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Prospect Q&A: Colorado's Jalil Brown

By Dan Parr, [ProFootballWeekly.com](#) Mar 23, 3:15 pm EDT

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With a little more than five weeks to go before the NFL draft, PFW recently caught up with one of the two Colorado cornerbacks expected to be selected in April,



Jalil Brown, who led the Buffaloes in interceptions (three) last season. He's continuing to prepare for meetings with teams — Brown was headed to a workout as soon as he got off the phone with us.

We spoke about his upbringing in Phoenix, Ariz. Brown, one of six kids (three boys and three girls) in his family, said he was home-schooled and taught by his mother, Chalette, until his senior year of high school. We also asked him how concerned teams should be about the character issues attached to his college teammate and fellow draft prospect, CB Jimmy Smith. Smith has first-round talent, but he could slide in the draft. Character is considered to be one of Brown's strengths, though, and it could attract teams to him.

Brown, who has been busy this offseason competing at the Senior Bowl and the Combine, is projected to be drafted in the third or fourth round by PFW draft expert Nolan Nawrocki.

PFW: How has going through the draft process thus far affected you and how anxious are you to get to Draft Day?

Brown: This process has been very interesting. It's obviously my childhood dream to play in the NFL and being able to literally almost reach out and grasp it has been awesome for me. ... The last five or six years I've been watching the Combine on TV and I'm thinking, 'That's where I want to be. I want to go to Indianapolis and perform at Lucas Oil Stadium.' Actually being there and looking from the inside-out vs. outside-in — it was really an awesome experience. It was really gratifying for me, but at the same time, there was a lot of hectic stuff going on. Interviews all day, meeting with team doctors, everybody pulling on you, pushing on you, meeting with psychologists and doing interviews. There was so much going on that you were like, 'Man, I need a break.' It's funny because when you first get there you're thinking, 'OK, I'm a little nervous about running my 40 and doing my bench-press and vertical.' But it actually got to the point where I was like, 'Let me go ahead and show what I can do with the physical part and leave the interviewing and the mental part alone because there's so much going on.' Sometimes you're up at five in the morning doing a urine test and don't get to bed until 11:30 (p.m.) because of interviews.

PFW: Was there a common theme in interviews with teams? Was there something every team seemed to be bringing up with you?

Brown: A lot of teams were very excited about my size and speed and the character I have. I haven't been in any trouble. No arrests, no suspensions, none of that. So they were trying to find out, 'OK, is this really you?' At the same time, a lot of teams were asking, 'You're a good kid, you haven't been in trouble, but are you a tough guy?' I talked to them about that. I let them know that I was a team captain, so obviously teammates saw that I was a guy who could lead them. They wouldn't want a guy who wasn't tough. They pretty much try to rattle you and see if you're going to break and see how you respond to different things. It's your job to keep a level head.

PFW: You told me you were home-schooled until your final year in high school. How was that experience? Did you ever wish you were in a different school setting?

Brown: Looking back, I think (home-schooling) was a pretty good thing. My mom, she basically did it because she wanted to keep me and my siblings close together as a family. She wanted to raise us without any outside influences from other teachers and students. With the way that the world is going today, I think it was pretty positive. It's so easy to fall into trouble and get caught up in the wrong things. For her to do that was good for me. It kept me focused. It taught me how to be disciplined because you pretty much have to teach yourself a lot of things. My mom was there to tell you what to do, but you have to understand your own schedule and make sure you're up to par. Even going into college it helped me out because a lot of the students got caught up in this whole new lifestyle. Parents aren't there, you can do whatever you want. For me, I realized I had to get my work done and be on top of things. When it was time to study, I was in there studying. I had to get that part done before I was able to do other things. It definitely helped me become the person I am today. I'm very disciplined and dedicated to whatever I'm doing.

PFW: How would you describe your mom's teaching style?

Brown: Early on she was pretty lenient on us, but as we started to get older, she became pretty disciplined. She was definitely one of our toughest critics. She was trying to make sure she developed us into being a successful human being able to make the transition into life and do well in life. ... A lot of people think when you're home-schooled there's no studying, you're at recess all day. There was none of that. It was studying, do your work, get it done — there's no ifs, ands or buts about it. At times I wanted to be around other kids and go to public school and interact with them. It seemed fun, but at the same time, I played sports my whole life. I ran track, played basketball and football, so I was around other kids. It wasn't like I was shut up in a hole, no interaction with other people.

PFW: What was the classroom at home like?

Brown: When we were young, you could be in the living room, lay down, chill and relax, but when we got older, there was a lot more talking and instruction going on. She would kind of break us up. One person would be at their desk in a room, one person would be in the dining room, family room, living room. It was kind of spaced out. During the time we were doing work you had to be focused and on top of your work, but in between when we'd take a break, we could interact. My mom would take us to the park. We even had field trips, if you will. There were a lot of kids in the same area whose parents home-schooled them as well and they formed a home-schooling group. They set up things for kids to go to museums, art shows, all that kind of stuff.

PFW: I've been reading scouting reports on you, and the scouts have a lot of good things to say about you, but one thing people question are your hands. What's your reaction when you hear people say you don't have good ball skills?

Brown: My whole career in football I had always been known as a kid with good hands. ... It all came about my junior season. I don't know what it was. We sat down, me and my coach, and I legitimately dropped about nine interceptions. I don't know what it was. Maybe after the first couple times I (had a drop) I started thinking about it too much. I would concentrate on catching it almost to the point where it would throw me off. I think that's where the question about ball skills comes in. When it came to practice, I had very good hands. You watch me at the Combine, I caught all the passes that were thrown my way. I wouldn't say ball skills is a problem. ... There was a little period where I had trouble completing the catch.

PFW: There have been reports that some teams are taking one of your teammates from Colorado, Jimmy Smith, off their draft board. They have some concerns about his character (Smith was arrested twice for underage alcohol possession as an underclassman). Should teams be concerned about what they're getting with Jimmy?

Brown: Jimmy Smith is a great athlete, great person. I enjoyed having the opportunity to play alongside an athlete of Jimmy Smith's caliber. He was a great player. It was great to have somebody that was pushing me and driving me to get

better. He can help any team he goes to. The whole season, it got to the point where quarterbacks couldn't just sit back and throw to the side where the quarterback isn't as good. They had to play it honest, so we both had balls thrown our way. He's a great physical specimen. He has all the tools. Early on in his career, he did have some character issues. He got into a little trouble, which is not a secret. I think as he grew, he did mature and developed into a positive human being. Everyone makes mistakes when they're younger. Maybe he made a few more, but he did make a step in the right direction of becoming more mature.

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