

2006 NFL Draft

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Satisfied with pro day performance

By **Matt Leinart Special**
to **ESPN.com**

Editor's note: Former USC QB [Matt Leinart](#) will offer ESPN.com an exclusive look into his life in the days and weeks leading up to the NFL draft (April 29-30).

Pro day was Sunday.

I wanted to go in there and answer any questions scouts or coaches had. People were questioning my arm strength and if I'm athletic enough. I needed to show that I had plenty of arm strength, that I could throw on the run and make all the tough throws. I wanted to show that I was a better athlete than they expected. I think I answered all of that.

It was kind of hard to focus because there were thousands of people there. There was definitely anxiety because the environment and setting is way different than football games. There were a thousand people dead silent for every ball I threw. In football games, there are 90,000 people and you're just playing ball. You have a game every week, whereas here we are basically preparing two or three months of our lives, the most important months of all of our lives, for one single day to not screw it up. You don't want to think that way, but that's the way it really is. All football players say, "That's just what we do, just go out there and be ourselves," but the feeling is definitely a little more intense and uptight. You have very, very important people watching you.

I was initially frustrated following pro day because I am my own toughest critic. I expect perfection from myself, and a couple throws got away from me. I expect to go out there and be the best. Not in a cocky way, but in a confident way because that's my job. Everyone was saying, "You answered all the questions." After thinking about it and listening to the feedback, I started feeling better. I did show them I can move. I jumped 37 inches. I ran around and made some tough throws on the run. People were waiting to see what I could do.

LAND OF THE STARS

USC has been a dominant figure on the college scene the past three seasons. Now, many of those key performers find themselves on the verge of NFL careers. ESPN.com went to USC's pro day to check out the Trojans.

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I feel like a big weight has been lifted off my shoulders. Every USC guy in the draft class has been working extremely hard for the past couple months and everyone did extremely well.

Eighteen of my USC teammates were working out at pro day. It was the last day to be together with the team, unless some of us get drafted by the same organization. It's kind of sad in some sense, but you develop great friendships that are going to last forever regardless of what team you go to. You spend so many days, so many moments, together as a team in college, and it all culminates on that one day. We'll probably work out together up until the draft, but then we'll all go our separate ways. It's exciting because this has been everyone's dream. Now the next dream is to play in the NFL, and we all have the opportunity to do that. We might talk about going on a vacation somewhere before we all move on.

I've been talking to Carson Palmer quite a bit during the past few weeks. We usually play phone tag. We're really good friends, but lately when we talk it's

MATT LEINART

Matt Leinart starred for three seasons at USC, leading the Trojans to two national championships and a 37-2 record in games that he started. In his three season as a starter, Leinart completed 807 of 1,245 passes



(64.8 percent) for 10,693 yards, 99 TDs and just 23 INTs.

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been a lot about football. I have a lot of questions since he's been through the whole process.

Knowing you have to move on is scary and exciting at the same time. It's so crazy because right after the Rose Bowl, it's like the next day -- I'm an adult now. I'm not a kid anymore. I'm a man. I've got to make my own business decisions. No more school. You've got to be smart. I'm more than ready to move on to the next chapter of my life.

Monday morning I was supposed to go to breakfast with Titans head coach Jeff Fischer. We decided to just meet later in the day instead. We went out to dinner Monday night with the Titans coaches and my family. The Titans take out every player they've worked out. The process is new to me, but I think it's standard for what teams do.

I've never been to Tennessee. The L.A. culture is definitely different than Tennessee. It'd be nice to go to the South and experience that.

Being a USC guy, you never want to talk about UCLA, but ever since I was little I've been a UCLA basketball fan because they always have great teams. It sounds funny saying this, but I rooted for them in the national championship game.

On a health note, I have a cold. This cough has just been killing me these past couple days. My body feels fine, but I just need to get some rest. Hopefully the next time you hear from me I'll feel a little better.

We've set up a mailbag and you can [send Matt questions or comments](#).