

## **LINEMAN'S STRENGTH: HIS ARMS**

**BY PAUL KUHARSKY  
THE TENNESSEAN  
APRIL 27, 2008**

**PAGE: 6C**

The Titans said Jason Jones is a versatile, NFL-ready defensive lineman, a player who will help make up for the free-agent losses of Antwan Odom, Travis LaBoy and Randy Starks.

And because of a wingspan that will be second only to that of defensive end Jevon Kearse — Jones' arms measure 35 inches from tip of his fingers to his shoulder — the Titans said the Eastern Michigan product should be able to impact a good share of plays on which he doesn't even touch the quarterback.

"Everybody always charts sacks and things like that," Titans defensive coordinator Jim Schwartz said. "But you can win the play defensively without getting a sack when you have long arms.

"He gets a hand in the quarterback's face and the quarterback has to adjust a little bit, which buys time for the coverage, which buys time for the rest of the rush. Plus in the run game, he uses his arms and his hands extremely well."

The Titans might have been preparing to take Texas receiver Limas Sweed with the 54th pick, but he went to the Steelers 53rd overall. The Titans turned their attention to Jones, who was the highest-rated player left on their board, according to Coach Jeff Fisher.

The Titans love Jones' versatility and envision him as part of their rotation right away, Fisher said. They believe he can be sturdy against the run as an early-down end and has pass-rush skills that can be developed. If so, he becomes a third-down interior line

option who ends up at tackle fulltime later in his career.

"He solves a couple different issues for us," General Manager Mike Reinfeldt said.

Jones said he got a good vibe from the Titans during and after a visit to Baptist Sports Park, but also thought the Vikings or Buccaneers might take him. He thought he could go in the latter part of the second round, he said.

"I feel excited right now to be a Tennessee Titan," Jones said. "I've been playing cards, I've been sweating all day. When it got to the second round I was getting kind of nervous and anxious, but I'm so happy now."

At the end of his high school career in Detroit, Jones thought his athletic future might be in basketball. He accepted a football scholarship to Eastern Michigan, however, and majored in engineering.

As a freshman he played tight end and caught four passes. Then he moved to the defensive line in 2005 and accumulated 174 tackles, 46.5 tackles for a loss and 14 sacks over the remainder of his college career.

### **Local experience**

Jones spent the months before February's NFL Scouting Combine working out at D-1 Sports Training in Franklin. He said he got a good sense of Nashville during his stay.

Jones talked excitedly about being able to learn from Titans linemen Kyle Vanden Bosch, Albert Haynesworth and Kearse. Jones said he's a raw player anxious to discover the keys to better technique from Titans defensive line coach Jim Washburn.

"Hopefully he'll help me become a great defensive lineman in the NFL," Jones said. "He said I had natural talent, natural ability and he said with his coaching he could get me there. I'm a very raw person right now, I know my technique

needs to be improved but I feel with his help and my athletic ability we can make things happen."

###