The first round will begin at 8 p.m. Thursday. Teams will have 10 minutes to make selections in the first round. In 2011, the first round lasted three hours and 30 minutes. Thus, the first round is expected to end at approximately 11:30 p.m. on Thursday.

By JAMES W. WADE III

Staff Reporter

The2012 NFL Draft will be the 77th annual meeting of National Football League (NFL) franchises to select newly eligible football players. The draft, which is officially called the "NFL Player Selection Meeting," will be held at
Radio City Music Hall
inNew York City on April 26-28, 2012.

The Indianapolis Colts , who compiled the league's worst record in the 2011 season, have the

right to the first selection. Since May 2011, Stanford quarterback Andrew Luck has been the presumptive favorite to be selected number one overall in the 2012 draft by the team holding the first pick.

Time is a ticking for the Cleveland Browns . This once-proud franchise has fallen on hard times, as evidenced by its 9-23 record over the last two seasons. Since Cleveland re-entered the league in 1999, the Browns have had two winning seasons and made just one playoff appearance.

Should the Browns, who have the number 4 pick, choose a defensive player? That would mean most likely selecting cornerback Morris Claiborne out of LSU. Claiborne comes with some questions, the chief being what caused him to score a "4"on the Wonderlic at the NFL scouting combine. But he's highly touted and would make a nice tandem with Browns current cornerback Joe Haden.

Browns General Manager Tom Heckert gave his thoughts on if he still feels the need to acquire future draft picks during the draft. "We always like to stay where we're at, but if we think we can get a similar type of player and get something for it I just don't understand why not. Why wouldn't you do that? It has nothing to do with building for the future; I think it's just smart. The more draft picks you have the better off you are going to be. Everyone knows it's a crap shoot sometimes. The more chances you have in there the better chances you are going to get a good player. I'll always feel that way. Now, to trade just to trade, I don't think we've ever done that and I would never do that. I don't care what our record or depth is or any of that stuff. If there is a good football player we are going to take him, unless someone offers something that makes sense for us."

Maybe the smart way for the Browns to go with their first pick is defense. Eyes will also be on the Cincinnati Bengals with their picks.

The Bengals still need help at receiver as they head into a draft that gives them a lot of options. They have two picks in the first round on Thursday the 17th and 21st overall and three in the fifth round on Saturday. There are other holes to fill they could use an offensive guard and a cornerback, and might be in the market for a running back but none stands out more starkly than getting someone to catch the ball.

They got the extra first-round pick as part of the deal that sent quarterback Carson Palmer to Oakland during the season, a trade that didn't help the Raiders as much as they would have liked. Now, the Bengals get to cash in.

They can also use a running back when they allowed Cedric Benson to leave as a free agent. They signed BenJarvus Green-Ellis from New England, but could draft a running back to add to the competition for the starting job.

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The draft continues at 7 p.m. Friday, when the second and third rounds will take place. Teams will have seven minutes to make selections in the second round, and five minutes in the third round. Last year, the second and third rounds lasted four hours and 15 minutes, so Friday's expected end time is approximately 11:15 p.m.

The draft will resume on Saturday at noon for the final four rounds. Teams will have five minutes to make selections in each of the final four rounds. Rounds 4 through 7 in 2011 lasted seven hours and 23 minutes. Thus, the draft's conclusion is expected to be approximately 7:30 p.m. Saturday.

Both NFL Network and ESPN will televise the draft in its entirety all three days.