & Nineveh Fire Depts
Cost: \$50.00 First Child / \$30.00 Second

Will also be taking sign-ups for boys interested in playing Cal Ripken Baseball All Star District Tournaments (Must sign-up at one these 2 locations for league play to be eligible).
Will take sign-ups for the Girls ASA Sanctioned Tournament Players (Ages 7-14).

Contacts: John Petro 317-878-4108 (Princes Lakes & Nineveh)
Chuck Winsby 812-597-0315 (Morgantown)

Play Ball!

• Big Ten

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE B1)

He added that the committee will decide on a contract length, which probably will be set for four to eight years, after choosing the winning bid.

"We didn't open this up to 20 cities," he said. "These are the two best places for us. We're not saying it's a permanent home, like the Big East has with New York, but we want to look at something long term."

The two Big Ten tournaments represent a combined \$10 million net economic impact to Indianapolis, Indiana Sports Corp. president Susan Williams said.

"Securing the Big Ten's men's tournament is the most important thing we have to do right now," Williams said. "We're going to make it hard for them to say no."

Delany said the committee likely will choose whichever city offers the best combination of economic revenue, logistics and atmosphere.

He said corporate sponsorships and ticket revenue are the two main categories where one city

can gain an economic advantage. Delany, who said he has no vote in deciding who gets the bid, said the advantages of each city are apparent.

"Chicago is the best large city sports town in the country," he said. "The television ratings and the sports-crazy population show that."

"They don't necessarily have the hotels adjacent, but they have wonderful hotels and restaurants and the lake atmosphere, and there's an ease of access."

Delany said Chicago's better positioning for air travel, 3,000 more seats at the United Center as opposed to Conoco Fieldhouse and greater access to corporate sponsors could be deciding factors.

In Indianapolis' corner are several intangibles, such as better logistics, more diverse athletic hosting experience and an unmatched passion for hosting such events, he said.

"There's the most knowledgeable fan base of basketball fans in the country, plus an unmatched spirit for volunteerism," Delany said. "It will be a dogfight and very competitive, and one city will be disappointed and one very happy."

Williams, a Franklin College graduate, highlighted strengths for both cities similar to Delany's assessment.

She said the Indianapolis group feels good about its chances of landing the long-term contract.

No other city has hosted as many big-time college basketball postseason events, including Indy's fourth Final Four in 16 years this season.

"They have to decide what they want the tournament to be," Williams said. "They can have it where it's embraced 1,000 percent, or they may want the glitz of Chicago attached to it."

After Monday's presentation, Indianapolis supporters get the final say of sorts by showing how successful the tournaments can be in their city during the next two weeks.

Williams said Indiana Sports Corp. plans to make the most of that opportunity by adding even more scheduled fan-involvement events than in prior years.

"They do sort of get the last word. That's a great point," Delany said. "The committee that will decide has been to both cities a bunch, but there's probably a little emotional advantage to it."

Get a Bright, New Smile!

Offering you a wide array of services to fulfill all your dental needs:

- Full Orthodontics for Any Age
- **invi-align**
- Oral Surgery
- Cosmetics & Whitening
- Conscious Sedation
- TMJ
- Endodontics and Periodontics

Brighten Your Smile!

\$99

Whitening Special with a new patient exam

Limit One Offer per Patient. Expires: 2/28/06

Stacy D. Johnson

masters in comfortable dentistry DDS MS

191 U.S. Route 31, Greenwood

317.888.2234

Stacy Johnson, DDS, 16 Years Experience

Now Accepting New Patients!

Full Exam & X-Ray

\$49

Only Limit One Offer per Patient. Expires: 2/28/06

Got a story idea?

Call us, not them.

736-2712

LIFETIME WARRANTY BRAKES

Have a brake job using Genuine GM Brake Parts and never pay for brakes again!

See or call our service consultants for details.

Please call for an appointment. Must present coupon. Not valid with any other offer.

Reeves

EXPIRES 2/28/06 018UJ01

ROTATE & BALANCE BRAKE INSPECTION

\$29.95

Please call for an appointment. Must present coupon. Not valid with any other offer.

Reeves

EXPIRES 2/28/06 348UJ01

BUICK • PONTIAC

www.reevesauto.com
1250 U.S. 31 South, Greenwood

882-8425

The best service department in Johnson County!!

SERVICE, PARTS & BODY SHOP

Mon.- Fri. 7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Parts Department: Open Sat. 9 a.m. - Noon
PRO SHOP DEPARTMENT Mon.- Fri. 7:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m. - Noon

Service Before and After the Sale!

Goodwrench

10% OFF

ANY SERVICE WORK OVER \$100

Please call for an appointment. Must present coupon. Not valid with any other offer.

Reeves

EXPIRES 2/28/06 188UJ01

\$24.95

Oil Change & Car Wash

Up to 5 Quarts

Please call for an appointment. Must present coupon. Not valid with any other offer.

Reeves

EXPIRES 2/28/06 358UJ01