



Eli Cox's experience and maturity have him moving up the draft boards of several NFL teams. (Photo submitted)

Cox working his way up NFL boards

BY LARRY VAUGHT
Contributing Writer

Coming off a 4-8 season at Kentucky, offensive lineman Eli Cox has still found a way to move his name up the NFL draft lists.

Kentucky associate coach Vince Marrow, UK's NFL liaison, said NFL scouts tell him Cox reminds them of former UK lineman Luke Fortner, who is with the Jacksonville Jaguars. Marrow says they also like that Cox played under offensive coordinators Liam Coen and Rich Scangarello, who both have NFL experience.

Cox got NFL scouts' attention with his performance at the Hula Bowl and then the former West Jessamine High School player turned a lot of heads at the NFL Combine in Indianapolis. He scored 9.97 on the Relative Athletic Score (RAS) out of a possible 10 — the third best mark out of 622 centers from 1987 to 2025.

The 6-4, 306-pound Cox also ran the 40-yard dash in 5.05 seconds and completed the 20-yard shuttle in 4.58 seconds. He also had strong numbers in the vertical jump (32 1/2 inches) and long jump (9 feet, 1 inch). ESPN draft guru Mel Kiper moved Cox up on his draft board after the combine.

Cox started 47 games at Kentucky and played over 3,000 snaps in his 56 career games.

"The scouts like that he is a veteran. He's a married guy and is very mature, very smart," Marrow said. "Playing under Liam and Rich are both big pluses for him and could pay off on draft day."

Bill Miller of NFLdraftbuzz.com calls Cox a "solid contributor with the potential to carve out a role as a swing interior lineman at the next level" and believes his SEC experience and

"positional versatility" will appeal to run-oriented NFL teams.

"While not an elite athlete, Cox's technical proficiency and high character should allow him to contribute in a backup capacity early in his career. To maximize his potential, he'll need to improve his recognition of complex blitz packages and refine his technique when blocking in space. His leadership qualities will be an asset in NFL position rooms," Miller noted.

NFL.com also cites Cox's positional flexibility as a huge asset going into the draft and also likes the way he stays "connected with his block" even into the second level.

Bleacher Report's NFL's report likes the way Cox "understands spacing and depth in pass protection" and that he plays with "natural leverage."

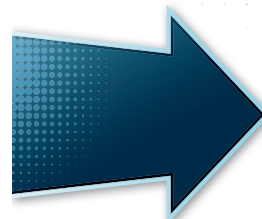
The New York Giants, Chicago and Las Vegas have all been projected as potential landing spots for Cox. Several teams apparently have reached out for additional interviews or even workouts and more likely will do that before draft April 24-25. Cox likely will be third day pick based on current mock drafts.

"He had good conversations with a lot of scouts at the Hula Bowl and a lot of good interviews at the NFL Combine where he talked to all but three or four teams," John Cox said. "He loves interviews with coaches where they just talk football and he says he can do that until the cows come home. He loves talking football."

"Eli might not be the most talented player on the field or at the combine but nobody will work harder to prepare at the time of the game, combine or pro day to prove that he belongs. I think we all always felt he was capable of being a draft pick and it has been great to see the attention he is now getting.



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