

CHECK UP FROM THE NECK UP III

DRAFT PREP!

How NFL teams use psychology to evaluate draft prospects

BY PERFORMANCE PSYCHOLOGIST, DR. RICK PEREA



For over 20 years, I have helped National Football League teams evaluate and select draft prospects from “the neck up.” Each year, I deploy over 300 personality assessments and personally interview over 50 players face-to-face to get a psychological and emotional glimpse into college prospects from all over the country. This “neck-up” evaluation gives NFL teams insight into how a player may perform mentally in an environment that they have never been in before.

HISTORICALLY

For years, teams have evaluated players based on their quantitative assessments — height, weight, speed, quickness, change of direction, et cetera. However, in an effort to improve the probability of selecting and drafting a player that will meet the team’s expectations, they hire practitioners like me to help them make more educated decisions about not only who to select and why, but also to help predict how a player will adapt to changing climates and cultures; we call this “emotional agility.”

NECK-UP

While the NFL will spend millions and millions of dollars assessing the neck down — including how players perform on game day through the measurables mentioned before — assessing from the neck up is what forward-thinking teams are now emphasizing. So many teams make draft day mistakes because they do not necessarily understand how important the mental side of the game is as related to performance, but they are also often unable to employ the right people and methodologies needed to make a selection that makes sense both operationally and financially. The Denver Broncos are a prime example of this process, resulting in players that are cost the team millions of dollars because their draft choices didn’t pan out — or were even a complete bust. Let’s take the quarterback position as an example. The Broncos drafted four quarterbacks — Tim Tebow, Paxton Lynch, Brock Osweiler and Drew Lock — in the first two rounds of the NFL Draft since 2010. How many of those quarterbacks are would you call successful? Were they functional, productive and operational? Or, would you categorize them as complete busts? When a team is willing to spend a first- or second-round pick on a player, from an organizational perspective, they’d better select a sure-fire player that will begin contributing almost immediately — and for years to come.



level of human capital performance. I teach them organizational practices and protocols, including understanding how compassion, fatigue and emotional agility all play a role in their organization. “

Dr. Rick Perea, Ph.D.

I help people in all industries with a unique and creative approach to teaching. On my ThinkOne4You.org website, you can check out testimonials from Broncos legends Von Miller, Demarcus Ware and Emmanuel Sanders, to name only a few. But it’s my work with everyday people in organizations and teams that really changes lives in the real world. I can be present for my clients in a fashionable suit with professionalism to match, or I can be present as your eclectic, fun-loving, compassionate doctor of psychology. Most of my clients prefer the latter, but you can choose for yourself. Either way, I will promise you this: I will work as hard as anyone in the world at helping people, groups, teams and organizations reach their true potential.

Let’s begin the road to shaping your thoughts, so your thoughts don’t shape you.

Dr. Rick Perea, PhD is one of the most energetic and dynamic Performance Psychologists in the nation and is available to help change your life today. Listen to Dr. P and Sandy Clough every Wednesday from 5:30-6:00 pm on Mile High Sports Radio. To get your “Check Up from the Neck Up.”

PERSONALITY ASSESSMENTS

The personality assessments I deploy to measure emotional and psychological acumen are, in essence, quantitative assessments that reflect qualitative outcomes. In other words, I measure five domains that will predict, with a high level of probability, players’ covert and overt communication and behavior skills. We measure players’ communication skills so we can determine how social they are, how perceptive they are, and, perhaps most importantly, how neurotic and conscientious they are. These behavioral constructs make a big difference when players must make decisions both on and off the field. For example, neuroticism defines how “moody” a player is, and will determine how often their mood will change depending on climate and culture; it also measures their perceptual value system. Think of it this way: Every quarterback is going to throw interceptions; it’s an unavoidable fact of the position. However, one of the key factors on how they will succeed in the NFL is how they handle the disappointment of turning the ball over or the frustration of repeatedly stalled offensive drives. In psychology, we use the “10/90” rule: Our lives are defined by the 10 percent of what happens to us, and the 90 percent of how we respond to what happens to us. Most people have this belief reversed, thinking that the experience is what shapes our thoughts. It’s not; how we respond to experiences is truly what shapes our thoughts. In fact, REBT (Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy) stipulates that it’s not the experience that shapes us; it’s the perception of the experience that shapes us. I teach REBT to every high-school, college and NFL quarterback I work with; it teaches them that the interception is just the beginning of the process of regulating communication and behavior.

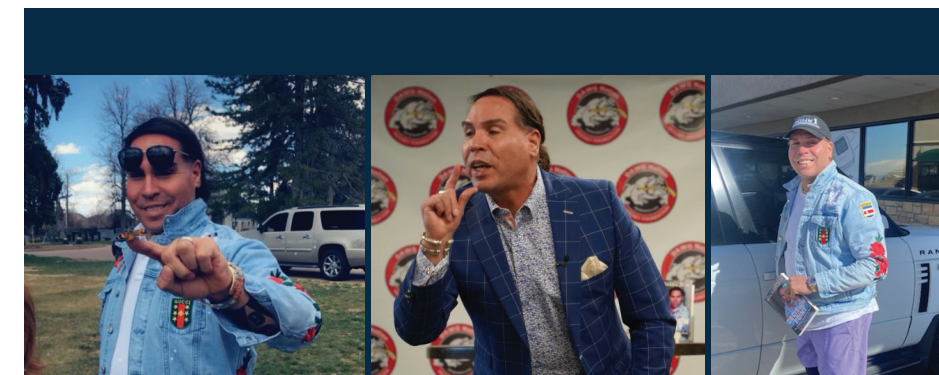
BRINGING NFL EXPERIENCE TO THE CORPORATE AND HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

While Dr. P has won Super Bowls and National Championships as a Performance Psychologist, it is his work with high school athletes and corporations that gives him the most pleasure today.

“I still work in the NFL, MLB and NBA on the individual level, and help NFL teams cultivate and support a ‘culture by design’ as opposed to a ‘culture by default,” says Dr. P. “But I am really into helping high-school athletes and teams reach their potential from the neck up.”

That’s not all, though. Sport is simply one potential application of these same skills.

“I also love helping companies and organizations establish a ‘culture by design’ as opposed to the predominant ‘culture by default.’ Few high-level executives have been taught the ‘culture by design’ methodology,” he says. “It’s illuminating for all parties involved to be able to help an entrepreneur, VP, or CEO take their organization to the next



PEE FUNK Edition

Dr Rick Perea, Ph.D. Edition

Dr PEE FUNK, Ph.D. Edition