



# NICK ZAKELJ

63

OL

6-6 \* 316 \* FORDHAM

6.22.99 \* BROADVIEW HEIGHTS, OH \* ROOKIE \* ACQUIRED D-6A IN '22

## GOLDMINE

- Zakelj's path to the NFL was anything but traditional. The Brecksville-Broadview Heights (OH) HS product was a zero-start recruit when he joined FCS Fordham University's football team. Once on campus, the former LB converted to OL. If it wasn't for another Fordham teammate and current Miami Dolphins RB Chase Edmonds, Zakelj may have not ended up where he is today. When NFL scouts from all 32 teams came to see Edmonds his senior year, they were struck by the potential Zakelj possessed as a freshman playing offensive line for the first time. The story came full circle when the 49ers drafted the four-year starter five years later in the sixth-round of the 2022 NFL Draft.
- Zakelj earned his Master's Degree in business analytics while at Fordham and is passionate about the subject. Zakelj said if he wasn't in the NFL he'd probably pursue a career in baseball analytics, something he explores in his free time. "Baseball reference is the coolest thing ever. Looking at Barry Bonds' baseball reference page... that 2004 season is so crazy," Zakelj said. "Sites like fan-graphs make it so much easier for a casual fan to understand that stuff. As I got further in my studies at Fordham, I was actually able to take that data and analyze it myself."

## COLLEGE

Appeared in 37 games in five years (2017-21) at Fordham. As a senior in 2021, appeared in 5 games (3 starts) and helped Fordham rank 6th in the FCS in yds. per game (349.7). As a junior in 2019, started all 12 games at LT and helped block for the Patriot League's top-ranked offense (357.2 yds. per game). Appeared in all 11 games as a sophomore in 2018. As a freshman in 2017, appeared in 9 games (8 starts).



## ZAKELJ'S GOLDEN NUGGETS

- Last name is pronounced zuh-CAL.
- Played LB at Brecksville-Broadview Heights (OH) HS alongside former Iowa State and current Kansas City Chiefs LB Mike Rose.
- Received All-Patriot-League honors in three consecutive seasons. Was selected to the first-team in 2021 and 2019 and the second team in 2018.
- Member of the Patriot League All-Academic team in 2021.

## PERSONAL

- Was a captain of the football team and a member of the National Honor Society at Brecksville-Broadview Heights (OH) HS. Named first-team all-suburban league and Cleveland.com All-Star as a senior in 2016.
- Son of Lois and Stan Zakelj. Has an older brother, Matt, and an older sister, Audrey.
- Majored in finance at Fordham.

## ZAKELJ'S CAREER STATISTICS

GAMES/STARTS – 5/0: 2022 (5/0)

POSTSEASON GAMES/STARTS – 0/0: 2022 (0/0)

### Milestones:

NFL Debut: at Car. (10/9/22)

## ZAKELJ'S TRANSACTIONS

Originally the first of three sixth-round (187th overall) draft choices by SF in 2022.