

Ohio State's Dre'Mont Jones Brings Competition, Versatility To Denver Broncos' DL

After three seasons as Ohio State's three-technique tackle on position coach Larry Johnson's defensive line, Dre'Mont Jones heads to Denver with an edge in the Broncos' 3-4 defense.

"He'll give us some good competition there," said Denver head coach Vic Fangio. "It's always good to add to that group. That's a position that's always hard to find, not only in the NFL — colleges have the same problem, trying to find D-linemen. We're glad to get one right there."

The 6-3, 281-pounder presented the Broncos with an opportunistic pick in a historically deep class of defensive linemen.

When the 2019 NFL draft kicked off last Thursday in Nashville, Tenn., 12 defensive linemen — an even split, between six ends and six tackles — were off the board by the end of the first round.

Two more went in the second round before the third round rolled around with another gone at No. 65 overall, allowing Denver to select Jones six slots later with the 71st overall pick.

"He's a real good (pass) rusher," said Broncos general manager John Elway. "He can rush the passer. Very good first step and can really get up the field, so we're excited about it. He really had a good year last year and (is) just continuing (to get better). He's just scratched the surface with the potential that he has, so we're excited to get Dre'Mont."

Jones joins Denver's strong defense, which returns versatile talents such as outside linebackers Bradley Chubb (6-4, 259) and Von Miller (6-3, 250) in its physical front seven.

In the trenches, the Broncos bring back long defensive ends like Adam Gotsis (6-4, 287) and Derek Wolfe (6-5, 285).

On the interior, Jones adds a slightly undersized but fast and technical pass rusher for defensive line coach Bill Kollar to tinker with and mold further.

"(Jones is) absolutely still growing up, still maturing," Elway said. "So I think that with the help of Bill Kollar and the defensive staff that he'll continue to get better. So anytime you can get some pressure from inside, where he'll play — especially in nickel — it's an added bonus, especially with the guys that we have on the outside."

Denver's defense is based out of its 3-4 scheme, but nickel packages allow the Broncos to get another linemen — such as Jones — up front in a 4-2-5 look on certain situations.

Jones enters the mix after he broke out as a junior in 2018, ending his season with 43 tackles (13 for losses) and 8 1/2 sacks, plus an interception returned 28 yards for a touchdown and three fumble recoveries (one forced fumble).

Across 14 games, Jones played through a nagging ankle injury as well before he decided to end his fourth-year campaign on top Jan. 1 with the Buckeyes' 28-23 win over Washington in the Rose Bowl.

"The Big Ten is definitely no joke," Jones said. "I know how it feels to be double-teamed, I know how it feels to go against those 6-7, 330-(pound) offensive tackles, and those 6-4, 330-(pound) guards and I got a feel for both. I think I can handle myself in the league."

Once he capped his career with the Scarlet and Gray, Jones competed March 3 during the NFL scouting combine at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis and moved well from line drills to linebacker workouts.

"I expect to put on some more weight," said Jones, who measured 6-2 3/4 and 281 pounds at the combine. "I think I'm about 285 (pounds) right now. I was a little light at the combine. I think I'm ready to go."

Originally an edge rusher out of high school — before he arrived in Columbus as the 247Sports composite's No. 133 overall prospect, No. 10 strongside defensive end and No. 6 player from Ohio for the 2015 recruiting class — Jones plans to bring Denver his best wherever the Broncos line him up.

"My ability to play, just be tough (stands out most)," Jones said. "I come from the Midwest grit. We're tough in the Midwest, for sure. Just me, personally, I feel like I have a chip on my shoulder — just being considered a small defensive tackle. So I feel like I can play out there and just be raw, and be fast and just play nasty."

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