

Sammy ready to ‘shock the world,’ as Boyd, Bryant, Breeland, Thomas look to impress

Kerry Capps - orangeandwhite.com

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Sammy Watkins recently told an NFL website that he’s going to “shock the world” with his 40-yard dash time at the NFL Scouting Combine this week in Indianapolis.

The former Clemson All-American has been training to do just that, working alongside South Carolina’s Bruce Ellington and others at Performance Compound in Tampa, Fla. over the last two weeks.

Watkins, who’s widely projected as a top-five pick, surprised many observers when he announced his intention to participate in a full range and timed drills and skill work during Combine week, which gets underway on Thursday with weigh-in and medical exams for offensive linemen,

tight ends and special teams players. Among that group are Clemson offensive tackle Brandon Thomas and Georgia tight end Arthur Lynch.

Watkins, Ellington, Clemson’s Tajh Boyd and Martavis Bryant, South Carolina’s Connor Shaw and Georgia’s Aaron Murray will go through their check-in activities on Friday, and all but Murray will work out for the scouts on Sunday.

Scheduled for workouts Monday and Tuesday are South Carolina defensive linemen Jadeveon Clowney and Kelcy Quarles, South Carolina safety Victor Hampton and Clemson cornerback Bashaud Breeland.

A total of 335 players accepted invitations to the Combine, which will be attended by coaches, scouts and executives from all 32 NFL teams.

The week’s schedule is staggered by position, but will include the same routine for all: measurements and medicals the first day; interviews, psychological testing and bench press on the second day; with on-field workouts, including timing stations and position-specific skill drills, on the third day.

Clowney and Watkins will be looking to solidify their standing at the top of the draft. Various mock drafts have Clowney in the running as the No. 1 pick, while some have Watkins going as high as No. 4 to the Cleveland Browns or No. 5 to the Oakland Raiders.

“Watkins is a special player - and I usually don’t get too excited about wide receivers in the Top 10, but this kid is different,” said NFL Network analyst Mike Mayock during a teleconference this week. “He’s physically explosive, he’s got great hands, he’s got good size.

“What I really, really liked about this kid is he’s got toughness. He’ll physically beat press coverage. He high points the ball. He’s got a little attitude about him. He blocks people. You can see him getting pissed off during games and going after corners and safeties and linebackers.”

Mayock says that Clowney “has got the physical makeup to be the best player in the draft.”

“If you want to compare him to Mario Williams, I think he’s a better football player with more upside than when Mario came out of college, and he was obviously the first pick,” Mayock said. “From a physical skill set, this kid is as freaky as they come.