

Publication: The Virginian-Pilot; Date: Mar 21, 2013; Section: Sports; Page: C2

VIRGINIA TECH PRO DAY

# Hokies get 2nd chance to make lasting impression

By Andy Bitter

## The Virginian-Pilot

### BLACKSBURG

As a chiseled, 6-foot-4, 306-pound athlete who doesn't resemble a typical flabby offensive lineman, Winston Painter had a strategy to catch the scouts' eyes at the NFL draft combine last month in Indianapolis.

"Took my shirt off," he said with a laugh. "I just walk around a little bit, get my Calvin Klein on. That's all."

Painter, an offensive tackle who has heard good things about his draft standing since a solid showing at the combine, was one of several former Virginia Tech players who tried to impress scouts again Wednesday at Tech's pro day.

The Maury High grad tried to build on last month's performance. Satisfied with his combine numbers – he benched 225 pounds 32 times, ran a 4.95-second 40 and had a 30.5-inch vertical – Painter declined to do the workouts again in Blacksburg, instead doing whatever positional drills scouts and coaches asked.

Projected as an undrafted free agent immediately after last season, Painter's agent has heard that the lineman could be a late-round pick now.

Painter thinks he displayed a strong football IQ at the combine in addition to his obvious physical attributes. Although he didn't play much until his senior season at Tech, the fact that he has little wear and tear could work in his favor.

"The doctors for the teams couldn't really believe it," he said. "They tried to find any and everything that they could, but there was nothing there."

He said he has "maybe one or two" individual workouts with NFL teams coming up, although his agent encouraged him not to disclose the teams involved.

Painter wasn't alone in working out for NFL scouts Wednesday, though. Receivers Marcus Davis and Corey Fuller caught passes from former West Virginia quarterback Pat White, a stand-in for Logan Thomas, who is not allowed to throw in front of NFL personnel because he's still a college player.

Davis and Fuller are expected to be the first Hokies off the board, projected as mid-round picks. It's a thin group of Virginia Tech prospects this year. It's shaping up to be only the second time since 2008 that the Hokies haven't had someone go in the second round or higher.

Linebacker Bruce Taylor looked at Wednesday as a second chance. He struggled in the workouts in Indianapolis, running the slowest 40 time of the linebackers, but he fine-tuned technique in the weeks afterward. He didn't know his time Wednesday, but thinks it was faster.

"I got a good night's rest, which I didn't get on the combine," Taylor said. "My legs were a lot fresher than they were at the combine. Just overall, I felt a lot better."

For players that didn't get an NFL combine invite, Wednesday was the first chance to show off their stuff to scouts. Running back Martin Scales, who did every drill and workout, enjoyed the opportunity.

"For me, it was just fun," he said. "I'm stretching my legs out, enjoying myself because it's not the end of the world for me. I just go out there and do my best. You can't be mad at yourself if you just go out and do your best."

Scales, who isn't projected to be drafted, hopes he can latch on to a team this spring, even if it's a tryout situation.

"I'm going to push it and see if I can go with it," he said.

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Maury grad Winston Painter hopes to be drafted next month.

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