

Manziel wows elder Bush, others at pro day

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COLLEGE STATION, Texas (AP) — Johnny Manziel's NFL pro day had a former president, lots of swag, a Drake soundtrack and even some football, too.

The 2012 Heisman Trophy winner threw for 75 officials from 30 teams on the Texas A&M campus Thursday.

He also had some special guests, as former President George H.W. Bush and wife Barbara — and her two dogs — rolled into the facility on golf carts about 10 minutes into the workout.

The always flashy Manziel was true to his over-the-top Johnny Football persona, trotting into the facility with his receivers as a tune by his buddy Drake blasted through the building. He wore camouflage shorts, a black Nike jersey with his white No. 2 and caused a stir by wearing shoulder pads and a helmet.

Manziel didn't understand why it was a big deal.

"You play the game in shoulder pads on Sundays," he said. "Why not come out and do it? ... For me it was a no-brainer."

Manziel threw about 65 passes to six receivers, including A&M teammate Mike Evans, who like Manziel is expected to be a first round pick in the May draft. Only two passes weren't caught and Evans grabbed a third long pass out of bounds.

"I felt like it was good," Manziel said. "(I) was obviously going for perfection. So had a couple balls hit the ground. One was on me. One was a little bit high. I could've got it down for him a little bit."

Quarterback guru George Whitfield ran the workout. Manziel has worked with Whitfield

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throughout his career and has spent a big chunk of the last 2½ months working with him in California. Whitfield raved about his competitiveness.

"This wasn't just merely a set of routes that he was just going to go through and throw," Whitfield said. "It just feels like ... life is riding on every pass with him."

Eight NFL general managers and eight head coaches were among the group, including Texans general manager Rick Smith and coach Bill O'Brien. Houston has the top overall pick in the draft. Smith and O'Brien liked what they saw from Manziel, but both cautioned that this is just one step in a long process.

"He made the throws that you look for and that you wanted to see so it was good," Smith said. "It's just a part of it and it was impressive."

Manziel, who started at A&M for two seasons, planned to meet with several teams on Thursday afternoon after the workout.

Several coaches were impressed that Manziel called all the NFL officials onto the field at the end of his workout to personally thank them for coming.

"College Station's a little bit of a tricky spot to get to," he said. "For me to call those guys up, just wanted to speak on my behalf as well as the six guys behind me and thank them for coming out."

Tampa Bay coach Lovie Smith, who grew up in Big Sandy, Texas, enjoyed seeing Bush at the event.

"That's a first, a workout with an ex-president," Smith said. "But they do things a little differently in Texas, which is a good thing, me being a Texan."

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Bush sat in his golf cart during the event and posed for pictures with dozens of people afterward. But Secret Service agents shooed away reporters looking to talk to the 41st president.

Manziel said he didn't notice when Bush came in.

"No," he said. "I was trying to go 65 for 65."

Several more Drake songs played after his introductory one and he looked loose during the workout, at times bobbing his head, covered in the matte black helmet, to the beats. There was a brief hitch in the playlist, though. When he began the workout the explicit and expletive-laden versions of the songs were played. When the 89-year-old Bush entered the building, the soundtrack quickly switched to an edited version of the same songs.

He worked under center, making throws of all distances, on the run and in the pocket. Whitfield added some challenges to the workout, waving a broom and chasing him with it on several throws.

"We wanted to show that we didn't have anything to hide, that we could come out here and go through our seven-step footwork and go through all the footwork that we thought that these guys want to see," Manziel said.

He finished the day with a long completion to Evans and yelled 'Boom!' and the assembled crowd broke into applause.

Whitfield was pleased with how the day went and thinks Manziel has improved since the end of the season.

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"He learned how big of a jump it is to go from playing on Saturdays to playing on Sundays and it's a grueling process," Whitfield said. "Secondly he's come an awfully long way in his body. He's an awful lot stronger. He's put in his work."