

Rookie Specialists

by Mike Herman, exclusive to Footballguys.com

Last year, two rookies place-kicked in the NFL (Ryan Succop and Graham Gano). In 2008 there were five (Connor Barth, Dan Carpenter, Garrett Hartley, Steve Hauschka and Taylor Mehlhaff). In the early stages of 2010, it appears that Hunter Lawrence and Garrett Lindholm may have the best shot of joining that group.

Although three punters were drafted this year as noted below, the majority of the specialist signings occurred in the hours just after the draft (as is usual). NFL teams have signed the following rookie kickers, punters, and snappers as undrafted free agents or invited them to an upcoming rookie minicamp.

Atlanta Falcons

- longsnapper [Justin Drescher](#) (Colorado)
- kicker [Garrett Lindholm](#) (Tarleton State), who will challenge Matt Bryant and/or Steve Hauschka

Baltimore Ravens

- longsnapper [Morgan Cox](#) (Tennessee)

Carolina Panthers

- kicker [Aaron Pettrey](#) (Ohio State), who will serve as a camp leg and understudy to John Kasay and likely will compete with Todd Carter for a kickoff specialist role
- punter [Blake Haudan](#) (Minnesota)

Chicago Bears

- long snapper [Tom Harrington](#) (Western Michigan) invited to minicamp
- punter [Desi Cullen](#) (Connecticut) invited to minicamp
- kicker [Mike Salerno](#) (Northern Illinois) invited to minicamp
- kicker/punter [Tom Mante](#) (Yale) invited to minicamp

Cincinnati Bengals

- longsnapper [Mike Windt](#) (Cincinnati)

Cleveland Browns

- kicker [Leigh Tiffin](#) (Alabama) invited to minicamp
- kicker [Chris Ulinksy](#) (Utah State) invited to minicamp



Dallas Cowboys

- punter/kicker [Delbert Alvarado](#) (South Florida)

Indianapolis Colts

- kicker [Brett Swenson](#) (Michigan State), who will serve as a camp leg and understudy to Adam Vinatieri

Jacksonville Jaguars

- punter [Robert Malone](#) (Fresno State)

Kansas City Chiefs

- kicker [Austin Signor](#) (Eastern Illinois) invited to minicamp

New England Patriots

- drafted Michigan punter [Zoltan Mesko](#) with the 19th pick in the 5th round... he's the favorite for the job over recently signed Aussie punter David King

New Orleans Saints

- longsnapper [Clint Gresham](#) (TCU)
- RUMORED: kicker [Eric Perri](#) (Jackson State)

New York Giants

- drafted East Carolina punter [Matt Dodge](#) with the 14th pick of the 7th round
- the pick gained further explanation when it came to light that veteran punter [Jeff Feagles](#) is strongly considering retiring

San Diego Chargers

- punter [Cort Johnson](#) (West Texas A&M)

San Francisco 49ers

- longsnapper [Matt Wigley](#) (San Jose State) invited to minicamp
- punter & kickoff specialist [Philip Zavala](#) (San Jose State) invited to minicamp

Tampa Bay Buccaneers

- drafted Virginia Tech punter [Brent Bowden](#) with the 3rd pick in the 6th round... incumbent punter Sam Paulescu was subsequently released
- kicker [Hunter Lawrence](#) (Texas) will challenge incumbent kicker Connor Barth

