

# Brad Jones: The Key To the Green Bay<sup>by</sup> Packers' Defensive Success In 2010

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When the Packers selected Brad Jones in the 7th round of the 2009 NFL Draft, they were hoping for at best a player who could contribute on special teams and provide depth on the roster as a player who was experienced with the 3-4 defense. Everything changed when Aaron Kampman tore his ACL in week 9 against Tampa Bay. The next week no one knew what to expect in a must-win game against Dallas. Jones came out with 7 tackles (all solo) and showed incredible awareness and coverage abilities for a rookie (especially a 7th rounder). He went on to finish the season with 33 tackles and 4 sacks, which projects out to about 56 tackles and 8 sacks for a full 16 game season as a starter. Statistically, the defense got better when Jones started, but everyone still wished Kampman had stayed healthy.

As a UFA, the Jacksonville Jaguars signed Aaron Kampman to play his more natural position of a 4-3 DE. That led many to assume that the team would draft an OLB like Sergio Kindle or Brandon Graham to replace Kampman. However, the Packers did not go this route. They decided to stick by Jones and let him compete for and most likely win the starting job at ROLB for the 2010 season.

So what do we know about Brad Jones? We've already seen that he is a very intelligent player with great awareness and a good knowledge of the game. He showed that he has pretty good coverage skills as well. However, there are 2 areas that will be critical for this upcoming season: His ability to stop the run and of course, getting to the QB.

Against the run last season, Jones did fairly well, but there are some concerns about his strength being that he only weighs about 240 lbs. The one asset he does have going for him is his speed. Jones ran an insane 4.49 40 yard dash at his Colorado pro day last year and has shown that he has the quickness to not only chase down speedy backs like Ray Rice but also get around the edge and to the QB.

One of Brad Jones' most impressive plays last season came in the game against Baltimore in week 13. He used his speed to blow straight past Michael Oher and get the 1st sack of his career. As seen earlier in this article, Brad Jones was on around an 8 or 9 sack season pace in his short late season

stint as a starter. If he can do that this year, watch out! If he can even improve that and capitalize on the one on one battles he will have thanks to Clay Matthews wreaking havoc on the other side, Jones could elevate this defense to the best in the league.

At only 24 years old and heading into his second season in the NFL, the future looks bright for Brad Jones. It is yet to be seen whether or not he can take the next step and elevate his game, but no matter how you look at it, Brad Jones is one of (if not the most) important player on the Green Bay Packers defense for this upcoming 2010 season, which should be a good one. This is pretty impressive from the 218th pick in the 2009 draft.

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