



CLEVELAND BROWNS TRANSCRIPT

*2020 NFL Draft, Round 5
4-25-20*

Scout Adam Al-Khayyal:

On C Nick Harris:

“We are really excited to add Nick to the team. There is a really interesting story with him. He is a guy who came into Washington, probably you could say under recruited, went to one of the premier programs in the PAC-12 and really in the nation and all he did was work his way into the starting lineup as a true freshman and then start his final three years – one at guard and two at center. He is a guy who has had a really productive career and adds some good depth to the roster and a chance to compete.”

On if the team sees Harris as more of a C or G and if versatility helped make him appealing:

“I think for Nick, center is probably going to be where he starts, I would imagine, and really where he shined at Washington, but he has played at multiple spots. Certainly, I think his lack of height – he is only 6-1 – might have caused some people to think that maybe he can’t play in multiple spots, but he has done it on the biggest stage. As a true freshman, he was playing guard against Alabama in the CFP playoffs and holding his own against guys who have gone on to be productive NFL players. This guy certainly adds ability and depth to the roster.”

On Harris’ character:

“I think he fits that smart, tough accountable mantra that (Head Coach) Kevin (Stefanski) and (Executive Vice President of Football Operations and General Manager) Andrew (Berry) have been hitting on throughout this process. He is a guy who came in and earned his way every step of the way. He did not redshirt as a freshman. They pulled his redshirt because they couldn’t keep them off the field really. He is a guy who really worked his way and worked for everything he has. He came in and was in the 270s as a true freshman. He is up in the 300 range now. He has done a lot throughout the course of his career to improve every step of the way every year.”

On attributes for a strong interior OL and why Harris is a fit for the Browns offense:

“Probably it varies when you are talking scheme to scheme, but certainly, for what we are trying to do in a wide zone system, Nick is a guy with really good feet, good quickness and really good range in terms of getting out in space and getting to the second level. A guy who really there is not a block he doesn’t think he can make, and quite often, he makes them. He played on a line that had some other highly talented prospects so people have been paying attention to this line for a few years. Every game, he makes a play or two or a block or two where you kind of sit up in your chair and take notice, which usually offensive linemen are guys that you are not noticing them unless they do something wrong in some instances, and he is a guy who he would do things right and make you take notice of it.”

On selecting players from the Senior Bowl and how Harris’ participation contributed to the Browns’ evaluation:

“In general, the opportunity to go to the Senior Bowl is just another feather in your cap and another chance to go down and compete at a high level. For Nick, he is a guy who competed against the best of the best throughout his career. He went against Auburn, who has some really good defensive linemen, last year in their opener. He went against Alabama. He went against the best teams in the PAC-12. He was not a guy who necessarily you needed to see at the Senior Bowl to see him go against the top competition, but whenever you get a chance to go to the Senior Bowl and compete, that always helps.”

On Harris’ height potentially impacting his draft status and how much that comes into consideration when determining his position:

“Honestly, wherever he ends up is going to be a coaching decision, but from the perspective of the line, it is not a competition about who is taller; it is about a leverage battle. For Nick, he plays with great leverage and he has some natural leverage. He really is a tough guy to get around because of his combination of leverage, quickness and athleticism. Wherever he ends up, I think for him, the height is less of an issue. Certainly, he also has length in his arms so it is not as if he doesn’t have an ability to play with extension or leverage.”



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On Harris' projected role with the Browns, given their current OL, and if Harris is a long-term option or someone who can help create competition with C JC Tretter:

“For all these guys, it is a chance for them to come in and compete and add depth to the roster. Where they ultimately end up is to be determined by them and their performance. All the guys we bring in, it is an opportunity for them to be on the Cleveland Browns. From here, what they make of it is really going to be determined by them and their performance. Certainly, he is a guy who we thought had a really good fit for our scheme and a nice skillset and ability to come in and add depth and value.”

On Harris winning Washington's most inspirational player award and what led to that achievement:

“For Nick, it is really just the whole person. He is a guy that everybody in the program speaks highly of. Usually when we go to these all-star games, we get a chance to interact with many of the teammates of players at each school so you go and you talk to the guys from Washington and you say, ‘Hey, who is one guy that you would like to bring with you to the next level?’ A lot of them said Nick Harris. He was a team captain. For him, I think it was more the person and the way he went about his business every day competing and the energy and passion he brought to the field every day. You go out to practice, you can hear him and you can feel his energy. He is certainly a guy that inspired his teammates that, I’m sure, in a lot of ways and not just with his on-field performance.”

On Harris being a vocal leader and if that was more based on encouragement or holding guys accountable:

“He was a team captain, and when you talk to people around the program, they say he is one of the best leaders they have. I think it is sort of a combination of everything. I think he really does bring a lot to the team and for them as a program. He was a guy that played a lot, and he did it with his actions, but he also did it with his words.”

On the importance of pre-draft interviews and preparation prior to the combine and all-star games:

“It probably varies from player to player. For a guy like Nick who started for three-plus years, he has been on the radar for a while, you have heard about him for a while and you have been watching him for a while. There are other guys who may be later in the process that pop up or they started for one year or only had one year of production. Person to person and player to player, there is some variance, but for him, he is a guy that we have been paying attention to for a while – certainly, I have. The rest of the process after the season ends is just to find out more but not necessarily change a whole lot about what you think.”

On the impact high school coach Pat Harlow had on Nick Harris, given Harlow's NFL career:

“I have not talked to him about his high school coach in particular, but I think certainly that kind of instruction at a younger age helps. He is definitely somebody who came in ready to compete and to produce, and he did so coming into the PAC-12 at 270 pounds and working his way into the starting lineup. He definitely was ready early and has continued to improve throughout his career.”

On if the Browns were surprised Harris was available when Cleveland selected him:

“I will probably leave the board discussion to AB (Executive Vice President of Football Operations and General Manager Andrew Berry), but certainly, pleased that he was there. I have gotten a few texts from guys on the west coast excited and congratulating about the pick because he was a guy that quite frankly a lot of people did like. We are excited to have him.”

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C Nick Harris:

On being drafted by the Browns and entering the NFL:

“I am excited. This is a dream I have had now since I can remember. I have been playing football since a young age. I am excited. I am ready to get to work when all this stuff clears up and I just want to play football again so I appreciate the Cleveland Browns organization for taking the chance on me and giving me opportunity.”

On if he feels more comfortable playing C or G, given he most recently played C but started at both positions:

“Like you said, just because I played center last few years, I feel comfortable there, but I also feel comfortable at guard. Wherever I can get on the field the fastest and contribute will be good for me because I have those two years playing guard. Anywhere I could just start playing football will be good.”

On overcoming his height, given he is shorter than the typical interior OL:

“It starts with technique. It starts with also the mental aspect of the game. I take both of those pretty seriously and how I go about playing football. Also, it is just a will. I love playing O line. I like finishing people. I take pride in what I do. Honestly, I think it helps me, I get better leverage under people. I have long arms for my height. I think at the end of the day, it helps me more than it hurts me.”

On if he prides himself on his leadership ability and vocal nature:

“Yeah, it is definitely my style. I am an outgoing guy. I love talking. I love being around and I am a real social guy. If need be in a locker room where I had to take the reins and lead my guys, I was not afraid to say it. That is definitely something I pride myself on and I got to definitely do that at Washington.”

On winning Washington’s most inspirational player award:

“That meant a lot because it was voted on by my teammates. It just goes to show how much they liked me being around and how much they fed off me. It was truly an honor for sure because that is one of the most prestigious awards on the on the Washington football team. I am just glad that my teammates thought so highly of me. I want to continue to build on that characteristic on the next level.”

On joining an offense with QB Baker Mayfield, WRs Odell Beckham Jr. and Jarvis Landry, the Browns OL and other talented players:

“Anywhere I went, I was just glad for the opportunity. There is definitely a lot of talent on the Browns. I am excited to get around these guys, get to work and find my way on the next level. Like you said, there is a lot of talent. I am excited.”

On if he is looking forward to learning from veterans like G Joel Bitonio and C JC Tretter:

“Oh yeah, 100 percent. I watch those guys a lot when I watch film and just try to better my game. Those guys have been playing ball for a while. They are still doing it at a high level. I am very excited to learn from those two guys and trying to soak up everything I can from them.”

On how former NFL player Pat Harlow being his position coach in high school helped his development:

“It definitely helped me in my development as a lineman. I started playing O line pretty late in my career. I started playing my sophomore year of high school. When he came around, he really instilled that pride and passion in O line play into me. I still talk to him to this day. Whatever I need, he always helps me. I was training down in Orange County at my high school, and he helped me out with technique stuff. He is just a great resource to have. He is very knowledgeable. He definitely is an idol of mine, for sure.”



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On his determination to get on the field in college, given he earned a starting position as a freshman after initially planning to redshirt:

“Honestly, like you said, I went in there expecting to redshirt. I was 17 years old. I was 275 pounds at the time. I wanted that year to try to get bigger and learn the offense. When I got in, I learned the offense pretty fast, and it allowed me to play really fast and violent like I like playing. They thought I could contribute to the team that year. I sat down with (former Washington Head) Coach (Chris) Peterson and my O line coach at the time, (former Washington offensive line coach and Colts offensive line coach) Chris Strausser. They gave me a chance and asked me if I wanted to do it. I was like, ‘Hell yeah. I want to play as soon as I can because taking a year off from football sounds horrible (*laughter*).’ I took the chance and I learned a lot that year about how I need to build myself and about how I need to learn how to play. Honestly, it was probably the best thing for me.”

On if he was nervous in the College Football Playoff game against Alabama his freshman year:

“Oh my God. I just turned 18. I kind of blacked out, honestly (*laughter*). It was definitely a great experience, and I learned a lot about what I need to do to get better. It definitely helped me in the long run and in my development as a player.”

On if ever he gets bothered when people mention his height as a disadvantage for where he should or shouldn't play:

“That has been the case since I was getting recruited in high school was my height. It used to bother me back then, but I have learned to embrace it and just use that to fuel how I play and keep that chip on my shoulder because a lot of people do not think I can play at a high level at this height. It helps me play with better leverage. That is what I always tell people. I get under guys a little better, and I try to play with sound technique. I think at the end of the day, it helps me.”

On when he realized he could compete at a high level in college and potentially reach the NFL:

“I think it would be my sophomore in college. After I put some weight on, it made my life a lot easier. I got up to 295 and I was playing really well as a sophomore at guard. At the end of that season, when they told me they were moving me to center, I knew had a chance because that was my natural position. That spring ball and all those reps, I started to realize I can definitely play at the next level and compete. It all dawned on me during that time.”

On if he has watched film of Bitonio and Tretter and how much he looks forward to learning from the veterans:

“I definitely watch their film. I watch tons of NFL tape. It does not matter who and it does not matter what team. I just like watching how those guys play at the next level. They are just sound players. Their technique is always on point. That is definitely something I have taken from both of those guys. They play very well together. You need to have that continuity as an O line. I am more than excited to learn and pick their brains to see how they go about not just on the field but how they carry themselves off the field and what I can learn from that.”

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