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## Bush picks Segal as agent

By Darren Rovell  
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For Reggie Bush, picking an agent was anything but an easy process. But the USC running back, who announced today he will turn pro, feels he has the right man for the job.

Bush selected Joel Segal to represent him in contract negotiations. He is still considering candidates to negotiate his marketing deals.

Bush said at a news conference that Segal was "a strong agent who will do a great job in representing me."

The fight to represent Bush was likely the most intense battle ever over the representation of any potential NFL star. Bush's agent audition derby was originally conducted by Reebok consultant Mike Ornstein, but USC football coach Pete Carroll soon took over, and a different set of agents emerged as favorites.

Sources said the final round of talks included conversations with agents about their willingness to reduce their standard 3 percent commission on contract negotiations to as low as 1 percent. Assuming Bush earns a top overall pick and a signing bonus of around \$25 million, and if Segal takes 1 percent, the agent's cut would be \$250,000. Segal, who represents Atlanta Falcons quarterback Michael Vick, could not immediately be reached for comment.

ESPN.com's Len Pasquarelli reported on Dec. 21 that, from an original contingent of seven potential agents, Bush and his advisors had narrowed the possible representatives to three: Segal, Todd France and Leigh Steinberg. But the composition of the finalists group quickly changed in the ensuing days and Pasquarelli reports that the three agents who made presentations to Bush on Monday in Los Angeles were Segal, David Dunn of Athletes First, and Ben Dogra of SFX Sports.

It's still not clear who will be handling Bush's marketing. Sources tell ESPN.com that Athletes First, which represents former USC quarterbacks Carson Palmer and Matt Cassel, is in the running with Ornstein for the job.

Bush's marketing contract actually might be worth more over time than his contract with an agent, depending on whether Bush is given any up-front marketing guarantees. Bush could earn approximately \$800,000 in marketing deals right off the bat, and the marketing agent's take is usually between 20 and 25 percent.

Sports marketers have praised Bush's flash on the field and his poise off of it this year, which could help him attract a healthy portfolio of companies in the early going.

"Reggie has done a really good job this year in proving that he can shine in the limelight," said David Carter, executive director of the Sports Business Institute at USC. "Being that he was in Los Angeles and he learned by watching and doing what Matt Leinart did, he already has gone through the sports marketing equivalent of his rookie year."

But Bush's national marketing appeal, as with others before him, also will depend on how well he and his team do in the future. Bush, like his teammate Leinart, will have two different agencies working for him. Leinart signed with Creative Artists Agency to represent him in his marketing and licensing deals. The quarterback has not yet announced who will do his contract work.

"I don't think there has been a draft that I can remember that has three more dazzling pre-packaged stars coming out of the top of the draft," said superagent Leigh Steinberg, who is in the hunt to represent Leinart for contract negotiations. "The competition is so fierce, it's like Star Wars. Reggie is a human highlight show, Leinart is a movie star and Vince Young is dazzling."

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