

Western Ware

Story by Andy Ellis
Photos by James D. Smith

With the 11th pick of the NFL draft, the Dallas Cowboys made Demarcus Ware the first Trojan ever taken in the first round

Demarcus Ware stood in front of Sartain Hall surrounded by friends, family and well-wishers and grinned from ear to ear. Still wearing his black graduation gown, Ware had become the first in his family to earn a college degree with his bachelor's in business information systems.

Only two weeks before on April 23, Ware had experienced another monumental moment. He became the first Troy University football player to be drafted in the first round of the NFL draft.

The Dallas Cowboys used their first draft pick to take the 6-4, 251-pound Ware with the 11th pick overall.

“(Dallas) Coach (Bill) Parcels called and asked ‘Are you ready to be a Cowboy?’” said Ware, who watched the draft with friends and family in his hometown of Auburn. “When I got that call everyone began to yell. It was like an explosion. Everyone was just so excited.”

Describing his entire family as Cowboys fans, Ware said he was thrilled to

be headed to Dallas.

“I really like the way they key on team chemistry,” the newly-minted Cowboy said. “I like the way Parcels coaches and the determination of the whole team.”

Ware became the 25th player in the history of Trojans football to have his name called during the NFL Draft.

During a conference call following his selection, Ware described his feelings as that of “opening a present at Christmas time” or “going to the fireworks on the Fourth of July.”

Ware truly had reason to celebrate. His lofty draft status probably seemed unlikely as he came out of Auburn High School at an undersized 6-2, 198.

“TROY recruited me and I needed that extra attention that I got here,”

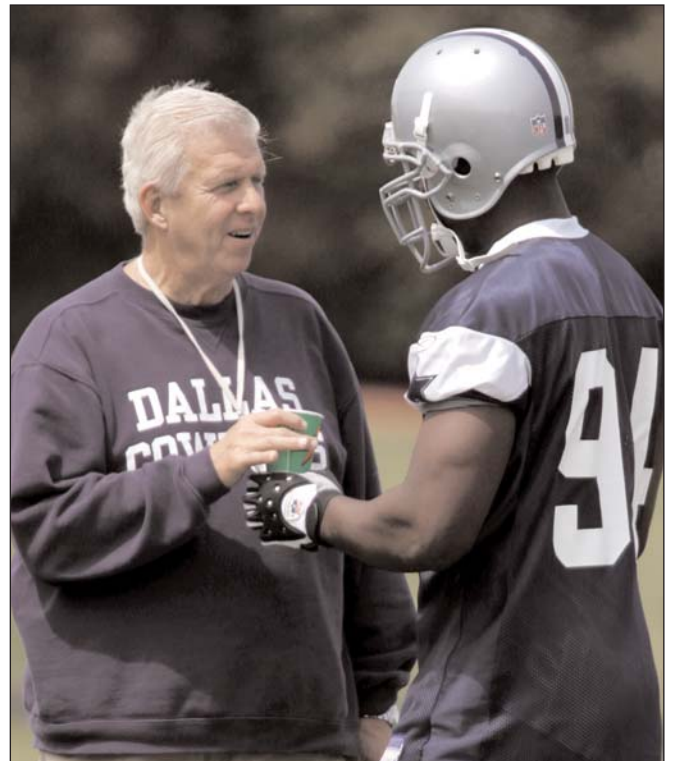
Ware said.

Head Coach Larry Blakeney said the TROY staff thought they had a “find” when they recruited Ware.

“Demarcus Ware is the perfect model of a guy who was overlooked by the big guys, who came in, worked hard and continued to make himself a better player,” Blakeney said. “If we could get every player who comes in here to have the attitude and work ethic of a Demarcus Ware, then we would win every game.”

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Ware speaks with Dallas Cowboys head coach Bill Parcels during the team's first rookie mini-camp of 2005.



Ware believes it was his performance in the Trojans' 24-14 upset of No. 17 Missouri on national television during his senior season that truly began to open the eyes of pro scouts. He recorded only four tackles during the game; however, one was a nine-yard sack and two of them accounted for losses totaling 13 yards. Ware also forced a fumble against the visiting Tigers.

"He certainly had some big games throughout the year and played well every week," Blakeney said. "But, I think the biggest thing was that teams always had to account for where he was on the field and they usually had to put two or three guys on him. Because teams had to account for him, Demarcus caused the other guys to have more opportunities to make some plays."

In a press conference following the first day of the draft, Parcels said he was pleased to have landed Ware.

"He is a 6-4, 250 guy who has very good speed. I was particularly impressed with him against the higher level of competition like LSU," Parcels said. "The TROY program is really on the upswing. They are competing on the Division 1 level full time and have been very competitive against some strong competition."

Cowboys owner Jerry Jones echoed his coach's sentiments, adding that he expects Ware to contribute early.

"When we were able to evaluate him, we saw what an athlete he was, we saw his balance and the strength he has and he's got real speed," Jones said of Ware. "He is very instinctive and has good awareness. He really does see the play and see it quickly. He is extremely athletic, a very smart young man and has strong charac-

Demarcus Ware

Troy University

Career stats

34 starts in 43 games
195 tackles, including 126 solo
27.5 sacks for minus 236 yards
57 stops for losses totaling 251 yards
74 quarterback pressures
10 forced fumbles and 4 fumble recoveries

2004 Accolades

All-Sun Belt Conference Defensive Player of the Year and First Team selection; Finalist for the Ted Hendricks Award presented to the top defensive end in college football



ter. They (TROY) played some tough teams. There is no issue with him being able to come in and compete."

Blakeney is not surprised about the impact TROY is having in the NFL.

"We are able to recruit a high caliber of student-athletes and pro-

vide them with the right environment for success. Having a first-round draft pick will definitely have a positive impact on the football program and athletics as a whole."

Ellis is a University Relations coordinator and editor of the Troy University Magazine.

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and plan to join us for

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November 5, 2005

Florida Atlantic Owls

vs.

TROY Trojans

Movie Gallery Veterans Stadium

Watch for further details!

www.troy.edu