

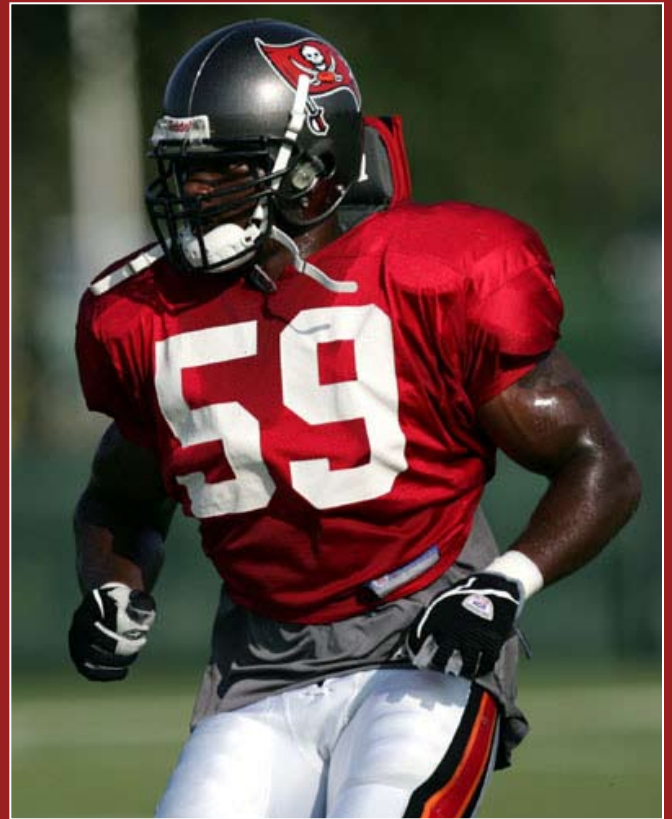
Finding His Strengths (excerpts from a Buccaneers.com feature)

Jermaine Taylor could very well become the first Bridgewater alum in the NFL, but that certainly wasn't what he had in mind when he chose the small, Christian college of fewer than 1,500 undergraduates. Somewhere along the way, he recognized a very serious capability – the scouts who started nosing around in his junior season were something of a tip-off – and he expanded his vision of the future to include the possibility of a career in the NFL.

“When I graduated from high school I didn't think I'd end up here, to be honest with you,” said Taylor, the last player to trudge off the Tampa Bay Buccaneers' practice field after a recent team session. “My main focus was education and I wanted to go to a small college and get that one-on-one experience with the professors, which I did get at Bridgewater. I was able to excel in football and track while I was there – I was blessed with that – and that gave me an opportunity to become a free agent for Green Bay, which brought me to the NFL. I know it's pretty tough to get into and I was very grateful for the opportunity.”

Taylor made it tough for the scouts to avoid that 15-minute drive down from JMU. Over four seasons as a starter he led the Eagles to a 45-6 record, earned conference player of the year honors twice and set a school record with 148 tackles as a senior. Oh, Taylor also won the conference championship in the 100-meter dash for three years running, which plays no small part in why the scouts were intrigued. Even on the NFL level, Taylor is fast for his position, and that makes him a particularly interesting prospect for the Buccaneers, who have long valued range and instincts over size at linebacker.

You could say that Taylor has definitely “recognized his capabilities.” Now he needs the Buccaneers to come to the same conclusion.



“In the end the real value of a program is judged by its product. Although wins are important, even great programs should be just one important part of the total college experience. In Jermaine I think Bridgewater has shown it has the balance well set. If you are NFL level they will find you here, but an educated athlete can treat football as a bonus, and be secure both on and off of the field.”

~Coach Clark

« Jermaine is now working for Raymond James in Tampa in their Computer Systems Department and is going to graduate school. While with the Bucs, he participated in an internship program which led to his post football job.