The players selected in the 2017 NFL draft have had three years to show us what they are capable of. If we could go back in time, Patrick Mahomes would obviously have gone first overall to the Cleveland Browns. However, Mahomes played in the Big 12, a conference notorious for not playing defense, and many felt the Texas Tech product wasn’t ready to start in the NFL right away. At the time it was reasonable why Mahomes fell to the 10th pick for the aforementioned reasons. But why did Deshaun Watson fall to the 12th pick?

In his two seasons as Clemson's starting quarterback, Watson was a Heisman Trophy finalist. Many players put up big numbers, but their teams aren’t successful. That certainly wasn’t the case with Watson. He led his team to two national title games and won one of them.

On top of his great play on the field, Watson was a tremendous leader. His former head coach Dabo Swinney [compared his former quarterback to Michael Jordan](https://www.si.com/college/2017/01/24/dabo-swinney-deshaun-watson-passing-michael-jordan-nfl-draft). With all of those things in mind, why did so many QB needy teams pass on Deshaun Watson in the 2017 draft?

Let’s reevaluate all eleven picks before Watson was selected.

**1. Browns selected Myles Garrett**

At the time the Browns needed a quarterback but they also desperately needed to improve the rest of their roster. Few people questioned the Browns for selecting the best prospect available because of how bad their overall roster was. If Baker Mayfield lives up to his hype, no one will fault the Browns for passing on Watson here.

**2. Bears selected Mitch Tribusky.**

We all know the story here. The Chicago Bears traded up to select Mitch Tribusky, who has been significantly worse than the two quarterbacks selected after him in the first round. The Bears would be perennial Super Bowl contenders with Watson and their great defense. It’s easy for anyone to look back now and question this pick, but why were the Bears so high on Trubisky? I don’t understand why they preferred a one-year starter over a two-time Heisman Trophy finalist and National champion in Deshaun Watson.

**3. 49ers selected Solomon Thomas**

Similar to the Browns, at the time the 49ers lacked a franchise quarterback but also needed to improve the rest of their team. This pick hasn’t worked out for the 49ers, but fortunately for them, they’ve found their quarterback in Jimmy Garoppolo and have built an excellent team around him.

**4. Jaguars selected Leonard Fournette**

It surprises me that this mistake by the Jaguars doesn’t get talked about more. At this point in time, the Jaguars were three years into the Blake Bortles experiment. It was clear that he wasn’t the quarterback they thought he would be. With Watson and their dominant defense, they would have been Superbowl contenders but they opted to take a running back who has averaged just 4 yards per carry through his first three seasons.

**5. Titans selected Corey Davis**

You can’t blame the Titans for not selecting Watson here because Marcus Mariota was coming off of an excellent season where he threw 26 touchdowns and only 9 interceptions.

**6. Jets selected Jamal Adams**

Like the Browns and 49ers, the Jets had both poor quarterback play and a bad overall roster. They decided to take the best player available. Luckily for the Jets, Jamal Adams has become one of the best safeties in the league and Sam Darnold might end up becoming the franchise quarterback they’ve been searching for.

**7. Chargers selected Mike Williams**

The Chargers weren’t going to use their first round pick on a quarterback when they had Philip Rivers.

**8. Panthers select Christain Mccaffrey**

In 2017 the Panthers quarterback was Cam Newton, who was one year removed from winning the MVP award and taking his team to the Super Bowl. Carolina used this pick on Christain Mccaffrey, who has become arguably the best running back in football.

**9. Bengals select John Ross**

At the time Andy Dalton was one year removed from leading the Bengals to five consecutive playoff appearances. Cincinnati used this pick on Ross, who has been very disappointing.

**10. Chiefs select Patrick Mahomes**

If you were starting a team from scratch, Patrick Mahomes is the only player from this draft that you would start a team with over Deshaun Watson.

**11. New Orleans Saints selected Marshon Lattimore**

Could the Saints have taken Watson here to be Brees' successor? Turns out they didn’t need to since Brees has given the Saints three excellent seasons since this draft and is still going strong.

The twelfth pick was FINALLY when Deshaun Watson was taken. After years of searching the Houston Texans finally found their franchise quarterback. Despite everything Watson showed at Clemson, he fell all the way to the 12th pick.