

The Daily Californian

[Players Anxiously Await Results of NFL Draft](#)

Fujita and Wife Take Things One Step at a Time

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Staff/Sean Boyd

Scott Fujita progressed from scout team to starter and overcame a major neck injury before finding himself facing a possible future in the NFL.

By the end of this weekend, Jaclyn Fujita can look forward to not supporting her 6-foot-5, 245-pound husband.

Scott Fujita is no deadbeat husband by any stretch. He's wrapping up his master's in education this spring after earning his degree in political science last May.

But when you're a college football player, a monthly scholarship check doesn't go a long way in supporting two people. So while admiring the white Ford Expedition he gets around in, he is quick to point out its Jaclyn-a personal banker who graduated last year-that is the one to make sure the couple's wheels are on the road and kept up.

After the upcoming NFL Draft which begins Saturday, Scott will be in line to do more than his fair share. If anyone deserves to be happier than him, it's Jaclyn.

"It's a good for trade for me," she says.

After starting at outside linebacker for the last two seasons, Scott is on the cusp of taking the first step to making an NFL roster.

For the most part, he is rated as one of the top-10 outside backers available. But he is remaining level-headed entering the weekend. While Jaclyn, friends and other family are excited as can be, Scott sees the two-day affair as the first phase of what he hopes is a 10-12 year pro career.

"I took everything one step at a time," Scott says of his climb from walk-on to NFL prospect. "It's just a slow progression."

He went from the scout team in 1997 to an honorable mention All-Pac-10 performer in his junior and senior seasons.

The progression to the pros wasn't on the minds of the couple when they wed on July 17, 1999.

"When we got married I didn't even know it was in the picture," Jaclyn says. "He wasn't even starting."

Scott admits that on Saturday, he'll be "nervous as heck" until he hears his name called. He plans to watch the draft, possibly charting who goes where to see if the teams interested in him take outside linebackers.

He's been answering a lot of questions leading up the Draft. Team executives want to know about that

notorious 2001 season for Cal.

They ask about his neck surgery in 2000. Team doctors poke, prod and look at X-rays to see what Scott already knows-everything is fine.

"Every single team twisted and tugged and X-rayed it and everything's fine," Scott says. "Now its not even an issue, which is the way it should have been."

On the field, Scott wasn't always able to display his full athletic abilities. His responsibilities in Cal's scheme usually kept him locked on a tight end. But he opened eyes at workouts, running as low as a 4.43 40-yard dash time by some stopwatches.

"I ran pretty well by everyone else's standards," Scott says. "I was hoping to run a little better at the combines."

The electronic timer had Fujita in at 4.59. He also impressed with a 42-inch vertical leap.

Scott's athleticism is getting him looks from some organizations as a pass-rushing defensive end/outside backer. Last season Baltimore Raven Peter Boulware played this hybrid role. And in the NFL, copycats are the norm. Just look at how many versions of the West Coast offense are in the league.

Also, after seeing the success the New England Patriots had in using the 3-4 defensive alignment, more teams will be looking for more backers. In these four linebacker sets, outside backers need to be adept at getting to the quarterback.

Though he never played end in college, Scott doesn't see why lining up in a three-point stance would be a problem.

"I think I could," Scott says. "A lot of teams want me to, kind of like (former Cal linebacker) Sekou (Sanyika) does with the Cardinals."

The Raiders, San Francisco, New England, St. Louis, the New York Giants, Minnesota and Atlanta have expressed interest in Scott's services.

Lately, the New York Jets, Miami and Jacksonville have left messages. Scott realizes there's no telling where he'll end up. He's expected to go anywhere from the second to fourth round. But he knows not even that is set in stone.

Sanyika was expected to go about the same time in the 2000 Draft and ended up being one of the final players selected overall.

Two years later, Sanyika is still with Arizona, the team that drafted him. He's seen his role increase on special teams as well as on defense.

Wherever Scott ends up, Jaclyn is ready to move to destination unknown. The couple have lived in California their entire lives and grew up together. Jaclyn went to his games in high school, but they didn't begin dating until college.

While Scott was at Cal, Jaclyn was attending San Diego State. She later transferred to San Francisco State.

The possibility of a "real winter" intrigues them. Scott, who never played in a bowl game at Cal, is looking forward to playing in December and January, knowing that in today's NFL, anyone can play deep into the

postseason.

"It's pretty nerve-wracking," Jaclyn says. "I know I'm moving, I just don't know where to."

They'll know this weekend where to have their mail forwarded to. Then it will be Scott's turn to take care of Jaclyn.

They wouldn't have it any other way.