POINT COUNTERPOINT: WHO SHOULD THE JETS DRAFT WITH THE 2ND PICK OF THE 2026 NFL DRAFT?

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Graham: Jeremiyah Love (RB, Notre Dame)

Would the New York Jets select Love if I was the GM? No. Is it a real possibility? Absolutely. While I'm still inclined to believe Aaron Glenn will first look to build his defense during his second offseason in The Big Apple, selecting the Heisman finalist doesn't seem unreasonable.

Love was a baller in 2025, rushing for nearly 1,400 yards and 18 touchdowns while maintaining an excellent 6.9 yards per carry. He added another 280 yards and 3 touchdowns from 27 catches, showing he can be a three-down back. His play was enough to keep Jadarian Price, PFF's RB2 in the 2026 NFL Draft, to just 113 carries all year. Love also averaged 125.5 rushing yards per game against ranked competition.

The Jets' offense is in desperate need of playmakers, and Love is the best offensive player the draft has to offer. If it wasn't for the nature of the running back position, there'd be a real shot he'd be selected with the No. 1 pick.

Breece Hall is a talented player, but he only just eclipsed 1,000 yards for the first time this season. More importantly, he's an impending free agent, and it seems unlikely he'd play under the franchise tag when teams like the Kansas City Chiefs would seem ecstatic at the opportunity to sign him to a long-term deal. The tag value for running backs is $14.5 million this season, which would account for 18% of the Jets' cap space.

Bringing back Hall would mean the team with the most holes in the NFL would be investing more money in bringing back the same core. A tag and trade seems the most likely for Hall.

Beyond Hall, the Jets' backfield features Isaiah Davis and Kene Nwangwu, who are also impending free agents. Davis has been an efficient back in his two seasons, but has never proved he can be more than a change-of-pace back.

Aaron Glenn's Lions weren't shy about taking the players they wanted regardless of draft position, and one of those players was a running back: Jahmyr Gibbs. Gibbs was the No. 12 pick in the 2023 NFL Draft after being projected to be selected in the 25-40 range, and the Jets could make a similar shock pick with Love. With no quarterback worthy of the No. 2 pick, the Jets could find their Gibbs in the Notre Dame prospect to bolster their offense.

With tackles Olu Fashanu and Armand Membou looking to be stars, the Jets could continue to upgrade their interior offensive line through the draft and later in free agency with the money they otherwise would have paid Hall. They could, perhaps, select Alabama QB Ty Simpson with the No. 16 pick they acquired from the Colts to be their long-term starter.

Alternatively, they could look to acquire veteran Kyler Murray, or perhaps Malik Willis?

An offense with a new QB, Love, Garrett Wilson, and a pair of ascending young tackles is a solid baseline for the Jets going into Aaron Glenn's second season. Of course, they'd need to make a concerted effort to upgrade the defense during free agency, but Love could help the miserable offense make up ground on the rest of the AFC East.

Raiyan: Reuben Bain Jr. (DE, Miami)

The New York Jets fielded an unexpectedly abysmal defense during the 2025 season. They were ranked near last in most basic counting stats, making them an obvious reason for why the team acquired the second overall pick in the 2026 NFL Draft.

The Jets quickly became aware that this group of players wasn't working out and acted accordingly. Standout defensive players CB Ahmad "Sauce" Gardner and DT Quinnen Williams were traded before the deadline, and defensive play caller Steve Wilks was also fired. Head coach Aaron Glenn will now reportedly assume playcalling duties in 2026. The Jets have put themselves in a position where they need to completely rebuild their defense from the ground up.

The best place to start? Their first pick of the draft.

If the last two Super Bowl champions can tell us anything, one way to succeed in the modern NFL is to generate heavy pressure with four rushers. It allows a significant amount of flexibility on the defensive side, which is something that any defensive play caller can exploit. The Jets' defensive line was poorly ranked this season as PFF has them at 28th, however, they already have solid pieces with veterans LDE Will McDonald IV, LDT Jowon Briggs, and LB/EDGE Jermaine Johnson (assuming he recovers from injury).

Since the Raiders should be going QB with their first overall pick, the Jets will have the entire roster of defensive ends and tackles to choose from to bolster this line.

DE Rueben Bain Jr. from Miami would undoubtedly be the best pick for the Jets from that roster, who finished his 2025 season with a historic 83 pressures and consistently did this against some of the best collegiate offensive line talent. He's also generally perceived as a "high-floor" candidate who should succeed regardless of the situation around him. This is in contrast with other top prospects like LB/EDGE Arvell Reese from Ohio State, who may need to be coached into playing a defensive line role like standout edge rusher Micah Parsons.

From the perspective of the Jets front office, if a coaching shake-up in 2026 ends up being necessary, they can stay rest assured that their top pick from the 2026 draft will still be someone who can contribute meaningfully to the team. Someone like Bain Jr. will help them build a defense for the future, no matter the circumstance the team could find themselves in.

