

Inside the combine

The National Invitation Camp, better known as the NFL combine, began in 1982 as a way for a group of teams to develop a common base of knowledge on elite prospects coming out of college.

By 1985, all NFL teams joined. The combine spent two years in New Orleans and one in Arizona before settling in its current home at the RCA Dome in Indianapolis. This year, NFL teams will spend four days evaluating, measuring and drilling 333 invited players.

Schedule

The NFL combine is a seven-day process that begins Wednesday and ends Feb. 26. Players arrive in groups by position and generally follow the same four-day itinerary:

- DAY 1:** Arrival, registration, hospital pre-exam and X-rays, orientation, formal interviews with NFL teams
- DAY 2:** Measurements, medical examinations, media, psychological testing, more interviews
- DAY 3:** Players association meeting, psychological testing, more interviews
- DAY 4:** Field workout (timing, station and skill drills), departure

ARRIVAL DATES

Wednesday

Kickers/punters
Offensive linemen
Tight ends

Thursday

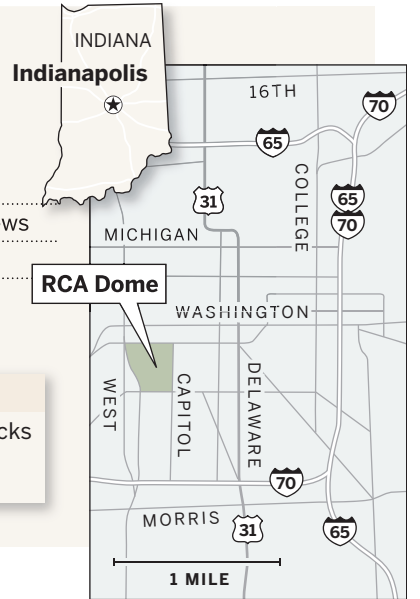
Quarterbacks
Running backs
Wide receivers

Friday

Defensive linemen
Linebackers

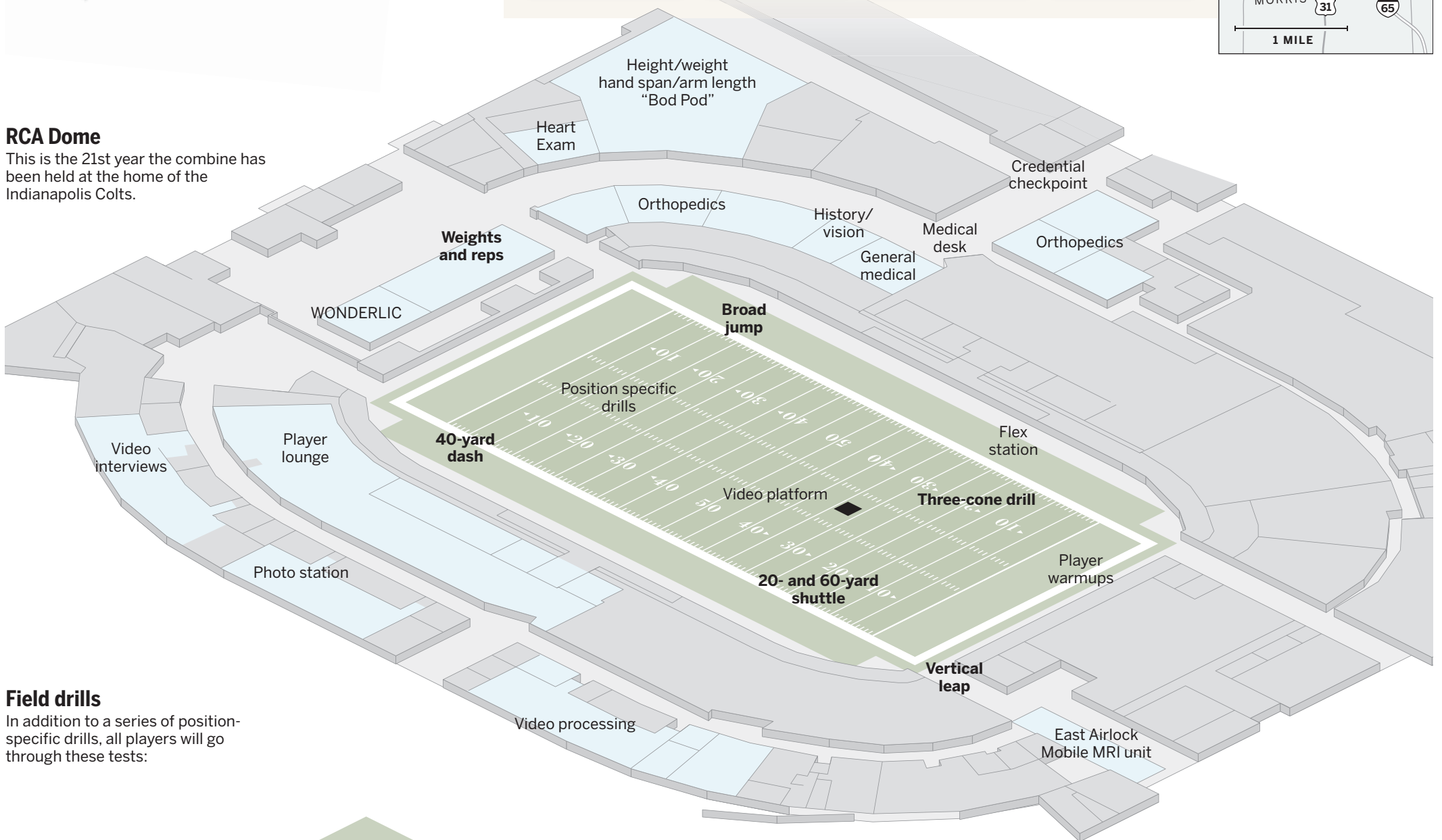
Saturday

Defensive backs



RCA Dome

This is the 21st year the combine has been held at the home of the Indianapolis Colts.



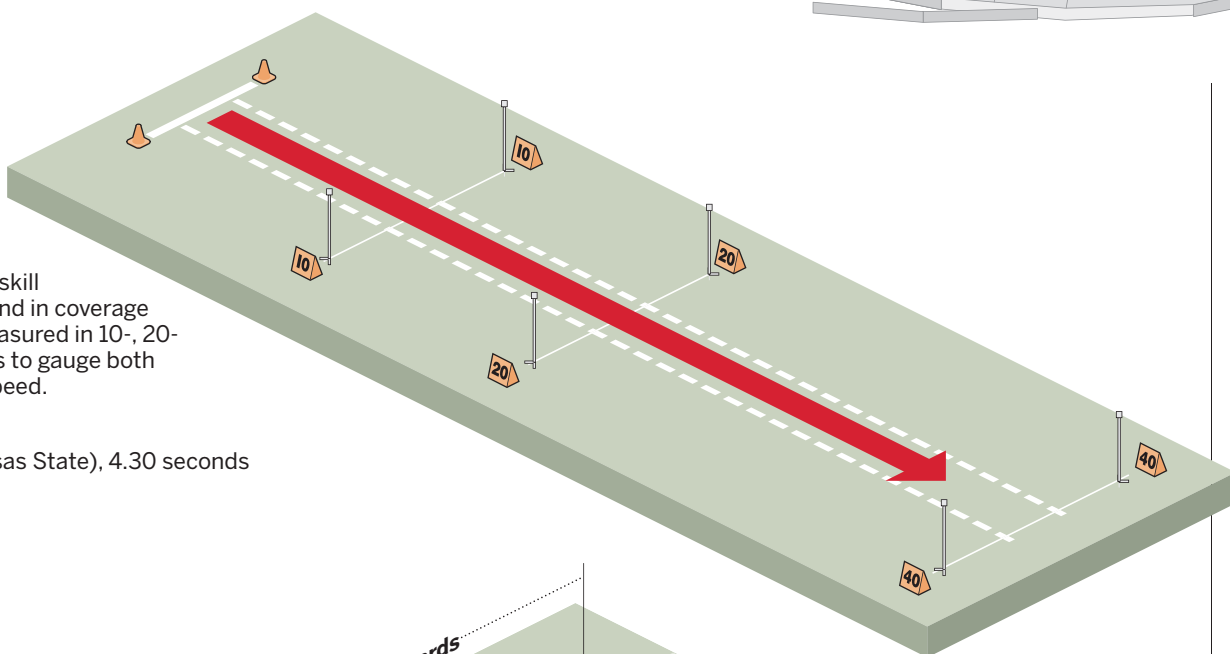
Field drills

In addition to a series of position-specific drills, all players will go through these tests:

40-yard dash

The first measure that comes to mind for the average fan, the 40-yard dash is crucial for players in skill positions (WR, RB) and in coverage (DB). Players are measured in 10-, 20- and 40-yard intervals to gauge both explosiveness and speed.

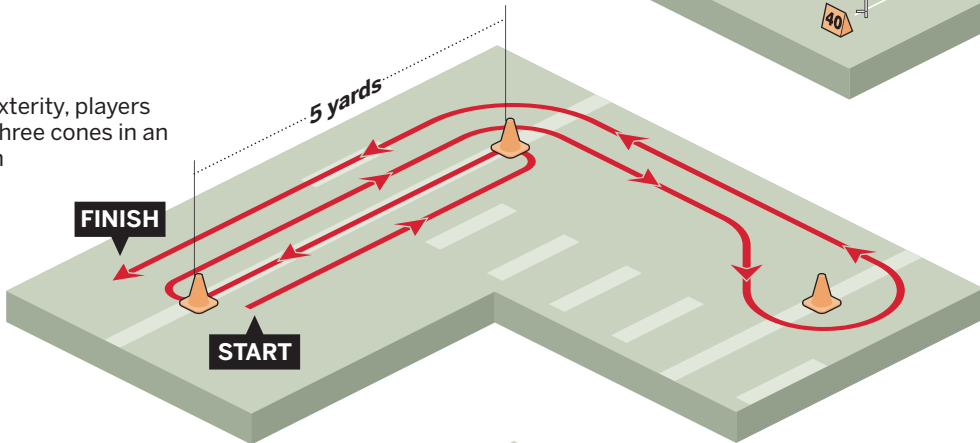
2007 best:
Yamon Figures (Kansas State), 4.30 seconds



Three-cone drill

A measure of cutting and dexterity, players will make five turns around three cones in an L-shaped pattern. The fourth turn requires a complete reverse of direction.

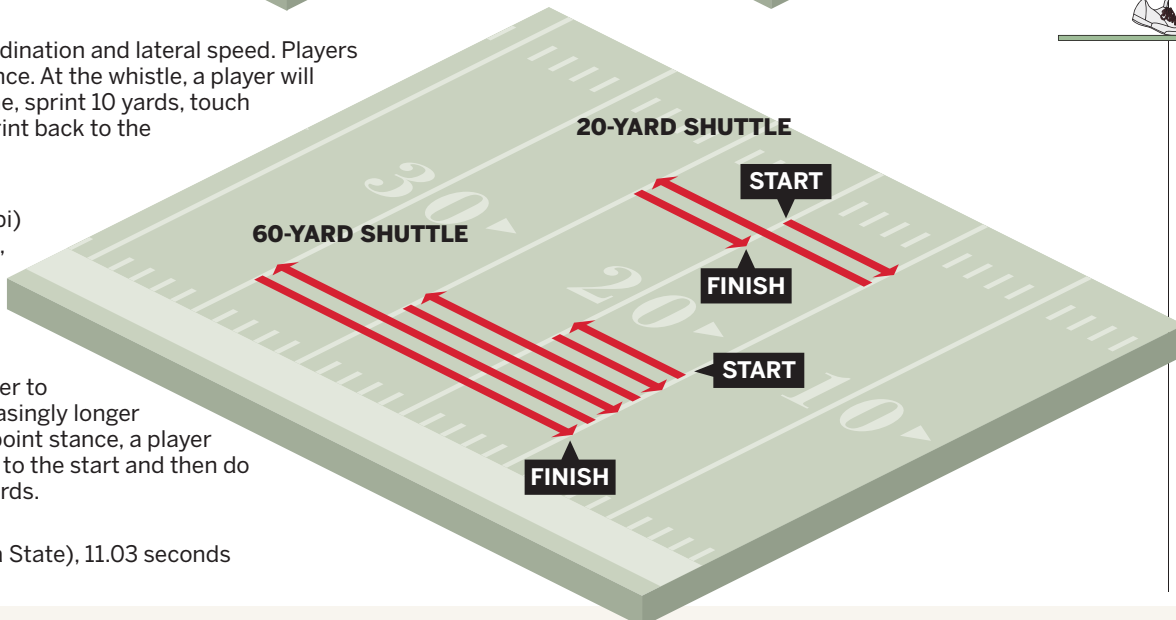
2007 best:
Leon Hall (Michigan), 6.50 seconds



20-yard shuttle

This is a measure of coordination and lateral speed. Players start in a three-point stance. At the whistle, a player will sprint 5 yards, touch a line, sprint 10 yards, touch another line and then sprint back to the starting point.

2007 best:
Rory Johnson (Mississippi) and Leon Hall (Michigan), 4.07 seconds



60-yard shuttle

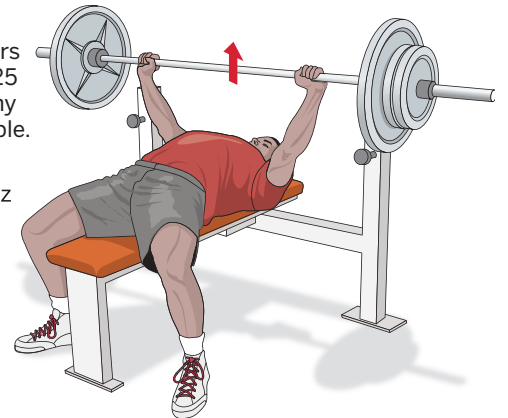
This shuttle forces a player to accelerate through increasingly longer stretches. From a three-point stance, a player will sprint 5 yards, return to the start and then do the same at 10 and 20 yards.

2007 best:
Craig Dahl (North Dakota State), 11.03 seconds

Bench press

In this test of strength, players bench press 225 pounds as many times as possible.

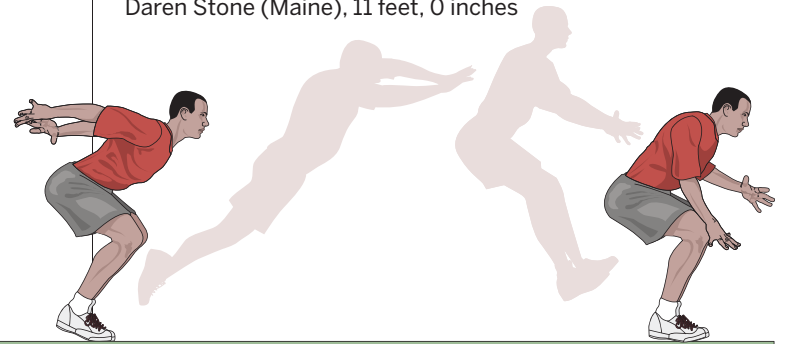
2007 best:
Manuel Ramirez (Texas Tech), 40 reps



Broad jump

Starting from a standing flat-footed position, players jump forward as far as they can.

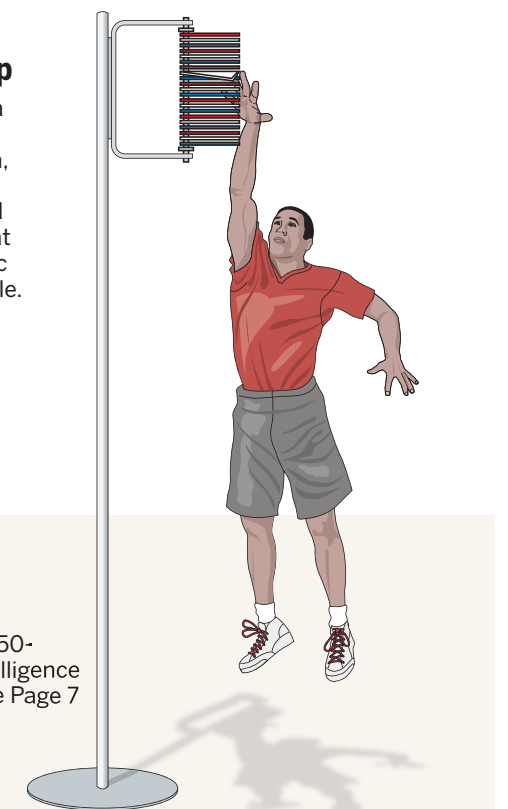
2007 best:
Daren Stone (Maine), 11 feet, 0 inches



Vertical leap

Starting from a standing flat-footed position, players leap straight up and attempt to swat as many plastic flags as possible.

2007 best:
Quincy Black (New Mexico), 41 1/2 inches



Other evaluations

INJURY EVALUATION

Players undergo a full range of medical testing. An MRI unit is available to look at players who suffered severe injuries during the college season.

PHYSICAL MEASUREMENTS

Evaluators measure all players' height and weight. Linemen are also measured for body mass index.

TEAM INTERVIEWS

Each team gets the opportunity to sit down one-on-one with a number of prospects. Teams get a chance to address individual issues (such as legal or injury problems).

THE CYBEX TEST

Players are strapped into a machine that allows for evaluation of joints and flexibility. This is particularly useful in seeing how well injuries have healed.

WONDERLICH

Players also take a 50-question timed intelligence test. For details, see Page 7.