ANSWERS TO THE TEST: WOLF'S 2024 DRAFT CHEAT SHEET

8/27 UPDATE

2024 FANTASY FOOTBALL INVESTING GUIDE

THE WHO, WHEN, WHY & HOW OF 2024 FANTASY DRAFTING

200+ PLAYERS ANALYZED!

THE WOLF'S TOP 2024 STRATEGY

BACK TO RB-RB?
ELITE QB?

VALUES & BUSTS

THE BEST & WORST PICKS IN EVERY ROUND!

"PENNY STOCK" SLEEPERS

FIND THE NEXT PUKA OR KYREN!

MUST DRAFT ROOKIES!

CHEAT CODE
ROOKIE QB?

2024 LEAGUE WINNERS

THIS YEAR'S
HERO RBS

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Welcome Letter:

Current / Future Fantasy Wolf,

As is tradition, I want to start my 2024 Fantasy Football Investing Guide with a thank you. If you're reading this, you've paid for the lone piece of "pay-walled" content that we put out at Roto Street. Everything earned goes towards paying our staff and improving the site. The support over our first three years has been humbling and motivating. I am so excited to present my fourth edition. You're helping a special ed teacher chase his other dreams (and hopefully afford a house someday), and for that: Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Indeed, this summer has been *just a bit* quieter than last year. No wedding. No honeymoon to Santorini or Croatia. Yet, life has been just as wonderful at home in Beverly, MA – and I'm pumped to report I still have not screwed up my marriage and we just celebrated our anniversary (with a bar crawl in Newport, RI, of course!)

Even with some "slight distractions" in 2023, we mostly nailed it in last year's guide. Batting 100% is impossible, but the pivot to the "Jellyfish Strategy," early "all-in" stances on **Kyren Williams** and **Tank Dell**, listing **Raheem Mostert** as *the must draft*, and a very strong fades list (besides CeeDee, of course) ideally made it a valuable addition to any fantasy library. It helped me make 8/8 playoffs, 6/8 semis, and win 3 of those leagues. Meanwhile, I also ranked in the 95th percentile for Best Ball Advance Rate (28.4%), and while I'm still chasing the six- (or seven!) figure grand prizes, I made a few thousand! It was the most successful fantasy year in a while, and it's time to go harder.

In 2024, I'm even more lasered-in. Instead of marveling at Croatian waterfalls or Santorini caldera sunsets, I've been back to staring at my real true loves: workhorse backs and target hog receivers, plus all the stats, data, content, and news you need to know to find the right ones in 2024. I'm also well over 300 Best Ball Drafts deep. My opinions and takes are stronger than ever. I don't remember what grass feels like, but I do know how to dominate 2024 fantasy football in any format.

Below is my collection of Round-by-Round Targets, Fades, and Game Theory. It's even more clear to me now than ever before that Best Ball and Redraft Fantasy are two completely different beasts, so I will be more intentional than ever in attacking both formats differently, and going through the details here, too.

By the end of this guide, you'll know the *who, when,* and *why* of drafting in 2024. It will be updated throughout the summer due to Training Camp news & Preseason action, with new versions delivered right to your inbox.

If you don't feel this was worth the $$, please DM me directly @ RotoStreetWolf or email admin@rotostreetjournal.com, and we'll refund you immediately. Thank you once again, your support truly means so much.

Cheers to making 2024 your best fantasy year ever!
-The Wolf

SCORING NOTE: I play mostly Half-PPR, and so does the public. Underdog Fantasy is also Half-PPR for Best Ball. As such, much of this is written through that scoring lens. Still, the strategy and player recs hold (mostly) true regardless of format: good players are good players, and best practice is best practice.

ADP NOTE: The guide is organized into "Draft Stages" using a mix of FantasyPros' ADP & ECR -- where you can generally expect players to go. I also reference Underdog's ADP when discussing Best Ball Notes.

Still: FantasyPros / Underdog are only two sources. You should reference the expected "prices" wherever you play (Yahoo, Sleeper, Underdog), where individual player values can vary greatly.

LAST NOTE: If you have not tried Best Ball Fantasy drafting, you are truly missing out. Not only is it the most fun, head-ache-free way to play, but you also open up a shot at truly life-changing money. For $25, you get $12.5Mil in prizes and a chance to win $1.5Mil. If that's too steep, just $5 can get you a shot at $200K and over $2Mil in prize pools in Underdog's Puppy Contests. AND - if you use code RSJ or click this link, you can get up to $250 in Bonus Cash with a deposit match – that's 10 Free BBM's or 50 Free Puppy Drafts! (We also get a nice $40 kickback for every sign-up we generate, so you're helping your boy too!)

SHOUT OUTS & CREDITS:
Note - none of these are affiliate links, these are simply to give credit where it is due. So much of the wisdom, data, and info shared in here is from these two sites

-So much of my research is done using RotoViz – a ton of the amazing visuals (the game log graphs, the game-splits), data, and stats that are provided in here come from using their tools. It is one of my first fantasy subscriptions every year, and I could not recommend them any higher

-Besides our own content at Roto Street Journal, FantasyPoints is the one site I read more than any other – especially Scott Barrett, Graham Barfield, and their new writer Ryan Heath. A lot of my "Overarching Approach and Draft Strategy" comes from research done by them. Along with their new FantasyPoints Data Suite, they are one of the best sites in the game

The Wolf's Overarching Approach & Draft Strategy

Similar to every other rendition of this guide, my "North Star" and overarching strategy remains the same: Upside Wins Championships. Whether a 12 man home league or Best Ball Tourney vs. 800,000+ others, I am always chasing the highest ceilings – the players who are the "poster boys" for that single season.

I always reference the great Scott Barrett's article here as a Game Theory masterpiece. But to summarize, every fantasy season boils down to a small handful of "League-Winners," and the rest simply don't matter. If you owned **Christian McCaffrey** in 2019, you had a 48% chance of making your Championship and 78% chance of winning, regardless of who you surrounded him with.

In 2021, you had similar "Advance & Win Rates" with **Cooper Kupp.** In 2022, **Travis Kelce** and **Josh Jacobs** gave you 72% and 67% respective win rates in ESPN leagues.

Last year, a whopping nine players delivered "Advance Rates" above 30% in Best Ball:

Player	Position	ADP	Playoffs	Semi-finals	Finals
Raheem Mostert	RB	151.9	42.6%	2.44%	0.119%
Dak Prescott	QB	103.2	36.9%	1.92%	0.175%
Christian McCaffrey	RB	3.5	36.2%	5.64%	0.328%
CeeDee Lamb	WR	11.6	34.6%	2.38%	0.260%
Kyren Williams	RB	203.8	34.6%	3.52%	0.272%
Tyreek Hill	WR	4.3	34.5%	0.44%	0.019%
Mike Evans	WR	67.6	31.6%	1.93%	0.200%
Nico Collins	WR	124.1	31.0%	1.37%	0.076%
Puka Nacua	WR	203.1	30.2%	1.65%	0.328%
De'Von Achane	RB	120.1	29.2%	1.47%	0.062%
Brock Purdy	QB	169.6	29.1%	2.96%	0.143%
Keenan Allen	WR	37.5	28.3%	1.10%	0.030%
Tank Dell	WR	186.8	28.2%	1.20%	0.071%
Sam LaPorta	TE	152.7	28.1%	4.97%	0.313%
Travis Etienne Jr.	RB	39.5	27.9%	0.93%	0.021%
Alvin Kamara	RB	90.8	27.7%	1.29%	0.078%
C.J. Stroud	QB	190.6	27.5%	1.08%	0.055%
Jake Ferguson	TE	183.2	27.3%	1.79%	0.123%
Josh Allen	QB	26.3	27.1%	1.41%	0.067%
Adam Thielen	WR	143.2	26.5%	0.95%	0.078%
Zack Moss	RB	198.2	26.5%	1.29%	0.130%
George Kittle	TE	60.9	26.3%	1.41%	0.122%
Brian Robinson Jr.	RB	107.1	26.3%	1.40%	0.087%
Rachaad White	RB	82.9	26.1%	2.29%	0.165%
Brandon Aiyuk	WR	52.8	25.6%	1.72%	0.103%
DJ Moore	WR	43.3	25.4%	1.12%	0.066%
Gus Edwards	RB	188.0	25.2%	1.47%	0.104%

We honestly need to be right on 2-6 “Home Run” or “Power Law” players in a given season, and then hit enough singles & doubles around them, and we’ve got a title! That may be maddening to us “experts” who pour 10+ hours a day researching and analyzing, but really, it should be comforting.

Regardless, in redraft leagues at least 75%, if not 100%, of our “At-Bats” should be home run hacks at finding these gems. We have the waiver wire and trades available to us to replace duds, so shooting for anything but the stars is just wearing extra condoms for no reason.

BEST BALL SIDE NOTE: Ironically, this “Hack Only at Home Runs” strategy is not optimal in Best Ball. Many people (wrongly) assume that, because BB is a massive field and we automatically get our top weekly scores, that we must use every pick to chase “Boom/Bust” profiles with the highest ceilings. Yet, we have no roster management or “outs” after our draft. Thus, avoiding landmines and finding steady, consistent production throughout the draft is equally, if not more, important than also hitting the home runs. You need the **Kyren Williams**’ grand slams, no doubt – but the surefire production of boring yet steady **Gus Edwards** & **Chris Godwin-**types are crucial, too. We’ll identify those as we go Round-by-Round.

2024: Who are the League Winners & When do they Go?

Now that we’re ready to embrace “home-run hacking” in redraft leagues, the question becomes - how do we identify these “League Winners?” Are their common traits? Draft ranges to pick them?

For many years, RBs were the most-common “League Winners.” Through 2022, 17 RBs had given owners a 60%+ chance to make the playoffs in ESPN leagues, compared to only six wide receivers, three tight ends, two quarterbacks, two defenses, and one kicker. 12 of the top-15 highest scoring flex eligible players were RBs.

Not only this, but you needed to dive into the pool early: 2017-2022, 17 of 31 (55%) league-winning RBs were drafted in the first three rounds. Excluding UDFAs, 80% of league-winning RBs went in Rounds 1-4.

It’s why I embraced a “Bell Cow Breeder” mentality and started nearly every draft with RB-RB. Landing a true “Legendary RB” remains the single-greatest edge in fantasy – last season, **Christian McCaffrey** was on a whopping 72.8% of ESPN Playoff Rosters, the highest amount by any player!

Yet, as the NFL evolves and flows to more pass-oriented attacks & RBBCs, we’re starting to see a major shift in league-winners. Look at this shift in players appearing on ESPN Playoff Rosters >55% of the time via Ryan Heath’s 2023 Review at FantasyPoints:

Players Appearing on ESPN Playoff Rosters >55% of the Time, By Round (2023)						
Round	QB	RB	WR	TE	D/ST	K
Rounds 1-3	2	1	5	0	0	0
Rounds 4-6	0	2	1	1	0	0
Rounds 7-9	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rounds 10-13	0	1	0	0	1	0
Rounds 14-17	0	0	0	1	0	1
UDFA	0	1	1	0	0	0

Players Appearing on ESPN Playoff Rosters >55% of the Time, By Round (2017-2022)						
Round	QB	RB	WR	TE	D/ST	K
Rounds 1-3	1	17	7	4	0	0
Rounds 4-6	1	4	6	0	0	0
Rounds 7-9	1	0	1	0	0	0
Rounds 10-13	4	3	1	0	0	0
Rounds 14-17	0	1	0	2	4	0
UDFA	1	6	6	2	2	2

CMC was the only Round 1 RB to provide “league-winning” upside in Round 1-3, compared to 17 the six seasons prior (2.8 per year).

Equally noteworthy, the only 2 league-winning QBs (**Josh Allen** and **Jalen Hurts**) went in this Round 1-3 range, as did 71% of league-winning WRs (5-of-7 total). Not only are you less likely to find a League-Winning RB in Rounds 1-3, but it’s costing you a shot at a true game-changing QB or WR.

Additionally, the Value of those top-end WRs became even more important in 2023. [FantasyPoints’ Ryan Heath brilliantly displayed this](#) both by the combined aggregate fantasy points, as well as Value Over Replacement (how much better a player was compared to the replacement level, i.e. CMC compared to the RB24):

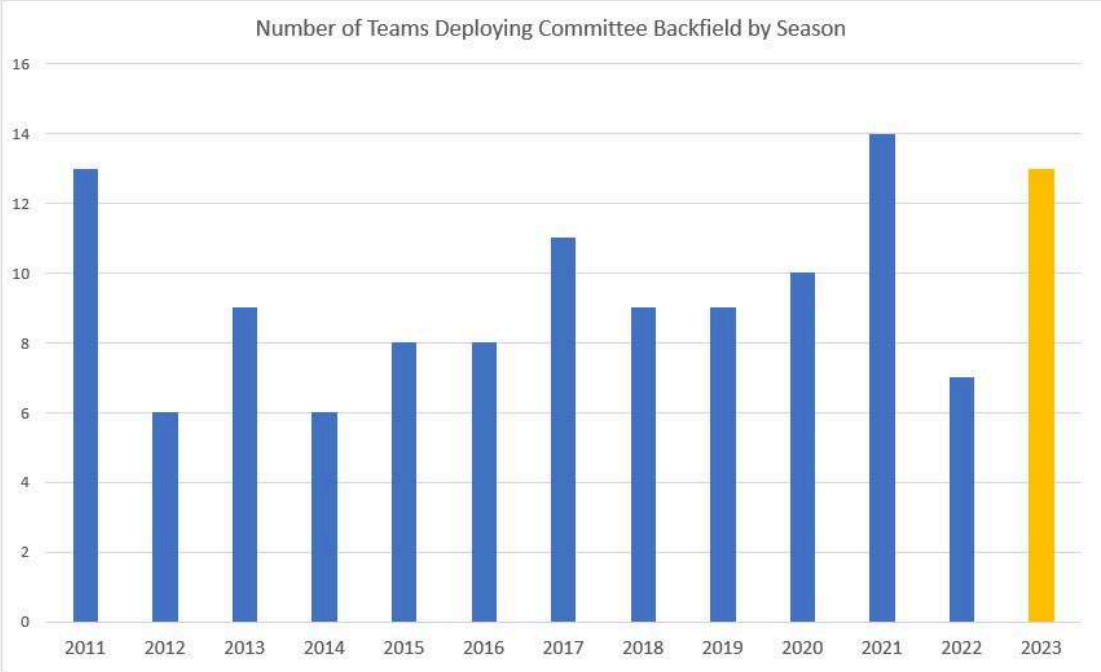
Combined PPR games by Positional Grouping (Top-12, Top-24, Top-36)							
Year	QB1	WR1	WR2	WR3	RB1	RB2	TE1
2008	3007	3188	2616	2123	3257	2445	1988
2009	3256	3317	2583	2017	3305	2328	2453
2010	3195	3183	2553	2140	3347	2387	2129
2011	3649	3304	2547	2122	3191	2314	2499
2012	3649	3483	2667	2166	3184	2234	2282
2013	3526	3546	2709	2212	3289	2344	2402
2014	3603	3615	2647	2244	3259	2115	2339
2015	3742	3684	2724	2286	2766	2121	2424
2016	3576	3232	2619	2313	3312	2270	2177
2017	3381	3097	2443	2019	3282	2164	2070
2018	3861	3649	2597	2135	3613	2284	2250
2019	3655	3215	2677	2271	3476	2412	2211
2020	4198	3409	2735	2327	3163	2236	2189
2021	3999	3640	2807	2259	3224	2382	2317
2022	3855	3481	2627	2170	3376	2414	2119
2023	3690	3609	2779	2444	3223	2459	2290

Value Over Replacement: Difference Between a Top-3 and Bottom-3 Starter													
Pos	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Average
QB	+4.1	+5.1	+3.9	+3.4	+4.4	+4.0	+3.4	+4.8	+2.9	+2.8	+6.9	+3.6	+4.1
RB	+7.1	+9.2	+9.5	+6.0	+11.4	+11.2	+11.4	+9.2	+9.7	+8.5	+7.7	+7.6	+9.0
TE	+5.0	+4.5	+4.4	+5.2	+1.7	+6.0	+7.5	+3.8	+7.4	+5.3	+5.2	+3.9	+5.0
WR	+6.2	+6.9	+9.2	+7.2	+5.5	+6.8	+5.7	+5.4	+7.5	+8.1	+7.6	+8.3	+7.0

2023 was the first year since 2015 that the high-end WRs were more valuable than RBs in VORP!

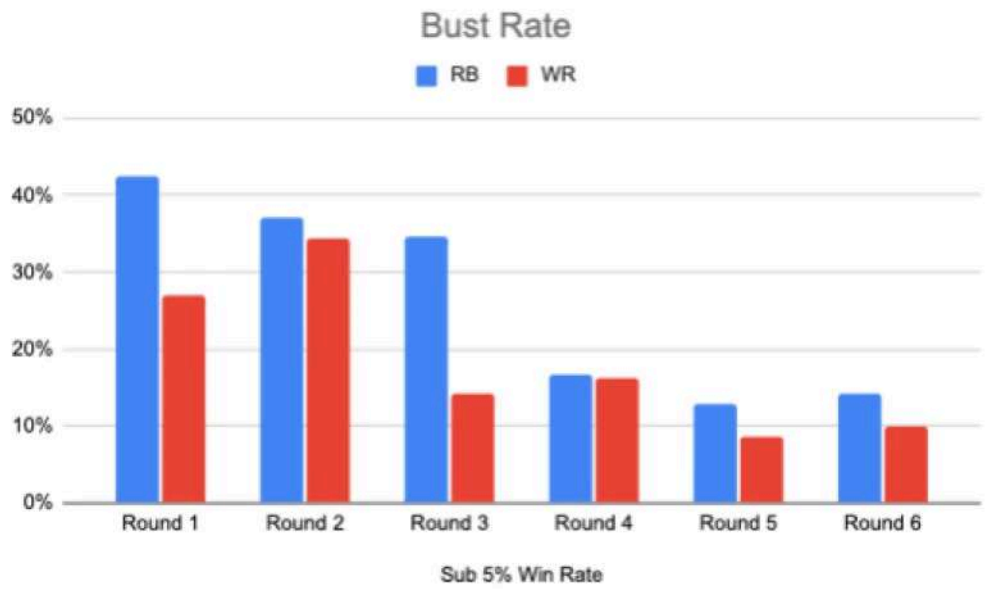
For one, RBBC's are so much more prevalent. Only 4 RBs saw north of 70% of their teams' snaps. Just 10 hit 60% or higher snap share, and only three RBs (Joe Mixon, Derrick Henry, and Rachaad White) tallied 60% or more of their team rush attempts.

PLAYER	POS	TEAM	SNAPS	RUSH ATT.	ROUTES	TARGETS	TPRR	SDD SNAPS	I5 ATT	LDD SNAPS	2MIN SNAPS	PPR MIN	PPR AVG	PPR MAX
Christian McCaffrey	RB	SF	79%	56.99%	78%	19%	20%	83%	62%	84%	73%	13.1	25.2	42.7
Rachaad White	RB	TB	78%	62%	68.99%	13%	15%	85%	73%	81%	94%	6.8	15.7	27.9
Travis Etienne	RB	JAC	73%	59%	56.99%	12%	17%	68.99%	58%	62%	78%	6.1	16.3	34.4
Tony Pollard	RB	TEN	71%	55%	58%	12%	17%	73%	64%	62%	84%	5.3	13.5	22.3
Joe Mixon	RB	HOU	68.9%	67%	54%	11%	17%	79%	88%	18%	73%	7	15.5	29.7
Bijan Robinson	RB	ATL	68%	41%	70%	17%	20%	64%	20%	90%	96%	0.3	14.8	27.3
Saquon Barkley	RB	PHI	65%	55%	46%	12%	19%	74%	100%	50%	67%	5.7	16	30
Kyren Williams	RB	LA	60%	49%	50%	8%	14%	59%	85%	62%	76%	7.7	20.3	38.4
Breece Hall	RB	NYJ	60%	58%	48%	17%	27%	67%	33%	42%	55%	0.9	16.9	43.1
Chuba Hubbard	RB	CAR	60%	54%	43%	9%	15%	70%	61%	70%	67%	2.4	10.7	22.4



Additionally, RBs are seeing fewer targets as the WR and especially TE talent pool grows, and RBs age. From 2019-2022, 18 RBs earned at least 5.5 targets per game, an average of 4.5 players per season. However, only two players did so in 2022 (Austin Ekeler and Christian McCaffrey), while only one player did it in 2023 (Alvin Kamara).

Moreover, RBs are also busting at a far higher rate than WRs. Since 2015:



Again, every season is different, and most often, a “Legendary RB Season” is the single-biggest difference maker in all of fantasy. It just does not happen every year, and there is far greater “landmine” bust risk in trying to get the right RB, and a much better chance of at least “getting on base” with WRs, alongside “week-winner” upside that’s growing each passing year.

As such, we should be adjusting our draft strategy and mindsets with more flexibility in mind. This was already the case entering 2022, but is especially true in light of this 2023 data.

Thus, I will be once again embracing “The Jellyfish” in 2023 (albeit with a few more guard rails in place).

The Jellyfish Strategy, Revisited in 2024

For those of you who read my 2023 guide, you saw the debut of “The Jellyfish Strategy.”

The name comes from my puka-shell-wearing, pot-smoking hippie senior yearbook quote from Jack Johnson:

“When you go with the flow, rhythm don’t mean nothing, you go with the flow… you don’t stop.”

I had always been an “RB-RB” and “Wait on QB” purist, but the rigidity was costing me the highest upside fantasy rosters, while failing to acknowledge the changing NFL landscape. In redraft, I do still lean towards “Hero-RB” given the scarcity of true difference-makers at RB, whereas WR depth extends into Rounds 8-9.

Now, I am a jellyfish. I flow with what the draft gives me, and build a balanced squad upon what I have already laid as my foundational pieces in the early rounds. I don't lock-in "Zero RB" "Hero-RB," "Double Bi-Modal Supersized RB," or the "Villain Anti-Hero & His Sidekick RB."

Amon-Ra St. Brown falls to nine? Awesome, let me snag him, and take a stab at a Hero-Worthy RB like **Kyren Williams** in Round 2… and if all those guys are gone, let's keep stockpiling those Target Hog WRs & pivot to a modified Zero-RB approach.

It's a WR-thirsty room and **Breece Hall** is there at 10, and **Jahmyr Gibbs** makes his way back to 15? Hell ya, I'll start RB-RB and game plan for the WRs I want from here.

There's never been more ways to "skin the fantasy cat" for a title. But I still do have a few "2024 tent poles" as sort of guard rails to keep my "jellyfishing" towards smart decisions.

REDRAFT TENT POLES:

1. **Take a stab at least one Hero-Worthy RB in Rounds 1-3 redraft:** Given no edge is greater than a Legendary RB, especially given the positional scarcity, along with the depth of WRs in redraft this year, I like taking at least one RB stab in Rounds 1-3. This is especially true with **De'Von Achane** falling to Round 3 - he is a phenomenal value with league-breaking upside there, and opens up a ton of doors for Rounds 1-2, as well as beyond.

   I'll dive in deeper, but I consider the Hero-Worthy RBs:

   Tier 1 (Pick 1): CMC
   Tier 2 (Round 1 worthy): Breece Hall, Bijan Robinson
   Tier 3 (Round 2 Worthy): Jahmyr Gibbs, Jonathan Taylor, Kyren Williams, Saquon Barkley, De'Von Achane

   After these 8 names, I am OK avoiding RB until that nice 70-100 pocket we'll explore later. I do feel **Isiah Pacheco** has a case, but he still goes too early in redraft (late round 2) that I struggle going all-in.

2. **Early Elite Onesies #1 (QBs & TEs):** I pivoted from my usual "Wait on QB" philosophy, and had **Josh Allen** on six-of-eight rosters. Six of them made the semis, three of them won titles. Him and **Jalen Hurts** were the only QBs above 55% of ESPN Playoff Rosters. Their "Konami Code" Rushing Upside is too much to pass up in Round 3, and edges them above all others.

   I also view the following QBs with "Legendary QB Upside":

   Tier 1 (End 2 / Round 3): Josh Allen, Jalen Hurts
   Tier 2 (Round 4): Lamar Jackson, Patrick Mahomes
   Tier 3 (Round 5): CJ Stroud

   If I miss on one of these 5, I am OK waiting until the Round 8-9 pocket (**Jordan Love**, **Kyler Murray**) or fine punting even further to Konami Upside like **Jayden Daniels**. It is a deep QB pool this year, but still

the biggest edges exist at the top. As such, I highly prefer getting one of these elite guys and trusting my ability to back-fill in the later rounds + on the Waiver Wire.

The same goes for securing an elite TE. Again, we'll dive much deeper when we hit Round 4-5, but the "Spike Week" upside of an elite TE is such a massive edge, especially in the fantasy playoffs. While I don't love the opportunity cost that **Sam LaPorta** and **Travis Kelce** present at their Late 2nd prices, the entire cluster of Late 4th / Early 5th guys are SEXY, especially **Trey McBride, Mark Andrews,** and **Dalton Kincaid.**

Similar to QBs, gaining this edge that I'm unlikely to ever find in the late rounds or waivers,

3. **Leave Round 1-2 with a WR w/ 20+ FPPG Upside:** As mentioned above, true WR1s were the hardest-to-replace asset in all of fantasy (after CMC), and there were only 2-of-7 available after Rounds 1-3. Thus, I like taking one of my first three picks to snare a guy with legit 160+ target upside. These include:

   Tier 1 (Top-3 Picks): CeeDee Lamb, Tyreek HIll
   Tier 2 (Top-8 Worthy): Ja'Marr Chase, Justin Jefferson, Amon-Ra St. Brown
   Tier 2.5 (Round 1 Worthy): Puka Nacua, AJ Brown, Garrett Wilson
   Tier 3 (Round 2 Worthy): Marvin Harrison, Davante Adams, Drake London, Nico Collins, Mike Evans, 49ers Guys, Chris Olave

   This is less important in a 2 WR league, but pretty imperative in a 3 WR + Flex situation where up to 4 starters can be WRs.

   The number of "usable WRs" is quite deep, with strong WR2 candidates available even into Round 8. Still, a true "Alpha WR1" capable of 100 rec, 1500+ yards, and 12+ TDs is rare and typically requires a Round 1-2 selection.

When looking at these first 3 tent-poles in sum, that leaves us with a **Round 1-5 Goal of: QB1, RB1, WR1, TE,** and either **RB2 or WR2**.

In redraft, that might look something like:

Round 1: Breece Hall (RB1)
Round 2: Marvin Harrison Jr. (WR1)
Round 3: Jalen Hurts (QB1)
Round 4: Cooper Kupp
Round 5: Trey McBride

Round 1: Amon Ra St. Brown (WR1)
Round 2: Kyren Williams (RB1)
Round 3: De'Von Achane (RB2)
Round 4: Pat Mahomes (QB1)
Round 5: Dalton Kincaid

This type of diverse, spread-it-around philosophy plays into Tent Pole 4, which is a new one for me:

4. **Besides K & D/ST, try to fill out your starting lineup within 8-9 picks:** Given my new affinity for the elite onesies, it should be no surprise that I'm aiming to fill in my whole starting lineup outside the "special teams" positions, before I start going after depth.

   In years past, I used to stockpile RBs and WRs, as the depth is indeed crucial at multi-starter positions. Yet, the top-end QBs and TEs are becoming such big potential edges, and I've got enough faith in my late-round drafting + Waiver Wire skills, that I am hoping to have all 8-9 starting spots filled.

   Granted, if a WR or RB, or even a second elite TE, is falling that I love and can't pass up before, say, I add a QB – of course, I can "jellyfish" and get the guy I love. Still, if I can have my 8 starters after Rounds 1-8, it likely means I attacked each where the historic upside is at the peak, and I can then hunt for later-round upside freely. It also means I won't be getting punished by Tent Pole 5:

5. **Understand the Law of Diminishing Returns:** In a nutshell, this law in investing means:

   "Profits or benefits gained from something will represent a proportionally smaller gain as more money or energy is invested in it."

   In fantasy, this means: the heavier you invest at a position, the less valuable the later and later additions become. So, if you start RB-RB, adding another RB within the next 2-3 rounds would provide a significantly smaller gain than a WR, elite QB, or TE-edge, even if the "Best Available Player" is an RB. Best Available doesn't mean Best Available for YOU.

   Eventually, though, adding a 5th or 6th WR before you have an RB2 ultimately hurts your team, as you can only put so many in your lineup. Plus, it creates more headaches for you every Sunday.

   Keep your Roster Needs and the Law of Diminishing Returns on your mind, especially when deciding between two similarly priced players at differing positions.

   Combine Diminishing Returns with the following principle, and you should have a strong roadmap to navigate any fantasy draft, no matter how it starts:

6. **Use Tiered Rankings to Get-Ahead of Drop-Offs & Start Runs, Rather than End Them:** You should find a ranking set with tiers (like my 2024 Big Board!) & learn where the "Talent Levels" generally drop off. I make it clear in my Round-by-Round strategy below where you should anticipate tiers dropping off, but knowing when Elite RB1s drops to Possible RB1s down to Quality RB2s down to Last Acceptable RB2s, and trying to capitalize before a tier dries up versus when you should move to a different position – i.e. a High-End WR2 over a Middling RB2 – is crucial.

These last two *shouldn't* be necessary Tent Pole reminders for managers hardcore enough to be reading this guide, but it never hurts to be reminded of two key draft principles:

7. **Always Know & Play to your Scoring + Roster Settings:**

   Scoring: Make sure you know if your league is STD, Half-PPR, or Full-PPR. Understand if there are certain bonuses (i.e. 200+ rush yards, 50+ yard plays) and who that plays to. Are there other nuances (return yards? First Downs?) to account for? How does that shift projections?

   Rosters: Know if you start 2 or 3 WRs, and how many flexes if any. One QB or SuperFlex? This GREATLY changes supply and demand dynamics, as the "Value over Replacement" becomes much different if the "last possible starter" is the WR24 v. WR36 or even WR48 & a True Alpha WR1 is that much more important. Of course it's even more dramatic with 1 QB (12 of 32 starters) vs 2 QB leagues (24 of 32 starters).

   These dynamics greatly alter the "Supply and Demand" dynamics and can flip rankings on their head, so be sure to know your scoring and roster settings before any draft.

8. **Know and Play your "Market":** I'm using FantasyPros ADP in this guide - but values can swing largely on Yahoo, ESPN, Sleeper, and especially in Underdog Best Ball, or wherever you find yourself playing. Picking at the turns can make it tougher, but you rarely want to pay +10 a player's price (ADP), and you often want to scoop players falling -10 or more spots below, even if they aren't favorites of yours. Get your guys, always – but always be trying to stay +ADP Value while doing so. Make sure to do mocks on your specific site to get a feel of how drafts ebb and flow on your specific site.

Differing Market & Tent Poles for Best Ball:

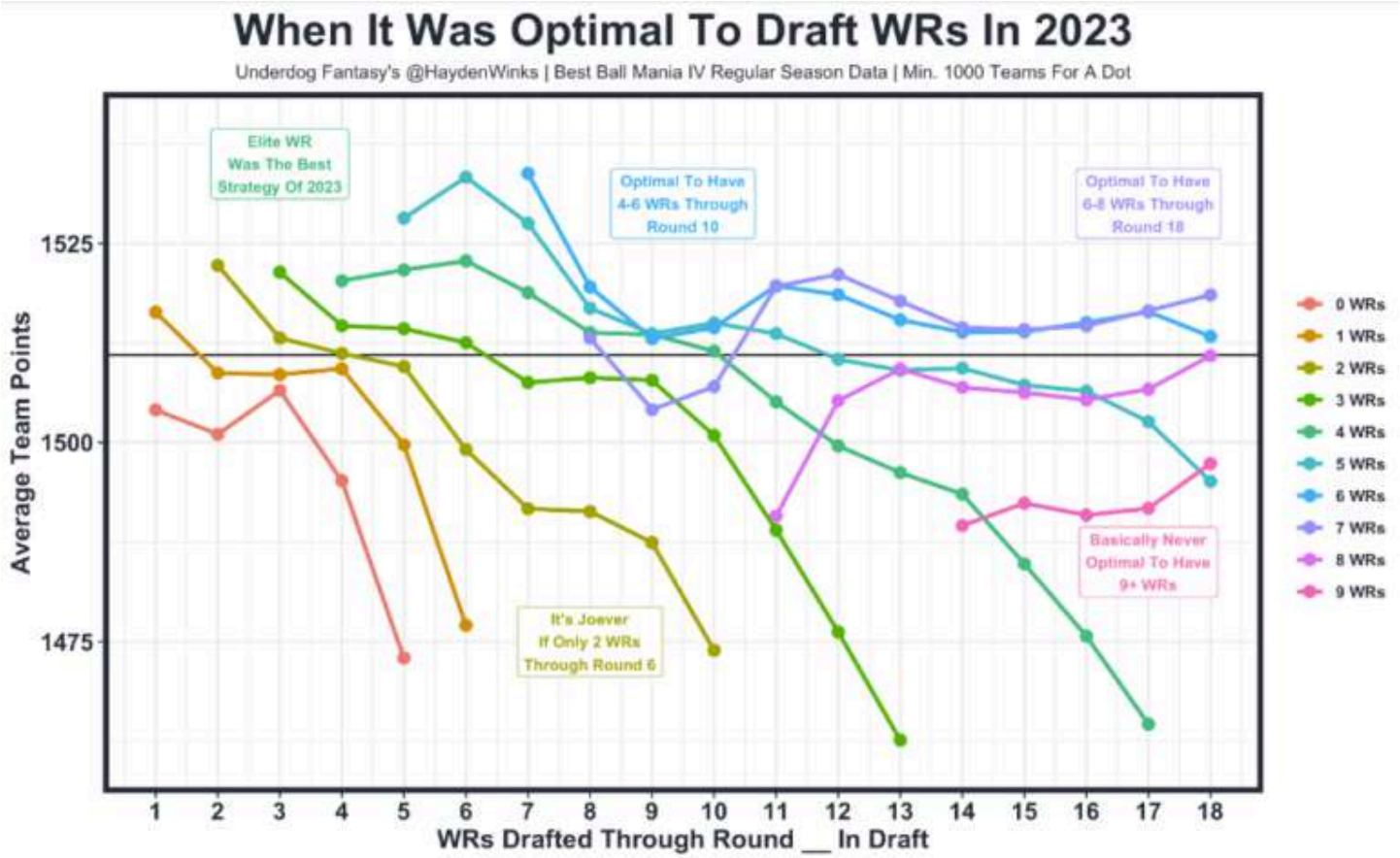
Note - while you may want to skip if your sole focus is redraft, I do think there's a lot that can be learned from constructing Best Ball Rosters designed to beat 800,000+ others, and not just your 12 leaguemates. It can show you how to build rosters that not only score the most points, but ones that are optimized for the end of the season (back-weighted production) where all the money is. I'd recommend this to all!

The Best Ball Market is EXTREMELY different from Redraft. It's honestly a different game entirely.

Our own MOH has a great overview & breakdown of What Best Ball is, how it works, and the biggest core differences between Redraft and Best Ball. I linked it here.

The biggest drafting difference is at the WR Position. WR firepower and depth is absolutely critical to Best Ball success, and has been through four years of data. This has greatly altered the ADP to favor WRs far earlier than a typical redraft league.

Hayden Winks produced this graphic on when & how many WRs were optimal to draft in 2023:



There's far more data & research out there, but some key takeaways through 4 years of drafting (via Underdog):

- Having at least 4 WRs through 7 rounds has become almost “table-stakes” in its necessity. Hayden Winks calls this “The Golden Rule.”
- One of the highest advance rate builds involved 6 of the first 7 picks being WRs last year
- You almost had no hope if you only had 0-1 WRs after Round 6

Consequently, WRs prices have SKYROCKETED, to the point the 2024 market is being called “The WR Avalanche.”

Just look at the impact this is having on the first four rounds:

In many markets, it can be profitable to “zig” while others are “zagging,” and find the upside. In 2024 Best Ball, this WR inflation is a tidal wave you’re best left swimming with, not against.

UNDERDOG BEST BALL ADP - Rounds 1-4:

Best Ball ADP Takeaways:

- **7 RBs** through the Top-24 (29%)
- **17 WRs** in the Top-24 (71%)
- **11 RBs** in the Top-48 (23%)
- **31 WRs** in the Top-48 (65%)

Clearly, Best Ball drafters are leaning into WR-heavy starts more than ever before. Moreover, the RB24 lasts until the middle of Round 8 in Underdog Fantasy!

Now compare that to:

YAHOO ADP - Rounds 1-4

- **10 RBs** through the Top-24 (41%)
- **12 WRs** in the Top-24 (50%)
- **18 RBs** in the Top-48 (37.5%)
- **22 WRs** in the Top-48 (46%)

You'll notice some stark differences in guys like **Derrick Henry** (31 on UD vs. 16 on Yahoo), **Isiah Pacheco** (47 on UD vs. 22 on Yahoo), and **Josh Jacobs** (52 on UD vs. 26 on Yahoo).

Moreover, guys like **Rachaad White**, **Kenneth Walker, Joe Mixon, David Montgomery, Alvin Kamara**, and **James Cook** get drafted in Rounds 3 or 4 in Yahoo, compared to Rounds 6 or 7 in Best Ball.

There are 25 receivers drafted in the first 40 picks this season. Over the previous two years of Underdog drafts, the 25th receiver was taken at ADP 50.8 overall on average

Comparatively, back in 2022 on Underdog, we saw 20 running backs taken within the first 56 picks (overall ADP). This season? On average, the RB20 isn't coming off the board until 78 overall.

There are so many quality RB2s with huge upside available in the Round 7-10 pocket like never before in Best Ball, while the WR Tap typically runs dry by mid-Round 7.

It makes sense – WRs account for 52% of the 19.5+ FP scoring games, compared to 41% RBs and just 7% TEs. They provide far more "spike weeks," and you need to start at least 3 every week. Thus, depth and access to these monster games is crucial, or you'll be left swimming against the wave of monster rosters.

Naturally, this shifts some of my tent poles in Best Ball.

1. **Swim with the WR tide & ensure 4 WRs in 7 picks (ideally 3 in first 4):** We'll point out some specific as we go round by round, but by Pick 48, any viable WR2, and many WR3s, are long gone. For example, **Christian Kirk** and **Terry McLaurin** are typically gone by Round 5, but often fall to Round 7-8 in Redraft Leagues.

   I love to take three WRs to start, as this gives me a ton of flexibility with "Detours" for my remaining four rounds in the Top-7. I could keep loading up on WR, or go with an "elite onesie" detour to a falling Josh Allen (Round 3-4) or Jalen Hurts (Round 3)

2. **Depth, *especially at WR*, is more important than the starting lineup:** Whereas in redraft I like to aim for a starting lineup within my first 8-9 picks, I will often err on the side of depth in Best Ball. I still do love targeting the elite onesies, especially the TEs, and so I find myself close to full starting lineups by Round 8-9 on many occasions. Still, I don't prioritize it nearly as much as I would in redraft. Here, depth, especially at WR, reigns supreme.

3. **The winner might come down to the right Round 1-7 detours:** I loved a discussion I heard with former BBM3 Winner **Pat Kerrane** and **Erik Beimfohr.** They believe, as do I, that the winning BBMV lineup will likely come down to who "skied with the WR Avalanche" while also choosing to "Detour" at the right time.

   Was the detour for a Hero Worthy RB? An Elite QB and/or TE? Perhaps an RB-RB start that then goes 4 WRs. We won't know til December. But if you properly swim with the tide, while also capitalizing on these crazy values at RB, QB, and TEs that the WR inflation has created, you can make an absolute monster.

4. **Stacking & Correlation -** Even more important than WR Firepower is "stacking." Mike Leone's Best Ball Manifesto is also arguably the best resource available on the topic.

   In a nutshell, Stacking is the concept of pairing the QB you draft with the pass catchers in that offense. For example, a roster that contains **Patrick Mahomes**, **Travis Kelce**, and **Xavier Worthy** would be a Chiefs stack.

   Generally, stacking is a good idea because it limits the number of things we "have to get right." Think of it like building a parlay of prop bets. As you bet Mahomes passing yards and then Travis Kelce receiving yards, the book shifts your odds dramatically. There's no negative line movement in Best Ball, however. Rather than going for an 18-leg parlay, picking 2-3 teams to stack up dramatically increases our odds. When building a roster with a stack, we are betting on that offense to succeed. It is much

easier to correctly identify one offense that will succeed than it is to correctly identify 18 individual players that will succeed.

5. **Correlating for Week 17:** Given that all the major money is in that final Week 17 (our fantasy championship), optimizing for Week 17 can be a huge edge. This involves not just stacking up your QBs and his weapons, but also "bringing back" their Week 17 opponents to bank on a shoot-out style environment.

   This is again in the same vein as "limiting what we have to get right." Successful DFS players correlate game environments all the time, and try to capture the games that finish with the most total points scored and plays run.

   We have two articles that break down this idea and the top matchups – one here, and the other here.

6. **Small Wins are much more important in Best Ball -** It seems counterintuitive that "small wins" matter more in Best Ball, where you're trying to beat out 1,000s of others, compared to Redraft where you just want to be the best of 12.

   Yet, I think framing Best Ball Draft Strategy through baseball can help:

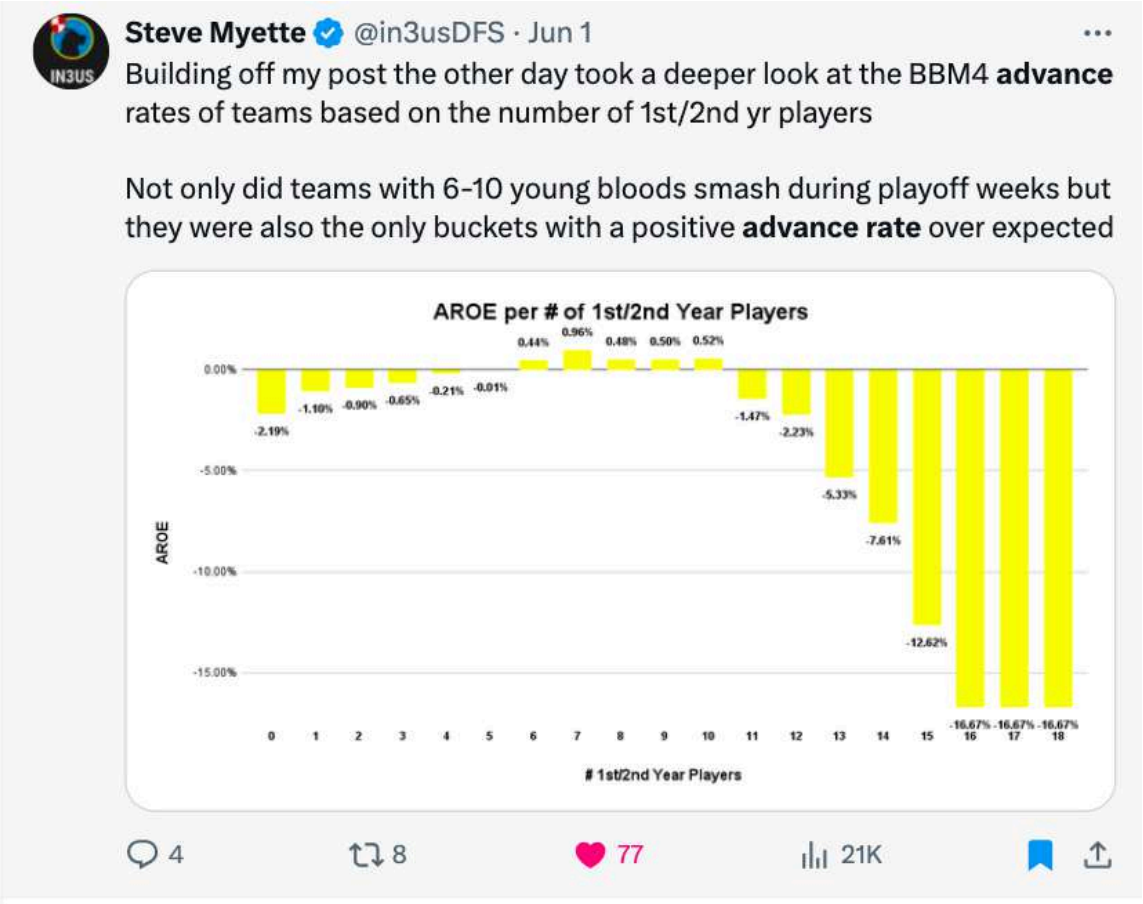
   - To win a big tournament, you need a Grand Slam
   - So yes, you 100% need the home run(s) (Kyren, Puka, Lamb in 2023)
   - Yet, the HR can't get you there alone. We still need plenty of "small-win, on-base" guys to maximize its impact (i.e. ETN, Ferguson, Thielen, Gus Bus last year)

In redraft, we have waivers & trades to help find base runners. Thus, we should take home-run hacks with each "at-bat" in our drafts

Without that luxury in Best Ball, it's important to balance floor & ceiling, and to especially avoid zeroes. When we do make elite contact, we don't want just a solo-shot. Stacking increases those odds of the grandslam coming from one place, too!

7. **Building for Back Weighted Production:** As you'll see in my round-by-round picks, I also embrace this in redraft fantasy. The concept is essentially: you want to prioritize players whose production is likely to peak at the end of the year, particularly when rounding out your bench. Obviously, we prefer players who are giving us numbers all year, but as you get into the later rounds, these types of players are unicorns. Rather, it's more prudent to go for late-season bloomers, which are most often:

   A) **Rookies:** In 4/4 seasons, the winning lineup has featured a rookie WR who blossomed later in the year. From **Rashee Rice** and **Jayden Reed** last year, to **Amon-Ra St. Brown,** to even **Ja'Marr Chase,** it happens every single season. Rookies are going higher and higher as a result, but it's appropriate. Rookies have been HUGE to success, both in the regular season but especially the playoff rounds:



B) **Handcuffs/ Contingency Plays:** This is most obvious at the RB position, where injuries happen most often. But the handcuff play involves taking a backup whose volume and role would spike in the case of the starter getting knocked out, whether due to injury or because he's leap on the depth chart.

We'll dive into our favorite 2024 Rookies and Handcuffs throughout the next many pages, but I similarly fill out my redraft benches with "back-weighted" production in mind. I can always dip into the Waiver Wire for a quick streamer. Instead, I like to maximize my roster space with the true ceiling plays that could carry me if everything bends right.

I will continue to make notes as to key differences in Round-by-Round Redraft vs. Best Ball draft picks and strategy, but the majority of these next pages will focus on redraft.

NOTE - If you haven't played Best Ball but you're interested, click the graphic below, click the link right here, or use code RSJ – you'll get up to $250 in BONUS Cash, and we get a nice little kickback for your sign-up. It's SO much fun, and it would really help us out

Round 1: Three (maybe Four) Hero RBs or a Target Hog

While I may have shifted away from locking in an "RB-RB start no matter what," I still prefer leaving Round 1 with a "Hero-Worthy" Bell-Cow whenever possible. Nothing is more rare, or more valuable, so the edge cannot be greater.

I dove deep into the common characteristics of "Hero-Worthy RBs" here – or the guys who have averaged 23+ FPPG for at least 12 games since 2000. Of course, there are anomalies, and many outcomes can't be boiled down to a single checklist or point. Still, some clear trends emerged – many that should not surprise fantasy owners:

- Versatile skill set, with an ability to shoulder volume and goalline work (duh).
- A pass-catching role that can yield 4+ weekly receptions
- Even better if the back has flashed elite receiving upside and the ability to break a big play as a pass-catcher
- A path to at least 2 "green zone" opportunities (inside-the-10) a game
- Running behind above-average to elite offensive line
- Often 26 or under, and typically over 210 lbs

Yet, besides only CMC, WR1s dominated win-rates and Value Over Replacement Player (VORP) like never before. Moreover, I only feel only three RBs have true "Hero-Worthy" upside that's worth a Round 1 stab, but about eight total including Round 2.

My preference is to leave Round 1 & 2 with two big stabs at a Hero-Worthy RB and an Alpha WR1 Profile. Of course, if the draft flows where a WR-WR start, or RB-RB opening makes sense, I'll jellyfish there.

But I like the flexibility that comes with having a true anchor at those multi-starter positions (RB & WR) before pivoting towards some elite onesies soon after.

Let's dive into Round 1 and how I have it ranked & tiered:

Tier 1 - Gods

1. Christian McCaffrey (SF, RB1)

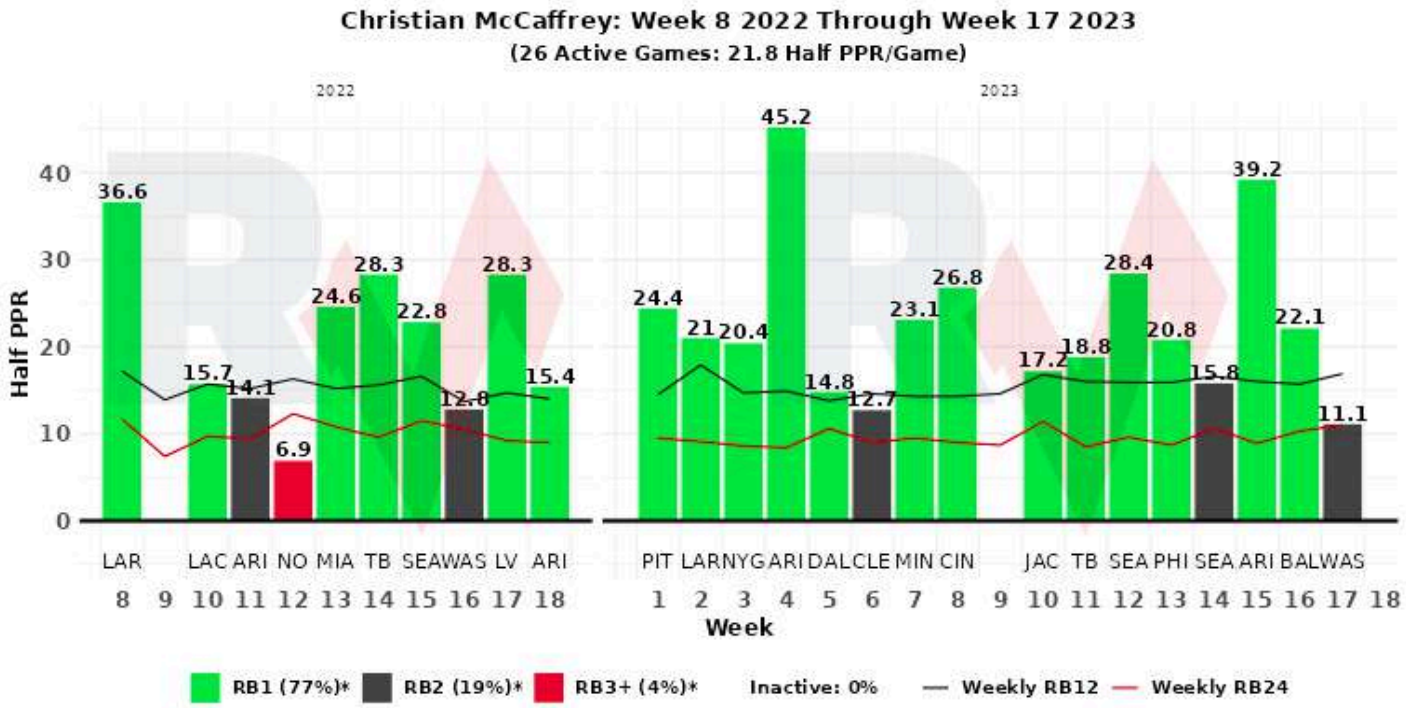
Anyone claiming any other player belongs at the top is getting too cute (maybe, just maybe **CeeDee Lamb** in Best Ball amidst the WR inflation, but it's still CMC for me).

CMC ranks as the fantasy RB3, RB1, RB1, RB8, RB2, and RB1 across his past six seasons. His 2019 season was the fifth-highest scoring for an RB of ALL-TIME, and he was on pace to score even more before an injury in 2020.

Unsurprisingly, a versatile weapon like CMC and a genius play caller like Kyle Shanahan has been a match made in fantasy wet dreams. In 26 games with the 49ers, CMC has:

- Topped 20 Half PPR points in 15-of-26 games (57.6%)

- Finished as a Top-12 RB a whopping 77%
- Finished as a top-5 RB in 14-of-26 games (54%). Absurd!



Graphic via [RotoViz NFL Stat Explorer]

Last year, McCaffrey was first in total opportunities, fourth in RB targets, first in rushing yards, first in rushing TDs, and first in PPR FPPG & total FPs.

McCaffrey checks all the "Legendary RB Upside" boxes: a great offense, a strong line, and meaningful work in every facet of the game, including the red zone. Another 20+ TD season is very possible, even if the 49ers lighten McCaffrey's load as they've promised to do.

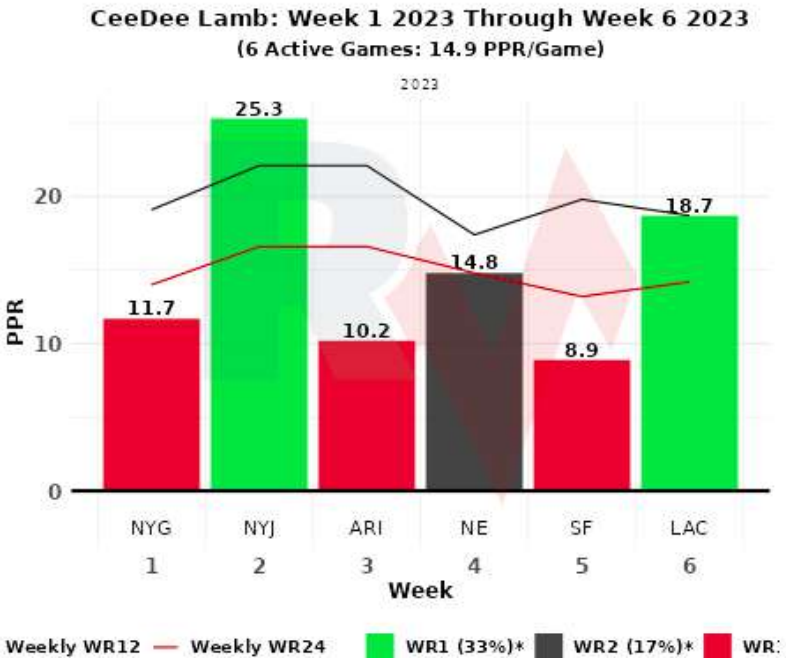
Lastly, CMC's stock is boosted simply because he is a running back, and true every-down RBs are a much more scarce than quality WRs. As such, he was on a whopping 72.8% of ESPN Playoff Rosters, the most of any player last season. His 304 Value Over Replacement (VORP) score was the highest in the league, +82 points Lamb, who ranked second for Half-PPR.

2. CeeDee Lamb (DAL, WR1): As Godly as CMC was last year (73% of ESPN Playoff Rosters!), **CeeDee Lamb** actually scored more PPR FPs than him & all players not named **Josh Allen**. Lamb ranked second in WR/RB Half PPR scoring & was the clear WR1 behind a massive breakout.

- 1st in targets (181)
- 1st in receptions (135, 6th-most for an all-time single-season)
- 2nd in yards (1749)
- 1st in total TDs (14 - 2 rushing)
- 1st in PPR FPs (407.2!) & FPPG (24)
- 1st in Half-PPR FFPs (339.7) & FPPG (20)

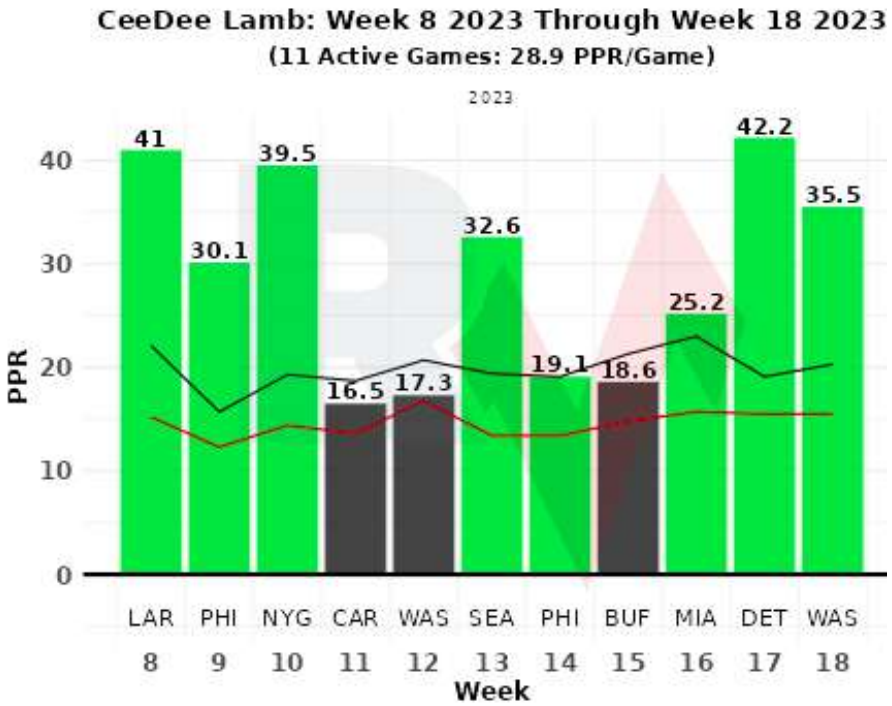
Even more terrifying? The Cowboys were a pathetic passing attack through the first six weeks. **Dak Prescott** was the QB22 in FPPG (14.6), while the offense ranked 20th in passing yards & was bottom-five in pass-rate over expectation.

Meanwhile, Lamb was just the WR13 in FPPG (14.5) – fine, but not first-round worthy.



After the Bye, the Cowboys completely changed their philosophy and opened it up. They finished the year first in points (30.1), pass yards (265.8), pass attempts (37.4), and passing TDs (2.2) per game.

From Weeks 8-17 in this high-flying attack, Lamb was a FANTASY GOD:



RotoViz

CeeDee Lamb Splits 2023 - 2023

Per Game / Full Season Pace

Statistic	In Split	Out of Split
Games	11	6
PPR	28.87 / 491	14.93 / 254
reRECS	9.18 / 156	5.67 / 96
reTDS	1 / 17	0.17 / 3
reTRGS	12.64 / 215	7 / 119
reYDS	115.82 / 1969	79.17 / 1346

In Split: from week 8 to 18, from 2000 to 2023, *out of split evaluates to all games the subject player played that don't meet the in-split criteria.

Yes, Lamb scored 28.9 PPR FPPG and was on pace for 215 tgts, 156 rec, 1969 yds, 17 TDs & 491 FPs!

491 FPs would be the most ALL TIME by a WR-- 52 more FPs than **Cooper Kupp'**s legendary 2021.

With the Cowboys likely to sling it early and often again given the lack of run-game presence, Lamb could legit sustain that wild pace for all of 2024. Dallas added no legitimate target threats out wide either, and I truly think he could push for 200+ targets with legit 2,000 Yard & 18+ TD upside in 2024.

In PPR leagues, and even Half, Lamb does demand consideration to be the first pick in drafts -- especially if you believe his second-half pace is more reflective of what we can expect in 2024 (as I do).

3. Tyreek Hill (MIA, WR2)

The last of my “God Tier,” Hill’s 2023 ranked 9th all-time in total FPs (376). He has now finished as the WR2 in back-to-back seasons since joining the Dolphins, and is used to perfection by **Mike McDaniels**.

Indeed, Hill’s final stat-line was impressive: 172 tgts (3rd), 119 rec (2nd), 1799 yards (1st), 13 TDs (2nd). Additionally, he ultimately was on more playoff rosters than Lamb (70.3% vs. 65%), likely because Hill was elite for longer stretches.

Yet, it’s even more mind-boggling considering Hill's slight drop-off in performance following a Week 14 injury against the Titans that forced Hill to miss one game and play at less than 100% the rest of the way.

Before the injury (Weeks 1-13), Hill was actually on pace to beat his goal to become the first 2,000+ yard receiver in NFL History:

RotoViz

Tyreek Hill Splits 2023 - 2023

Per Game / Full Season Pace

Statistic	In Split	Out of Split
Games	12	4
PPR	26.38 / 448	15.95 / 271
reRECS	7.75 / 132	6.5 / 110
reTDS	1 / 17	0.25 / 4
reTRGS	10.67 / 181	11 / 187
reYDS	123.42 / 2098	79.5 / 1352

In Split: from week 1 to 13, from 2000 to 2023, *out of split evaluates to all games the subject player played that don't meet the in-split criteria.

Hill was on pace for 181 tgts, 132 rec, 2098 yards (!!), and 17 TDs. A true game-wrecker. He set this as his goal for the season last year, and likely would've hit it.

There's little reason to expect much, if any, drop off in 2024. **Jaylen Waddle** may be healthier, and Hill himself said 2,000 yards would be "very selfish" of him. Plus, Tua seems to always crap himself at the end of the year, which has dragged down Hill slightly when you need him most.

Nonetheless, last year's most-owned WR on playoff rosters in a tier with only Lamb and CMC as true "Fantasy Gods," and no one could fault you for taking him 1st overall.

Tier 2 - Remaining Hero RBs & Alpha WRs

Note: I truly find this tier to border on interchangeable. In Redraft, I rank the 2 RBs (Robinson & Hall) higher given the scarcity of the position compared to the depth at WR in home-leagues. Still, if you play full-PPR, or prefer the safety of this crop of WR1s, by all means take your pick of the litter!

4. Breece Hall (NYJ - RB2)

Miraculously, **Breece Hall** finished 2023 as the RB2 in fantasy, despite recovering from an ACL tear and being shackled to a hellish QB Carousel of **Zach Wilson, Tim Boyle,** and **Trevor Siemian**. This is a testament to Hall's unique, elite talent, and also his extremely high fantasy floor.

Hall is an insane athlete. A size-speed terror we rarely see -- especially one with the three-down skillset of Breece.

Per PlayerProfiler, Hall ranks in the 97th percentile for 40-yard dash (4.39), 98th percentile for weight-adjusted speed score, and 94th percentile for burst score. Unsurprisingly his Relative Athletic Score (RAS), was an absurd 9.96/10 -- the 7th best of nearly 2,000 RBs of all-time!

Relative Athletic Score

RAS

Providing simple context for player metrics on a 0 to 10 scale

Breece Hall | RB | Iowa State					
Hand-9.75	Arm-31.25	9.96		2022 RAS	@Mathbomb
Composite Size Grade :		Good	Composite Speed Grade :		Elite
Metric	Mez	RAS	Metric	Mez	RAS
Height	5112	6.96	40 yd dash	4.39	9.72
Weight	217	7.27	20 split	2.55	9.51
Bench			10 split	1.52	9.51
Composite Explosion Grade :		Elite	Composite Agility Grade :		
Vertical	40	9.68	Shuttle		
Broad	1006	9.35	3-Cone		

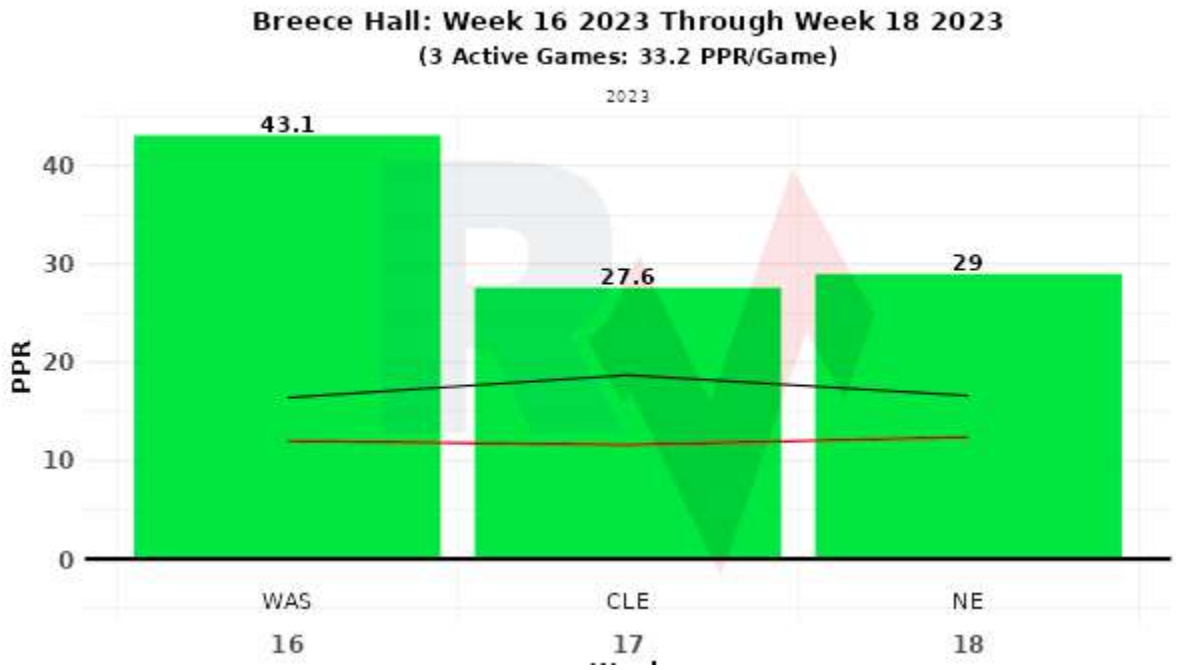
Considering last year's hellish set-up, it can truly only get better from here (and again, he was THE RB2!)

In 2024, it could get MUCH better. **Aaron Rodgers** is already a full-go and should create the best offensive environment Hall has ever played in. Rodgers routinely checks down and gets his RBs into advantageous situations, while also creating more opportunities for TDs.

The Jets ranked 29th in points per game (15.8) last year. With Rodgers, the Packers routinely ranked Top-10. Hall is an excellent bet to improve upon his nine total TDs (RB12). In the rare moments the team was leading, Hall averaged the most fantasy points in the league, and the second-most weighted opportunities as a favorite last season; the Jets are favored in 14 of 17 games entering 2024. He had exactly **1** carry from inside-the-five last year.

Hall is also fully healthy entering this season after fighting through an ACL tear that ruined an explosive start to his NFL career. Hall said he "feels like I'm back to my old self," which is scary considering how well he played. Running backs historically show real improvement in Year 2 post-ACL surgery.

He finally seemed to find his groove by the end of 2023. Over his final three games, in which he felt fully back, Hall accrued 507 YFS, scoring 43, 27.6, and 29 FPs (33.2 PPR FPPG). If he could achieve those ungodly totals in a disastrous setting, imagine what a full year behind a better line and a more stable offense could look like. The ceiling is truly limitless



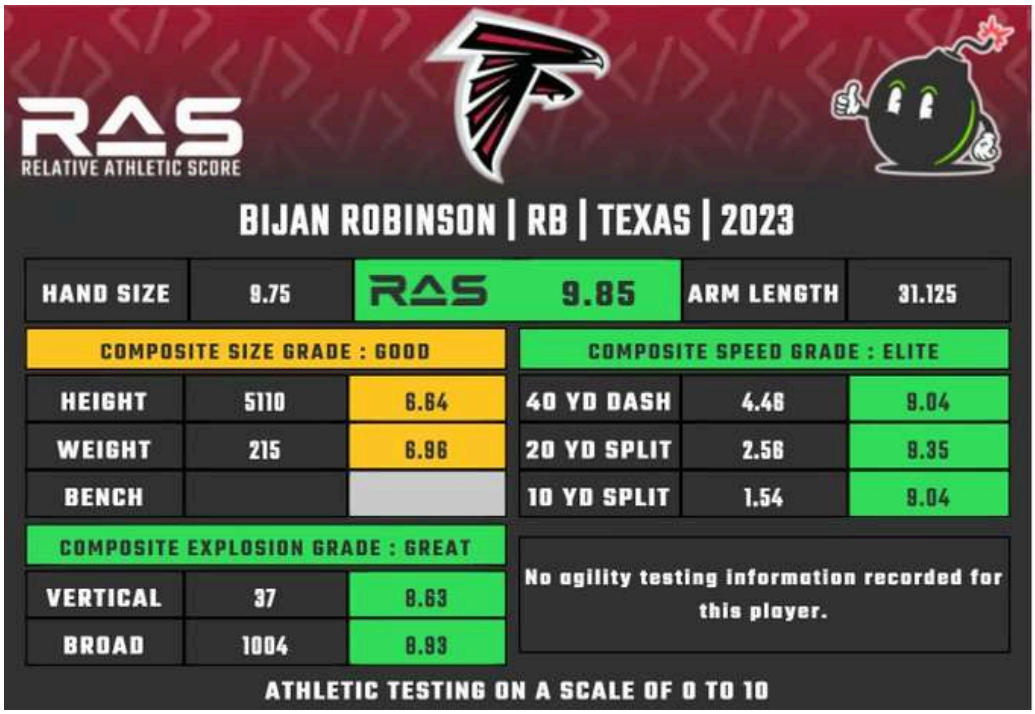
Perhaps best of all, the Jets go from 2023's 31st-ranked offensive line to a potential top-5 unit this season (ranked 5th by PFF). In free agency, New York signed **Tyron Smith** from the Cowboys and the mauling **Morgan Moses** from the Ravens, who both ranked in the top 10 in PFF grade last year. They also spent the 11th overall pick on monstrous T **Olu Fashanu**.

Sure, the team drafted a bruiser in **Braelon Allen**. There's a chance Allen vultures some TDs & carves out an annoying role – **Nathaniel Hackett** has typically preferred RBBCs. Still, all that should be offset by a return to full health & a substantially more fertile fantasy environment with Rodgers back and a vastly improved line.

5. Bijan Robinson (ATL - RB3)

Despite being lauded as a "generational product," **Bijan Robinson** underwhelmed in fantasy as a rookie. He finished as the PPR RB8 in total FPs, ranking as the RB16 in FPPG.

As a raw athlete, Bijan is plenty impressive: 87th percentile 40-yard dash (4.46), 90th percentile speed score 82nd percentile burst score. is 9.85 RAS ranked 28th of nearly 2000 all-time RBs:



Definitely an impressive specimen... but not *quite* on the level of Breece Hall. In comparing their college tape, Robinson looked like the more natural runner, and was similarly effective as a pass-catcher. Yet, at the NFL level, Breece has popped more regularly.

Yes, Arthur Smith's frustrating rotation should shoulder some (much) of the blame. Still, Robinson did finish third in RB targets and ninth in total opportunities. He ranked first in RB routes (385). Robinson was just slightly above average in efficiency, ranking 27th in FPs per opportunity, 21st in YPRR, and 16th in YPC.

Still, Robinson's situation will vastly improve in 2024, and I expect those efficiency numbers to spike, in addition to much steadier usage for Bijan.

Reason 1? **Kirk Cousins**' arrival should mean a far more stable overall offensive environment. Defenses will have to respect the passing game far more than **Desmond Ridder** or **Taylor Heineke** being under center. Robinson faced an average of 6.7 defenders in the box (RB36), and teams will no longer be able to stack the front. His eight TDs (RB20) could legitimately double in a more competent offense as well.

Additionally, new OC Zac Robinson hails from the Shanahan / Sean McVay tree. This scheme's key focus is merging the run and pass games, and the right talent (CMC, **Todd Gurley**, **Kyren Williams**) often produces monstrous results.

Bijan has already been promised "usage like Christian McCaffrey." HC Raheem Morris said his plan is “to get the ball to Bijan as much as you can in as many ideal situations as you possibly can.”

If Zac Robinson deploys Bijan like Kyren Williams, he could see north of 340+ touches. Williams averaged 82% of the snaps, 74% of the rushes, and 65% of the routes under Robinson's direction -- massive totals that were topped only by CMC (per FantasyLife's Utilization Hub):

Kyren Williams

WEEK	SNAPS	RUSH ATT.	ROUTES	TARGETS	TPRR	SDD SNAPS	IS ATT	LDD SNAPS	2MIN SNAPS	PPR	PPR RANK
1	67%	38%	72%	6%	7%	60%	33%	86%	100%	17	9
2	97%	78%	80%	18%	19%	100%	100%	100%	100%	28	1
3	100%	83%	83%	22%	21%	100%	100%	100%	100%	9	25
4	73%	74%	61%	8%	11%	100%	100%	86%	85%	28	4
5	85%	92%	76%	6%	6%	80%	0%	92%	58%	8	27
6	83%	74%	71%	0%	0%	100%	100%	80%	100%	22	3
12	61%	50%	62%	19%	29%	67%	0%	70%	100%	38	1
13	94%	84%	62%	15%	22%	100%	100%	82%	100%	20	9
14	89%	83%	74%	11%	13%	100%	100%	93%	100%	14	14
15	77%	77%	63%	23%	29%	80%	50%	67%	100%	27	3
16	79%	68.99%	63%	0%	0%	100%	100%	83%	100%	16	12
17	93%	87%	34%	6%	15%	100%	100%	100%	100%	30	1
19	67%	76%	47%	3%	6%	67%	0%	78%	0%	8	11
Sample	82%	74%	65%	10%	14%	89%	68%	86%	88%	20.38	-

Stir in a line that ranks 6th in PFF's line grades (and top-3 in run blocking), and Robinson presents the perfect balance of talent + usage + surrounding talent -- all the ingredients for a legendary RB season.

Tyler Allgeier is a strong back-up, with a rookie-year 1,000 yard season on his resume. Zac Robinson has said, "Certainly, Tyler (Allgeier) is going to have a big role, and at certain points in the season we are going to be leaning on him." I still consider Allgeier a handcuff (perhaps the best there is), and I do not consider him any different than what **Braelon Allen** is for Breece.

Nonetheless, Bijan is an elite prospect in an ascending situation that should provide so much more stability. The ceiling is astronomical if Robinson's usage mimics Kyren Williams... and as the superior player, it very likely could.

After these RBs, it comes down to 3 WRs:

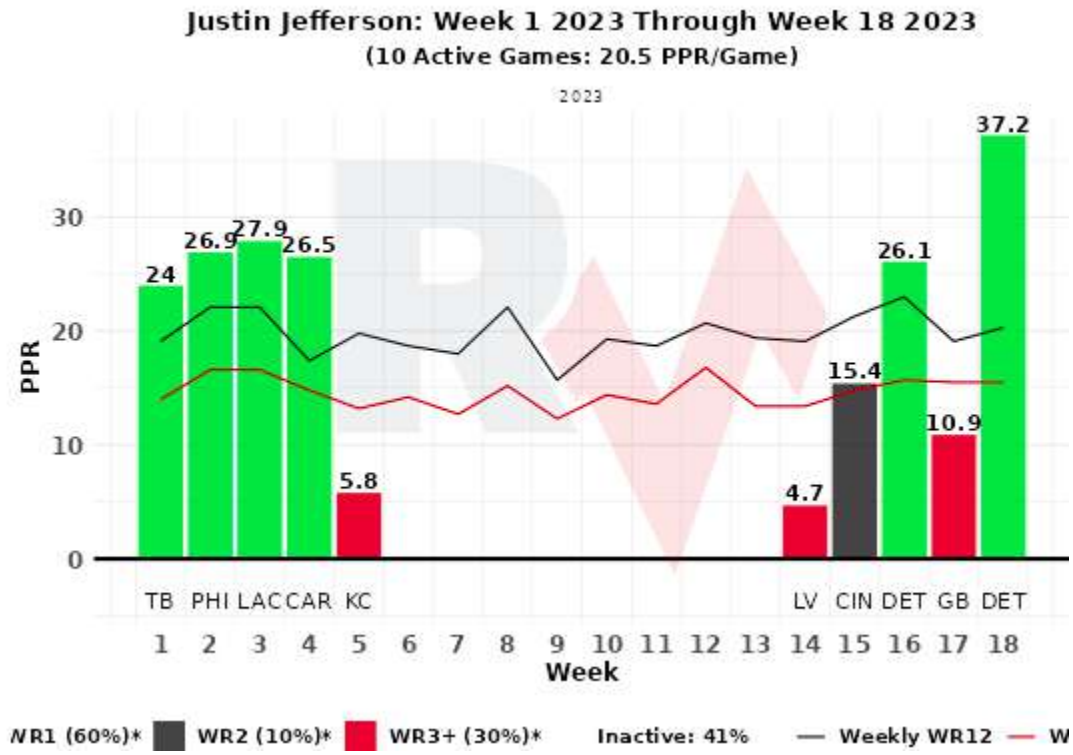
Ja'Marr Chase vs. Justin Jefferson vs. Amon-Ra St. Brown

Here's how I rank them… a little different than most!

6. Justin Jefferson (MIN, WR3)

The WR6, WR4, and WR1 prior to last year's injury-marred campaign, Jefferson is arguably the most-talented WR in the entire NFL. Despite the injuries to himself and his QBs last year, Jefferson was still the WR5 in FPPG – just as dominant as ever.

Check out his game log: Jefferson was a Top-12 WR and topped 24 FPs in 6-of-10 games (60%), and two of those 10 games he either was injured (Week 5) or being eased into the line up (Week 14). Really, he was Top-12 in 6-of-8 games (75%)



Graphics via [RotoViz's NFL Stat Explorer]

Losing **Kirk Cousins** will undoubtedly hurt. Yet, in four games with Mullens as the starter, Jefferson posted 15.4 (WR22), 26.1 (WR7), 10.9 (WR35), and 37.2 (WR1) FPs. While I would have preferred **JJ McCarthy** (out for 2024), **Sam Darnold** looked excellent thus far during the 2024 preseason and Training Camp.

I give a ton of credit to HC **Kevin O'Connell**, a pass-happy branch of the **Sean McVay** tree**.** In two years calling plays, O'Connell's Vikings have racked up:

- Pass Attempts: 672 (3rd) and 631 (4th)
- Passing Yards: 4818 (2nd) and 4700 (1st)
- Passing TDs: 30 both years, 4th both years

Consider they achieved these totals with **Josh Dobbs, Nick Mullens**, and **Jaren Hall** all making starts, and it's clear: O'Connell is a passing game wizard. WRs seem to run wide-open in this offense, and even with the added defensive attention, Jefferson regularly roams free. This offense is going to throw early, often, and successfully, no matter who's under-center.

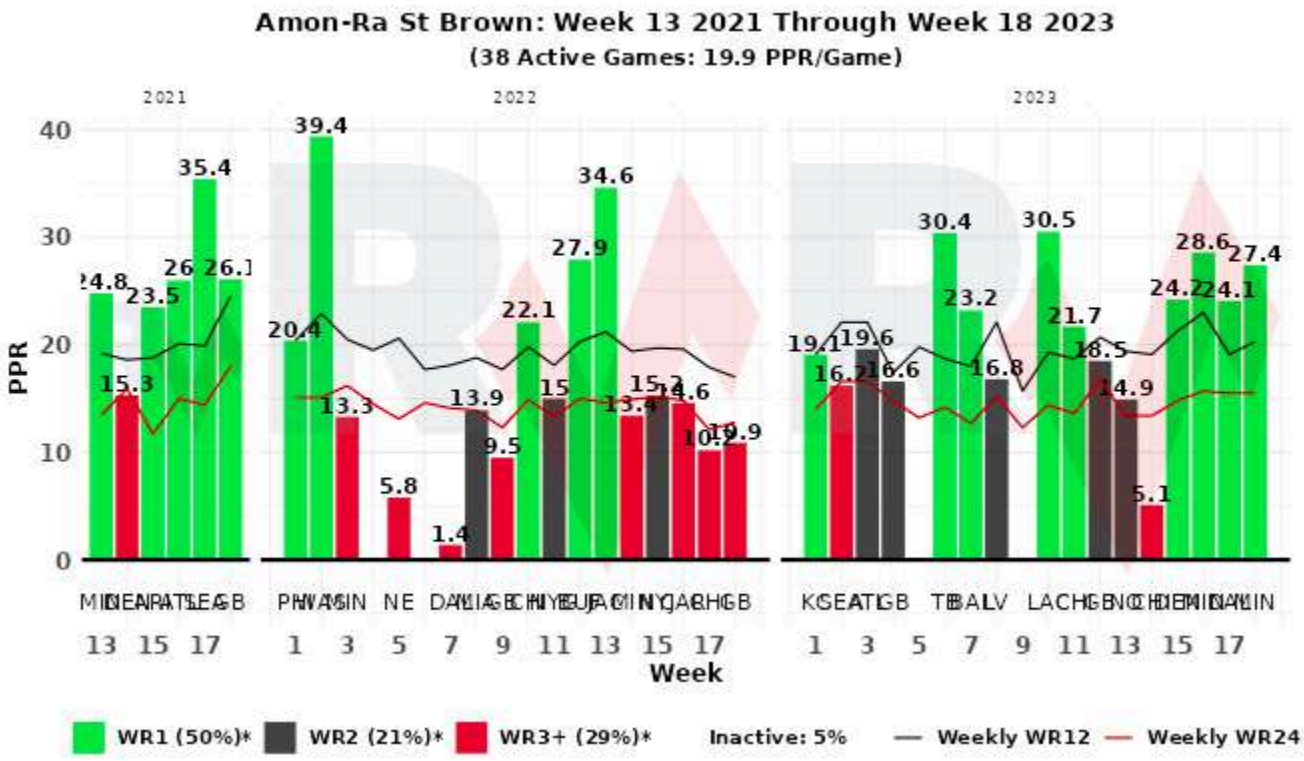
If none of that compels you, well, just remember: Jefferson is the best WR in the game. Talent will always solidify the floor, and open up the ceiling, no matter how bad the surrounding play may be (and it doesn't project to be terrible).

The Darnold-to-Jefferson connection has reportedly been "lights out" and "on full display" throughout camp. Jefferson commented: "This is my first time really being around Sam, having him throw to me. To see the balls that he throws, especially the go balls, the deep balls that he throw, it was right in the hands. It feels like a soft pillow. He's been doing a great job, just, you know, trying to learn and try to… build that chemistry with the whole team." SOFT PILLOWS! Sign me up!

7. Amon-Ra St. Brown (DET, WR5)

Having ASB ahead of **Ja'Marr Chase** may shock some, but I just don't see it as controversial. St. Brown's floor is SIGNIFICANTLY higher, and the ceiling really isn't all that much lower.

Since Amon-Ra St. Brown became a starter in Week 13 of his rookie season, he has been a Top-12 WR in a whopping 50% of his games. He has also been Top-24 in an even-more impressive 71% of games



St. Brown is perhaps the safest Round 1 WR in fantasy. His weekly consistency is unparalleled, yet don't let his high-floor detract from a similarly high-ceiling.

As the graphs show, ASB's log is littered with 20+ FP performances, and include plenty of 30+ FP spike weeks too. He has seldom been a line-up killer, falling outside of the Top-24 WRs in just 29% of games.

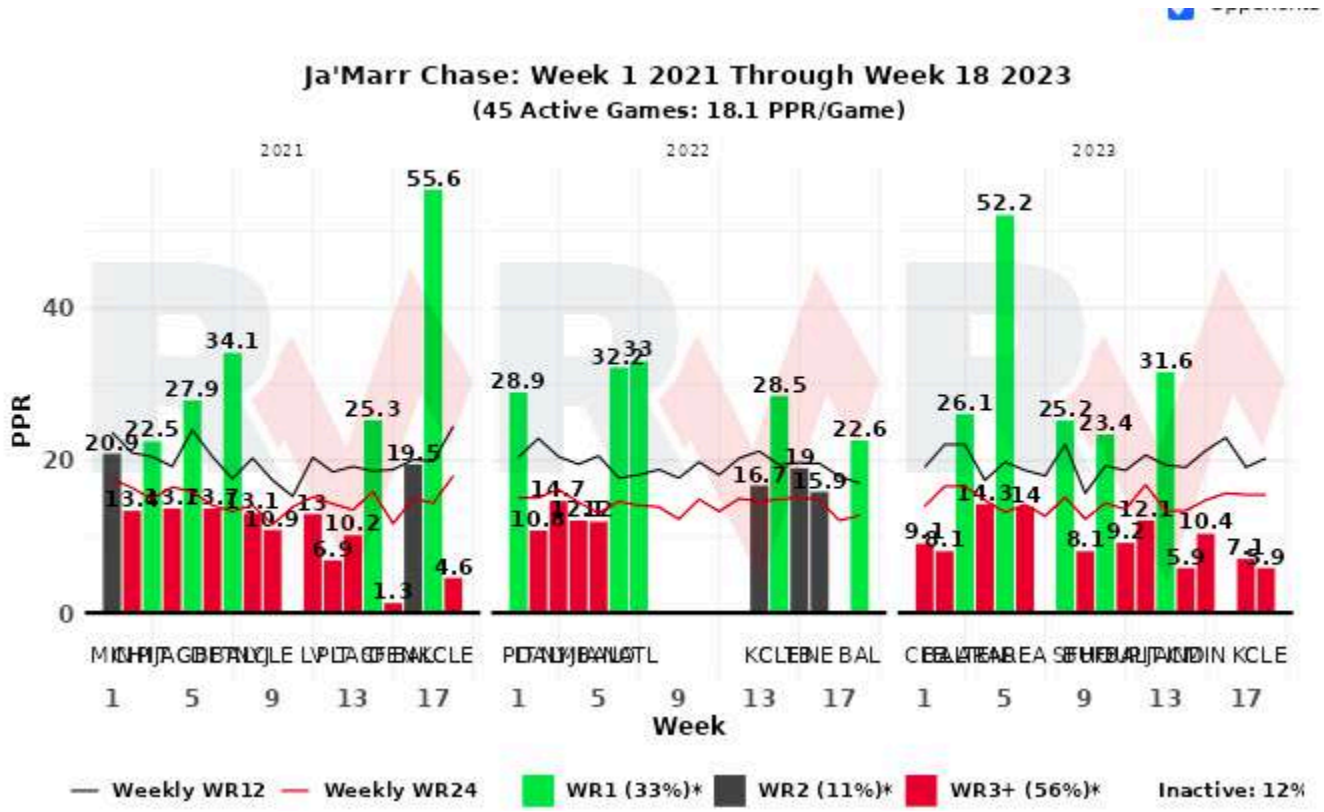
St. Brown eats up "lay-up targets," posting 145 and 164 looks over his past two seasons (after an impressive 119 as a part-time rookie). With TD luck rebounding for him in 2023, ASB finished as the WR3 behind only Lamb and Hill (21.1 PPR FPPG, 17.3 Half-PPR). He ranked 5th in targets, 2nd in receptions, 3rd in yards, and 6th in TDs.

ASB also achieved these impressive totals while playing with a torn oblique! He's simply so damn good and steady. With **Ben Johnson** and **Jared Goff** both returning, ASB should once again eat his steady, always-helpful production. His consistency gives him a major edge in 2024 Fantasy Football Drafts.

8. Ja'Marr Chase (CIN, WR6)

I called Jefferson the best WR in football earlier... and yet, when he was teammates with **Ja'Marr Chase** at LSU, Chase was the clear No.1. Chase is so violently explosive, both in his routes and with the ball in his hands, and he truly has zero gaps in his game. Besides maybe **Tyreek Hill**, no one can flip a game-- real life or fantasy-- faster than Chase.

That's because Chase's ceiling is unmatched. Over the past three years, Chase has the two highest-scoring games among WRs, with 55.6 FPs (2021) and 52.2 FPs (2023):



Yet, while these graphs illustrate Chase's monstrous spike-week potential, they also showcase his volatility. He may be a bit more boom-or-bust than fantasy managers realize, even with **Joe Burrow** in the lineup.

Across his three seasons, Chase has been a Top-12 WR just 33% of the time and Top-24 just 44%. He's much more regularly busted and been out of lineups, with over half of his games (56%) outside the Top-25.

Indeed, Burrow has been in-and-out of the lineup for stretches of Chase's career, and especially didn't look healthy for much of 2023. When Burrow played a full season in 2022, Chase posted a career high 20.5 FPPG (WR3).

Yet, this total is actually below ASB's performance last year (21.1). In his career with Burrow, Chase averages 18.35 FPPG, below ASB's career average of 19.9 FPPG as a starter:

RotoViz

Ja'Marr Chase Splits 2021 - 2023

Per Game / Full Season Pace

Statistic	In Split	Out of Split
Games	30	15
PPR	18.35 / 312	17.68 / 301
reRECS	6 / 102	5.87 / 100
reTDS	0.67 / 11	0.6 / 10
reTRGS	9.23 / 157	8.6 / 146
reYDS	83.1 / 1413	81.6 / 1387

In Split: Joe Burrow played, from week 1 to 13, from 2000 to 2023, *out of split evaluates to all games the subject player played that don't meet the in-split

Had **Tee Higgins** moved on, I would've had Chase as the clear WR3 after Hill and Lamb. Yet, Higgins is still here. Chase is the clear No.1 at this stage of their careers, but faces far stiffer-competition than ASB, who absolutely eats first-read targets.

Tier 3 - Remaining RB1s & WR1s

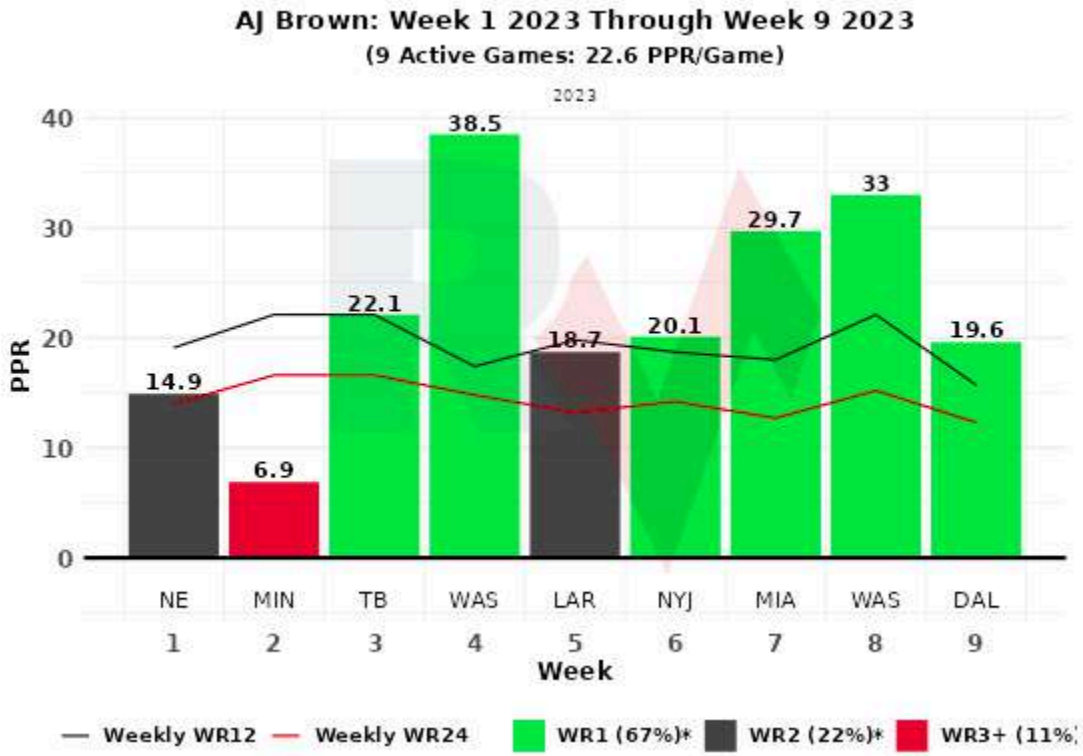
After these Top-8 are gone, the board flattens out a bit for 9-12. The WRs in this range feel most likely to "explode" into the next top-tiers, but there are some RBs who could flirt with Hero Status, too.

9. AJ Brown (PH, WR5)

Since moving to Philly, **AJ Brown** has finished as the WR5 in PPR leagues in back-to-back seasons, notching 144 and 157 targets in the deserved "Alpha Role."

Even if you were just getting what he's consistently done with the Eagles, Brown would be a phenomenal pick at 9 overall. Yet, there's some room for optimism.

Through 9 weeks, AJ Brown and the Eagles were cooking. Brown was the WR2 in fantasy with 22.6 FPPG, trailing only **Tyreek Hill,** while 6 of his first 9 games were Top-12, and 89% were Top-24. He was on pace for 172 targets, 126 receptions, 1898 yards, and 11 TDs (384 FPs, sheesh!)



Unfortunately, Brown and the Eagles collapsed over the second-half. AJB only averaged 11.26 FPPG as the WR37 in this span. **Jalen Hurts** definitely was playing through some tough injuries, and the offense as a whole completely caved in.

RotoViz

A.J. Brown Splits 2023 - 2023

Per Game / Full Season Pace

Statistic	In Split	Out of Split
Games	9	8
PPR	22.61 / 384	11.26 / 191
reRECS	7.44 / 126	4.88 / 83
reTDS	0.67 / 11	0.12 / 2
reTRGS	10.11 / 172	8.25 / 140
reYDS	111.67 / 1898	56.38 / 958

In Split: from week 1 to 9, from 2000 to 2023, *out of split evaluates to all games the subject player played that don't meet the in-split criteria.

Which AJ Brown should you expect in 2024? I do think **Kellen Moore** brings some optimism.

No, Moore's run with the Chargers didn't go as planned. After engineering some explosive Dallas attacks, Moore's Chargers ranked just 18th in total yards and 21st in total points.

Yet, Moore's offense has ranked top-6 in points per game in 4 of 5 seasons. They've been Top-5 in YFS per game in 4 of 5 seasons. They've been Top-4 in situation-neutral pace of play in 4 of 5 seasons, and top-7 in plays per game in 5 of 5 seasons.

Expect this Eagles team to be up-tempo and to run a lot of plays, and hopefully score a lot of points.

Moore has also been masterful at using his WRs in motion and creating phenomenal "lay-up" looks for his weapons. Last year, **Keenan Allen** finished as the WR3 in FPPG while leading the NFL with 11.7 Targets per game (199 tgt pace). **CeeDee Lamb** leapt from the WR19 to the WR5 under Moore's tutelage and slot usage.

In 2022, CeeDee Lamb led the NFL with 87 PPR points as the pre-snap motion man. The next-highest total was 56. In 2023, Keenan Allen led the NFL with 105 PPR points as the pre-snap motion man. Allen had never scored more than 40 points as the pre-snap motion man in a season prior to teaming up with Moore.

Imagine what a talent like **AJ Brown** could do with this type of "lay-up usage?!" Sure, **Devonta Smith** could also man this role well, but no WR has more fantasy points on "short routes" than AJB (1.81 FPs per Short Target). His run-after-the-catch abilities make him a natural choice to thrive in this role.

Thus, AJB comes with the "know what you're getting (WR5)" floor, with the upside of a massive ceiling boost if he gets the Keenan / Lamb role. Sign me up at 9 all day!

10. Garrett Wilson (NYJ, WR7)

If any end-of-Round 1 WR is going to take a **CeeDee Lamb** style leap, it's Garrett Wilson. Anyone with eyeballs can see the dude is a special talent, capable of attacking every layer of the field with every type of route. He ranked 5th in ESPN's Open Score, and drew volume like an elite WR should, ranking ninth in target share (27.1%), first in air-yard share (45.8%), and fifth in first-read share (36.8%).

Wilson simply has had no one to get him the rock. Last season, the Jets ranked 30th in adjusted completion rate and 27th in catchable target rate. He was bottom-3 in catchable targets in both 2022 and 2023.

Enter **Aaron Rodgers**. From **Jordy Nelson,** to **Greg Jennings,** to **Randall Cobb,** to of course most recently **Davante Adams,** the list of WR1s thriving with Rodgers is long. In fact, any Rodgers WR to see 140+ targets has never finished worse than WR4! (Per BDGE)

Wilson has all the ability to be Rodgers' next great WR1. Rodgers himself acknowledged this, saying, "He's got all the makings of a star receiver," Rodgers said. "And we feel like if we can both stay healthy that we can accomplish a lot this year, but it's going to be important we communicate."

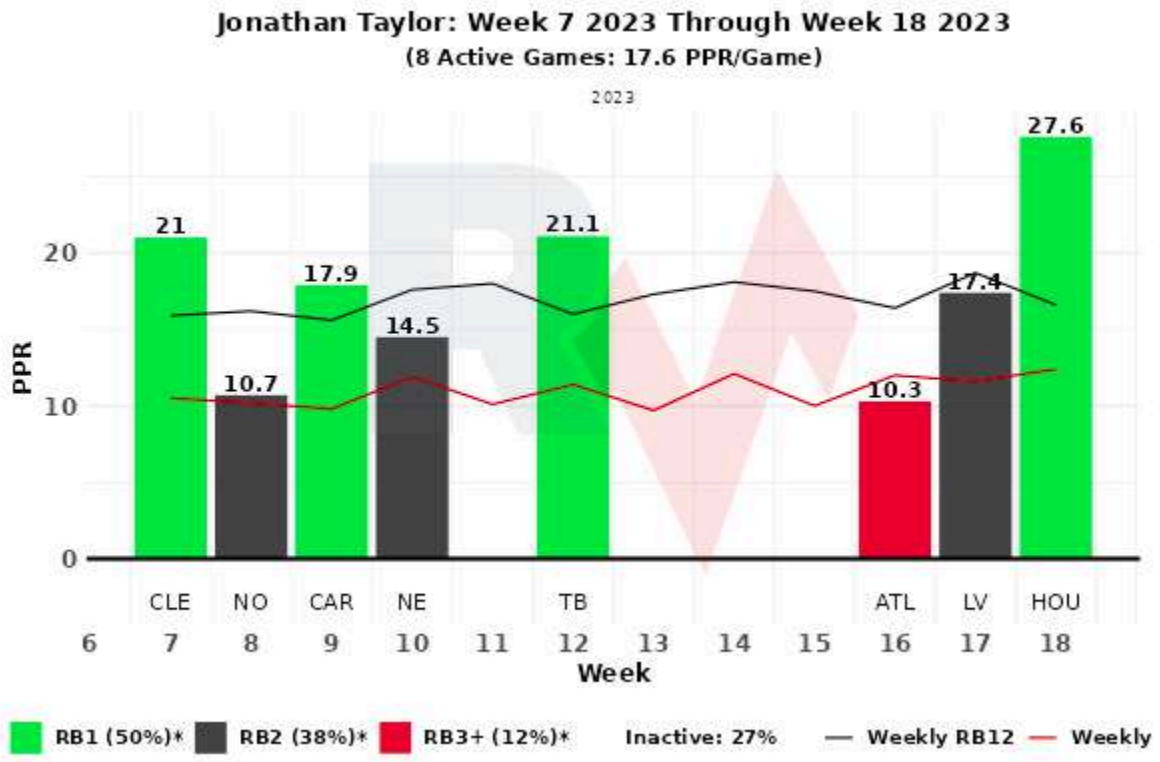
Coming off an Achilles tear, Rodgers health is no guarantee. At minimum, the Jets signed **Tyrod Taylor**, a very capable backup, which should buoy the floor quite a bit if Rodgers is to miss time.

This is a pretty easy case to make, and even as someone who was burned by Wilson (moreso his QBs) last year, I am more than ready to go back to the well in 2024.

11. Jonathan Taylor (RB4, 12 OVR): ***Note:*** *Originally #13 overall, Jonathan Taylor has jumped into Round 1 of my Redraft Rankings due to Puka Nacua's knee injury & Jahmyr Gibbs' hamstring*

There's no denying the Hero RB fantasy upside here in Jonathan Taylor. He is just two seasons removed from finishing as the clear RB1, with 2171 YFS and 20 total TDs on a massive 384 opportunities. This new Colts offense under Shane Steichen offers tons of upside. In the few games with **Anthony Richardson,** the Colts were 1st in pace and no huddle rate, 3rd in average play clock seconds, and 1st in combined plays run (w/ opponents) and 7th in combined points. Even without him, the Colts ranked 12th in plays run and 11th in points. This is a RIPE fantasy environment, especially out of the backfield.

Taylor also played well once his legs were under him and saw meaningful work. From Week 7 onward, JT was the RB3 in Fantasy with 16.8 FPPG. He finished Top-12 in 56% of his games. If you combined **Zach Moss** and JT's scoring from starts, you'd get 268.6 FPs, which would have ranked RB2 on the season. This is not a perfect science and can't obviously be assumed, it illustrates the ripe set-up – especially when you mix-in the Colts line ranks third in PFF's 2024 line rankings, boasting continuity, one of the top tackles duo in the league, and with Ryan Kelly at center.



As one last bonus, Taylor faces the *easiest* fantasy playoff schedule among RBs too. Yes, his receiving ceiling is completely capped with Richardson, and if Richardson also vultures the larger share of TDs, JT will struggle to pay off his price. But if the Colts want to protect their young QB, I imagine JT gets the lion's share of opening cracks at the GL. There's real 1500+ rushing, 15+ TD upside with this talent, scheme, and line mix.

12. Saquon Barkley (RB5, 12 OVR) - Note: *Barkley was originally an early second-rounder (14th OVR) for me. The injuries to Gibbs & Puka have vaunted him into Round 1 in Redraft*

Early in the offseason, I had been largely fading **Saquon Barkley.** I was (& remain) worried about the "Tush Push" completely sapping Barkley's TD upside, while also concerned about his receiving ceiling.

Hurts ranked first in the NFL in TDs inside the five last season (13 attempts, ultimately he had 15 total rushing touchdowns). Also, in Hurts' two full seasons at QB, the Eagles have ranked 21st and 32nd in RB targets and have consistently been behind the Giants in this metric. Sure, they haven't had a pass-catcher like Barkley (although Swift is no slouch). Hurts also scrambles for first downs more often than a statue QB who may dump it off. Plus, Barkley will be contending with **AJ Brown** & **Devonta Smith,** after spending his career as the passing-game focal point.

Those concerns are all valid still, but I am warming up the more & more I dig into Barkley's 2024 outlook, and the more positive drumbeat I read.

Granted, it's never good to overreact to practice news… but we don't want to underreact either.

In the opening days, longtime Eagles beat noted: "Saquon Barkley was heavily involved in the passing game, and he probably had more receptions than anyone on the team. He lined up all over the formation. The Eagles ran some speed option drills with Hurts and Barkley to open practice…

"It's often been pointed out that Barkley will be running behind a great offensive line for the first time in his career. But beyond that, he'll also have a quarterback in Hurts who can draw attention away from him on speed options / RPOs / etc., and with A.J. Brown and DeVonta Smith at wide receiver opposing defenses won't be able to stick eight defenders in the box to stop him."

The usage has been so creative, that Barkley hopes to have "Christian McCaffrey level of impact." Now, I don't believe Barkley is CMC, perhaps not even close. But RB is a usage driven position. He was behind an Eagles offensive line that was 2023's top-graded unit and ranked second in PFF's 2024 Rankings (compared to the 29th Giants). Barkley goes from the 30th-ranked offense to the seventh.

Plus, even with the GL Vulture concerns, Swift actually averaged 1.5x Barkley's goal-line carries per game last year (14 attempts over 16 games compared to Barkley's eight over 14 games). **Miles Sanders** just hit 11 TDs and an RB12 finish, and Barkley offers a FAR greater ceiling. Given the massive three-year, $37.8 Million contract, the Eagles are incentivized to use him, too. If these pass-catching & GL concerns bend in Barkley's favor, a "Legendary Season" is within his range of outcomes, and much likelier than I originally gave him credit for.

Round 1 Best Ball Notes & Differences:

- While I still like the Hero-RB strategy in Underdog Best Ball, the WR economy is so inflated (& RB so underpriced) that I do not bump **Bijan Robinson** or **Breece Hall** to the 4 & 5 slots like in Redraft. Give me **Justin Jefferson, Amon-Ra St. Brown,** and **Ja'Marr Chase** first, above any RB not named CMC.

- Similarly, **Jahmyr Gibbs** is my 12th ranked player, after **Garrett Wilson** – I see a big drop-off in WRs after him.

- **Amon-Ra St. Brown**'s floor is more appealing to me in redraft, but **Ja'Marr Chase**'s 50+ FP weekly upside gives him a slight edge in Best Ball – ASB will likely be more relevant & productive on a week-to-week, but Chase is more likely to have the "need-to-have-it" upside

Amon Ra > Ja'Marr Chase in Fantasy. Am I psycho?

Round 2: Find Your Missing Bell-Cow or Target Hog

I'm only looking at RBs or WRs in Round 2. Most often, I target the opposite of whatever I secured in Round 1. Still, if the draft flows where the clear top-guy is the same position I already have, I'm definitely fine with RB-RB or WR-WR starts.

Nonetheless, locking down an option with elite upside at both spots is my preferred play, as it creates a lot more flexibility for roster-building throughout the rest of the draft, while giving you a shot at the two biggest edges in fantasy.

Note: De'Von Achane's ADP is in the middle of Round 3 in both Yahoo and ESPN. If you're confident you could scoop him in Round 3, that opens up a ton of possible builds, and would make a WR in Rounds 1-2 more imperative (& a WR-WR start more palatable). He belongs in this Round 2 "Hero Worthy" group, but is included in Round 3 below given his price.

Remaining RBs with "Hero Worthy" Upside

Kyren Williams (RB7, 13 OVR)

The RB2 in PPR FPPG by a whopping 3.2 FPs behind only CMC, despite being largely undrafted, **Kyren Williams** was THE league winner of 2024. After the team drafted **Blake Corum,** I figured Williams' absurd snap share and touch totals would decrease. The man averaged 83% of the snaps, 74% of the rush attempts, 67% of the routes & 11% target share when active:

WEEK	SNAPS	RUSH ATT.	ROUTES	TARGETS	TPRR	SDD SNAPS	I5 ATT	LDD SNAPS	2MIN SNAPS	PPR	PPR RANK
1	67%	38%	72%	6%	7%	60%	33%	86%	100%	17	9
2	97%	78%	80%	18%	19%	100%	100%	100%	100%	28	1
3	100%	83%	83%	22%	21%	100%	100%	100%	100%	9	25
4	73%	74%	61%	8%	11%	100%	100%	86%	85%	28	4
5	85%	92%	76%	6%	6%	80%	0%	92%	58%	8	27
6	83%	74%	71%	0%	0%	100%	100%	80%	100%	22	3
12	61%	50%	62%	19%	29%	67%	0%	70%	100%	38	1
13	94%	84%	62%	15%	22%	100%	100%	82%	100%	20	9
14	89%	83%	74%	11%	13%	100%	100%	93%	100%	14	14
15	77%	77%	63%	23%	29%	80%	50%	67%	100%	27	3
16	79%	68.99%	63%	0%	0%	100%	100%	83%	100%	16	12
17	93%	87%	34%	6%	15%	100%	100%	100%	100%	30	1

While Corum will likely lessen this some, Early Camp reports & **Sean McVay**'s comments imply this is a clear "RB1 and RB2" situation, and not an RB1A + RB1B set up:

"He's going to go, he's going to lead the way for that running back room. I think the thing we have to be smart (about) is once we get into the regular season, in terms of the amount of touches. We'll be smart… When I've kind of talked about that, what I'm mainly talking about is the amount of carries that he did a great job of being able to handle last year. But if you want to be able to hopefully get an opportunity to play after those 17 games, hopefully stay healthy through those 17, knowing what an instrumental part he is going to be."

McVay even told Williams, who's fully recovered from a foot sprain, "Man did I miss you in the offseason…he's got such a good feel, such an ownership, such a good pace through the hole and then I thought that elevated the rest of the backs."

Indeed, these comments suggest Corum will come in for breathers. McVay even noted their similar styles as a major reason why they drafted Corum. He's among the highest value handcuffs in fantasy. Yet, even 80% of what Kyren did last year would be well-worth a Round 2 selection. With the injury and workload concerns mitigated, Kyren can safely be drafted as a "Hero-Worthy RB" in Round 2.

De'Von Achane (RB8, 16 OVR (+17 ECR!)) - NOTE* ** I have **De'Von Achane** firmly ranked in Round 2 at 16 OVERALL (+17 ECR!!). He typically goes in Round 3, but if you feel he won't make it to your Round 3 selection, Achane is absolutely worth your Round 2 pick. His upside could win leagues.

He's already flashed that "Legendary RB" ability. Achane ranked 44th in opportunities, but was the RB5 in FPPG and RB1 (31.8 FPPG!!) if you remove games where he saw under ten snaps.

His fantasy production was the result of absurd efficiency. Achane was 1st in fantasy points over expectation (+6.7 FPs per game), yards per touch (7.7), breakaway All-Time RB Leaders by Career FPG (PPR) run rate (12.6%), yards after contact per touch (4.94), Elusive Rating (153.5), and FPs per opportunity (1.36). He led the NFL in runs over 40+ yards with five total… on just 103 carries. He ultimately scored 7 TDs in his first four games, the first player to do that since 1943.

The dude put up nearly 50 FPs in his first true NFL action!

Sure, Achane comes with risk. Raheem Mostert, who led the NFL in rushing touchdowns last year, is still here. The team also traded up to draft speedster Jaylen Wright (who I love in Dynasty and Best Ball). At just 5'9″ and 188 lbs, there's obvious injury risk to Achane. Still, Achane proved plenty capable of shouldering a massive workload, accumulating 40% of Texas A&M's yards and scores (91st percentile Dominator Rating).

Moreover, Achane reportedly had two goals this offseason: "Get stronger to better withstand the hits taken in the NFL and improve on his route-running to get the ball more often in the passing game."

Through OTAs, Achane reportedly moved all over while working out with the WRs more often. Travis Wingfield, my favorite Miami beat, predicts a massive Achane breakout in 2024. A quote from his recent podcast (long but worth reading:

"My god, De'Von Achane is going to have a monster year. He's here, he's there, he's everywhere. This guy is doing so much with his game. His usage in the passing game, how he himself circled that as something he could improve upon to get more of a piece of the pie of this dynamic offense that has oodles and oodles of skill players who can beat you, and burn you, and score on you.

"I just think Achane, maybe he's receiver three. I'm watching this guy line up in the slot and run a slot fade and cook a corner—the pacing, the line up the stem, the explosive step to widen and then cut back inside; he looks like a receiver when he's playing the position. He just looks like that.

"This might be the next Christian McCaffrey in terms of overall versatility and general usage. Pass game, run game, he's just a big play waiting to happen. It's totally wild and something I haven't seen before.

“This guy is going to be a freaking superstar. I don't know what else to tell you. He is one of the best players on the field of a team that I think is one of the best five teams in the NFL. De'Von Achane, breakout superstar of the year."

If that doesn’t get you jazzed up, I don’t know what will. Indeed, the injury and split-workload downside is real. Yet, Achane has the highest ceiling of any RB not named CMC.

He is a stone-cold LOCK pick in Round 3, and if you don’t think he’ll make it back to you there, I am more than OK taking Achane in Round 2. He might be my “Must Draft of 2024.”

NEW “HERO-WORTHY” ARRIVAL (8/3) - Reid’s recent endorsement sent Pacheco ROCKETING up

Isiah Pacheco (16 OVR = + ECR; RB9)

For years, Andy Reid‘s featured RBs used to be a fantasy lock. From Brian Westbrook to Jamaal Charles, Reid often leaned on a single back and used them masterfully in the passing game.

Then Clyde Edwards-Helaire came and ruined all our dreams. In the Patrick Mahomes era, we really haven’t seen a bonafide fantasy lock, as Reid has turned more to a committee approach.

During his impressive sophomore campaign, Isiah Pacheco flashed the upside to buck that trend and become the next Reid RB Monster. He finished as the RB15 in FPPG, but the more important stats to dive into were his games without Jerick McKinnon, who is currently off the roster.

Check out Pacheco’s usage and production in seven games without McKinnon:

81% snap share, 20 touches (5 rec), 25.9 FPs, RB4
70.1% snap share , 21 touches (3 rec), 21.3 FPs, RB3
58.7% snap share, 15 touches (4 rec), 10.6 FPs, RB28 (first game back from an injury)
92.3% snap share, 25 touches (7 rec), 29.5 FPs, RB2
69.9% snap share, 25 touches (1 rec), 15.8 FPs, RB6
71.7% snap share, 16 touches (1 rec), 18.1 FPs, RB4
77.9% snap share, 28 touches (4 rec), 18.2 FPs, RB3

Pacheco averaged 22.3 FPPG and a 14.9% target share without McKinnon. His full season pace in games without Jerick: 353 opps (89 tgts & 81 rec), 1712 YFS, and 21 TDs for 379 PPR FPs

Pacheco trailed only McCaffrey and Kyren Williams in weighted opportunity per game from Week 10 onward. The Chiefs added no real backfield competition over free agency or the draft, but they did add surrounding firepower in Marquise Brown and Xavier Worthy. Both WRs should make this offense even more dangerous, which boosts Pacheco’s TD ceiling even further.

Last, in Training Camp, Pacheco has been thriving as a pass-catcher. Beats noticed, “Pacheco's work this offseason on flexibility seems to be paying off. He hasn't lost his violent running style, but somehow seems nimble enough to avoid even the quickest Chiefs defenders." This quickness has reportedly shown up in the passing game, with Pacheco expanding his route tree to deeper parts of the field.

Even more importantly, when asked which RB will fill the 3rd-down role, with Jerick McKinnon gone, Reid said:

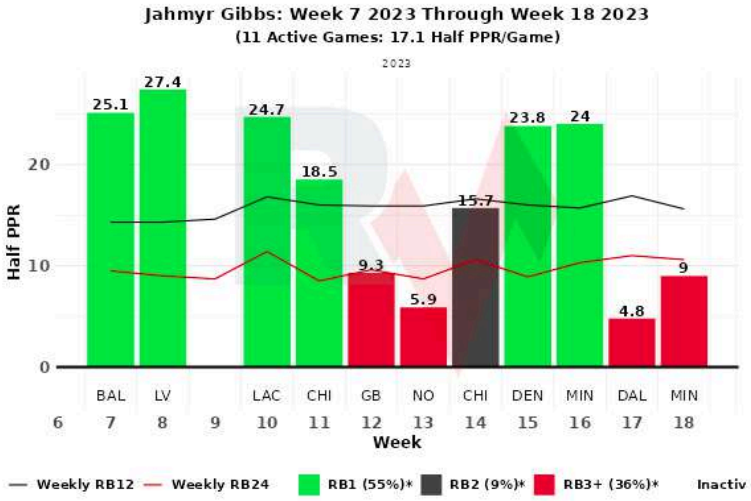
“[Isiah Pacheco]’s ready to be able to do all that. He’s good with the protections, he’s good with the technique and fundamentals, he can run all the routes, he’s got great hands.” He then mentioned CEH “can do that” too, but to bring up Pacheco instantly suggests what the plan is. And we already know the likely results given what Pacheco did without McKinnon last year! (And this offense could be even better in 2024!)

Given Reid’s track record producing league-winning RB ceilings, and Pacheco’s sample-size as “the guy” when McKinnon was out, there’s definitely a path to some season-changing upside. I especially love Pacheco’s Round 4 price in Best Ball, and with the WR depth, I am more confident than ever in taking Pacheco in Round 2 in redraft right now.

10. Jahmyr Gibbs (DET, RB4) 8/13 UPDATE: *Previously #10 Overall,* **Gibbs** *is reportedly dealing with a hamstring injury, his second of the offseason. While he should be OK for Week 1, the fact it’s already flared up twice + the missed WR reps hurt his ceiling + floor & make him more of a Round 2 pick now*

Despite ranking just 22nd in total opportunities and 28th in carries, **Jahmyr Gibbs** still finished eighth in FPPG during his rookie season. This is all the more impressive considering his slow start; Gibbs was just the RB28 from Weeks 1-4 before suffering an injury to miss Weeks 5 & 6.

Upon his return, Gibbs went nuts. He was the RB3 in total FPs, spiking for 24+ Half-PPR FPs in nearly half of his games!



Ultimately, Gibbs tied **Kyren Williams** and **Breece Hall** for second in Top-5 Weekly Finishes with six total, trailing only CMC's nine. Yes, two of these weeks came without **David Montgomery**, which is a reminder of Gibbs' massive contingency upside. Montgomery has also missed at least one game in four straight years (2, 4, 1, and 3 games).

Even in an RBBC that caps his TD upside, Gibbs could spike as a receiver in 2024. He ranked just 8th in targets (8th) and 9th in catches (52), despite GM Brad Holmes calling him a "special weapon" in the mold of CMC and **Marshall Faulk** when he was drafted.

Holmes again hyped up Gibbs as entering the offseason. Holmes said he expects Gibbs to "see more of a load...and has much more to offer in the passing game, so you'll likely see an increase in that as well." **Josh**

Reynolds vacated 64 targets in his departure, and without the team adding any real replacement, some of that work could definitely fall into Gibbs' lap.

To start camp, Gibbs has reportedly been taking part in both RB and WR drills. He's working alongside Amon-Ra on his releases, which can only boost the receiving floor of this explosive talent.

According to early Vegas lines, the Lions are projected to score the second-most points in the league, behind only the 49ers. They are also expected to play in 13 games with 48+ point totals. (H/T Connor Allen).

Lookahead Line Totals

Team	Projected Total Points	Projected Total Points Allowed	Games with Team Total >21	Games with Team Total >25	Game with Totals of 48+	Team	Projected Total Points	Projected Total Points	Games with Team Total >21	Games with Team Total >25	Game with Totals of 48+
SF	466.75	356.75	17	13	6	IND	412	396.5	16	0	4
DET	464.75	394.5	17	12	13	CLE	399.5	375	14	0	0
KC	456.25	356	17	11	4	SEA	399.5	406.25	12	0	3
MIA	445.5	393.75	17	7	10	LAC	398.25	370.25	13	0	1
BUF	445	390.25	17	5	9	ARI	395	415.75	13	0	5
CIN	442.25	364	17	7	4	TB	389.5	388.75	11	0	1
BAL	441.25	357.25	17	7	3	MIN	387.25	405.25	9	0	1
DAL	437	374	17	6	5	PIT	381	375.75	8	0	0
HOU	436.25	392.75	16	5	7	NO	378.5	378	7	0	0
GB	434.25	383.75	17	5	5	WAS	377.5	400.25	7	0	1
PHI	433.5	373.75	17	4	4	LV	375.5	396.25	7	0	0
LAR	431.8	395.8	16	2	8	TEN	372.75	412.5	5	0	2
ATL	427.5	371.75	17	2	4	NYG	361	393.75	4	0	0
NYJ	423.75	364.25	16	2	3	DEN	355.75	398.5	1	0	0
JAC	417.5	396	17	0	4	CAR	352	402.25	1	0	0
CHI	416.75	386	16	0	3	NE	344.5	410.5	0	0	0

The Lions also consistently boast the No.1 ranked offense line, including in PFF's 2024 line grades. With a ripe offensive environment, a prominent receiving role, and explosive talent, Gibbs deserves Round 1

On The Cusp of Hero-Wrthiness - Not Full Fade, but not Huge Targets in Round 2

Derrick Henry (20 OVR, RB9, ADP = 16 (-4 ADP):

With next-to-zero receiving upside, **Derrick Henry** has to absolutely sun-run carries, rushing yards, and TDs.

He is also in the perfect spot to do just that with the Baltimore Ravens.

Henry just turned 30 years old in January, and Henry's 2,030 career carries trail only Ezekiel Elliott among active RBs. This is worrisome for mere mortals, but Henry has proven to be anything but such. Despite playing behind a porous line that ranked dead-last by PFF, Henry ranked second in rush yards (1167), yards after contact (857), and explosive runs of 15+ yards (16 total). He had the 4th highest max speed among RBs, and had 5 total plays above 20 MPH – behind only **Breece Hall** and **De'Von Achane** at RB.

Simply put, the old man still has it.

The Ravens have been No.1 in carries in four of the last six seasons (never below 7th), and Top-3 in rushing yards in all six. Their line has been Top-5 in PFF grades for three of the past five seasons, including the 5th-best unit last year, which is largely unchanged entering 2024.

Gus Edwards ranked third in the NFL with 13 rushing TDs last year, and finished as the RB19. Henry is a completely different animal, and should smash those totals.

Yes, as I wrote this, I got more terrified about avoiding Henry. Still, my preference for the upside of Achane and/or one of the target-hog WRs in his range. Henry's mileage could finally catch up, and even if not, his path to a truly "Legendary Ceiling" is extremely capped given his pure reliance on carries and TDs.

Still, while it may only be a single path it's so well-paved in his set-up, and there's no better "Fantasy Lock Room Presence" than Henry, so I fault you none for going him in Round 2, especially if you're confident in the WR depth available in Rounds 4-8 in your league.

Remaining WRs w/ "Alpha Target Hog" Upside

16. Puka Nacua (LAR, WR7) - Note: *Originally Pick 10 overall & WR6 for me, Puka Nacua suffered a "minor knee injury" in early camp. By all accounts, he's due back ahead of Week 1, so I am only adjusting slightly & still like Puka pretty much anywhere in Round 2. Still, we've seen McVay be coy about injury information before, and Nacua did have a lengthy college injury history, so the added risk has him falling ~5-7 spots.*

From a Round 5 Pick to Fantasy's WR4, **Puka Nacua** was the ultimate league-winner of 2023. Nacua is fresh off breaking the rookie record for receptions (105), yards (1486), catches (15) & targets (20) in a game, and a single-game playoff record (182 yards). Understandably, expectations are very high for his sophomore season.

Nacua was highly-efficient with his work, racking up 2.72 YPRR (6th), 105 rec (8th), and 1486 yds (4th) along with 6 TDs (27th), yielding 246 Half-PPR FPs (WR4) and 14.5 FPPG (WR7).

The question becomes: how important was Kupp's absence?

In 12 games with Kupp, Nacua averaged 15.74 PPR FPPG vs. a whopping 21.92 PPR FPPG without Kupp in the line-up. Yet, Puka was still the Rams' most productive WR even with Kupp active, including his 182 yards in his first playoff game. Still, with Kupp reportedly healthy, there is some slight risk to Nacua.

RotoViz

Puka Nacua Splits 2023 - 2023

Per Game / Full Season Pace

Statistic	In Split	Out of Split
Games	12	5
HalfPPR	13.16 / 224	17.62 / 300
PPR	15.74 / 268	21.92 / 373
reRECS	5.17 / 88	8.6 / 146
reTDS	0.33 / 6	0.4 / 7
reTRGS	8.33 / 142	11.6 / 197
reYDS	78.67 / 1337	108.4 / 1843

In Split: Cooper Kupp played, from week 1 to 18, from 2000 to 2023, *out of split evaluates to all games the subject player played that don't meet the in-split criteria

I do love that Puka has remained in “Kupp’s hip pocket,” working out with him at 6am every morning throughout the entire offseason. Puka reportedly dropped 10 lbs. Rams WRs coach Eric Yarber noted, “He looks just like Cooper (Kupp). He’s lost so much body fat and gained so much muscle, which enabled him to move more efficiently now.”

Puka’s also reportedly playing faster because of the mental gains from Year 1 to Year 2, too:

“I think just his comfortability in this offense in general,” Kupp said of Nacua. “He’s moving great. The speed at which he’s playing, just [because] he’s not thinking about stuff. He knows the offense now at this point. Last year, there’s so much going through your head. You’re trying to figure out what are your parameters on each play. But for him to be able to play free, play fast.

Sure, if Kupp stays healthy, Nacua could struggle to improve his rookie numbers dramatically. Yet, if he’s truly in better mental and physical shape, the sky is also the limit. We know **Matthew Stafford** is the king of sustaining strong fantasy WRs, and **Sean McVay**’s system is the ultimate “lay-up target” machine. This gives Nacua a nice floor, along with a truly season-changing season if Kupp misses time again.

Marvin Harrison (WR8, 17 OVR)

Some may consider early Round 2 absurdly high for a Rookie WR, but **Marvin Harrison** has the perfect combination of talent, available volume, and surrounding QB play to crack the Top-10, if not Top-5, Fantasy WRs in 2024.

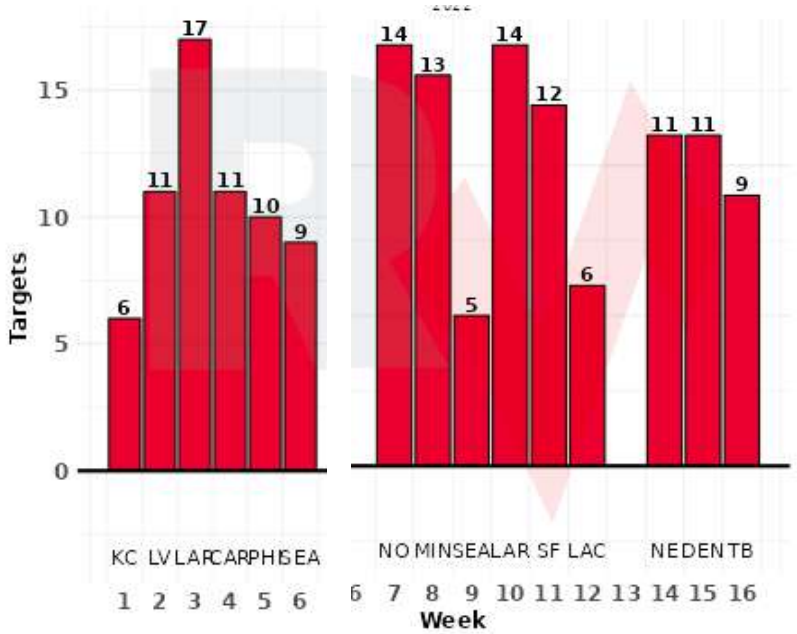
Harrison epitomizes the genetically gifted WR, honing his craft with track star speed and acceleration, running precise routes, and exhibiting elite contested-catch abilities with his strong hands, awareness, and ball skills. According to Dane Brugler, an NFL scout noted, “As talented as he is, his discipline and dedication to the craft might be the most impressive part of this guy.”

His production was nothing short of dominant. He is the first WR in OSU history with multiple 1,000-yard seasons, with 1,263 in 2022, followed by 1,211 this past year. His 15 100-yard receiving games are a school record, while his 31 TDs rank third in TD grabs.

With luminaries like **Michael Wilson** and **Greg Dortch** atop the WR depth chart, the Cardinals desperately needed a true WR1. Yes, **Trey McBride** notched a position-best 26% targets per route run in 2023, but he had almost zero competition.

Harrison will immediately ascend to the No.1 weapon here, and threaten for 150+ targets from year one. **Kyler Murray** has historically LOVED peppering WRs. Dating back to 2022, Murray relentlessly peppered his top target, whether **Marquise Brown** or **DeAndre Hopkins**. While Hopkins served a six-game suspension, Brown averaged 10.7 targets per game (WR5) and 18.3 FPPG (WR7). He hit 10+ targets in four of six games, including a whopping 17 in Week 3, while never dipping below 12 PPR FPs.

Upon his return, Hopkins immediately re-gained Target Hog status, notching 11+ targets in six of nine games, averaging 10.6 looks and 17.7 FPPG (WR9).



Cardinals WR1 Targets under Kyler Muray (Hollywood Brown + DHop)

Hopkins struggled with injuries in 2021, but still finished as the WR20 in FPPG, while **Christian Kirk** was the WR26. Yet, in 2020, Murray fed him 160 targets, which he turned into 115 catches, 1407 yds, and 6 TDs (WR4).

A young, fresh Harrison gives Murray the best weapon he's ever played with. He could easily match, if not surpass, Hopkins' 160+ looks and Top-5 WR output as an absolute target hog. All the Training Camp reports are glowing, and Harrison has real 120 rec, 1400+ yard, 8+ TD upside. He's far-and-away my favorite Round 2 WR to target.

If you miss him, a few others worth considering (though I mostly prefer the RBs & waiting on a Round 3 WR):

Drake London (WR9, 18 OVR) - *NOTE:* *London's ADP is ~30 on both Yahoo and ESPN – if you're confident he'll be there in Round 3, it probably makes sense to go an RB (Achane, Pacheco, even Henry) or pull someone like Josh Allen up*

Drake London was widely regarded as the WR1 of an impressive 2022 class, and has flashed his elite ability on many occasions. Yet, London's been hamstrung by:

A) Horrendous QB Play: Desmond Ridder?! Taylor Heineke?! C'MON!
B) Awful play-calling: Arthur Smith's prehistoric, run-first scheme? No thanks!

In 2024, both of these problems should be smoothed over completely. On the QB Front, **Kirk Cousins** is a WR1 FACTORY. Yes, having **Justin Jefferson** helps, but Cousins has supported EIGHT WR1 seasons in the last six years. Cousins' WR1 has finished as the WR1 (2022), WR4 (2021), WR6 (2020), WR24 (2019), WR7 & WR10 (2018).

According to **FantasyPoints Data,** Cousins led all passers with a 150.6 passer rating when throwing in-routes and deep/mid crossing routes. In 2022, he led all QBs in completions and attempts on these types of passes, too.

This is where Drake London thrives, according to **Matt Harmon**'s reception perception. It's also the type of routes that get dialed up all the time in new-OC **Zac Robinson**'s McVay-Inspired scheme. This offense relies on motion, unique WR alignment, and getting WRs "lay-up looks." With only **Darnell Mooney** and **Rondale Moore** behind him at WR, London is a shoo-in for the "Puka Nacua / Cooper Kupp" role, with even less competition for targets.

Robinson will also throw at least at league-average clip. They targeted WRs at the highest clip in the league, compared to Arthur Smith, who was dead last in Pass Rate Over Expected and targeted WRs at the lowest rate.

Despite London finishing as the WR31 and WR38 in Half-PPR, while never topping 4 TDs, I am very confident the QB and OC upgrades will be the exact antidote for a 1,200+ yard and 9+ TD season. We just need Cousins' Achilles to prove healthy.

Davante Adams (WR10, 19 OVR)
Adams is a popular fade by many, who see him purely as a volume-based WR bet following an inefficient 2023.

That take isn't necessarily wrong. Adams ranked Top-5 in target share, target rate, air yards, and route participation, but only finished as the WR10 in fantasy. He was among the worst WRs in FPs over expectation, scoring a whopping -34.6 FPs below his expected 300 based on volume.
This is concerning, no doubt. And yet, I also see a nice floor in that:

-Adams has finished with 30%+ target share in four-straight seasons.
-Adams has seen 176, 180, 169, 149 targets in that span
-Adams has been above 100 rec in the last 5-of-6 years, and would've easily hit it in the lone season if not for missing 4 games in 2019.
-When factoring in the depth of target & red zone usage (weighted target per route), Adams has been Top-3 in back-to-back years, too!

At WR, you don't earn this level of volume if you can't play. The quality of the volume may be suspect, whether it's **Aidan O'Connell** or **Gardner Minshew.** Yet, AOC did feed Adams an absurd 21 target game (13 rec, 126 yds, 2 TDs), and the two played mostly well across AOC's 10 starts: 15.5, 6.4, 21.2, 12.3, 12.3, 24.1, 1.4, 37.6, and 15.6 FPs.

And if Minshew wins this job, that may be even better. Though Minshew doesn't love to sling deep, he is accurate and can force-feed targets to his WR1. **Michael Pittman** played with Minshew for 15 games. His pace: 171 targets, 122 rec, 1289 yds, 5 TDs. He was ultimately the WR15 in Half-PPR, and I firmly believe Adams is still better even at this stage.

Ultimately, I understand why some are scared off. Me? I'll bet on a guy who, since 2016, has ranked as the WR9, WR6, WR1, WR5, WR1, WR3, WR3, and WR18 in Half-PPR FPs per game. I know the outlier there was on the Raiders, but he was also the WR3 just the year before, and can absolutely get back there with Minshew or AOC behind center.

NOTE: I have **Nico Collins (20 OVR), Mike Evans (21 OVR),** and **Deebo Samuel (22 OVR)** all ranked in my Top-24, as Round-2-Worthy-WR1s. Yet all three regularly (inexplicably) fall to Round 3, so I will cover them there. However, if you need a WR in Round 2, I prefer all three to the two WRs I'm about to cover below:

Round 2 “Fades”

Any Round 2 TE (Travis Kelce & Sam LaPorta):

As you’ll soon see, I am ALL ABOUT securing an Elite TE in 2024. Getting ahead at the “onesie” spots is one of my favorite new strategies, so I understand fully the intrigue of **Travis Kelce** and **Sam LaPorta.**

They are both phenomenal picks, despite being at much different stages of their career. Kelce should smash with some defensive attention removed and more Red Zone visits likely, while LaPorta was just the first rookie TE to ever finish as the TE1 in fantasy, and could ascend even more.

My beef isn’t with them, or the edges they present. They are my TE1 and TE2, respectively. I never select them though because I feel they offer only a marginal edge over **Trey McBride, Mark Andrews,** and **Dalton Kincaid,** who all go in Rounds 4-6.

In fact, Andrews FPPG (11.3) were just 0.2 fewer than LaPorta (11.3). As a starter, McBride averaged 11.7 FPPG -- 0.2 more! Kincaid is about to be **Josh Allen**'s go-to-guy.

Simply put: the edge of LaPorta or Kelce does not outweigh that opportunity cost, where the Round 2 / Early Third talent pool of true No.1 RBs and WRs is about to dry up. You're passing on Achane, Pacheco, Deebo, Nico, London, or an elite QB like Allen or Hurts. This is far too much opportunity cost for a marginal edge, at best. This is especially true if Kelce is again a “part timer” that’s preserved for the playoffs, or if Jameson Williams / Jahmyr Gibbs are both truly ascending into bigger receiving threats.

As such, I can’t get on board with either of the two-top TEs for 2024 fantasy. In Best Ball, when either fall to Round 4? Absolute smash! But in redraft, the 20+ pick gap between them and the other elite TEs is unjustifiable given their similar upside.

RBs:

Travis Etienne (34 OVR, ADP = 18 (-16 ADP)

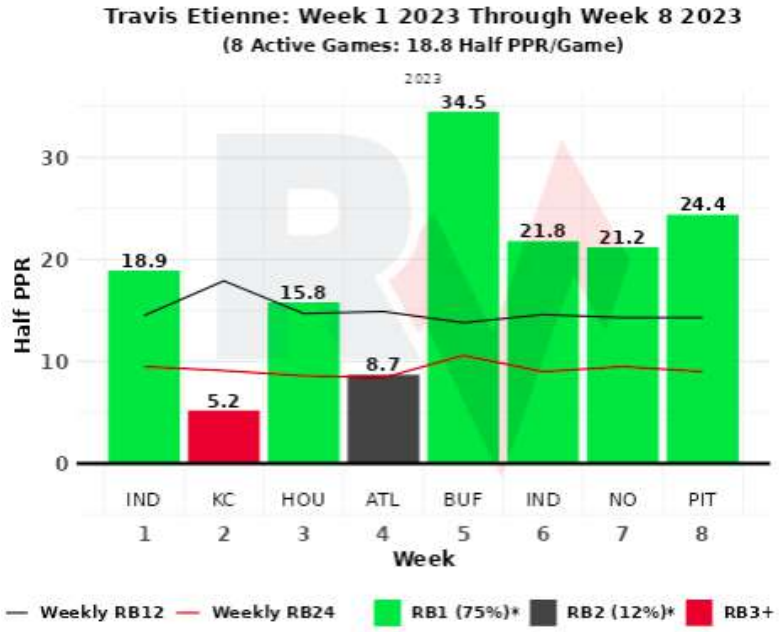
Fading last year’s RB3 is a risky bet, as he would seemingly be a screaming bargain in Round 2 if he produces similarly to last year.

Yet, all the offseason talk has been about preserving ETN and reducing his workload. Despite looking like the *worst* RB in the league last year, **Tank Bigsby** is generating strong offseason hype, too:

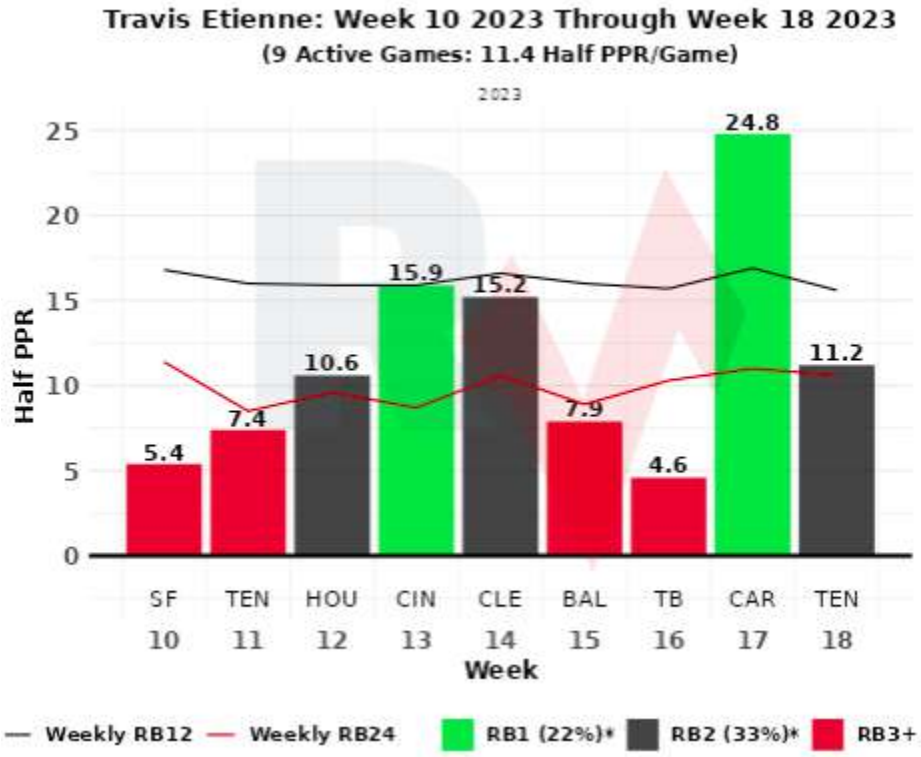
"I think Tank has a bigger role this year, going into Year 2. It’s something that we’ve been looking at. We definitely know we gotta take a little bit off of Travis [Etienne] and keep him healthy for an entire season… I think Tank’s role can definitely increase, especially in those short yardage situations.”

Losing volume, especially at the goalline, would significantly hurt Etienne's 2024 fantasy outlook.

In 2023, ETN’s first 8 weeks were unbelievable. He was the RB2 in fantasy, averaging 18.8 FPPG, with Top-12 finishes in 6-of-8 games. He also averaged 80% of snaps, and received nearly every touch in that span.



After the Bye, his production dropped dramatically down to 11.4 Half-PPR FPPG, and just two Top-12 performances (22%) the rest of the way:



This equaled the RB16 over this span.

Sure, his RB8 price seems to balance us out right in the middle, but I worry the second-half is closer to what we can expect for ETN with these promises of reducing his workload. Perhaps that would keep Etienne fresher and more explosive, and increase his efficiency. Nonetheless, you have to be worried.

Moreover, Etienne goes almost a full round ahead of **De'Von Achane.** My love for Achane is well known, and I would never take Etienne above a player with that much league-winning upside. I similarly prefer **Isaiah Pacheco**, who's looking likely to command a three-down role within the explosive Chiefs attack.

Thus, Etienne worries me as a Round 2 pick. Go with Achane, Pacheco, or one of the high-end WRs, who are all higher in my 2024 Fantasy Football Rankings, but often still available well after Etienne's 15 overall price.

Round 2 Wide Receiver Fades:

Note - I don't necessarily hate either of these WRs. In fact, they are on the cusp of my Top-24 on my 2024 Redraft Rankings, and I also have both guys behind 4 WRs who routinely fall to Round 3. As such, I rarely draft either of these two, as I typically side with an RB, or I've gone **Harrison, London (Round 3?!),** or **Adams,** and will pivot to **Nico, Deebo,** and **Evans** ahead of both these two.

Chris Olave (27 OVR, -6 ECR):

A lot of analysts who are smarter than me seem to LOVE **Chris Olave** in 2024. The main argument often hinges on **Klint Kubiak** bringing a more Shanahan-inspired offense to the Saints.

In this scheme, Olave is expected to be in far more advantageous / "Lay Up" situations, with more short-and-intermediate branches added to his route tree. I do buy this – it honestly can't get much worse after Carmichael's ancient offense ranked second lowest in rate of motion and dead last in play action.

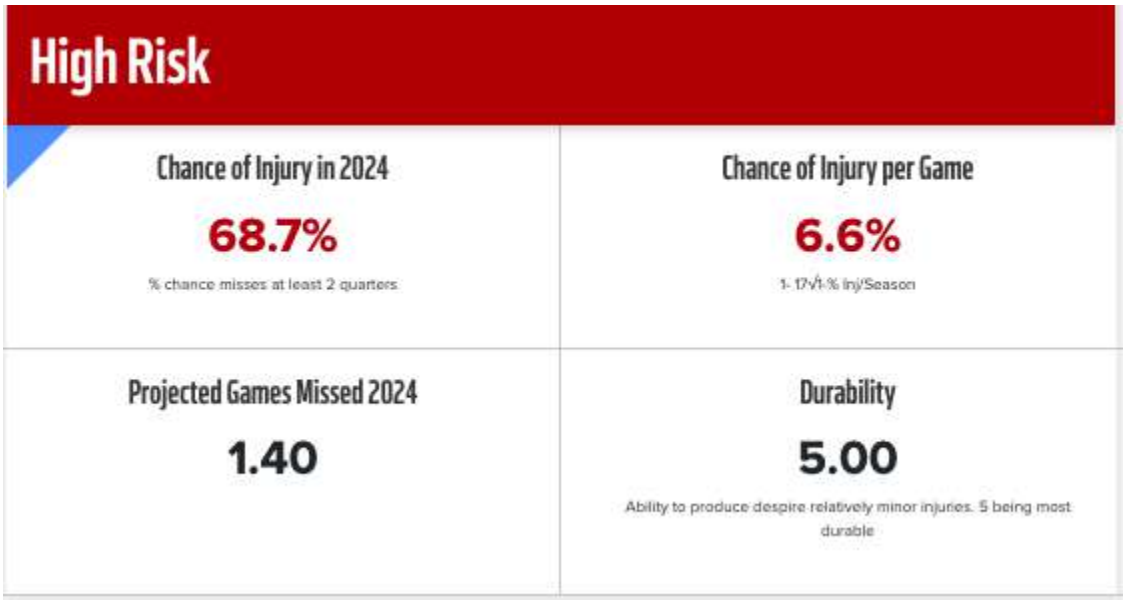
And... that's playing out so far in the preseason: Chris Olave has a 94% route participation rate and a whopping 46% target share on plays with Carr this preseason. On 15 attempts from Carr, Olave has netted: 7 tgts, 4 rec, 36 yards.

Stir in 12-of-17 games being indoors, and there's definitely a path to upside for Olave.

Yet, even with the usage upgrade, I worry the Saints will be an absolute dumpster fire. The team seems to hate **Dennis Allen**, who just sucks. I also worry Olave, who's been just the WR25 and WR22 in Half-PPR FPPG, isn't quite as elite as many seem to assume.

Since entering the NFL he has exactly 16% Top-12 games (5 of 31), including just three Top-12 games last year, isn't quite the elite guy everyone seems to believe.

I understand all the "Unrealized Air Yards" (3rd most), and Target Accuracy issue (72nd), but guess what? **Derek Carr** is still the QB. This line is still abysmal. Olave has already dealt with numerous nagging injuries in camp, and has suffered 3 concussions throughout his college and NFL career. He's labeled "High Injury Risk" by DraftSharks "Sports Injury Predictor":



The scheme changes and possible expanded role are definitely intriguing for Olave. I still think the risk outweighs the reward, and comes out too great of an opportunity cost.

At WR straight up, I rank **Deebo Samuel, Drake London, Mike Evans, Nico Collins** all above Olave in my 2024 Fantasy Football Rankings. I also love **De'Von Achane** or **Isiah Pacheco** to lock up some potential "Hero-Worthy RB Upside."

Round 2 picks are crucial to nail, and I can envision the ceiling outcomes for so many players going after Olave much better than his own.

Brandon Aiyuk (24 OVR, -2 ECR):
I'll keep this short and sweet, because I think Aiyuk is a Top-10 WR in the league on pure talent. That has NOTHING to do with the argument.

104. That's the amount of targets Aiyuk saw in 2023. His career high is 113. That is, quite literally, 70 fewer targets than **Davante Adams.** He only had ONE game above 10 targets all year.

I fully understand not all targets are created equal, and that Aiyuk is much more capable of "doing more with less" than most – he scored 82.9 more FPs than expected, and was WR3 in this metric!

Still, with **CMC, Deebo, Kittle,** and now **Ricky Pearsall** all commanding attention in a run-first offense, I think Aiyuk's volume will remain shaky, which will keep his fantasy value a bit more of a roller-coaster than a Round 2 WR ought to be.

Round 2 Best Ball Notes & Differences:

- As we keep harping upon, WRs are SO MUCH more valuable in Best Ball formats. Drake London and Nico Collins, third rounders in redraft, go at 15 and 17 in Underdog. As such, I am most often starting WR-WR, as this buys the most “future pick flexibility” while staying in line with the market.

- **Kyren Williams** is routinely available in mid-Round 3 for Best Ball. **Isaiah Pacheco** is typically a Round 4 selection. This is why I like WR-WR-WR starts – it keeps the door open for these amazing values, and allows for you to take “detours” when the values are right

- In Best Ball, the “spike week” upside of **De’Von Achane** outweighs the steady consistency of a guy like **Saquon Barkley –** if you enter Week 17 and need a 40+ pointer to beat out the field, who’s your better bet? Achane!

Round 3-5: Two Elite Onesies & Depth Where Needed

I don't lump Rounds 3-5 together to be lazy. Rather, my goal by the end of Round 4 aligns with the mindset I enter Round 3 with: secure two elite "onesies" (QB or TE - one starter positions) with 2-of-3 picks.

I am confident in my ability to pluck late round RB & WR gems and navigate the Waiver Wire with the best of them. The way to capitalize on this, and get the most "bang-for-the-buck," is to secure the truly elite edges you will almost never find in those dark rounds or in Free Agency. Routinely outscoring your opponents QB & TE is such an advantage.

I had always been a "Wait on QB" purist – if you've fallen along since our start in, what, 2017, you know I never took a QB ahead of Round 10. Yet, the emergence of "Konami Cheat Code" rushing QBs that also sling for oodles of passing points is simply too damn juicy.

Similarly, at TE, there's maybe 5-6 total guys who can spike for 15-20+ FPs multiple times in a season. Most owners are left chasing "TD-or-Bust" options, while having a TE who routinely logs 8-12 targets can provide a stabilizing force that is crucial. Yes, these TE gems occasionally emerge in the late rounds – especially last year, with **Sam LaPorta, Trey McBride,** and **Dalton Kincaid** all becoming locked-in TE1s. This was definitely an outlier year, and 2024's crop of late-round TEs is atrocious.

The sneaky other benefit of "Elite Onesies" is the freed-up bench space. Since you're not throwing TE darts at the wall or rotating QBs by matchup, you can roster more WR and RB depth, especially those with a huge contingent, breakout upside like handcuffs in strong offenses or rookies just waiting for their chance to shine.

Below, we'll cover who I consider the "Elite Onesies" in 2024, what the common traits and characteristics are, and when you should be targeting them.

Note: A reason I love starting 1 RB and 1 WR is it opens up the "Onesie Door" as early as Round 3, where the truly elite QBs (**Josh Allen** and **Jalen Hurts)** go. If I haven't yet snagged an RB or WR, then there's much more pressure to secure that position in Round 3, before the Talent Cliff really hits. As such, I typically lean into the flexibility that starting RB-WR or WR-RB provides.

Note 2: With guys like London, Nico, Evans, and Deebo available in Round 3, I would be OK pushing Josh Allen all the way up to late Round 2 if you were confident in landing one of those 4 in Round 3.

Round 3-4 RBs

De'Von Achane: Seeing the praise I heaped upon him as a Round 2 selection, it's no surprise I LOVE snagging Achane in Round 3, where he typically goes. He's one of the very few guys I'm willing to pass up Josh Allen or Jalen Hurts for. If you start WR-WR, or you don't *love* your RB1 (i.e. Henry or Pacheco), or if you just want the guy who could very well break fantasy this year, Achane is THE BEST Round 3 Pick there is.

Besides Achane, and unless **Isiah Pacheco** or **Derrick Henry** fall into Round 3, I truly don't like any of the RBs going in this range (as you'll see in my Rounds 3-5 Fades). This is what is often coined "The RB Dead Zone" comes into play. While it's admittedly a deeper "Dead Zone Pool" than years past, most of the RBs here are not worth foregoing the Elite Onesie upside and/or the absolute MONSTER WR upside available in these rounds.

Round ~4/5 RB = Ken Walker (38 OVR, +5 ECR)
I will reiterate, I do feel the value of the Elite QBs and WR1 prospects outweigh the RBs in this range.

However, if any other RB is capable of truly booming here, I think it's **Ken Walker** of the Seahawks. With a 4.38 forty (98th percentile), Walker is much more explosive than your typical "Dead Zone RB." His 10 "Breakaway" runs ranked 15th, while his 8.9 YPR was 4th.

I also am intrigued to acquire all pieces of **Ryan Grubb**'s offense, especially the run-game – Grubb is a former o-line guy who has preached the offense will flow through creative run concepts. His lead-RB racked up 1100 yards and 16 TDs at Washington in a clear featured-role.

The training camp hype has been solid, too, with SI's Bert Breer noting:

> "Kenneth Walker III was the star of Monday's practice, the first one in full pads, and it reflected the sort of spring and summer he's had. To the new staff, he looks like the kind of back you can play on all three downs, and build a running game around. And Zach Charbonnet gives the team some depth behind him."

Even more intriguing, HC Mike Macdonald hinted at feeding Walker a massive workload when he said, "Every time we go over the roster, [RBs coach] Kennedy [Polamalu], he gives me a little hint like, 'Let's feed this guy, he can be special.'"

KW did have one of the worst early-down success rates last year, and is often criticized for not getting what's blocked– he had the 6th most "stuffed runs" in the league. Additionally, Charbonnet is a talented back-up behind him, one who could theoretically eat into Walker's workload if he's not succeeding.

Still, I do like KW more than most RBs in this range, especially because the opp cost is lower in Round 4 / 5 – the elite QBs are typically gone. I would rather have Kupp, Waddle or any of the Elite QBs, but if you've gone Zero-RB and are desperate for an Anchor with upside for the cost, Walker would be my pick.

Round 3 WRs:

We'll cover the Round 4-5 WRs I like after the onesies , but truly it's the Round-2-Caliber WRs that fall into Round 3 that really need the upfront attention.

As mentioned in Round 2 Analysis, **Drake London (?!), Nico Collins, Deebo Samuel,** and **Mike Evans** are all true Fantasy WR1s worth top-24 selections. Yet, I already hit London & he's my definite No.1 on this list. Here is my take on these other guys available at Pick 30, and sometimes well-beyond, in redraft.

Nico Collins (23 OVR, WR12)

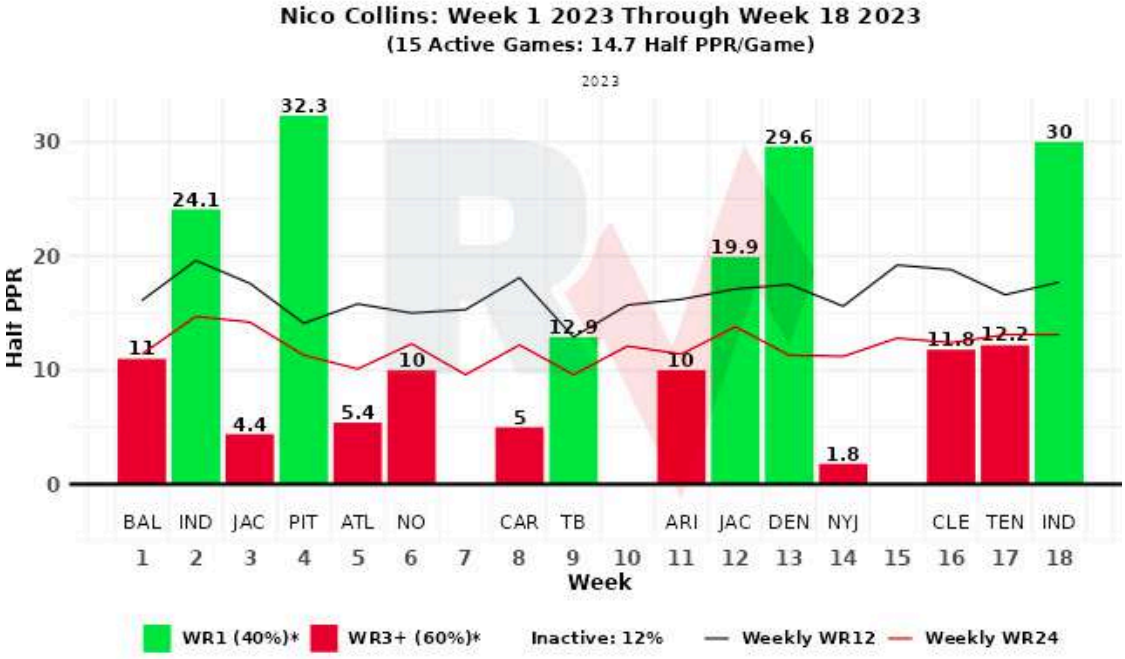
Collins was one of the biggest "League Winners" of 2023. He was a Round 10+ selection that leaped from WR78 to the WR10 (& WR7 in FPPG) on the backs of QB (Stroud) and OC (Slowik) upgrades. While I understand the volume concerns – he only saw 109 targets (in 15 games), and now a vacuum like **Stefon Diggs** has arrived, I still think Nico can at least maintain, if not expand, upon his breakout year because:

A) **Offensive Continuity & a Year 2 Stroud Jump:** There's no denying how strong rookie-of-the-year Stroud was in his debut – 4108 yards and 23 TDs across 15 starts, while looking incredible doing so. What's dangerous to think is: this was **Bobby Slowik**'s first year calling plays, and Stroud's first time facing NFL Competition. So many of the game's best QBs experience a massive Year 2 spike as the game slows down. It's a scary though to think what Slowik and Stroud could achieve with a year of experience under the belts, and how that could expand this "Pie" too close to 5,000 yards & 40 TDs

B) **Nico in the "Julio Jones" role:** Last year, Nico mentioned Slowik had him watch film of **Julio Jones** in Atlanta's offense in preparation for his "move-around-X" role. This seemed ambitious, but Collins clearly rose to the call with 80 rec, 1297 yards, and 8 TDs in only 15 games. The team then extended him with true "WR1 money," suggesting they see him in this role for the foreseeable future. Even with so many mouths, Collins will be fed most steadily.

At worst, Collins proved he is incredibly efficient. Even on just the 24th targets, he ranked 8th in receiving yards (1297), 6th in yards after catch (549), 11th in TDs, and 2nd in yards per route run. At WR, banking on talent and efficiency is almost always the right path. And even with more competition, there's a very real world where steps from Stroud and Slowik create an Aerial Bonanza that feeds Collins, and everyone else, even more than last year's impressive performance.

Plus, if anything happens to **Tank Dell** or Diggs, the other two would shoot to the MOON. At 36 overall on ESPN and Yahoo (behind Diggs?!?!), Collins is an absurd steal. Yes, he is a bit "boom-or-busty" on the surface, but the booms were so huge (30+ Half PPR FPs 3 times), while he only dropped below 10 FPs on 4 occasions. He's a roller coaster well worth riding, especially at this low cost of admission.



Deebo Samuel (20 OVR, WR11, +7 ECR)

Note: *With* ***Brandin Aiyuk*** *trade rumors heating up,* ***Deebo Samuel****'s stock could SOAR! I'd rank him as a early-to-mid Round 2 pick, with fringe Top-12 upside, if Aiyuk is moved.*

Similar to Aiyuk, Deebo also is negatively impacted by all the mouths he needs to contend with in San Fran. Yet, his floor, and ceiling, are both bolstered a bit by the near-guarantee of manufactured touches. He's seen 178, 136, and 126 opportunities across the past three seasons. Yes, targets are much more valuable in fantasy, but with a player as dangerous as Deebo, all touches are massive – his 10.0 Yards per Touch ranked 10th in the NFL last season.

So while I believe Aiyuk is the better, more valuable *wide receiver* in real life, Deebo's versatility within Mad Genius Shanahan's scheme gives him the edge in fantasy for me – especially since he comes with a cheaper price tag. It's unlikely Deebo will ever hit his WR2 finish of 2021 again, as he no longer is asked to attack deep like he used to – but last year's WR10 should be a reasonable expectation.

Deebo will have you like this w/ Fantasy Bling as a Round 3 Steal

Cooper Kupp (UPDATED 8/26 - 25 OVR, +9 ECR & ADP)

UPDATE (8/26): *Following Puka's injury, Kupp's ADP has risen into mid-to-late Round 3. I have him as a fringe-second rounder, so I still love buying him at these prices.*

After playing in just 9 and 12 games the past two seasons, Kupp presents a risky fantasy bet. Yet, some of that is mitigated by a 4th Round price tag.

We're talking about a guy who was legitimately the No.1 WR in FPPG in back-to-back seasons in 2021 and 2022. In 2021, Kupp led in catches (145), receiving yards (1,947) and receiving touchdowns (16) while posting the most FPs in a single-season *ever*.

Sure, Puka Nacua is now here. He's certainly the preferred fantasy option – especially after posting 9-181-1 in the playoff game vs. the Lions, compared to just 5-27 for Kupp.

Yet, in the 12 full games Kupp and Puka played together last year, targets were:

Puka Nacua: 100
Cooper Kupp: 99

Kupp actually had the higher fist-read target share, too (29.7%, compared to 28.7% for Nacua).

All the hype this offseason is that Kupp is “all the way back.” McVay acknowledged how brutal the injuries have been for Kupp, but said that Kupp is back to 100% and looking like his old self. All the talk is Kupp is “a man on a mission” out for his triple crown again. Jeremy Fowler left Rams camp thinking Kupp, and not Puka, was the clear No.1 Weapon – and it’s easy to imagine given Kupp’s track record.

In Round 4, Kupp is an easy click. We know the ceiling is astronomical, we know McVay is a genius, and we know Stafford can feed multiple weapons. We just need Kupp to stay healthy.

Mike Evans (26 OVR, WR13)

We highlighted Evans as a mid-round WR to hammer last year. Even though his price has risen, Evans remains a massive buy in Round 3.

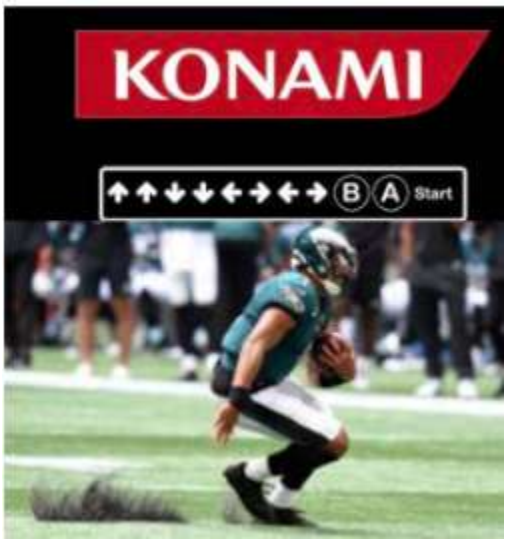
Counter-intuitively, Evans actually benefited from the QB switch from future HOFer **Tom Brady** to career journeyman **Baker Mayfield.** Evans saw his highest target share (135) and Air Yards (1906-2nd most in league) since 2018, as Mayfield’s willingness to chuck it into coverage / DGAF-mentality favored Evans’ style over the more conservative & calculated Brady.

With Mayfield locked back in place, Evans should again be dialed up early-and-often. The duo has reportedly been cooking it up in camp, and with 1000+ yards in EVERY YEAR of his 10 year career, Evans is firmly on my must-draft list til I see any reason not to be in.

Crazily, Evans also dropped 3-4+ long-bomb TDs that he normally catches. There’s a real-world where he hauls in 17 TDs and is now going in Round 1/2 range, so soak up the Round 3 discount 100%.

Elite Onesie, Part One: QBs (& the Konami Code)

What is the Konami Code?



Simply put: QBs who can gain points not only from throwing, but from rushing, often offer the ultimate “Cheat Code” in fantasy football.

Again referencing the great Scott Barrett, since 2000, 41 QBs have played 12+ games and averaged 5.5+ rush attempts per game. Of them, 34 finished as Top-12 QBs (83%) and 24 finished Top-6 (59%) in FPPG.

No QB to post 750+ rushing yards has finished lower than 9th in FPs, even if their passing was minimal.

Quarterback (year)	Passing Yards (rank)	Rushing Yards (rank)	Fantasy Finish
Kyler Murray (2020)	3,971 (13th)	822 (2nd)	QB2
Lamar Jackson (2020)	2,757 (22nd)	1,005 (1st)	QB8
Jalen Hurts (2021)	3,144 (21st)	784 (1st)	QB9
Justin Fields (2022)	2,242 (T-26th)	1,143 (1st)	QB7

15-of-16 QBs with 125 rush attempts have finished as a Top-12 QB, with the lone exception **Cam Newton** during his dreadful Patriots run (still was QB16). Most of those finished in the Top-5, too.

If you needed further convincing, **Tim Tebow** was the QB7 in FPPG, despite ranking 42nd in attempts per start & 38th in passer-rating.

In typical settings, rushing yards are 2.5x more valuable than passing, and rushing TDs are 1.5x more valuable than passing scores. As such, QBs that offer “leg points” are infinitely more valuable than typical pocket-passers.

It’s simply the biggest QB edge you can find in fantasy, especially when combined with QBs who are also accruing explosive passing game production, too. Those guys are:

Round 3 (perhaps even 2 for JA)

Josh Allen and Jalen Hurts were the only two QBs on 60+% of rosters in 2023.

However, whereas Top-3 QBs provided a +6.9 Value Over Replacement edge in 2022, this had dropped to +3.6 VORP in 2023 – still higher than 2020 and 2021, though. Allen was also 5th in FantasyPoints' Fantasy Wins above Replacement (2.39), while Hurts was 9th. The next closest QB was Dak, at 24th.

This emphasizes the elite edge both Allen and Hurts still provide. Let's dive specifically into the 2024 Fantasy Outlook of both:

Josh Allen (QB1, 20 Overall)
No QB has epitomized "Konami Cheat Code Upside" more than Josh Allen. Not only has he been the QB1, QB1, QB2, and QB1 across his last four seasons, all four of those years rank in the TOP-10 ALL TIME QB SCORES! He has been a Top-12 QB in 71% of games, with nearly half of those in the Top-5.

								Fantasy		Fantasy per Game		
Rk	Player	FantPt	Season	Age	Team	G	GS	FantPt	PPR	FantPt	PPR/G	Pos
1	Patrick Mahomes	417.1	2018	23	KAN	16	16	417.1	417.1	26.07	26.07	QB
2	Patrick Mahomes	416.4	2022	27	KAN	17	17	416.4	417.4	24.49	24.55	QB
3	Lamar Jackson	415.7	2019	22	BAL	15	15	415.7	415.7	27.71	27.71	QB
4	Peyton Manning	410.0	2013	37	DEN	16	16	410.0	410.0	25.63	25.63	QB
5	Josh Allen	402.6	2021	25	BUF	17	17	402.6	402.6	23.68	23.68	QB
6	Aaron Rodgers	397.4	2011	28	GNB	15	15	397.4	397.4	26.49	26.49	QB
7	Josh Allen	395.5	2022	26	BUF	16	16	395.5	395.5	24.72	24.72	QB
8	Josh Allen	395.1	2020	24	BUF	16	16	395.1	396.1	24.69	24.76	QB
9	Drew Brees	393.6	2011	32	NOR	16	16	393.6	393.6	24.60	24.60	QB
10	Josh Allen	392.6	2023	27	BUF	17	17	392.6	392.6	23.09	23.09	QB

The ultimate scoring machine and GL Hammer, Allen has 42+ total TDs in four straight seasons. He has never finished with fewer than 6 rushing TDs, and is fresh off a career-high 15 rushing TDs – those TDs coincidentally spiked when **Joe Brady,** who will now be calling the plays in 2024, took over as the interim OC.

Yes, losing **Stefon Diggs** sucks, but JA can still thrive. Diggs imploded from Week 9 onward, failing to hit 7 FPs in 6-of-8 contests and finishing Top-24 just once (no Top-12 games). Meanwhile, Allen actually scored MORE FPPG, especially with Brady installed as the OC in Week 11. Allen was on pace for 675 rush yards and 19! Rush TDs under Brady.

While I don't *love* Allen going almost a full round ahead of Hurts, the year-to-year consistency and durability make it an easy click. You're never going to regret Allen as a centerpiece to build around.

Jalen Hurts (QB2, 25 OVR)

The QB2 and QB3 the past two seasons, Hurts is an even more dangerous rushing threat than Allen. He has 10, 13, and 15 rushing TDs across his past three seasons. Losing **Jason Kelce** may hurt for those goalline "Tush Push" TDs, but Kelce himself handpicked **Cam Jurgens**, who's a BEAST. Hurts (& his 600+ lbs squats) is the crucial element there. I still expect 12+ rushing TDs.

Plus, I could see Hurts post his best year as a passer under new OC **Kellen Moore.** Yes, the Chargers were grossly disappointed last season, but Moore still plays fast and throws often. His offense has ranked top-6 in points per game in 4 of 5 seasons. They've been Top-5 in YFS per game in 4 of 5 seasons. They've been Top-4 in situation-neutral pace of play in 4 of 5 seasons, and top-7 in plays per game in 5 of 5 seasons.

With **AJ Brown** and **Devonta Smith** still very-much in their primes, this offense could reignite and re-gain that 2022 massive upside. You can certainly make a case for Hurts to be the QB1 based on his surrounding skill talent, and the fact he goes nearly a full round cheaper than JA makes him a more regular target of mine. Those two are in tiers above the field.

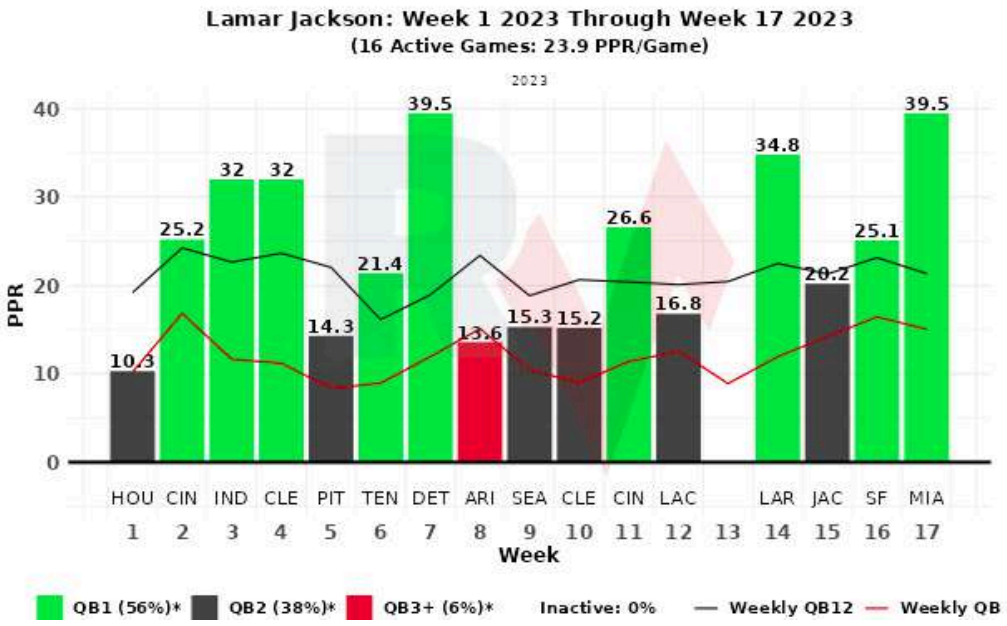
Still, if you choose to go Achane or London / Collins in Round 3, there's two other QBs that could break fantasy this year after the Top-Two:

Lamar Jackson (QB3, 31 OVR +6 ECR)
Jackson is the epitome of the Konami Code, averaging over 51 rush yards per game for five-straight years.

Intriguingly, his passing ceiling is higher than ever in **Todd Monken**'s "Air Raid" style offense. In his first year in the system, Jackson set a career high in attempts (457), completions (307), completion % (67%), and passing yards (3678). Yes, some of this came at the expense of rushing, but he still hit 819 yards & 5 TDs, and reportedly shed some weight to be even more dangerous as a runner in 2024.

Considering his finish as the QB2 in FPPG in only his first year of the system, and with **Zay Flowers** just a rookie, Jackson's ceiling feels even higher in 2024. Indeed, the missed games are a concern given the added hits he's exposed to (only 12 GP in 2021 & 2022). Yes, he was a little more boom-busty than you might expect, as the Ravens LOVE hammering in at the stripe (Gus Edwards = 2nd in NFL w/ 13 ruTDs!) – and they now have a monster in **Derrick Henry** to absorb massive volume.

Still, LJax also topped 30 FPs four separate times. He has as high of a weekly ceiling as anyone, and could hit those massive weekly outputs more regularly with another year of experience in the offense and with these weapons. Plus, if the defense slides back at all, LJax could also hit more ceiling outcomes too. He's the ideal QB target if you miss on Allen or Hurts.



Patrick Mahomes (32 OVR, QB4)
Of course, Mahomes does not fit the “Konami Code” profile. Sure, he scrambles a bit, and has topped 300+ rushing yards in 4 straight years. But rushing is more of a bonus than a feature here.

Yet, Mahomes is arguably the only pure-passer capable of breaking fantasy. In six seasons, Mahomes has THE top-two scoring seasons of all-time (2018 & 2022), both of which included 5,000+ yards and 40+ TD.

The Chiefs have ranked 1st in pass-rate over expectation every single year since Mahomes took over in 2018. Mahomes has been a Top-5 QB in FPPG in 5-of-6 seasons, with last year being the lone outlier. Looking at 2023’s pathetic weapons cabinet, Mahomes’ lackluster performance is forgivable.

Expect a much different offense in 2024. To stretch the field, the Chiefs have since added **Hollywood Brown** and the fastest-ever player to enter the NFL in **Xavier Worthy**, with **Rashee Rice** and **Travis Kelce** returning to dominate after the catch. Since OTAs and through Training Camp, all the buzz about this offense has been a return to the explosive passing game they were known for, each practice featuring an emphasis on deep plays. Don’t expect a repeat of Mahomes’ career-low 6.8 aDot.

Plus, the Chiefs lost a few key defensive pieces, most notably L’Jarius Sneed. They were just 27th in total combined points with their opponents last year, but with a weakened secondary and more explosive offense, expect that number to rise.

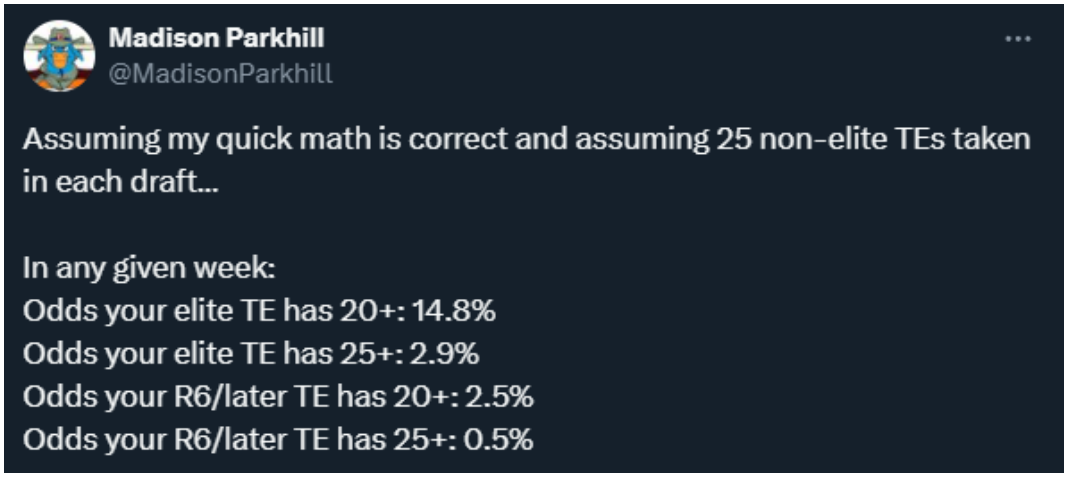
Mahomes has everything in place to at least approach, if not repeat, the 5,000+ passing yard, 40+ TDs seasons we know he’s so capable of.

Elite Onesie, Part Two: TEs w/ 110+ Target Upside

While I may not be on board with **Travis Kelce** and **Sam LaPorta** as Round Two picks, that's mostly because I think there's similar value and production that goes 2+ rounds later. Those two are my No.1 and No.2 ranked TEs, but the opportunity cost is far greater where they go.

Meanwhile, **Trey McBride, Mark Andrews,** and **Dalton Kincaid** drip in similar upside, but linger to the Round 4-6 Range. After them, **George Kittle** and possibly **Kyle Pitts** offer a ceiling, but the following drop-off is steep. Thus, I think this Round 4-5 range is a perfect time to secure a consistent target-earning TE. I dove into the strategy and reasoning more here, but the biggest point:

"Elite TEs" (drafted before Round 6) have a MUCH higher shot of a spike week (20+ FPs)



When most of your opponents are rolling out TD-or-bust options, a 20 burger from your TE can often end their week before it even begins. This is especially important in the fantasy playoffs / in Best Ball.

Granted, I feel stronger about securing an elite QB than a TE. **Brock Bowers** falling to the ~110 range in redraft is a nice fallback. Still, I'd like to secure one of the following guys in the Late 4th through 5th Round:

Mark Andrews (TE3, 42 OVR)
Routinely going in Round 2 last year, Andrews at his ~48 ADP is a steal. Over the past five years, Andrews has finished as the TE5, TE5, TE1, TE4, and TE5 in FPPG.

In Todd Monken's new attack, Lamar Jackson set career highs with 457 pass attempts & 3678 yards. Given Lamar has a 36 TD season on his resume, there's plenty of upside to add more scores in 2024 in Year 2 of this offense.

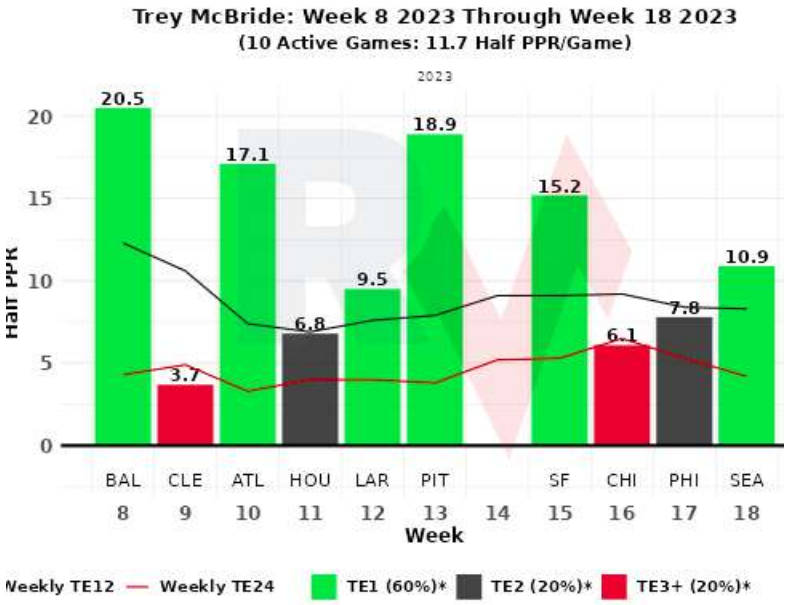
Andrews was THE TE1 and highest-rostered player on Fantasy Playoff finals teams in 2022. No, he probably won't return to the 26.6% target share or 30% targets per route that year, nor the 107 rec for 1,361 yards with nine touchdown receptions…. yet… we know the ceiling exists!

Andrews still was plenty effective when available last year. He notched a healthy 22.2% target share and was targeted on 22.6% of his routes run. Moreover, Andrews averaged 2.01 yards per route run (3rd) and 8.9 yards per target (4th). He was on pace for over 900 yards & 10 TDs, easy top-5 TE numbers. If you only count his 9 healthy games, Andrews averaged 12.2 Half-PPR FPPG, which would've been the top-TE on the season. I'll side with his consistency over the young guns as my No.3 TE.

Trey McBride (TE4, 43 OVR)

Despite being the top TE prospect from the 2022 class, Trey McBride was again behind **Zach Ertz** to open 2023. Yet, once Ertz went down with an injury in Week 7, McBride went OFF. He was the TE4 from Week 8 onwards, with multiple spikes mixed in. He averaged 8.5 tgts, 6.6 rec, 65.5 ypg, and 11.7 Half- FPPG

Full Season pace = 112 rec (144 tgt), 1114 yds, 5 TDs:



Now, McBride will be contending with new-arrival **Marvin Harrison,** which will ding his volume some. Yet, McBride could benefit from lesser defensive attention, too.

Dalton Kincaid (TE5, 50 OVR)

Of all the Round 4/5 TEs, Kincaid steadily falls the furthest… and yet, the argument could be made he has the strongest target outlook, and from the best QB, of every TE in the NFL.

All reports from Training Camp suggest Kincaid has been the “main vein” of the passing attack. He’s getting moved all over the formation, put in motion a ton, and absolutely eating in Red Zone drills. After Kincaid scored just 2 TDs last year, this would be huge.

Kincaid also needs to expand his route tree to the deeper levels of the field to truly hit an elite ceiling. His aDot was just 6.0, which ranked 28th. In college, Kincaid was plenty capable of stretching the seam, with a 15.8 college YPR.

Likely to see 110+ targets from the NFL’s most explosive QB in Josh Allen, Kincaid has a very real case to finish as THE TE1 in 2024.

ROUND 4-5 WR Targets

While I do love locking up “Elite Onesies,” there are some huge-upside WRs available even after **Drake London, Nico Collins, Deebo Samuel,** and **MIke Evans** go.

Particularly, the Round 4 guys all can make strong cases to finish in 2024’s Top-12. If I don’t have a WR by Round 4, definitely snare one of the following, as the Round 5-8 range is more “High-End WR2” types.

Round 4 Wide Receiver Targets:

Jaylen Waddle (29, +10 ECR & ADP)

Indeed, Waddle was a pain in the ass to own last year. While he only missed 3 games, he never was himself. He missed most of the preseason with a sternum injury, and then suffered a concussion in Week 2, along with ankle injuries during the year. He only had two Top-12 games all year, and ultimately, he was just the WR22 in FPPG – after finishing as the WR12 & WR8 in his first two professional seasons.

Yet, Waddle’s an easy talent to buy-back in on. He had six Top-12 games the year before, finishing as the WR8 despite ranking just 23rd in targets – ultimately ranking 2nd in FPs over expectation. He can be insanely efficient, and reportedly “looks on a different level” in camp so far:

Yes, Waddle’s true ceiling will be capped as long as **Tyreek** is on the field. Yet, the contingency upside is among the highest in the NFL if Hill is to miss any time – he did last year, and Waddle put up 28.2 FPs, his highest of the year! Between his own value + the contingency upside, Waddle is a strong bet in Round 4.

Malik Nabers (32 OVR, WR19, +15 ADP) - UPDATE 8/26 - Nabers is no longer falling to Round 6, and if you want him, you likely need to invest by Round 4. I have him ranked as Round-3 worthy & +15 ahead of his ECR, so that’s no problem to me!

I have Nabers ranked as a Round 3 worthy player, so you can imagine I will be SMASHING his Round 6 redraft price. I am more than happy to “reach” in Round 5 if I am not confident he’ll make it back to me, too.

Many believe Nabers to be the best WR prospect in this “generational 2024 WRs class” While **Marvin Harrison** gets that nod for me, the fact it’s worth debating tells you how damn good Nabers is. He led the FBS in receiving yards per game (120.7) and explosive catches of 20+ yards (34) last year, with gliding speed and phenomenal ball-tracking that he uses to consistently win on downfield seams, corners, and posts. Nabers is also dangerous after the catch and on handoffs (jet sweeps especially), and has experience playing both the

slot and outside. The explosiveness, violent ball skills, and versatility have led some to compare Nabers to fellow LSU great **Ja'Marr Chase** (who Nabers outproduced).

In other words, Nabers is the type of player you build your offense around and feed 150+ touches. Coincidentally, he enters a Giants squad desperate for a centerpiece after losing **Saquon Barkley**.

Thus far in camp, Nabers has indeed been the focal point. Every day, a new highlight clip comes out, along with reports of "usage all over the field." I particularly loved Art Stapleton's quote that "Malik Nabers has that special quality the Giants have not had since Odell Beckham Jr.: he demoralizes defenses. Even then, I think Nabers might be better at the top of his routes than OBJ was as a rookie."

That's carried over into Preseason Action. In his first action with **Daniel Jones,** Nabers posted 33% target share and 35% target-per-route, seeing 6 looks, 4 receptions, and 54 yards. This came in roughly one half of action. Many of his grabs were contested circus grabs, too. Yes, Daniel Jones looks like dog mess (2 ints) – but we should also notice him & Daboll's desire to sling the rock deep. Jones may never be good, but with he rust shaken off, he can be better.

Yes, I understand (and worry) about the Giants being absolutely abysmal as a team. Per Josh Norris, the highest-finishing WR from a Bottom-8 offense last year was the WR29, and Vegas projects the Giants for the fourth fewest points.

Yet, I'm not completely ruling out a Top-18 finish for the Giants offense as a whole. They achieved just that in 2022 (18th in PPG, 21.2), and **Brian Daboll** routinely churned out Top-7 scoring units while with the Bills. Even in last year's nightmare offense, they were still 5th in no-huddle rate and 4th in play-clock seconds left. They want to play fast and explosively.

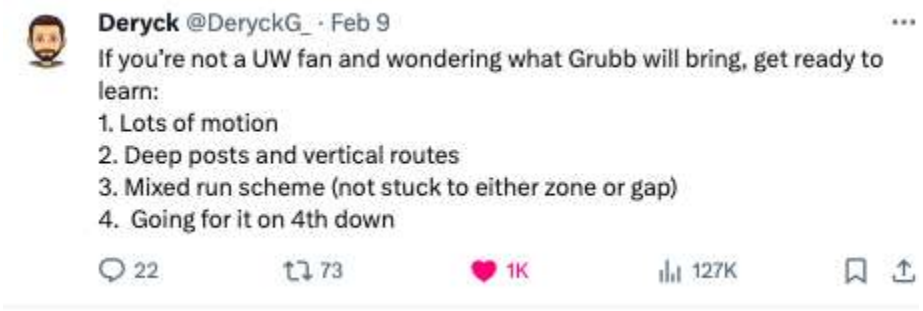
For stretches late in that 2022 season, nobodies like **Isaiah Hodges** (Week 13-18) and **Richie James** (Week 11-18) were BOTH Top-20 in FPPG when they became full-time starters. I don't believe either are still in the league… So it's not impossible to imagine Daboll feeds Nabers, one of the best WR prospects of the last decade, enough creative volume to facilitate Top-20 stats.

Plus, if **Daniel Jones** blows, at least **Drew Lock** provides a worthwhile backup. This raises Nabers' floor quite a bit, while the ceiling is truly sky-high. I'd go after him as early as Round 4 in redraft if I needed to, but I'll gladly scoop him in Round 6 for the time being.

DK Metcalf (34 OVR, +7 ECR)

In 2020, DK Metcalf was 7th in receiving yards and the WR6 in fantasy. He's been *ok* since, but after back-to-back WR17 finishes and just two Top-12 games last year, it's fair to question "Why Metcalf?"

New OC **Ryan Grubb,** formerly of the high-flying Washington Huskies offense, could unlock this passing game, and especially Metcalf. Here's a quick summary of his scheme:



Deep posts and vertical routes are right in Metcalf's wheelhouse (14.1 aDOT last year).

But what he could especially benefit from is increased motion and usage out of the slot. Grubb and HC **MIke Macdonald** called Metcalf "a moving target" this year, saying they want to get him the ball "a lot." While appearing on a podcast, Grubb mentioned "10 targets per game" as "possibilities that are certainly in the framework of the offense."

"He's a big, imposing, fast, powerful receiver," Macdonald said, adding the team wants to ensure opposing defenses have to "account for [Metcalf] at all times but it's gonna be hard to find him."

Metcalf ran 84 percent of his pass routes from the boundary in 2023, in line with his career rate. He saw only 12 targets from the slot last season. This type of move-around role could unlock huge upside. This would mimic how **Rome Odunze** was used with the Huskies, as he racked up 92 receptions, 1640 yards, and 13 TDs

With **Tyler Lockett** and **Jaxon Smith-Njigba** as worthy mouths to be fed, Metcalf may not see the target volume he needs to truly hit that WR6 ceiling from before. Still, he achieved that on just 129 targets that year, and another 130 looks, but in more advantageous alignments, could get him close to those dominant numbers again– especially with **Geno Smith** reportedly COOKING in the new scheme!

Round 5 Wide Receiver Targets

DeVonta Smith (41 OVR, WR22, +5 ECR)

Devonta Smith's career has been *fine* so far:

WR39, WR16, WR21 in FPPG at 9.2, 12.4 & 11.4 in FPPG
TGTS: 30th, 13th, 23rd in targets
REC 34th, 9th, 16th
TDs: 34th, 8th, 20th

Yet, I think Smith's ceiling may be the highest it's ever been. Remember all those potential boosts new OC **Kellen Moore** could bring to **AJ Brown** (see Round 1 Breakdown)?

Devonta Smith should similarly benefit from a faster-paced, pass-happier attack – and especially the potential for increased lay-up / slot usage. While AJB is a catch-and-run monster, D.Smith has actually outproduced AJB purely from the slot. Smith has averaged 2.59 YPRR and commanded a 25.4% target per route run when in the slot, compared to just 1.38 YPRR and 14% TPRR for AJB.

In Training Camp, Eagles CB Avonte Maddox said (7/29) he's been "seeing DeVonta Smith in the slot a lot more than he's used to seeing." Perhaps Smith, and not AJB, will be Moore's "Keenan Allen / CeeDee Lamb" lay up guy?

My guess is both rotate through the role – Brown is too damn good after-the-catch to not utilize. Yet, Smith has reportedly also taken another step forward in camp so far, according to beats:

In Round 5 as a WR2 / WR3, Smith is a no-brainer.

Amari Cooper (47 OVR, WR24, +7 ECR)

Ken Dorsey, the former Bills play-caller, was hired by Cleveland as OC with two main goals:

- Improve the passing game
- Increase the tempo

The second goal may be tough – the Browns actually led the NFL in total plays run last year. Still, a more pass-happy attack can only help **Amari Cooper.** He's already been the WR10 and WR18 across his two seasons in Cleveland, seeing a healthy 132 and 127 targets as the clear No.1 WR.

Cooper also is one of the only weapons on the roster to succeed with Watson, as he averaged the same FPs with him in the lineup than without him (15.4). Stir in true week-winning upside (51.5 FPs in Week 16 last year), and Cooper is a great WR2 / WR3 target.

Plus, if Watson struggles or gets injured, **Jameis Winston** awaits in the wings. We know Winston can facilitate monster fantasy seasons, so that boosts both the floor and ceiling for Cooper.

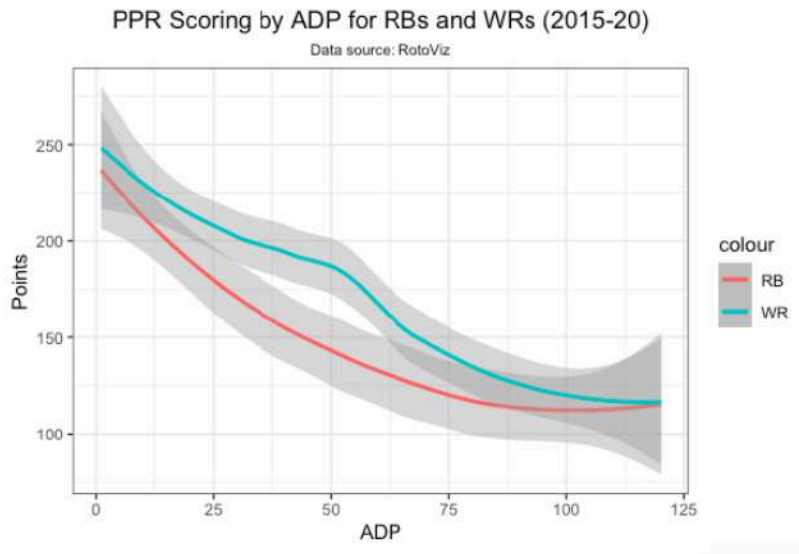
Round 3-5 “Fades”

All RBs Not Named Achane or Pacheco - The “RB Dead Zone”

Once the Top-9 guys (& maybe Henry) are gone, I feel there's a steep drop-off in fantasy upside. To hit a true “Hero-Worthy RB” season, you need serious talent… and the RBs in this range feel mostly like volume bets, at best.

There are guys going in the Round 7-10 range with similar profiles and ceilings to the Round 3-5 RBs. They are far more replaceable than the Elite QBs or TEs, or possible WR1s, that go in this area.

Moreover, RBs at this price have historically underperformed compared to WRs. For nearly 10 straight years, WRs picked in Rounds 3-6 have averaged an above-expectation win rate in six consecutive seasons. RBs picked in that area have been below-expectation for six straight years. Just look at this graph from **Jack Miller,** who first introduced the RB Dead Zone concept in 2020:



The drop in RB scoring (red line) is so clear compared to WR.

This is why I love going (at least) Hero-RB, and secring 1-2 RBs in Rounds 1-2 (or Achane) that can match the higher-end WR scoring, rather than flopping around in a sub-optimal talent pool of Round 3-6 RBs. As a whole, I’d much rather go for young, explosive WR talent in this range – London > R. White; Collins > Mixon; Devonta > Montgomery; Nabers > Kamara.

Let’s look at the backs in this range and outline their floor / ceiling & who I’m fading harder than others.

- **Josh Jacobs (GB, ADP ~30):** The Packers offense promises to be Top-10 in scoring, and Jacobs is a proven bell-cow RB. Yet, **Matt LaFleur** is committed to committees, and is already preaching **MarShawn Lloyd** as a “lightning complement.” Jacobs’ efficiency was also worse than ZEKE ELLIOTT last year, and among the Bottom-10 RBs. Stir in groin and hamstring injuries already in camp, and Jacobs is a clear **FADE** ahead of Achane, London, Deebo, Evans, and Collis.

- **Rachaad White (TB, ADP ~34):** White only trailed CMC in touches last year, and is a truly elite pass-catcher. Moreover, **Liam Coen** is installing the Rams' uber-successful "merge-the-run-and-pass" system that has made fantasy RB Gods. Still, White was in the bottom-10th percentile in rushing efficiency last year… he was flat out bad as a runner. Meanwhile, 4th Round pick **Bucky Irving** is generating strong steam as a "perfect fit" in the zone scheme. Considering White was highly volume-dependent & that's now in question, I can't take him above an Elite QB or the Remaining WR1s – **FADE in ROUND 3 (but acceptable in late Round 4+)**

- **Joe MIxon (HOU, ADP ~35):** Mixon is the toughest fade – he should net 250-300 touches in a surging Texans attack. Similar to White, though, Mixon just hasn't been efficient at all. He's also dealing with a nagging hamstring injury all of camp. With a lot of tread on his tires, Mixon presents scarier "break down" risk than many may recognize. **Soft-ish fade until late Round 4**

- **James Cook (BUF, ADP ~40):** If I was truly desperate for an RB, I would consider **James Cook** in Round 4. Unlike the previous names, Cook IS talented and explosive. Despite 4 dropped TDs, he's a dangerous pass-catcher, too. The TD ceiling will always be capped when playing with a GL Hammer like **Josh Allen,** and rookie **Ray Davis** has reportedly put on a show in early camp. The fade with Cook comes more down to opportunity cost & preferring the other positions in this range. **Soft Fade.**

- **David Montgomery (DET, ADP ~50):** The GL-back role in the Lions offense always carries some value. 12-15 TDs are very possible and the floor is nice. But the ceiling feels capped with Gibbs absorbing more work in Year 2. Monty will be a solid bet to rarely dip below 10 FPs, but rarely Top 15 FPs. This makes him less appealing than WRs with 20-30 FP upside. **Fade.**

- **Alvin Kamara (NO, ADP ~48):** Last year's RB4 in FPPG, Kamara might feel too low at this RB17 price tag. Yet, Kamara has been one of the least-effective RBs on a per touch basis, with declining efficiency for three straight years. He's at least approaching a cliff. Given **Kendre Miller** continues to flounder / get hurt, and that new-OC and former 49ers passing-game coordinator **Klint Kubiak** is hyping AK41 in a CMC style role, there's a chance Kamara's efficiency rebounds and he's a massive steal here. Since he falls to Round 5 on some redraft platforms, I can (somewhat) get behind Kamara, but would still vastly prefer the ceiling of a young, explosive WR like **Malik Nabers** or **Tank Dell. Soft Fade.**

- **Aaron Jones (MIN, ADP ~50):** While the "Revenge Narrative" is nice for Aaron Jones (especially since they face Green Bay in the Week 17 Fantasy Championship), I have a hard time buying him in Early Round 5. I love the player, and he showed he has plenty of juice when healthy, closing the season with six-straight 100+ YFS performances, including five with 130+ yards, with 20+ touches in all six. Yet, the Vikings ranked 28th with just 23.0 run plays per game, and both **Dalvin Cook** and **Alexander Mattison** floundered as the lead RBs for O'Connell in back-to-back years. Jones also carries high injury risk, while the team continues to hype up an RBBC with **Ty Chandler**. All-in-all, Jones' talent does not outweigh the injury risk and especially the opportunity cost of passing a WR or Elite TE here. **FADE.**

Michael Pittman (IND, ADP ~33, OVR = 47, -14 spots)

While I like most WRs in this range, one of the first off the board is my least favorite in **Michael Pittman.**

Indeed, Pittman had the best year of his career, leaping from the WR26 and WR29 in FPPG all the way to WR19. Yet, he also performed far-better with **Gardner Minshew** than he did **Anthony Richardson:**

RotoViz

Michael Pittman Jr. Splits 2023 - 2023

Per Game / Full Season Pace

Statistic	In Split	Out of Split
Games	4	12
HalfPPR	10.25 / 174	13.06 / 222
PPR	13 / 221	16.68 / 284
reRECS	5.5 / 94	7.25 / 123
reTDS	0.25 / 4	0.25 / 4
reTRGS	8.75 / 149	10.08 / 171
reYDS	55 / 935	77.67 / 1320

In Split: Anthony Richardson played, from week 1 to 18, from 2000 to 2023,
*out of split evaluates to all games the subject player played that don't meet the in split criteria

No, it wasn't even four full games, so the sample-size is tiny here. Yet, the Colts as a whole were far run-heavier with Richardson at QB compared to Minshew, which shrunk the passing pie tremendously.

Pittman's season-long pace with AR: 149 tgts, 94 rec, 935 yds, 4 TDs, 174 Half-PPR FPs (10.25 FPPG)
Pittman's season-long pace with GM: 171 tgts, 123 rec, 1320 yds, 4 TDs, 222 Half-PPR FPs (13.06 FPPG)

Nearly 400+ yards and 30+ receptions is no joke. Additionally, **Josh Downs** has been one of the stars of Colts Training camp, and the team took **AD Mitchell** in Round 2, which could create even more target competition.

Having **Joe Flacco** as AR's back-up does provide a path for Pittman to hit a greater ceiling if injury strikes. Yet, with so many strong WRs in high-volume passing-attacks going cheaper, and not requiring a QB injury for their highest-case ceiling, I typically fade Pittman.

Anthony Richardson (IND, ADP 46, OVR = 65, -17)

I don't think any fade scares me quite as much as Colts phenom **Anthony Richardson**.

His upside and ability to "break fantasy" is obvious. Richardson is the most freakish athlete to ever play the QB position: 6'4", 244 lbs, 4.43 forty, 40.5 inch vertical?! He has the speed and explosiveness of **Lamar Jackson,** at the size of **Cam Newton, and** one of the strongest arms in the entire NFL.

Plus, in the brief glimpses he was available, Richardson already showed he can use these physical gifts to perfection. In ~2.5 games of action, Richardson ran in 4 TDs! He was on pace to top 20 rushing TDs last year. Plus, the accuracy concerns (53.8% completion percentage in college) improved, as Richardson completed 60% of his passes – not stellar, but a definite step forward as a passer and decision-maker.

So why would I possibly be out on this BEAST? The answer largely boils down to injuries and cost.

I know, I know. Predicting injuries is a fool's errand. Yet, the fact Richardson suffered a concussion, and then season-ending shoulder injury, in only oughly 2.5 games of action has to give you some pause. Both injuries came on designed runs, too.

Yes, I am encouraged that **Shane Steichen** has said the team won't hold Richardson's rushing back. The exciting HC said, "Would you tell **Steph Curry** to not shoot 3s?" Indeed, it's this rushing upside that creates true cheat code potential. Yet, it will also expose Richardson to more hits than most QBs. Last year is only a small sample size, and Richardson seems built to withstand some punishment, but you have to at least be mildly concerned with his availability.

With that in mind... what if the team chooses to protect him more, despite Steichen's comments? Can the Colts really withstand losing ARich, their potential franchise QB, two seasons in a row without getting a full evaluation? I wonder if they tighten the rushing reins a bit should he suffer an injury.

That would be a concern, as Richardson is still VERY raw as a passer. His 56.5 PFF Passing Grade was among the worst in the league, and Richardson's 2024 Training Camp has been a mixed bag. He's made some highlight-worthy throws... but he's also struggled with consistency. Look at these quotes from joint practices with the Bengals:

- "'He's just throwing to spots,' Bengals safety Geno Stone yelled out after the ball hit the grass. 'He doesn't see his receivers….'

- 'Is that all he does is run?' CB Cam Britt-Taylor said."

When they squared off in Preseason Week 3, the Bengals BACKUPS proceeded to intercept Anthony Richardson – for a Pick 6! Richardson started hot – going 6-of-6 as a passer, and tossing a TD to exciting rookie **AD Mitchell**. But he finished 2-of-8 with the Pick-6 and a lost fumble on his next 8 throws.

To me, the injury and passing concerns create enough risk that I am fading Richardson in the Late 4th / Early 5th Round. If I'm taking a QB this early, I'd much rather it be one of the "Big Four" in **Josh Allen, Jalen Hurts, Lamar Jackson** or **Patrick Mahomes** -- even if that means reaching a round earlier. I also prefer **CJ Stroud,** who has real 5,000+ yard & 40+ TD upside, at the same price point.

Granted, if Richardson falls to mid Round 6... I would happily bite. He's still my QB6 in 2024 Fantasy Football Rankings. The upside is truly league-changing. Still, I'd rather dabble in something safer earlier, or get a similar rushing profile with better passing skills in **Jayden Daniels**... 4+ rounds later.

Fun fact: Jayden Daniels averaged over 4 more FPs per game on RUSHING ALONE in college compared to Anthony Richardson's rushing stats!

Joe Burrow (CIN, ADP 52, OVR = 81, -29)

Burrow is a Top-3 real NFL QB in my eyes, yet I can't fathom his ~50-55 price tag right now in fantasy.

The only non-rushing QB that should go in the Top-5 Rounds is Mahomes. Burrow should be viewed similarly to (if not below) guys like **Dak Prescott** and **Jordan Love,** but goes 20+ picks ahead of them.

The QB16, QB10, QB4, and QB26 in FPPG, Burrow is of course talented… but clearly, it hasn't translated to massive fantasy totals besides one season. The Bengals play slower than you'd expect, and without any

Konami Upside, Burrow's ceiling feels capped unless he pulls off a Mahomes-ian 5,000 Yard, 40 TD effort – something he hasn't proven capable of yet.

As detailed by Draft Sharks, Burrow also has a sneakily-large injury history, with 6 major injuries since he joined the NFL in 2020. These include a multi-ligament knee tear, knee strain, calf strains, and most recently a wrist ligament tear he is reportedly still fighting back from throughout camp. They set his injury risk as "High" at 63.3% – for a non-mobile QB, this is brutal!

Yes, when you have the natural arm talent of Burrow and a weapons cabinet that includes **Ja'Marr Chase** and **Tee Higgins,** you can smash any given week. Yet, with the scary injury history and lack of rushing upside, Burrow should be going 20+ picks later alongside Prescott or Love, not this far ahead of them where mobile QBs, high-end WR1s, and elite TEs are available.

Soft Round 3-5 Fades:

CJ Stroud (45 OVR)

I am very into Stroud and the Texans passing game. Of all the QBs not named Mahomes, Stroud has the best shot at a true 5,000+ yard season. Thus, I am far from "fading" him. I just think he belongs closer to Round 5 than Round 4, and a ~10 pick gap between him and Mahomes / the elite Konami QBs is not wide enough *yet.*

As such, I don't land a ton of Stroud on my redraft teams. I am ALL IN on him in Best Ball in the ~70s range where he currently goes, though.

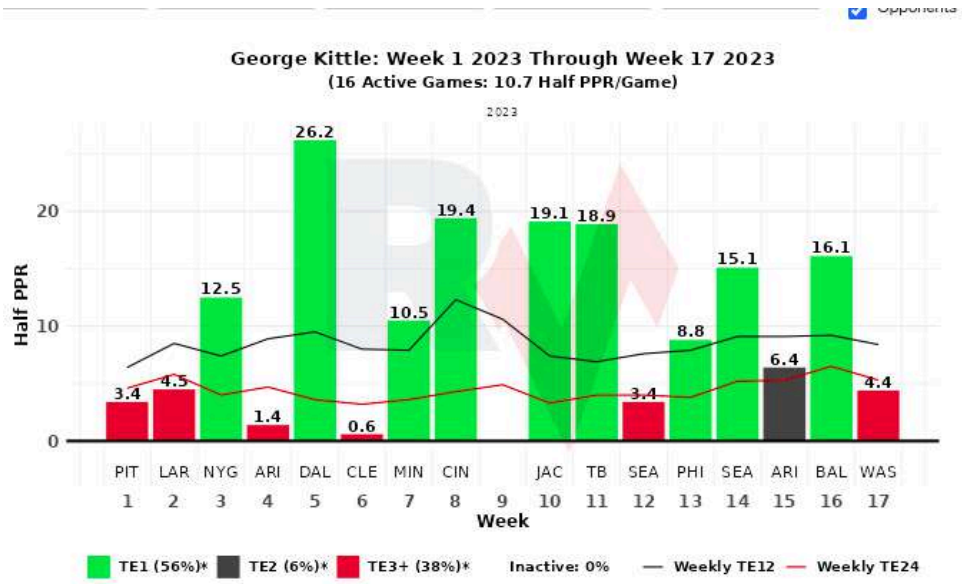
George Kittle (55 OVR)

Similar to Stroud, I am not full-out on Kittle by any means. I think he's the best all-around TE in the NFL, and he's got a great rapport with **Brock Purdy**. In fact, Kittle is tied with **Travis Kelce** for the most 20+ spikes among TEs across the past two years!

The difference with Kittle and Kelce / some of the other elite TEs is the boom-bust nature of his production. He had six games under 5 points… and then 6 games above 15!

When you're contending with **CMC, Deebo,** and **Aiyuk** for looks, this inconsistency is understandable. In Best Ball, this is perfectly fine, but in redraft, Kittle can leave you some true 0s, which you shouldn't normally expect from TEs going this early.

Stir in the fact that Kittle goes ahead of Kincaid in redraft, who I think will be steadier week-to-week, and I just don't land him a ton right now. Yet, if the "Big 5" TEs are gone, sign me up for Kittle all-day still.


George Kittle: Week 1 2023 Through Week 17 2023
(16 Active Games: 10.7 Half PPR/Game)
2023
Half PPR
0
10
20
3.4
4.5
12.5
1.4
26.2
0.6
10.5
19.4
19.1
18.9
3.4
8.8
15.1
6.4
16.1
4.4
PIT LAR NYG ARI DAL CLE MIN CIN JAC TB SEA PHI SEA ARI BAL WAS
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17
Week
TE1 (56%)*
TE2 (6%)*
TE3+ (38%)*
Inactive: 0%
Weekly TE12
Weekly TE24

Sample Teams & Builds Through Rounds 1-5:

Now that we've covered some of our favorite strategies and picks through the first-third of the draft, let's look at some hypothetical starts based on ADP. I starred my favorites but wanted to show combos of what's possible in redraft / home leagues:

EARLY PICK (1-4)

Hero-RB, 2 Onesie+ 2WR* **	**(Elite WR1, 2 RBs, 1 Onesie)**	**(RB-RB, 1 Onesie)**
Round 1: CMC	**Round 1: Tyreek Hill**	**Round 1: Breece Hall**
Round 2: Drake London	**Round 2: Isaiah Pacheco**	**Round 2: De'Von Achane**
Round 3: Josh Allen	**Round 3: De'Von Achane**	**Round 3: Jalen Hurts**
Round 4: Devonta Smith	**Round 4: Malik Nabers**	**Round 4: Malik Nabers**
Round 5: Mark Andrews	**Round 5: Trey McBride**	**Round 5: Devonta Smith**

Mid-Round Pick (5-8)

Hero-RB, 2 Onesie+ 2WR	**(Elite WR1, 2 RBs, 1 Onesie)**	**(RB-RB, WR-WR, TE)****
Round 1: Bijan	**Round 1: ASB**	**Round 1: Bijan Robinson**
Round 2: Marvin H	**Round 2: Kyren Williams**	**Round 2: Isaiah Pacheco**
Round 3: Jalen Hurts	**Round 3: De'Von Achane**	**Round 3: Drake London**
Round 4: Malik Nabers	**Round 4: DK Metcalf**	**Round 4: Jaylen Waddle**
Round 5: Dalton Kincaid	**Round 5: Trey McBride**	**Round 5: Dalton Kincai**

Late-Round Pick (9-12)

Elite WR1, RB1 + 2 Onesies**	**(Zero-RB (WR WR)**	**(RB-RB, WR-WR-WR)****
Round 1: AJ Brown	**Round 1: Garret Wilson**	**Round 1: Saquon Barkley**
Round 2: Kyren Williams	**Round 2: Puka Nacua**	**Round 2: Jahmyr Gibbs**
Round 3: Lamar Jackson	**Round 3: Lamar Jackson**	**Round 3: Nico Collins**
Round 4: Cooper Kupp	**Round 4: Nico Collins**	**Round 4: Cooper Kupp**
Round 5: Dalton Kincaid	**Round 5: Dalton Kincaid**	**Round 5: Malik Nabers**

On many /most of these rosters, we've checked multiple of my tent poles:

-Elite "Hero-Worthy RB"
-Elite QB
-Upside WR1 w/ Target Hog Upside
-Elite TE

I've kept in mind opportunity cost and what will be replaceable later (WR2s & WR3s; RB2s & RB3s), all while laying the structures in place for a full line-up earlier than ever before. Of course, some builds – like the last one for Late Round picks, also show the upside of foregoing onesies til later, too.

Still, as we see the absurd WR talent still here, alongside some RBs that make for fine No.2s, you'll ideally recognize the value these "Elite Onesie" edges can provide

Rounds 3-5 Best Ball Notes & Observations:

- Given the "WR Avalanche," a WR-WR-WR start opens up a lot of doors for "detours" in Rounds 4-5

- Elite QBs go significantly later in Best Ball – **Josh Allen** routinely slips to Early Round 4, while **Jalen Hurts** often goes mid-to-late fourth. Sometimes **Mahomes** and **Lamar** even slip to Round 5

- Most of these redraft RB fades actually fall to the Round 6-8 range in Best Ball Drafts, where they are no longer fades but targets. It's almost a complete reversal of what we see in Redraft, where there's a "WR Oasis" in the Round 6-8 range; in Best Ball, it's much more of an RB Oasis. The depressed RB costs make a Zero or Hero RB Approach much more optimal in Best Ball than Redraft.

- Conversely, some WRs we haven't even covered yet like **Tank Dell, Malik Nabers, Zay Flowers,** and **George Pickens,** all Round 6 Redraft, typically go in Round 3 of Best Ball Drafts (Nabers in Round 2!). The WR Tap sure dries up fast on Underdog, so drink while it's still on!

- I noted it in Round 2, but **Isiah Pacheco** goes in Round 4 of Best Ball. It's absurdly cheap. You can legit start **ASB - Nico Collins - Cooper Kupp** and then go **Pacheco.**

Isiah Pacheco is one of the best Round 4 Picks in Best Ball (& still a great option in Round 2 or 3 in Redraft) – recently, he's risen to the mid-to-late third (as of August 26th), which is still solid, especially if the WRs have fallen off.

Round 6-8 Strategy, Picks, and Fades

While the true Top-12 WR1 profiles are typically gone by Round 3 (the middle of Round 4, at the latest), the amount of plausible-to-upside WR2s that linger in Rounds 6-8 is truly staggering in 2024. It's possibly the deepest pool we've ever seen.

Thus, I am perfectly confident to enter this range with just 1 WR on the roster in redraft, and go WR-WR-WR for three straight rounds in Round 6-8.

Additionally, I don't see a ton of difference in the RBs in the Round 6-8 range compared to those going in Rounds 3-5, hence why I avoid RBs almost entirely in those rounds (besides Achane). I still prefer loading up on WRs in this Round 6-8 range, as the ceilings are much higher. Meanwhile, similar RBs continue lingering into Round 9-10 as we'll soon explore.

Note: ADP is of course different everywhere you draft, but it swings 20+ picks on certain WRs in these ranges. I try to include a happy-medium of where to expect guys to go, but definitely check and practice on your site.

Round 6-8 WR Targets

Group 1 = WRs Who Fall to Round 6 but Belong in Round 4-5

Rashee Rice (53 OVR, +23 ADP) - 8/26 UPDATE- RICE CONTINUES TO RISE, PLAY THE MARKET BUT RICE IS DRAFTABLE ANYWHERE IN ROUND 5+

This is purely a hypothetical upside stab right now as we await any news (or non news) on **Rashee Rice**'s suspension. The longer we go without a move (nothing as of 8/26), the greater the chance Rice's suspension will get pushed to next year. If we knew Rice would be available all year, he'd be going in the Round 3 range. Even if he only gets 4ish games, he's a steal this late.

Rice became a near full-time starter in Week 12, seeing 70%+ of routes from that point on. He thrived, finishing as the WR8 in FPPG over this span (15.2 Half-PPR). He was on pace for 162 targets, 122(!) receptions, 1468 yards, and 8 TDs– good for 259 Half-PPR FPs. This would've ranked 4th on the year, behind only Lamb, Hill, and St. Brown!

Oddly, Rice ranked 99th in aDot (4.8), but finished Top-10 in Yards per Route RUn (2.52). This profile is quite rare, and recently, the only comparisons to have such low target depth but do so much damage were **Deebo Samuel** and **Amon-Ra St. Brown.** This would be QUITE a talent to develop into, but considering Rice had the third most yards-after-catch (654), it's not impossible.

Yes, the suspension risk is real. Indeed, Rice will face more competition for targets. Nonetheless, he's a phenomenal bet right now in the off-chance he's not suspended or that it's only 4 games or fewer. We know he'll be a key-cog in Reid's masterful screen game. Plus, Mahomes has discussed Rice adding more explosiveness, and downfield routes, to his game. This is a shoo-in Top-20 weekly WR once he's on the field… it's just a matter of how quickly that will be.

He projects to be the No.1 WR and possible top overall pass-catcher for Patrick Mahomes, in a highly consistent role. Rice would be going in Round 2 or 3 in this role without any supsenion risk, and as of 8/26, it now feels 80% or higher a suspension is avoided til 2025. HAMMER him in Round 5-6.

Tank Dell (50 OVR (+15 ADP), WR27)

I raved about **Tank Dell** all offseason, and he ended up being one of my top predictions of 2023.

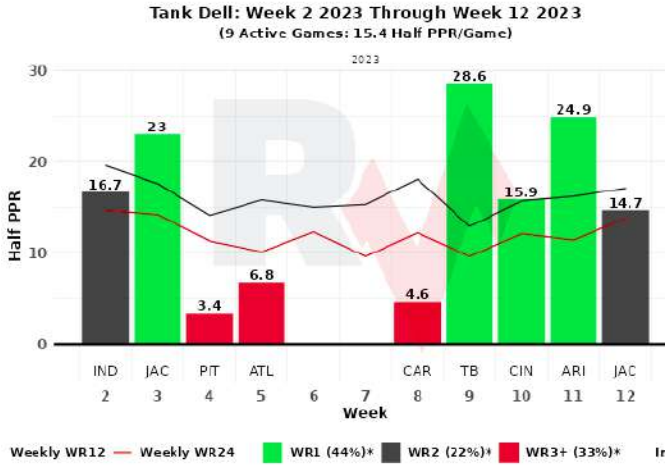
In 9 games with over 50% snaps, Dell averaged 15.4 Half-FPPG. This would've ranked as the WR6 on the season, just below Justin Jefferson and just ahead of Nico Collins and Puka Nacua. Speaking of Collins, in the 7 games he and Dell played 60%+ of snaps together, Dell was actually the highest target earner:

Dell: 53 tgts, 35 rec, 571 yds, 6 TDs, 110.6 FPs
Colins: 52 tgts, 37 rec, 601 yds, 5 TDs, 108.6 FPs

Sure, I still prefer Collins straight up, but Dell was clearly a monster. Even with **Stefon Diggs** now here, Dell may have the most clearly defined field-stretching role. Despite his small stature, he's an elite TE scorer thanks to insane quicks at the line for rapid separation (26 red zone TDs in college).

Perhaps most importantly, **CJ Stroud** LOVES him. He banged the table for the team to draft him after they worked out at the NFL Combine together, and when asked which 3 current WRs he'd build the perfect offense around, he listed Dell as his slot guy (with Adams at X and Chase at Z)

There's a lot of mouths to feed, and it could be a bit inconsistent. Still, with 3+ games of 23+ FPs in Half-PPR already, we know Dell brings a massive weekly ceiling. As the cheapest Texans WR, I'm targeting him the most



8/26 Update: I know many are expressing concern over Dell losing snaps in 2 WR sets, as he has only played in 3 WR sets so far, while Diggs and Collins have taken the vast majority of snaps in 12 personnel. I couldn't care less. I think the Texans will run 3 WR sets at one of the highest clips in the league, and I have no issue with Dell coming off in obvious run situations – we don't need him lining up at fullback to get hurt again!

Zay Flowers (51 OVR, WR28, +5 ADP)

The Ravens have long been hunting for their true No.1 WR, and Flowers stepped up big as a rookie. He ultimately finished as the Half-PPR WR27 with 13.4 FPPG, but his most impressive run happened when **Mark Andrews** was knocked out of the lineup. Flowers was the WR9 with 14.5 FPPG, proving he could shoulder the entire passing game with 17+ FPs in 4-of-5 games.

Even when Andrews returned for the playoffs, Flowers put up 20.9 FPs vs. the Chiefs. He ultimately finished 15th in most rooke receptions of all-time (77)

12	LAC	Deane Leonard	94.2%	36 (100.0% rate)	8 (1 rz)	5 (1 tds)	25 (38 air)	23.2 (#6)
14	LAR	Derion Kendrick	95.8%	51 (100.0% rate)	10 (1 rz)	6 (1 tds)	60 (122 air)	20.0 (#8)
15	JAX	Montaric Brown	85.5%	30 (100.0% rate)	2	1	7 (20 air)	1.7 (#101)
16	SF	Charvarius Ward	86.6%	36 (97.3% rate)	13 (3 rz)	9 (1 tds)	72 (61 air)	22.2 (#13)
17	MIA	Jalen Ramsey	60.0%	14 (60.9% rate)	3	3 (1 tds)	106 (61 air)	19.6 (#11)
20	HOU	Derek Stingley	83.8%	26 (100.0% rate)	5	4	41 (44 air)	8.1 (#13)
21	KC	L'Jarius Sneed	89.5%	40 (97.6% rate)	8 (1 rz)	5 (1 tds)	115 (88 air)	20.9 (#1)

In Year 2, the Ravens noted Flowers has emerged as a leader. Receivers coach Greg Lewis said, “We [are] trying to take it to another level. He's done a great job with that..Flowers has] pretty much gotten better at everything. I think just trying to get him the ball ... If he touches the ball, something special is going to happen; so [we're] just putting him in [a] position to be successful each and every way possible.”

Some of this reportedly involves more deep and intermediate targets; Flowers’ aDot was a lowly 8.4 yards (81st). He averaged 15.3 YPR at Boston College, and when used deep, often shook the defense. Expanding his role for more splash plays would significantly boost Flowers’ ceiling.

Going as the WR30, you’re buying Flowers at what he already did, when he’s very likely to take another step forward–perhaps a major one.

Round 7 WR Targets

Terry McLaurin (WR29, 54 OVR +20 ADP)
Since his surprising rookie-year splash, Terry McLaurin has seemingly underwhelmed relative to his price. Even so, McLaurin has finished as the WR30, WR19, WR25, WR16, and WR32, suggesting he’s being drafted at his floor right now.

Meanwhile, I expect McLaurin to hit his ceiling in a career-best setup for 2024.

First, **Jayden Daniels** (more on him later). should be, by far, the top QB McLaurin has ever played with. From 2019-2022, McLaurin caught passes from a whopping 11 different QBs, nearly all of them bad. 2023 marked the only year McLaurin played with one QB in all 17 games… and that was Sam Howell… inside Eric Bienemy‘s dreadful “spread-the-wealth” show.

In fact, when McLaurin played two drives with Jacoby Brissett last year (his first competent QB since Alex Smith), he exploded. 93 yards, and 1 TD. Just barely missed a second TD. On TWO DRIVES!

Daniels should provide the stability and arm-talent to launch McLaurin to his highest ceiling yet. The duo has reportedly been staying after practice to work on chemistry, and the rapport has been on fire, especially deep down the field.

Plus, **Kliff Kingsbury**'s RPO-heavy scheme, which relentlessly targets WR1s. Last preseason, **Ben Gretch** did phenomenal work outlining just how concentrated target shares become on RPO-based plays. These plays decrease the amount of reads a QB must make and require quick decisions, which results in huge target volume for the top two options.

Just look at the 2022 Eagles, who leaned on RPOs at a league-high clip. **AJ Brown** and **Devonta Smith** posted 145 and 136 targets respectively. The Dolphins, who rank third in RPOs, flow through **Tyreek Hill** and **Jaylen Waddle.**

Meanwhile, Kingsbury routinely ranked towards the top of the league in RPOs, and routinely peppered his WR1s. During Kingsbury's last season, the WR1 (DHop or **Marquise Brown**) notched 10+ targets in 10-of-16 games; they both averaged 10.6+ targets per game (Top-5) as the No.1 option.

Kingsbury also averaged the most plays run and fastest pace while with the Cardinals, per Pat Thorman.

Inside this scheme, and with this QB, McLaurin has a realistic shot at 150+ targets from the best QB of his career. At worst, he should hover around his career average finish as the WR24. At best, he could finally prove to be the WR1 that many seem to be giving up on just a tad too early.

Calvin RIdley (WR32, 58 OVR, +20 ADP)

Over his career, **Calvin Ridley** has finished as the WR20, WR27 (missed four games, WR18 in FPPG), WR5 and WR20, but he's now going ~WR37? This isn't **Mike Vrabel'**s Titans anymore. New HC Brian Callahan's Bengals ranked Top-7 in attempts in three of five years; during Joe Burrow's healthy seasons, the Bengals finished Top-7 in passing yards and TDs. They have been Top-10 in Pass Rate over Expected in all his years, even with **Jake Browning** at QB. Callahan also coached **Matthew Stafford** and **Peyton Manning,** so perhaps he's the perfect guy to squeeze what they can out of cannon-armed **Will Levis**.

Ridley himself should see much improved usage. In Jacksonville, Ridley was locked into a static and deep sideline role with some truly odd route deployment. Yet, he still finished as a top-10 receiver in 35% of games.Callahan, meanwhile, plans to use Ridley more dynamically, similar to Ja'Marr Chase's role in Cincinnati:

"Being able to move Calvin around is going to be exciting… I just think it's a good group that has some flexibility, particularly with Calvin. I think he has played all over the formation, so that part to me is exciting."

You are [looking at a very similar role to what Ja'Marr [Chase] played in terms of his ability to move, move around the formation, use him in motion. He's got such a unique skill set, he's got great quickness, he's got great speed, he can run all the routes…he can win inside, he can win outside, he's got a lot of different things he can do well.

This improved usage will be huge, as it should allow Ridley cleaner releases. Based on Matt Harmon's "Reception Perception," this will be huge, as Ridley did well against all types of coverage besides press (71.9% success v. man & 80.4% vs. Zone, compared to 66.7% vs. press).

The results are strong in camp so far with beat writer Easton Freeze writing: “With every passing day of watching Calvin Ridley at Titans cmap, the more confident I am the Jaguars are morons. His usage last season was afireable offense. They painted this skillset into a very stupid box. This is a player you force the ball, at every layer of the field.”

The last time Ridley was used in creative, “move-around” ways, he was the WR5 in fantasy. This reminds me a lot of 2023 **Mike Evans,** if Levis can be anything close to **Baker Mayfield**.

Xavier Worthy (KC) - UPDATE 8/26 - Worthy continues to SHINE this preseason, and he’s no longer going in Round 10. I still consider him a MASSIVE BUY, even at his new Round 7-8 price.

This math seems quite easy: Xavier Worthy is the fastest player in NFL history (4.21 forty). The cannon-armed Patrick Mahomes and Andy Reid have maximized speed more than any other duo ever. They traded up to secure Worthy and must have a vision for how to maximize this deadly weapon.

The glaring difference between Worthy and past speed failures (MVS, Toney) is his deadly ability in the screen game.

No one crafts a more deadly screen game than Reid. How often did we see Tyreek Hill get schemed into space, and then outrun the entire defense for 50+ yard TDs?

This is among Worthy’s biggest strengths. As Scott Barret points out, “46% of his career catches have come on screens (most of any projected top-25 Power 5 WR in this class), and 28% of his career targets have come on deep passes (most of any projected top-10 Power 5 WR in this class).” You can already picture the advantageous ways Reid will craft to get Worthy outrunning the entire defense.

While Worthy’s “screen-reliance” may be negative in some landing spots, it’s a match made in heaven in Kansas City, given the expected usage. Also, for a speedster, Worthy was shockingly bad on deep targets in college (his 9.2 YPT on deep passes ranks worst for any projected non-UDFA Power 5 WR in the class). Yet, Worthy had the worst deep catchable target rate of any WR over the last four classes (33%). This suggests a massive untapped ceiling, one that Mahomes is the PERFECT passer to unlock.

Worthy should eat from day one and could become a Round 1-2 fixture in startups for years to come, tethered to Mahomes and the Chiefs. Yes, there’s a viral Camp highlight of him getting tossed like a rag doll in (clearly illegal) press coverage. He is tiny, and not particularly strong – so injuries could be a factor here.

Yet, far more often we’re seeing highlight deep bomb after bomb where Mahomes and Worthy are connecting with ease. Don’t let recent Chiefs WRs busts like Skyy Moore and Kadarius Toney make you gun-shy. Worthy is going to EAT in a Chiefs offense committed to re-gaining its explosive identity.

Although Reid normally takes it slow with rookies, the Chiefs are also throwing Worthy right into the fire. He’s been a near every-down WR, with an 89% route participation with Mahomes this preseason . He played all but 3 snaps with the starters last week, and now has 25% target share & 68% Air Yard share!

In Week 2, he racked up 4 touches (3 rec) for 73 yards & 1 TD. He’s moving around more than any other WR, with his TD coming out of the slot. He’s getting designed runs and screens. The speediest player to ever touch an NFL field is being used early and often, and should break out HUGE. I have him at 50 overall – he goes

around 100 right now in Redraft ADP, but be prepared to spend what you need to lock up at least one, if not both, of these WRs.

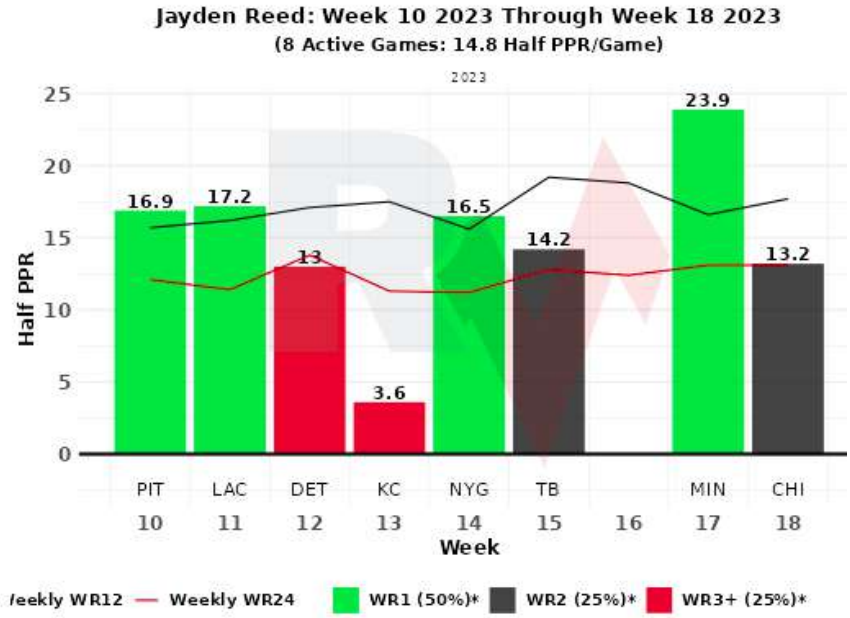
Ultimately, the Chiefs and Mahomes seem due to erupt for another 5K & 50 TDs, and the weapons have never been cheaper. BUY BUY BUY in all formats!

Jayden Reed (ADP 80, OVR = 71 +9 ADP)

While this Packers rotation could get messy, and he hasn't consistently played 2 WR sets, I feel this prices is far too low for a guy who flashed as brightly as him.

Historically, Rookie WRs who post over 200+ PPR FPs almost always explode in Year 2. They may not face quite as crowded WR rooms as Reed currently does, but also consider – Reed only crested 70%+ of the snaps 3 times last year. He had a 26.9 FP day on just 31.9% snap share in Week 17. He does not need a full-time role to make a massive impact, he just needs steady touches. As his role evolved into a "Deebo-lite" hybrid, steady touches are exactly what Reed got.

From Week 10 onward, when the Packers offense began to really take off, Reed ranked as the WR9 in fantasy, averaging 14.8 Half-PPR FPPG. 50% of Reed's remaining games were Top-12 WR1 performances (his 4 total in this span were more than Olave all year), and he dipped below 13 FPs only one time:



While this GB Room projects to be volatile, Reed feels like the best bet for steady, designed looks. His 653 yards from the slot were behind only CeeDee Lamb and Amon-Ra St. Brown, and his average depth of target of 11.9 yards was the fifth-highest, and his deep target rate of 26.2% was the third-highest (per PFF)

In Round 8, Reed can be had as your WR3 or Flex, but offer week-swinging upside.

Round 8 WR Targets

Chris Godwin (WR34, 63 OVR, +13 ADP)

Godwin is fresh off his worst fantasy season in recent memory. In the past five years since becoming a starter, he's finished as the WR2, WR15, WR9, WR19… and then the WR37 in 2023.

Why the dramatic drop-off? Perhaps Godwin's departure from his typical slot role played a major role. Godwin was lined up in the slot or inside on 67%, 70%, and 72% of plays in the three years prior to 2023.

He thrived in this role, ranking fifth in the NFL in receptions per game (6.5) and ninth in receiving yards per game (72.3). Godwin also had exceptional catch rates, hauling in 77.4% of his targets in 2020, 77.2% in 2021 and 73.2% in 2022

Last year? Godwin kicked inside just 32% of the time.

Thankfully, new OC **Liam Coen** has pledged to use Godwin more inside, with plenty of "lay-up" opportunities. In fact, Coen even mentioned using Godwin in a role similar to Cooper Kupp. Coen was the Rams' assistant WRs coach in 2019 – not Kupp's triple-crown season, but perhaps the start of his ascension (94 rec, 1161 yds, 10 TDs).

"You've got a guy [in Mike Evans] that's 6-4 and change, 220, and can move like he does," he said on Tuesday after being introduced to the local media. "Then you've got a guy like Chris that I think can be really dynamic on the inside. That's where I envision him playing, is more on the inside, playing that 'F' position that ultimately Cooper played. A lot of things do run through that. So I'm excited about him."

Just like Kupp, Godwin is an elite route-runner with phenomenal run-after-catch skills. He should thrive in a return to this more high-volume role. Godwin's WR41 price is lower than his career floor, and does not capture the incredible ceiling he has now back in the slot. Plus, if anything happens to **Mike Evans**, there's massive contingency upside too.

Diontae Johnson (WR36, 68 OVR, +19 ADP) - UPDATE 8/20 - On his first practice back from a groin injury, Diontae suffered… a foot injury! It sounds like he returned to the lineup, so nothing to be too fearful of, but it's a reminder of his fragility & risk.

Similar to Nabers, Diontae Johnson could be a talent that's hamstrung by his surroundings. Remember last year, no WR in a Bottom-8 offense finished higher than WR29. The Panthers are implied to be a bottom-three team in Vegas' preseason lines.

Still, at a WR40 price tag, we don't need DJ to go bananas. To get a steady, weekly contributor this late would be an amazing deal, and there's plenty of signs DJ could be just that.

First, I love new HC **Dave Canales**. He squeezed career years out of **Geno Smith** and **Baker Mayfield** in back-to-back stops, with those Seahawks and Bucs teams in the Top-12 offenses each season. Perhaps he can do the same for **Bryce Young**?

Regardless, Canales suggested a massive role is on the way for Johnson as camp started. He said, ""As we build our offense, we really try to feature someone," Canales told reporters Wednesday. "And for us right now, 'where is Diontae Johnson at?'"

DJ's been a target hog over his career, averaging 8.4 targets per game through five seasons with the Steelers – three of which he netted 140+ looks.

Then stir in that DJ is flat-out good. He ranks NUMBER ONE in ESPN's "Open Score" metric, ahead of **Jutin Jefferson!**

	PLAYER	RECEIVING RATINGS			
		OPEN	CATCH	YAC	OVERALL
1	Diontae Johnson 2021-23	92	54	48	77
2	A.J. Brown 2021-23	91	65	59	87
3	Justin Jefferson 2021-23	84	70	49	81
4	Mark Andrews 2021-23	83	59	45	73

For all **Bryce Young's** faults, he actually ranked 4th in accurate throw rate to open receivers according to FantasyPoints' data. The fact **Adam Thielen** had stretches as a Top-10 Fantasy WR shows Young can in fact support some fantasy goodness. DJ has had some injury concerns, and Young is no guarantee. But my faith in DJ's talent + Canales' play-calling make me a buyer in DJ, especially at his Round 8 price.

Round 6-8 RBs to Consider

I strongly prefer the WRs in this range, as I feel the position drops off much faster than RBs, with some quality runners / dependable volume available in the Round 9-10 range.

Still, if you feel compelled to go RB in this range, a few options do intrigue me more than others:

James Conner (61 OVR, RB18)

Another year, another chance for **James Conner** to be criminally underappreciated. Since joining the Cardinals, Conner has ranked RB6, RB10, and RB9 in FPPG. He seems to be the fine-wine of RBs, as his efficiency metrics continue to improve the older Conner gets, and Conner just racked up his first career 1,000-yard season (in just 13 games!)

Conner was significantly better once **Kyler Murray** returned, too. He improved in all areas, but most notably as a pass-catcher, where he had been non-existent. With Murray, Conner was on pace for 49 tgts, 40 rec, 287 yards, and 4 TDs compared to 27 rec, 102 yds, and 0 TDs without him. Those numbers are right in-line with Conner's career receiving average in Arizona, as he has topped 300+ yards in both seasons with Kyler.

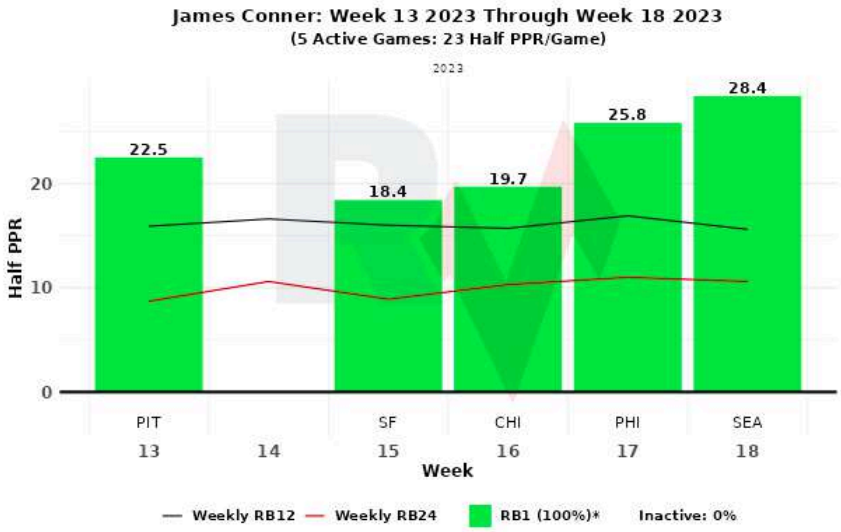
Additionally, Conner's 17.08 Half PPR FPPG w/ Murray would've ranked as THE RB3 on the season, behind only CMC and Kyren Williams. In fact, from Week 13 on, Conner was THE RB1, averaging an absurd 22.6 FPPG – more than CMC!

RotoViz

James Conner Splits 2023 - 2023

Per Game / Full Season Pace

Statistic	In Split	Out of Split
Games	8	5
HalfPPR	17.08 / 290	11.08 / 188
PPR	18.26 / 310	11.88 / 202
reRECS	2.38 / 40	1.6 / 27
reTDS	0.25 / 4	0 / 0
reTRGS	2.88 / 49	2 / 34
reYDS	16.88 / 287	6 / 102
ruATTS	17.5 / 298	13.6 / 231
ruTDS	0.62 / 11	0.4 / 7
ruYDS	84.5 / 1436	72.8 / 1238



How's that for "no ceiling?!"

Indeed, Arizona added explosive rookie RB **Trey Benson** in Round 3, but he's reportedly a distant after-thought right now, playing behind career-nobody **Emari Demarcado** while Conner operates as the clear-cut No.1 RB.

Yes, Conner will likely miss some time – he's never played more than 15 games in a season, and has missed 3+ in all-but one. However, when he's out there, Conner is a bonafide Top-12 Weekly RB play, especially with Murray in the lineup. At his Round 6/7 price tag, he's as valuable as nearly every RB in the Round 3-5 range.

Tony Pollard (UPDATE 8/27 - BIG RISER)
While I know I was previously fading Pollard, I am changing my stance based on two big preseason developments:

1) Pollard looks like the clear No.1 so far: **Tyjae Spears** has still rotated in, Pollard seems like he's firmly entrenched as "the one." In Preseason Week 3, Pollard handled 100% of the first-drive snaps, while subbing in for the crucial snaps (4th-and-2) in th second drive. On the preseason, he's at 58% snaps, 50% routes compared to Spears' 42% snaps, 33% rush share, and 43% route share. He has 4 targets on 4 drives, too, and scored from five-yards out in Week 3.

2) Pollard looks back to his old self: Later in the guide, I note key efficiency metrics where Spears blew Pollard out of the water. While that all holds true for last year, Pollard was also at less than 100% for most, if not all, of the season. Thus far, he looks fully back to the explosive back who smashed fantasy just two seasons ago, which has me ready to go back-in at his Round 7 price.

Yes, this will be a time-share. But I expect Pollard to lead this backfield, and even on ~55% of the work, he can do a lot of damage if he's back to his old self, as it looks.

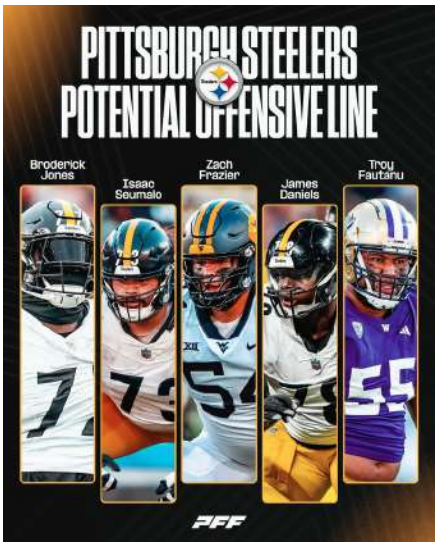
Najee Harris (RB20, +4 ECR) & ~~Jaylen Warren (RB23, +5 ECR)~~ - UPDATE 8/26: Jaylen Warren suffered a hamstring injury that could sideline him into 2024. Combined with how bad the Steelers look right now as an offense + Cordarrelle Patterson's potential to be annoying, and Warren is no longer a must-target – but is expected to be ready close to Week 1. Even Najee loses a little steam with C-Pat.

I love targeting both Steelers RBs at their late mid-round prices. Depending on my previous picks, I'll typically target **Najee Harris** for floor, and **Jaylen Warren** for ceiling.

Both RBs should benefit from a significantly more fertile fantasy environment.

First, new OC **Arthur Smith** has many faults, but crafting strong run-games is NOT one of them. has been a part of some bruising rushing attacks. The Titans averaged 153.5 YPG in his first two seasons in Tennessee. More impressively, he took the 2022 Falcons from 31st in rushing up to 3rd. His teams have ranked Top-10 in attempts and yards in four of five seasons, and top-three in both categories for three of those five years.

More importantly, the line is dramatically improved.

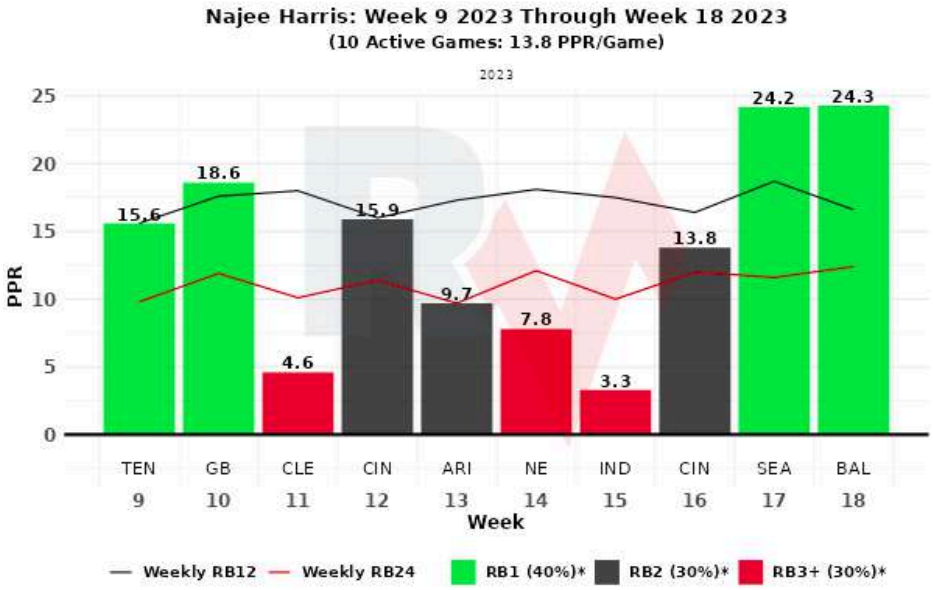


In the 2024 NFL Draft, the Steelers invested both their first and second-round picks on mauling linemen. **Troy Fautanu**, selected at 20th overall, was **Dane Brugler**'s No.1 ranked guard. Meanwhile, Round 2 pick **Zach Frazier**, was Brugler's third-ranked center. In 2023, the Steelers also spent Round 1 capital on **Broderick Jones**. Clearly, the Steelers are trying to get back to "bully ball" up front.

The Steelers' offensive line has shown significant improvement over the past three seasons.

Harris is the safer of the two picks, with a sturdy floor for his low price. He has finished every year of his career with at least 250+ carries, 1,000+ yards, and 7+ TDs, and has yet to miss a single game. Harris has finished as the RB4, RB14, and RB22 in his three professional seasons.

Moreover, Harris closed the 2023 season on a hot streak. After sucking to open the year, Harris was the RB9 in FPPG from the midpoint, including two 24+ blow-ups to close out the year:



Harris is also reportedly "motivated, to say the least" after the Steelers declined his fifth-year option. Harris is already down seven pounds. He's a safe bet to outperform his RB23 ADP, even in a timeshare.

Still, **Jaylen Warren** is preferred if I like my other RB options and want to shoot for the moon. UPDATE - His hamstring injury does worry me, as does the annoying potential involvement of Cordarrelle Patterson. It's still worth highlighting Warren's league-winning upside.

Yes, fantasy success for RBs is more volume-driven than any other position. Still, Warren's efficiency metrics are off the charts:

- 1st in missed tackles forced per attempt
- 3rd in yards over expected per carry
- 3rd in explosive run rate (8.1%)
- 2nd in elusive rating
- 2nd in yards per attempt (5.2)

Warren also thrived as a receiver. He ranked 5th in receptions (63) and 5th in yards per route run (1.41). Pretty much any metric that measures "is this back good," Warren smashed.

The issue becomes volume. Thankfully, Arthur Smith has been Top-3 in total RB touches in three-of-five seasons. When not paired with **Derrick Henry,** Smith has also typically featured backfield splits. Just by nature of the scheme, Warren should command more touches.

Yet, what if Harris *did* ever miss time? Warren's contingent fantasy value is truly unmatchable at RB. He would rank as a weekly Top-5 option as the Steelers' feature RB. If you happen to unlock this upside during your season stretch run, your Best Ball or Redraft team could prove to be unbeatable.

Other Round 8 RB Quick Hits:

- **Devin Singletary (NYG)** isn't sexy, but the Giants & Daboll LOVE him, and "Motor" is a master of making the most of his volume. He's outgained Barkley over the past 3 years, and he had the second most touches among RBs once he became a starter for Houston – he was the RB9 over this span, too (Week 10-18), and is a high-floor, mid-ceiling RB available ~Pick 100.

- **Brian Robinson (WAS)** is another RB I am perfectly content with as my RB2 if I've loaded up everywhere else. His true floor and ceiling will come down to how and where **Austin Ekeler** is utilized. If Ekeler is back to his explosive self and eating receptions + TDs, BRob will struggle. Still, with a mobile-QB in **Jayden Daniels** opening up strong cutback lanes, and a phenomenal GL presence (12th in TDs last year), BRob also has very real 1,000+ yard, 10+ TD upside – that's his goal for 2024, along with 500 receiving yards. **Dan Quinn** and **Kingsbury** reportedly love him. 49% of Kingsbury's offensive TDs were rushing, compared to an NFL average of 42%, as well. **Kenyan Drake, Chase Edmonds,** and **James Conner** were all beasts under Kingsbury, and BRob could be his next monster.

While I *like* both of these guys, I still prefer going WR. This is largely because two RBs I have ranked higher go in Rounds 9-10– and I feel the WR Ceilings fall dramatically at this point.

Tight Ends to Target (if you missed on the elite)

While I do prefer going elite TE in most builds in the Round 4-5 range, two TEs are going in Round 6-8 that I feel has "Elite TE Upside" but without the cost.

In fact, both are making me reconsider my "Elite TE" approach to Rounds 4-5, especially if WRs I love fall in that range.

Should either of these guys hit similar fantasy totals to the McBride / Andrews tier, but allow you one of the elite Round-5 WRs, they could go down as true league-winners in 2024:

UPDATE 8/26: Evan Engram (68 OVR, +16 ADP)

It took Preseason Week 3 to wake me up.. But **Evan Engram** might be the single-best TE value of 2024.

Last year, Engram was THE TE2(!) in fantasy! He had more catches (114) than everyone in the NFL besides CeeDee Lamb, Tyreek Hill, and Amon-Ra St. Brown. It was the second-most catches by a TE in NFL history, and his 143 targets led the position.

With a little TD luck, Engram could break fantasy. This is where **Calvin Ridley**'s departure could be huge. Ridley was third in the NFL with 25 Red Zone targets, 54.3% of the Jags looks inside-the-20! He vacates a total of 136 targets. Yes, **Brian Thomas** will soak up a bunch of that, and is an elite TD scorer.

Yet, Engram is a massive and nimble body. He scored 2 TDs in Preseason Week 3 on 2 End Zone targets. He was lining up in the backfield and moved everywhere.

Yes, his best games came with **Christian Kirk** out of the lineup – as a Jag, Engram averaged 19.3 FPPG without Kirk, compared to 10.4 with him. Still, if the "Elite TE thesis" is access to spike weeks, Engram had the second-highest single-game FP total (32 PPR FPs, 27 Half) in 2023. He had a 39.2 spike in Week 14 of 2022!

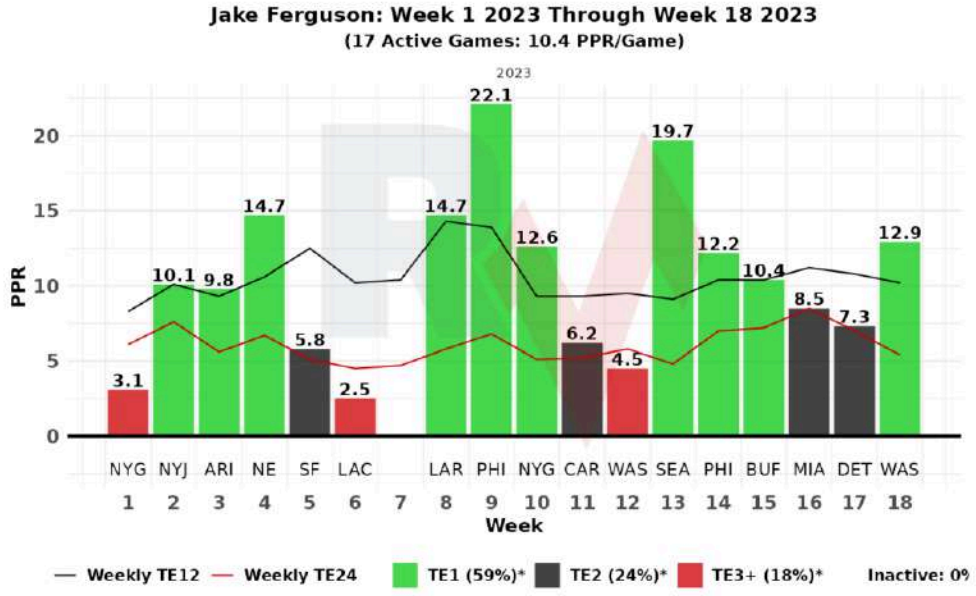
Ultimately, I have grown much more confident in waiting on TE with Engram available late-6th, Early-7th. He has maybe the highest floor of anyone at the position, and we may not have seen the ceiling yet.
Jake Ferguson (DAL)

As mentioned with Lamb, the Cowboys ranked first in total points (30.1), passing yards (265.8), pass attempts (37.4), and passing TDs (2.2) per game, despite a putrid start to 2023.

Yet, behind Lamb, the target-tree is questionable. The team lost **Michael Gallup** and added no one besides fifth-round rookie **Ryan Flournoy.** Sure, **Brandin Cooks** is still here, but behind CeeDee Lamb, the table is wide open for massive shares of one of the juiciest Aerial Pies in the NFL.

Enter **Jake Ferguson,** who has the upside to be the second-highest target earner on the 2024 Cowboys.

Among TEs, he already ranked third in total routes (511) and 7th in targets (102), despite not playing a full-time role until Week 6. He notched 5+ targets in 12 games, which yielded a steady share of TE1 weeks (per RotoViz). His impressive catch rate significantly boosts his fantasy value:



Similar to **Dalton Schultz** before him, Ferguson was highly-utilized in the Red Zone, too. He finished as TE 1 in targets from inside the 20, TE1 in targets from inside the 10, TE2 in End Zone targets.

Unfortunately, he was unbelievably unlucky in converting these looks into TDs, as he scored -3.8s over expected (per Hayden Winks). In fact, no one is more due for positive TD regression than Ferg.

Of course, we already saw that TD regression hit in the playoffs, where Ferguson hauled in an absurd 10 rec (12 tgts), 93 yards, and 3 TDs for 37.3 PPR FPs vs. the Packers! His performance in PPR scoring leagues was

outstanding. Imagine if he can string together similar TD luck across the full season. Ferguson continues to show promise and potential for a breakout season.

Then consider: Ferguson was actually good! He was 2nd in missed tackles forced and 6th in yards after catch per reception among TEs. His receiving yards further contribute to his overall fantasy value. Ferguson has all the makings of an elite fantasy TE, but goes 3+ rounds later. After him, the position gets ghastly, so I typically hammer Ferguson in Round 8.

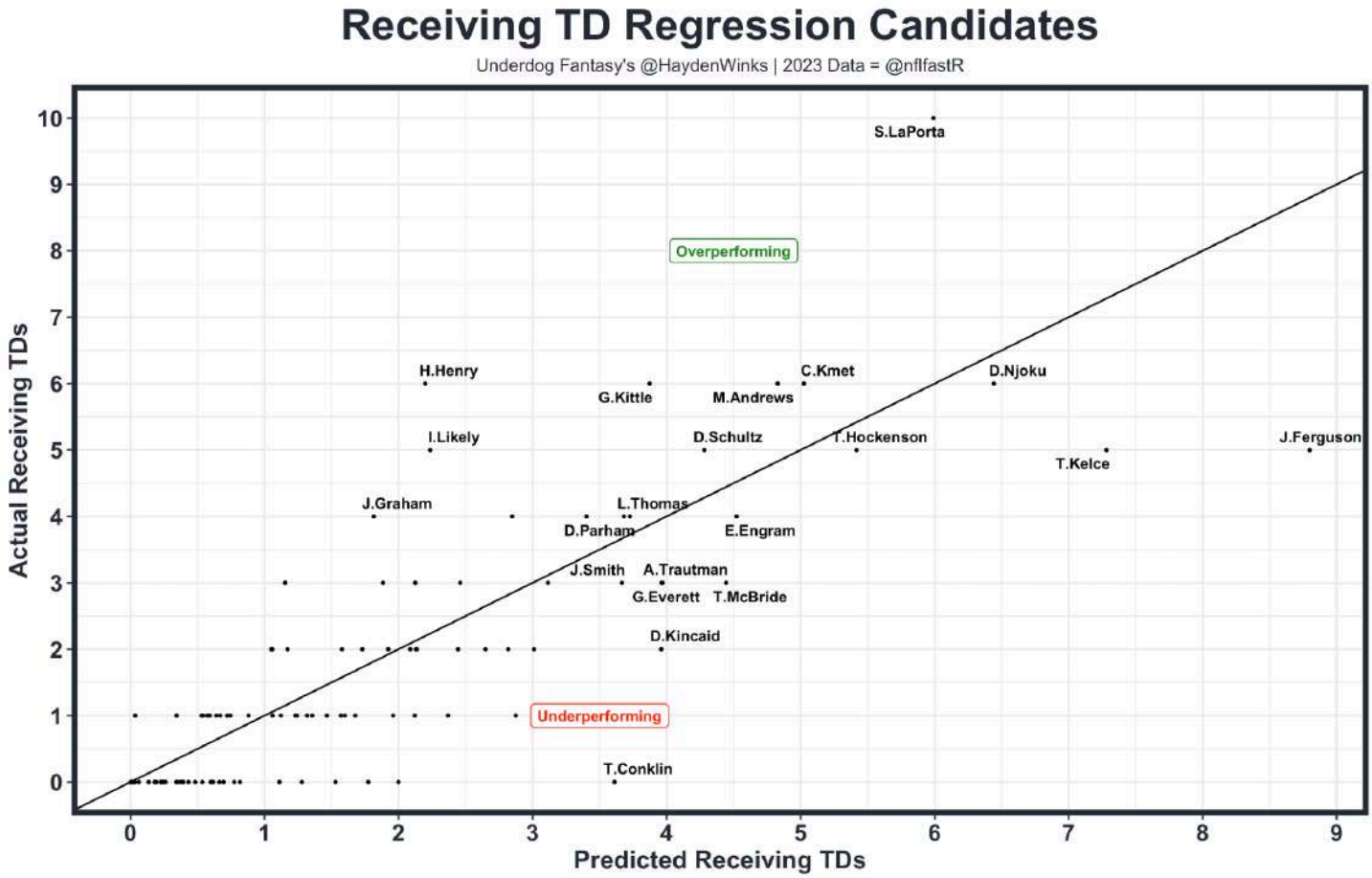
Ferguson himself believes he is only "scratching the surface." He plans to take his game to an even higher level next season:

"There's so many things that I want to get better at and I know I can get better at. We watch film every day of different games, even the practices we're doing now and I'm like, 'OK, I can get a lot better still.'"

His coaches agree, with **Mike McCarthy** adding: "Jake has so much more to give."

Even Dak Prescott joined in on the hype: "Obviously, you see the jump he made from Year 1 to Year 2," Prescott said, "and he's improved his intensity in his preparation just in this offseason -- the way he's treated his body, the way that he's been communicating with me throughout the offseason, whether it's catching and throwing, he's a big-time playmaker for this team, this offense."

In short, Ferguson enters 2024 as a third-year pro with a year under his belt and in an even more favorable position to see volume in 2023's top-passing attack. Despite already finishing as a Top-6 TE during last year's final 11 games, Ferguson has the potential to take a significant step forward.



Ferguson is due for massive positive TD Regression (as we already saw in the 2024 Playoffs & his 3 TD Day!)

Round 6-8 Fades

QBS: Almost all QBs due to Opportunity Cost

Part of the reason I like securing a true edge-gaining, Elite QB1 with actual VORP in Round 3 is because so many of the other QBs are going WAY too early.

Kyler Murray apparently falls to 91 in ESPN, which is borderline robbery. However, he goes 55 on Yahoo (too early), and 75 on Sleeper (just right?). Given his rushing upside (5+ rushing points per game every year of his career), Murray is fair to target if he slips in this range.

Otherwise, it's largely replaceable pocket-passers who profile similar to **Matthew Stafford** or **Kirk Cousins,** but are 60+ packs more expensive!

Dak Prescott FEASTED last year after the Bye (QB1 in FPPG from Week 8 on), but if anything happens to Lamb, that offense will be completely devoid of playmakers. His ADP ahead of Dell, Flowers, and Pickens is too much opportunity cost. Yet, if Dak slips, he's definitely a reasonable target in Round 7+ – and a great Besst Ball pick in the Round 9 range where he's falling.

Brock Purdy in the 78-90 range is banking on historical efficiency to repeat. With these weapons and **Kyle Shanahan**, that may just happen, but last year's QB7 finish feels like a ceiling – one that can be matched later.

Tua Tags is probably the most egregious price of them all ~Pick 90-100. The QB26, QB11, and QB18 in FPPG, Tua was outside the Top-12 in 65% of his games, including a pathetic end-of-year collapse once again – across 18 games from Week 12 on, Tua has been a QB1 just 3 times over his last three years (16%). When you need him most, Tua consistently fizzles.

In general, if you still don't have a QB in this 6-8 range, don't panic. There's a QB I absolutely LOVE falling outside the Top-100, one with true Top-5 upside in my eyes.

And even if you miss on him, I again think Stafford and Cousins are strong bets to match any of the QBs in this range, but they won't cost you a shot at a high-end WR2 or solid RB2, which mostly dry up from here on out.

The Face of a man who will abandon you when you need him most (your fantasy playoffs)

Most RBs in this range, especially:

-Zamir White

Indeed, fading this ABSOLUTE UNIT of a human feels terrifying:

Yet, being completely yolked does not guarantee fantasy success, I'm afraid. Yes, we've got a small sample size (four games) of **Zamir White** as a starter. It was… *fine.*

- Week 15: 70% snaps, 20 touches (3 rec), 85 YFS, 1 TD (17.5 FPs, RB12)
- Week 16: 81% snaps, 22 touches, 145 YFS (14.5, RB16)
- Week 17: 58% snaps, 25 touches (5 rec), 106 YFS (15.6, RB16)
- Week 18: 73% snaps, 26 touches (1 rec), 121 YFS, (13.1, RB20)

White proved he could shoulder the load with 20+ touches every week. Considering those four-straight Top-20 finishes as a starter, his RB23 price seems reasonable.

But in a game of "what do you get when you're right," I want more *juice* than a middling-RB2-at-best in Round 6. Wide receivers like **Terry McLaurin, Calvin Ridley,** and **Rashee Rice** are going firmly after White -- I can see a path to Top-12 Fantasy stats for all of them.

Based on White's questionable preseason usage, there's plenty of reason to believe last year's four-game sample was indeed his ceiling, too. He's been in a near-even split with **Alexander Mattison** through two games, as Dwain McFaland emphasized in his Preseason Week 2 Utilization hub:

"Zamir White and Alexander Mattison have played the same number of drives in the first two preseason games. In Week 1, they played drives one through three, and White handled 45% of the snaps and accounted for 55% of the rushing attempts. In Week 2, they played drives one through eight. White played 35% of snaps and lugged the rock 33% of the time. It is hard to know precisely how this backfield will shake out, but we shouldn't be highly confident that White is the clear-cut No. 1."

Yes, White does have 4.4 speed, which is frightening at his size. White also is a **Antonio Pierce** favorite, and this team is going to *want* to run the rock.

I do worry about the Raiders actually being able to keep games competitive enough to do so. With **Gardner Minshew** under center, this promises to be a low-scoring, low-volume attack. If game scripts get out of hand, **Dylan Laube** is likely to take over as the likely third down RB.

Plus, White tore his ACL twice in college. The last time he had more than 175 carries in a single season was… his sophomore year of high school in 2015.

Whether an awful team, a sneaky injury history, an RBBC in a low-scoring attack, or White not playing well and getting leap-frogged on the depth chart, there's a lot of paths to him failing… and not a ton of ways he truly smashes. He's an easy fade for me, and has fallen out of my Top-100 on my 2024 Fantasy Football Big Board (nearly 40 picks below ADP & ECR!)

-D'Andre Swift

Going in the 60-70 range, Swift is an easy fade for me. Despite getting a bag from Chicago, this has reportedly been a three-headed nightmare in camp so far. While I do expect the Bears to take a substantial leap in 2024, it'll be mostly through the air, with 3 target monsters in **DJ Moore, Rome Odunze,** and **Keenan Allen**. Even **Cole Kmet** has been ahead of Swift as an early-camp target earner, which is where Swift's bread is supposed to be buttered.

As the lone lead back in Philly, behind one of the best offensive lines in the game, Swift finished as the RB23. Yes, the Tush Push vulture hurt his ceiling, but with two bigger, more powerful backs in **Khalil Herbert** and **Roschon Johnson**, I expect Swift to cede GL touches here – he actually ranked No.9 in carries inside the 10 last season, he just sucked at converting them (27 attempts, just 5 TDs). Inside-the-five, he ranked 12th with 14 carries, which he turned into just 4 TDs.

Swift's also just not a great rusher by nearly all efficiency metrics – he often dances too much or misreads his lanes. There's a real world where Herbert, who outperformed Swift in just about every metric, pulls a **Chuba Hubbard** to the higher-paid **Miles Sanders** and outright steals the early-down role.

Ultimately, the ceiling outcomes feel bleak, while the paths to failure feel quite high. I can't pass on Round 7 WRs like **Terry McLaurin, Hollywood Brown,** or **Calvin Ridley** for a mediocre-at-best RB bet.

-Nick Chubb

If I feel Chubb's ~125 ADP on Underdog is too rich, imagine how his ~80-88 ADP sits with me.

Look, no one loves Chubb more than me. He's the best pure runner in the game, and the ultimate fantasy locker-room presence too. The fact that he's squatting 500+ lbs and sprinting doesn't surprise me for a workman, physical specimen like Chubb.

Still, there's a big difference between running and squatting versus cutting and playing football. Chubb needed a second surgery in November to fully repair his ACL. This typically requires 9-12+ months of recovery, which would have him back in September at the earliest. The Brows are historically cautious with injuries, too.

Even then, if I knew we were going to get NICK FREAKING CHUBB for the last three months of the season, at Pick 80… OK, I'm 100% game. Unfortunately, most payers, especially RBs, have required at least 2 seasons to regain their full selves – **Adrian Peterson** is among the lone exceptions. It wouldn't shock me if Chubb is made of similar superhuman material, but it's still an outlier bet.

If your league has an IR spot, then Chubb is a more justifiable pick, as he won't be wasting valuable bench space while you wait– all while providing the fantasy lock room presence some young veterans may need. Also, Mary Kay Cabot reported the "Browns are expected to activate their star RB off the PUP list at some point this camp," which would put Chubb ahead of schedule and in-line to not miss the first four weeks.

Still, with so much WR talent in this range, Chubb feels too risky, despite providing some serious back-weighted upside.

Fading Nick Chubb, Wolf? You SURE about that?

Round 6-8 Best Ball Notes & Observations:

-Ironically, whereas Rounds 6-8 are a “WR Oasis” in redraft leagues, it’s pretty much the exact opposite in Best Ball. Running Backs fall so much further, and this is the range where I love to hammer my backfield & often go Zero-RB.

An example Zero-RB start might be something like:

1. **Jefferson**
2. **Deebo**
3. **Metcalf**
4. **Kelce**
5. **Mahomes**
6. **Ken Walker**
7. **James Conner**
8. **Jaylen Warren**

Boom. I’ve got a starting lineup, and for not touching RB til Round 6, I can have a room of Walker, Conner, and Warren?!

-QBs, especially pocket passers, tend to fall significantly further in Best Ball than redraft – and I think this market has it much more correct than “Redraft Home Leagues.”

In Best Ball, drafters wisely prioritize stacks for the single-week upside that creates, which can lead to guys like **Joe Burrow** and **Dak Prescott** falling to the 95-100 range to the Chase and Lamb drafters respectively. In this set-up, I LOVE the pocket passers I recommend fading in Redraft, as the opportunity cost is so much lower in the Late 8th / Early 9th compared to the Round 5-6 range they’re going in Home Leagues.

-By Round 7, the WR Tap is pretty much shut-off in Best Ball. This is why it’s so hard to take too many “detours” in Rounds 1-5, where the WR production is just so much higher-floor and higher-ceiling. The Golden Rule mentioned earlier = 4 WRs through 7 Rounds.

That being said, I really think it’s closer to 4 WRs through 6 Rounds in this Best Ball WR Market, as the Round 7 options are so underwhelming andseem similar to guys like **Lockett** and **Sutton** who go in the Round 8-10 range. Try to get your Top-4 WRs in Rounds 1-6, and then feel free to wait til the very end to tack on 3-4 more (lots of good WR sleepers we’ll be hitting shortly)

Sample Teams & Builds Through 8 Rounds

Let's revisit some of our starts and see how they look through 8 rounds if we mostly focus on "The WR Oasis" in Rounds 6-8:

EARLY PICK (1-4)

Hero-RB, 2 Onesie+ 2WR	**(Elite WR1, 2 RBs, 1 Onesie)**	**(RB-RB, 1 Onesie)****
Rd1, RB1: CMC	**Rd 1, WR1: Tyreek Hill**	**Rd 1, RB1: Breece Hall**
Rd2, WR1: Drake London	**Rd 2, RB1: Isaiah Pacheco**	**Rd 2, RB2: De'Von Achane**
Rd 3, QB1: Josh Allen	**Rd 3, RB2: De'Von Achane**	**Rd 3, QB1: Jalen Hurts**
Rd 4. WR2: Devonta Smith	**Rd 4, WR2: Malk Nabers**	**Rd 4, WR1: Amari Cooper**
Rd 5, TE1: Mark Andrews	**Rd 5, TE1: Trey McBride**	**Rd 5, WR2: Devonta Smith**
Rd 6, WR3: Terry McLaurin	**Rd 6, WR3: Rashee Rice**	**Rd 6, WR3: Zay Flowers**
Rd 7, Flex: Hollywood Brown	**Rd 7, Flex: Terry McLaurin**	**Rd 7, Flex: Calvin Ridley**
Rd 8, RB2: Devin Singletary	**Rd 8, Bench*: Jayden Reed**	**Rd 8, WR5: Xavier Worthy**

Mid-Round Pick (5-8)

Hero-RB, 2 Onesie+ 2WR	**(Elite WR1, 2 RBs, 1 Onesie)**	**(RB-RB, WR-WR, TE)******
Rd 1, RB1: Bijan	**Rd 1, WR1: ASB**	**Rd 1, RB1: Bijan Robinson**
Rd 2, WR1: Marvin H	**Rd 2, RB1: Kyren Williams**	**Rd 2, RB2: Isaiah Pacheco**
Rd 3, QB1: Jalen Hurts	**Rd 3, RB2: De'Von Achane**	**Rd 3, WR1: Drake London**
Rd 4, WR2: Cooper Kupp	**Rd. 4, WR2: DK Metcalf**	**Rd 4, WR2: Cooper Kupp**
Rd 5, TE1 Dalton Kincaid	**Rd 5, TE1 Trey McBride**	**Rd 5, TE1: Dalton Kincaid**
Rd 6, RB2: James Conner	**Rd 6, WR3: Malik Nabers**	**Rd 6, WR3: Tank Dell**
Rd 7, WR3: Terry McLaurin	**Rd 7, WR4: Calvin Ridley**	**Rd 7, Flex: Terry McLaurin**
Rd 8, WR4: Chris Godwin	**Rd 8, RB3: Devin Singletary**	**Rd 8, RB3: Brian Robinson**

Late-Round Pick (9-12)

Elite WR1, RB1 + 2 Onesies**	**(Zero-RB (WR WR)**	**(RB-RB, WR-WR-WR)****
Rd 1, WR1: AJ Brown	**RD 1, WR1: Garret Wilson**	**Rd 1, RB1: Saquon Barkley**
Rd 2, RB1: Kyren Williams	**RD 2, WR2: Puka Nacua**	**Rd 2, RB2: Jahmyr Gibbs**
Rd 3, QB1: Lamar Jackson	**RD 3, QB1: Patrick Mahomes**	**Rd 3, WR1: Nico Collins**
Rd 4, WR2: Cooper Kupp	**RD 4, WR3: Nico Collins**	**Rd 4, WR2: Cooper Kupp**
Rd 5, TE1: Dalton Kincaid	**Rd 5, TE1: Dalton Kincaid**	**Rd 5, WR3: Malik Nabers**
Rd 6, RB2: Najee Harris	**Rd 6, RB1: James Conner**	**Rd 6, TE1: Evan Engram**
Rd 7, WR3: Chris Godwin	**Rd 7, Flex: Hollywood Brown**	**Rd 7, WR4: Calvin Ridley**
Rd 8, Flex: Calvin Ridley	**Rd 8, RB2: Tony Pollard**	**Rd 8, WR5: Xavier Worthy**

Some pretty beastly squads right here! Most have at least 4 WRs, many have 5, and they're all capable of 20+ point spike weeks. That's the type of depth that can keep you churning through Bye Weeks without a hitch.

Yet, you'll notice if I didn't secure Allen, Hurts, Lamar, or Mahomes in Round 3, QB became an afterthought. The value just isn't there in this Round 6-8 range to take the plunge. Especially because, if you still don't have a QB by now, there's an absolute Fantasy God Send about to fall in your lap:1

Round 9-11 (97-132) Strategy, Targets, Fades

The Best QB Pick of 2024

Jayden Daniels (93 OVR, QB11, +13 ADP)
We already discussed the Konami Code earlier, but to reiterate the key points:

- Rushing yards are 2.5x more valuable than passing, and rushing TDs are 1.5x more valuable than passing scores.
- Over the past 10 seasons, 15-of-16 QBs to hit 125+ rush attempts have finished Top-10. Any QB to hit 700+ rush yards has finished Top-9.
- 59% of QBs to average 5.5 rush attempts a game have finished Top-6

It's a huge cheat code, and deservedly rushing QBs are flying off the board in the first-four rounds of fantasy. Except **Jayden Daniels**.

Despite averaging +4 more rushing FPs than ANTHONY RICHARDSON (!) in college, Daniels is going 50+ picks later right now. In 12 games last year, Daniels ran for an absurd 1133 yards & 10 TDs on 135 carries (8.5 YPA) – legit RB1 numbers.

This is in addition to a whopping 3813 yards and 40 TDs through the air, on a 72% completion percentage! Konami Rushing builds in a floor, but when we get someone actually capable of slinging the rock, the ceiling is truly limitless. 50 TDs, nearly 5K total yards, all in the SEC?!

He's much more "Lamar" than "Richardson" in his speedy, shifty style… and also in his frailer build. That's seen as the biggest risk for Daniels – he suffered a concussion last year, and an ankle sprain (that he played through) in 2022.

Still, Daniels is the type of prospect that OOZES in fantasy potential. It doesn't hurt that he landed in a great spot too. Say what you will about **Kliff Kingsbury,** but his offenses ranked first in situation-neutral pace and no-huddle rate during his four seasons in Arizona.

Under Kingsbury's direction, **Kyler Murray** was the QB15, QB6, QB5, QB10, averaging over 20 FPPG in 3 of 4 seasons, and tallying at least 418+ rush yds (including an 819 rush yd, 11 TD season). Dare I say Daniels is significantly more dangerous of a runner?

Stir in some interesting weapons in **Terry McLaurin, Jahan Dotson (?),** athletic rookie TE **Ben Sinnott**, and a dynamic backfield in **Brian Robinson** and **Austin Ekeler**, and Daniels has all the ingredients to be a fantasy weapon from Day One. My biggest concern is this offensive line, which ranks dead last by many respected OL Evaluators. Daniels could be running for his life (not a bad thing for stats!), and one huge hit could send his season spiraling.

Still, the upside is well-worth the squeeze, and veterans like **Matthew Stafford** and **Kirk Cousins** often fall to the last rounds of drafts to bake in a nice floor should Daniels not pan out / get hurt. Daniels is the ULTIMATE Round 9 QB if you forego the elite Round 3 options – and if he hits, you can build super teams around him.

RB Depth in Rounds 9-11 = PLENTIFUL

If you go Hero-RB, you realistically could avoid the RB position until Round 9-11, and still round out a very solid stable of backs. I truly don't think there's much difference about the guys going in Round 3-8 vs. this pool– most of the bets are on pure volume, and there's plenty to still scoop up here.

Chase Brown🐺 (& some Zack Moss still): +31 ADP on Brown.
Undoubtedly, one of the highest upside "Value Holes" in fantasy football is the Bengals backfield.

Joe Mixon's departure to Houston vacates a massive amount of high-value volume within a Top-7 offense. He played 69.8% of the Bengals RB snaps and accounted for a whopping 78.9% of their total RB opportunities – third among RBs.

Mixon also logged over 320 touches, 66 targets, and the third-most Red-Zone touches (71) – including the most carries from inside-the-10 (38). This was consistent with his past workloads, with 292, 323, 340, 285, and 323 opportunities whenever he's played 14+ games. In Half-PPR FPPG, Mixon has finished as the RB9, RB19, RB11, RB4, RB8 and RB13 across his past six seasons.

Mixon was especially valuable in the Red Zone –87.3% of the Bengals Red Zone RB Touches, including 71 attempts inside-20 (3rd most) and 38 attempts inside-10 (1st). He has averaged 13.4 TDs a year.

The question becomes: how does this massive pie get divided up now?

Somewhat surprisingly, **Chase Brown** has seen "the majority of carries with the ones" so far. He's certainly the higher-upside player with some freakish athleticism. His 9.81 Relative Athletic Score (RAS) ranks 35th out of 1745 RBs measured. He also ranks in the 92nd percentile with his 4.43 forty, which isn't just "testing speed." No — Brown ripped a 54-yard touchdown on a screen pass where he topped out as the second-fastest ball carrier in the NFL last year.

Brown's not just some tiny speedster, either. In fact, him and Moss weigh the exact same amount. In college, Brown was a workhorse – he averaged 29.6 touches per game at Illinois, and has 40 carry game on resume. He saw 328 carries and 400 touches his senior year. The man is certainly capable of shouldering workloads.

LT **Orlando Brown** added fuel to Brown's fire, noting, "If I could play fantasy football, I'd take him as my first running back…He's going to have a year. I guarantee it. Special talent, special player."

Given the early camp buzz and higher-upside profile, Brown is definitely my preferred option, and my single-favorite RB pick at cost right now (I am +31 his ADP @ 86 OVR).

This doesn't mean Moss should be completely ignored, though.

Zack Moss signed a solid two-year, $8 million deal to join the Bengals. He's one of the best pass-protecting RBs in the league, which is where many could see Chase Brown failing (just 1 third down snap all rookie year due to pass-pro concerns).

Plus, Moss showed OUT as a starter in 2023. In Jonathan Taylor's absence from Weeks 2-5, Moss operated as the Colts every-down back. Over those four weeks, Moss tallied 89 carries, 517 YFS, and 4 TDs, ranking as the Half PPR RB4 and averaging 20.4 FPPG.

Moss racked up some impressive efficiency metrics over this span, too. He had 15 explosive runs on just 183 attempts, grading out 15th among RBs in PFF's breakaway percentage. He also ranked 18th in PFF's elusive rating, compared to a 30th ranking for Mixon.

Moss proved capable of shouldering a massive workload, including 80% snap share in 3-of-4 contests. Via FantasyLife's Utilization Hub:

Moss' game logs included:

Week 2: 98% snaps, 22 touches (4 rec), 107 YFS, 1 TD (20.7 FPs, RB10)
Week 3: 77% snaps, 33 touches (2 rec), 145 YFS, 1 TD (22.5 FPs, RB5)
Week 4: 81% snaps, 18 touches, 70 YFS, 1 2PT (9.0 FPs, RB26)
Week 5: 80% snaps, 25 touches (2 rec), 195 YFS, 2 TDs (33.5 FPs, RB2)

From here, Moss took a clear backseat to Taylor. Still, he proved himself fully capable of lead-back duties and earned a contract suggesting he'll be just that in Cincinnati.

This is certainly a situation I want to invest heavily in. Brown is again my preferred play, but if Moss' price continues to creep down, he is certainly worth a look as well.

Javonte Williams (DEN)
Sean Payton-led backfields are typically Gold Mines. In 12-of-17 years calling plays, Payton has ranked Top-2 in total backfield points. This is largely due to the amount of receiving volume he funnels to RBs – across those 17 years, Payton has never had an offense finish outside the top five in receiving expected points to the backs. Last year's Broncos led the NFL in RB targets (after Russ Wilson had rarely targeted the position in his career).

In Denver, **Javonte Williams** appears to be the first-man up for this delicious pie. Despite being clearly less than 100% following a multi-ligament tear last season, Javonte finished with 264 touches (217 att, 47 rec). Sure, Payton likes his rotations, but Williams saw 54 more touches than **Samaje Perine** (103) and **Jaleel McLaughlin** (107) COMBINED! While at less than 100%!

Early in camp, Williams has reportedly been the "clear RB1" through drills. He's down 11 pounds from last year, a challenge Payton gave him, and by all accounts looks "quicker and shiftier." Payton was pumped to see Javonte rise to the challenge, saying "he's lost weight, he looks trim, I thought he looked sharp today, he looked much different. His weight's down and I'm proud of him." As a clearly prideful guy, don't discount what Payton's endorsement can mean.

I do worry about the (literally) GIANT shadow in the room: **Audric Estime**. He was one of my favorite RBs in this class. A 240 lb monster who had the most 15-yard-plus runs, most yards after contact, and fewest negative runs of any back in the draft. Estime's also one of my favorite "Penny Stock" picks this year – I want to take as many stabs at this backfield as a whole "Directional Bet." (Similar to the Dolphins in 2024).

Nonetheless, Javonte was a truly elite RB prospect when he entered the league, and he sure looked the part early in his career. If he's back to this beast, within a scheme that maximizes RB usage, he's going to be a Round 9-10 steal.

Jonathan Brooks (90 OVR, +8 ECR)
The clear-RB1 in this class but nearly every evaluator I respect, Brooks could be *elite* when he steps onto the field. He's a butter-smooth glider as a runner with plenty of receiving chops – he registered an 84th percentile PFF Run Grade and a 71st percentile receiving grade for his career.

Unfortunately, Brooks suffered a late-season ACL tear. While his recovery is right on schedule, he's expected to miss all of camp, and the team is targeting a Week 3 or 4 return.

This makes Brooks an ideal target if you're already well-set at RB. He brings a rare "back-weighted upside" to the position, as someone who could come in fresh and explosive and make a massive impact.

That may seem impossible on the lowly Panthers, but there's reason for optimism with **Dave Canales** at the helm. He just fed **Rachaad White** the second-most RB touches in the league last year (342 opps, 70 tgts, 272 attempts). Canales is on record as saying "you'll see how stubborn I am with the run game" this year.

Plus the team added two mauling lineman in **Robert Hunt** and **Damien Lewis,** which should dramatically improve their interior running.

Brooks only makes sense on certain builds, but he has the Talent + Usage upside to be a stretch-run league-winner. There's real risk the Panthers take an overly cautious approach in what's bound to be a rebuilding year, but the upside is massive anywhere after 100.

Tyjae Spears (TEN) - 8/26 UPDATE - While I do still like Spears, Pollard is looking much closer to the 2022 back who was insanely efficient + has operated as a clearer lead than I expected, so these metrics are less meaningful. I want pieces of this backfield regardless – but I now prefer Pollard, even if he's more expensive. Spears is a great consolation in Round 9-10 though to get exposure to Titans RBs!

As discussed in my Pollard Fade section, the Titans view this backfield as a clear "1A & 1B" situation, to the point they even listed Pollard and Spears as "co-starters' in the first depth chart of the year.

Callahan even mentioned a "hot-hand" approach when discussing the team, noting: Maybe they both play at the same time, maybe one gets hot and you let him run, maybe we just rotate back and forth... they are both going to play quite a bit of football for us, and I don't view either one of them as a starter or a back-up."

Though far from a given with Pollard another year removed from his injury, if we get the same versions of the two RBs from last year, Spears will undoubtedly be accruing the hotter hand far more often. The gap on nearly every efficiency metric is quite wide:

Stat	**Tony Pollard**	**Tyjae Spears**
FPs / Opp	.70 (R50)	.90 (RB13)
Yds per touch	4.3 (RB44)	5.5 (RB6)
Yds After Contact / Att	2.92 (RB25)	3.15 (RB12)
Explosive Run Rte	4.4% (RB25)	7.0% (RB5)

YPRR	.86 (RB34)	1.52 (RB11)
Avoided Tackles / Att	.18 (RB26)	.26 (RB4)

With volume up for grabs, I'll side with the more efficient, cheaper play every time. Love me some Spears!

It's Round 9-10 & I need Gross RB Volume...

Gus Edwards (LAC)

What we know: under **Jim Harbaugh** and **Greg Roman,** the Chargers backfield is going to produce value.

Across 10 seasons, a Roman-led offense has ranked:

- Top-10 in rush attempts every season & Top-3 in 7/10 years
- Top-10 in rush yards every season, Top-3 in 7/10, and No.1 in 4/10
- Top-10 in rush TDs in 7/10 years, Top-5 in 5/10

What we also know: **Gus Edwards** has thrived in this scheme before. He's never been below 5.0 YPC in four seasons with Roman.

No, "The Gus Bus" isn't flashy or exciting. But the 29-year-old posted single-season career highs in games played (17), starts (nine), rushing yards (810), rushing touchdowns (13), and rushing attempts (198). His 13 touchdowns tied for third among NFL running backs and No. 2 among AFC running backs.

He's also got almost no competition to be the most well-fed mouth of this delicious ground pie. **JK Dobbins** is impressing in camp off his Achilles tear, but literally no one has ever rebounded just one season after, and he's also had multiple knee injuries, too. **Kimani Vidal** was an interesting rookie prospect, but he went in Round 6, and has been hurt for most of camp.

This seems to be Gus' job for the taking. That's what **Joe Hortitz,** previously of the Ravens with a well-established history with Gus, said when they signed him:

"He's the bell cow, the goal line [guy], the finisher," he continued. "The right mentality for what we're looking to do here. I told you we wanted to be bigger, play a physical style of football on both sides of the ball and he helps us do that."

"I think specifically with Gus, I've seen him deal with the adversity of the [ACL] injury two years ago and come back from it," he said. "Grind, be physical, continue to play the same brand of football he's always played. Really excited to have him."

Ultimately, Gus is a strong bet to lead the way in one of the most productive and voluminous run schemes in the league. To get him well-after Pick 100 = stealing, no matter how unsexy it may feel.

Ezekiel Elliott (DAL)

This may feel hideous, given no player has touched the ball more than Zeke, and he's definitely on his last legs (so it would seem).

Yet, after Dallas didn't spend a single pick on RB and only brought in **Royce Freeman**, Zeke's looking like the first in line to lead the backfield of 2023's No.1 scoring offense… and he's going after Pick 100?!

Sure, the Cowboys are a pass-first squad, but Pollard still ranked 3rd in xFP, 6th in touches, and 7th in GL carries. That's especially where Zeke could butter his fantasy bread – Pollard was horrendous at converting his GL carries, but Zeke has always been highly effective at the stripe. 10+ TDs are well-within reach.

And just how washed is he, really? Zeke logged a faster single ball-carrier speed than Pollard, Ekeler, and Jacobs in 2023; if the argument is "he was under 4.0 ypc," well other RBs who were under that clip include Saquon Barkley, Josh Jacobs, Travis Etienne, Rachaad White, Alvin Kamara…

Ultimately, as the Patriots starter last year (Weeks 13-18), Zeke was the RB15, RB1, RB27, RB6, RB26, RB19. He was the PPR RB7 over that span. The Patriots were a DREADFUL team, and the Cowboys (again) were the No.1 scoring offense in the league.

I also like buying an even cheaper **Rico Dowdle**, who reportedly looks like the Cowboys best RB in camp so far. But when push comes to shove, Zeke's historic production and presence will likely win out, and give you a 250+ touch back in the Top-5 offense after Round 9.

Versus I like my RBs but want some upside on my bench…

Blake Corum (LAR)

This simply comes down to: **Blake Corum** is the best handcuff in all of fantasy football.

Sean McVay has already said the team targeted Corum because of how similar he is to **Kyren Williams**. He will get some work to give Williams a breather, but probably nothing usable in fantasy (unless Corum, the ultimate GL hammer, carves out a standalone red-zone role).

But if anything happens to Kyren, who missed 4 games last year and already dealt with a foot sprain this offseason, Corum will shoot to the moon and rank as a weekly Top-8 RB.

Apparently while ESPN's Jeremy Fowler was at Rams camp, he reported "'Corum's an F'ing stud' is a phrase I heard a few times from people on the ground here."

Plus, if Corum is closer to the RB he was in 2022 before multiple knee injuries… There's a shot he's just outright better than Kyren. If your RB room is set, there's no stronger bench stash in fantasy.

There might be only one man on this planet who this face excites… and it's The Wolf (15+ TD UPSIDE!!!)

Explosive WR Upside (Rookies & Breakouts) Still Available

If you hammer the WR Gold Mine (Rounds 6-8), your starting fantasy WRs should long be set by now.

Thus, now is the time for some real upside swings at the WR position. Thankfully, guys who go in the 50s-60s in Best Ball are falling all the way outside the Top-100 in redraft. Many of them are rookies, who make some of the best bets in all of fantasy due to their back-weighted production. They're even more valuable this cheap.

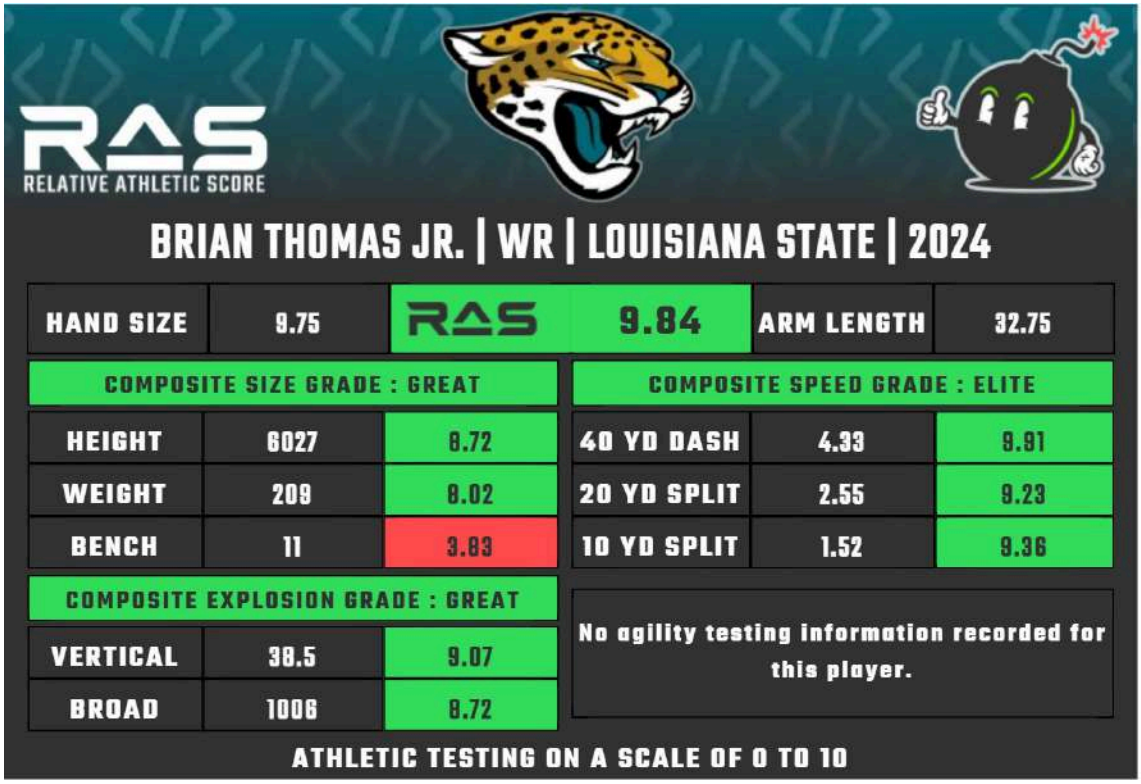
I would genuinely consider drafting pretty much any WR below in the Round 7-8 Range, but their ADPs are past 100 on most common redraft spots, with some as low as the 130s:

Brian Thomas (JAX)

Unfortunately, we haven't gotten much buzz on **Brian Thomas** so far in camp. On the positive front, the team said "he's not repeating any mistakes…" which is… good, I guess?

Thomas is certainly more a stash than the other rookies. Nonetheless, he was considered a much stronger prospect than either Worthy or Ladd, who are benefiting from better landing spots. In a historic Rookie WR class, Thomas was the clear No.4 WR in most rankings, behind the "Big 3" of Harrison, Nabers, and Odunze.

Thomas is definitely raw, but he's also a 6'3" athletic freak, posting a 9.84 RAS which ranked 57th out of 3402 WRs all-time!



Thomas can shred defenses deep like no other. Even while contending with No.6 overall pick **Malik Nabers** for looks, Thomas still managed 68 yards, 1177 yards (17.3 YPR), and an absurd 17 TDs!

Yet, 75% of his production came on only two routes – the go route, and the hitch. He also did very, very little prior to his junior season breakout, so his profile is not without warts.

Thomas also enters a Jags team that ranks 4th in pass-rate-over expectation, which is consistent in **Doug Pederson**'s offense. With **Calvin Ridley** and **Zay Jones** departing, well over 200 targets are vacated, particularly those where Thomas does his damage most: deep down the field, and in the Red Zone.

In fact, Ridley alone vacates 40 red zone targets and 22 End Zone looks, both towards the top of the league. Ridley struggled to convert these into scores, but a 17 TD scorer may have some better luck.

Considering Thomas has only played football for 6 total years of his life, the ceiling is so untapped here. It may be unlikely he finds it in Year One, but if he does, I want him on my roster, especially when he's going outside the Top 120.

Ladd McConkey (LAC)

Justin Herbert's injury, which will shelve the star QB for all of camp, certainly stings – this was valuable chemistry-building time for Herbert and his new rookie toy in **Ladd McConkey.**

Yet, by all the Training Camp reports prior to the injury, it sounds like the pair may be lights-out already.

The buzz did not stop pouring in. Quotes include:

-"On a day where the starting groups on both sides of the ball went against each other, it was the Herbert-McConkey connection that stood out."

-"The chemistry between Herbert and rookie WR Ladd McConkey continues to blossom. McConkey has been playing mostly in the slot, and he is already proving capable of winning easily and often in short areas of the field. His route running is pro-ready."

"On their first two drives, the second-round rookie caught touchdown passes from Justin Herbert, with the second being a back-of-the-end zone grab off a Herbert scramble."

Even the typically reserved **Charles Robinson** left Chargers camp saying "McConkey was the first name presented when I asked which young guy from the draft had the staff most excited. The way he gets in and out of his breaks is already high-level. I think they'll line him up all over the place and he'll eventually develop into a target monster."

Similar to **Puka Nacua**'s profile last year, Ladd didn't rack up any eye-popping total numbers; yet, his per-route metrics and overall ability to win against every coverage type (especially zone), at every layer of the field, on any type of route, were clearly evident.

That we're already seeing this type of "all-over" usage and success, and the fact Ladd's already become Herbert's go-to guy in the Red Zone and on broken situations, is wildly encouraging.

Indeed, this is a historically run-first scheme under Roman. He's been 28th or lower in pass attempts in 9/10 seasons, with 7/10 last or second-to-last. Yet, Roman's already acknowledged that you have to craft the offense to your talent, and that it'd be foolish to waste an arm like Herbert's.

The Chargers have the most vacated targets in the league (395). Moreover, even in these run-obsessed offenses, WRs like **Michael Crabtree** and **Anquan Boldin** have easily finished inside the Top-24 WRs for fantasy. Some of the best stat lines include:

2012: Crabtree - 127 tgt, 85 rec, 1105 yds, 9 TDs
2013: Boldin - 129 tgt, 85 rec, 1179 ys, 7 TDs (Crabtree hurt in 5 games)
2014: Boldin - 130 tgt, 83 rec, 1062 yds, 5 TDs

Boldin was also well into his 30s at the time, too!

No, we aren't going to have the volume for a Keenan Allen type of season. But the similarities are clear, and Ladd has even more long-speed and explosiveness. Allen was the WR6, WR12, WR12, WR3 in his four years with Herbert, averaging 18 FPPG and finishing Top 24 a whopping 62% of games. He averaged 10.3 targets per game & 27% tgt share average. This is a massive role, and Ladd seems to be the most-equipped to fill it (and already is doing just that).

Even more usable than Worthy "out of the box," Ladd is WAY too cheap and another must-draft WR – I'd be plenty comfortable starting him from Week 1.

Jameson Williams (DET)

Speaking of hype trains, not a day goes by without another positive clip or quote on Jameson Williams. Going in the 120-130 range right now, Williams is 100% the type of bet to make.

Yes, Jame-O has been largely irrelevant through two seasons. Whether injured or suspended, Williams seemed incapable of getting out of his own way, and constantly stuck in the mud, unable to beat out luminaries like **Josh Reynolds** or **Kalif Raymond** for a consistent role, despite being drafted 12th overall.

Yet, that draft capital, and the factors that drove it, are why we should be willing to go in one more time. At 6'1" with a 4.39 forty (94th percentile), WIlliams defines "size-speed" terror. He was an absolute game-wrecker at Alabama, and it sounds like we're finally getting steady signs of that prospect coming to fruition in Year 3.

According to The Athletic's Colton Pouncy, Jameson Williams "has been getting open against the secondary routinely" at Lions camp, adding "it's still early, but at this point, [Jameson] Williams is firmly entrenched as one of the guys. This is the best I've seen him look with Jared Goff. He's been getting the ball on end-arounds. He's coming off the sideline after a series and picking the brain of Goff or Ben Johnson."

Another writer for The Athletic, Nick Baumgardner, said earlier that Williams "looks like a different player."

Dan Campbell said: "Give me one player that is the most improved from that start to finish in that time,' and Jamo would be that guy right now, he is a man on a mission."

OC Ben Johnson got some praise in, saying, “We started feeling it towards the end of last year, and he’s taken that to another level in the springtime and so far here in training camp… His route tree has kind of grown, it has developed. In his mind, there’s nothing he can’t do.”

The Lions were 5th in points (27.4), 3rd in plays (66.8), 9th in paATT (35.9), 3rd in pass yards per (259.7), and are in desperate need of a wideout behind ASB to step up. Even behind ASB, LaPorta, and Gibbs, Jameson is talented enough to do some real damage if this hype bears true.

When there’s this much smoke, for this tantalizing of a prospect, there’s bound to be some fire. When it’s this cheap to find out if it’s purely puff or actually actionable, it’s an easy choice. Smash Jame-o in drafts.

TE Target- THE Guy to get if you miss an Elite TE

Brock Bowers (LV)

Brock Bowers has the highest upside of any TE going after Round 6. Sure, his landing spot in Las Vegas was not ideal, given **Michael Mayer** is already a strong TE prospect.

Still, in Bowers, we're talking about maybe the best receiving TE prospect of all time.

He led Georgia in receiving in all three seasons there. As a true freshman, he posted an insane 56/882/13 receiving line, 3.01 yards per route run, 91.6 PFF Receiving Grade, and added on another 4/56/1 rushing. ABSURD.

He then went nuclear with 1051 scrimmage yards and 10 TDs as a sophomore. His metrics (2.37 YPRR; 90.0 PFF Receiving Grade) remained elite, too.

As a final act, Bowers led the Bulldogs once more in receiving, despite only playing 10 games and dealing with an injury all year. His 2.65 YPRR and 87.1 PFF Receiving Grade were again top-notch.

Ultimately, his 2.64 career YPPR is the highest ever by a Round 1 TE. He didn't test at the Combine, but Bowers hit 21.4 MPH in a game, faster than any NFL TE in the past four years.

David Guatieri put together a chart comparing Bowers with other recent elite TE prospects, and he grades out quite favorably:

	(*Non-Adjusted Pro Day Score, Adjust .05 for 40's)								COLLEGE PRODUCTION							
RANK	NAME	AGE	HEIGHT	WEIGHT	DRAFT CAPITAL	EARLY DECLARE	40	VERT	DOMINATOR	CAREER YPR	CAREER YAC/REC	HIGHEST MTF	CATCH RADIUS %	CAREER YPRR	HIGHEST PFF REC. GRADE	NFL.COM GRADE
	Kyle Pitts		6'5 5/8"	245	1.04	Y	*4.49	*33.5"	24.10%	14.9	5.4	5	85th	2.36	96.1	7.19
	Brock Bowers		6'4"	240	1.13	Y	DNP	DNP	27.20%	14.5	8.5	18	?	2.64	91.6	6.71
	Sam LaPorta		6'3"	245	2.03	N	4.59	35"	25.50%	11.7	5.6	20	78th	1.89	85.3	6.18
	Trey McBride		6'4"	246	2.23	N	*4.56	*33"	46.30%	12.8	5.5	5	?	2.11	95.0	6.31

In short, Bowers seems legitimately worthy of the often overused "generational" label. Should we really be letting a talent like this fall to Round 9 because of a perceived bad landing spot?

No one should be shocked if Bowers is going in Round 4-5 in next year's fantasy drafts, so I'm buying this cheap while I can.

All the talk is the Raiders base set has been “12 personnel,” with both Bowers & Mayer on the field. While Mayer has been more of a traditional TE, Bowers is operating more as a chess piece. Per Raiders beat writers:

“Bowers has arguably been Las Vegas’ most reliable weapon as the team enters the midway point of training camp…But the first-round pick out of the University of Georgia is playing so much more than tight end in an approach that should make Raiders’ fans excited, if not relieved.

They didn’t see Bowers merely as a tight end, but rather someone who could single-handedly diversify the Raiders’ attack by lining up at different spots.

So far, they’ve lived up to their word as Bowers has not only frequently played alongside Mayer in 12 personnel — when one running back and two tight ends are on the field — but also sometimes as a slot receiver and fullback.”

This is in-line with GM **Tom Telesco** labeling Bowers a “hybrid receiver” on draft night, while **Antonio Pierce** suggested this diverse role would be coming long ago:

“I mean, just different. You’re talking about probably the most dynamic football player in college football at that tight end position in a long time,” Pierce raved. “And it’s rare you get a guy like that, that can line up as a slot receiver, see him in the backfield, reverses, catch the ball.”

Ultimately, contending with a target vacuum like **Davante Adams**, for targets from a weak QB room, on a run-heavy team… doesn’t sound all that appealing. Yet, Bowers has the versatility and athleticism to overcome all that, even as a rookie, and be a monster at one of the toughest positions to find them. I’ll bet on a historic prospect all day in the 100s.

Close your eyes. Picture the most athletic TE prospect you’ve ever seen. Is this what came up?

Round 9-11 Fades

Note: as we get deeper and deeper into the draft, fades become less impactful. Sure, there's opportunity cost at every pick, so it's good to know who to avoid. But that opp cost drops dramatically each round, as the likelihood of each pick hitting lessens, too.

All that being said, here's some guys in the 96-130 Range who aren't landing on many / any of my teams:

Justin Herbert (148 OVR, -36 ADP & ECR)

I can love a player's ability but not love his fantasy outlook, and that's the case here with **Justin Herbert**.

As mentioned, Roman's offenses have ranked 28th or lower in pass attempts in 9-of-10 seasons, including bottom-2 in 7/10 years. I do think we could see an uptick with a talent like Herbert at his disposal. Also, every QB Roman has coached had an improved "adjusted net yards per attempt:

Scott Barrett
@ScottBarrettDFB

Adjusted Net Yards per Attempt (Games Started)

Alex Smith
w/ Greg Roman: 6.34
w/out: 5.71

Colin Kaepernick
w/ Greg Roman: 6.38
w/out: 5.51

Tyrod Taylor
w/ Greg Roman: 6.44
w/out: 5.21

Lamar Jackson
w/ Greg Roman: 8.19
w/out: 5.87

Roman also was the architect of the NFL's highest-scoring offense of all-time (Ravens), so it's not all doom and gloom. But even while I love **Ladd McConkey,** the rest of this weapons cabinet is abysmal.

Plus, **Justin Herbert** suffered a plantar fascia injury that'll hold him out for the rest of camp. One path to real upside would be if Roman ran a sneaky-athletic Herbert a bit more to allow for some untapped Konami Upside. This injury all but ensures that won't be explored this year. Around the same price as **Jayden Daniels**, that choice is a no-brainer for me.

Aaron Rodgers (154 OVR, -28 ADP)

I want to be excited about my fantasy football picks and team. Nothing about Rodgers excites me. In fact, I hate him and think he's an undeserved ego-maniac.

Rodgers is the king of bleeding clock. His last three teams ranked 31st, 31st, and 32nd in pace. He had an average play clock seconds of 5.8 or fewer for three straight years – the slowest last year was 8 seconds. The Jets defense should rarely be in "shoot-out situations."

While I think the Jets will be very efficient, and that Rodgers can feed his top-end talent to fantasy gold, I doubt he himself will be an option you want.

Deshaun Watson (176 OVR, -45 ADP)

Speaking of players I (& everyone) hates… Enter Watson! Now that Watson has secured his bag, I truly think the guy could care less about football. He's already been in-and-out of camp, seemingly just for the hell of it. His coaches and teammates don't seem to like him. I wouldn't be surprised at all if another mysterious shoulder injury pops up, and Watson is yet again on the shelf.

The new **Ken Dorsey** spread attack could get Watson back to the guy who thrived in Houston. The Browns already led the NFL in plays per game and are talking about pushing the pace even more. I just think it's going to be **Jameis Winston** by midyear, at the latest. And I want guys I want to root for. I can get similar production without drafting complete scum bags.

Jerome Ford (144 OVR, -29 ADP)

If I'm fading Chubb, I should be more in on Ford. Part of this fade was a strong feeling that **D'Onta Foreman** was going to sneakily be the No.2 RB, or at minimum vulture TDs. Yet, he suffered a serious head injury in camp that required a stretcher, so I'm not sure if he'll even be on the team or in the NFL this season. If that's the case, ignore this fade and bump Ford up.

He proved plenty capable of leading the way last year, finishing as the RB18 in Half PPR FPs. He was rarely spectacular, but Ford was a solid option all year. Honestly, as I write this, I am re-evaluating this fade… because if Foreman's injury is as serious as it looks, Ford could be a monster to at least start the season.

There is the worry of him becoming nothing when depth matters most (bye weeks and playoffs), so a front-weighted bet, albeit a good one if Foreman is out, is a little rich at his ~110 ADP. It's less about being against Ford, and more about being intrigued by the Rookie WRs going at his price.

Jerry Jeudy (181 OVR, -50 ADP)I have never been a Jeudy guy, and it's never burned me once. Sure, he put up video game numbers at Alabama, which has people constantly finding reasons to forgive and justify his lack of getting it done. The Browns certainly believe in him, signing him to a $52.5M extension with a whopping $41M guaranteed (sheesh!). After this Deshaun Watson debacle, should we really trust the "talent eval eye" of the Browns front office?

The WR59, WR67, WR23, and WR56 across his career… I see one outlier, surrounded by a bunch of garbage. Jeudy hasn't been dealt the best NFL hand, but he also hasn't really shown worthy of much either – he quits on routes, is below-average after the catch, and has been a non-scoring threat his entire career.

I don't see what the Browns saw, nor do I understand what fantasy managers are seeing. If Jameis Winston comes in and is slinging a high-flying spread attack… maybe Jeudy pays off. But given he's already dealing with nagging camp injuries (after getting paid! The Browns have a type!)... I want nothing to do with him.

Round 9-11 Best Ball Notes & Observations

- Best Ball and Redraft strategy + price tags start to get more & more similar the later in drafts we get

- Just like in Redraft, Round 9 **Jayden Daniels** is a pick I'm hammering every-time. HOWEVER, unlike redraft, you'll see QBs like **Dak Prescott, Joe Burrow,** and **Jordan Love** fall to these late rounds given the priority drafters (wisely) place on stacking. I still love Elite QB in Round 4 builds in Best Ball, but the way some elite passing QBs fall makes it less of a priority in Best Ball

- By now, the WR Well is completely dried up in Best Ball. Some of the rookies mentioned (Xavier Worthy, Ladd McConkey) are going in Round 6-7.

- RB prices start getting similar in these ranges, with Chase Brown and Javonte Williams two "must targets" in the Pick 100 ranges in both best ball and redraft. You can usually get the older, less sexy backs (Gus, Zeke) in the 120-130 range of Best Ball.

- Ironically in a format that prioritizes ceiling outcomes to win it all, Best Ball is also sneakily a game of "small wins." Getting the players that outproduce their ADP, even if it's only by 10-20 spots, and not just the guys who define the season, is crucial. Thus, counterintuitively, building out your bench with some guys you know won't be "zeroes" is just as important as taking home run hacks. We don't have a Waiver Wire or Trades to bail us out like we do in Redraft, so dancing between floor and ceiling is much more important in Best Ball Bench construction vs. a Pure Ceiling approach in Redraft.

Chase Brown has become a Must Draft Player for the Wolf any time in Round 9+ – his ADP is ~120, but I would take him as high as the 80s. He's going to be this year's Raheem Mostert.

THE 2024 PENNY STOCKS

As I already mentioned, now that I'm rounding out my bench, I want PURE upside in redraft. You have the Waiver Wire and trading to patch holes in your roster, so every single pick should be spent with the highest-possible ceiling in mind.

Once we get to the Bye Week Hell and injuries strike, we will need to use the Waiver Wire to find streamers. In redraft, you want your bench to be full of the type of guys that, if things bend right, every one would be spending their top Waiver Wire Priority or $100+ FAAB on.

For the most part, this ends up being either A) Talented Rookies or B) Handcuff RBs in Good Offenses

I rarely carry more than 1 QB or 1 TE, especially if I go elite at the position. The lone exception would be if an upside-play like **Jayden Daniels** falls, or if I have a bunch of weapons for one offense and want to stack the QB late (i.e. **Matthew Stafford** with Puka and Kupp).

Here are some of the guys I like the most in the late rounds – broken into Sleepers, and then DEEP SLEEPERS for those of you in 18+ round drafts.

UPDATED & CLEANED UP 8/27:

Wide Receiver Sleepers (130-170)

***WR Sleepers Must Begin with the Hunt for the Bills Top-Target(s)* - UPDATE 8/20 - Curtis Samuel, my favorite of the bunch, suffered a turf toe injury & is now Week-to-Week. He still has a path, but is my least favorite of the three. Shakir and Coleman now have a clearer runway to taking over this role:**

Vacated volume can be a huge precursor to fantasy breakouts. From the Texans last year, to the Lions the year before, when a ton of targets are up for grabs in an unclear pecking order, serious fantasy value can emerge.

When that volume happens to be coming from one of the best QBs in the game, it's even more massive.

With the departures of **Stefon Diggs** and **Gabe Davis,** the bills vacated: 3353 air yards (most), 73.3% air yard share (most), 317 targets (2nd), 54.7% target share (2nd), and a whopping 86.3% WR target share (most).

Additionally, Joe Brady has been named the full-time OC. He only has one full year calling plays, and it was with **Teddy Bridgewater** as his QB. Yet, in that season, he had THREE Top-25 WRs: Robbie Anderson (WR20), Curtis Samuel (WR23), and DJ Moore (WR25).

Currently, all Bills WRs are going outside the Top-40 WRs & beyond 130+ in Redraft Leagues. Honestly, all three of **Keon Coleman, Curtis Samuel** and **Khalil Shakir** could BLOW UP.

Keon Coleman
Understandably, Keon Coleman is a polarizing WR prospect. Coleman's 4.61 forty was hideous. Yet he topped 22 MPH in his "play speed," which was Top-Five in the class. Coleman was below-average at separating from coverage, yet he was among the top contested ball catchers of the class.

Personally, I saw enough “wow” in Coleman’s tape to be highly intrigued. I love that he outproduced **Jayden Reed** when they were teammates at Michigan State. I especially loved his ability to get open on extended plays, with Coleman’s college QB calling him a “QB’s best friend” for this exact skill. Perhaps no QB buys extra time better than Josh Allen, which could help Coleman reach an absurdly high ceiling.

Speaking of Allen, he reportedly told the Bills that Coleman was the WR he wanted the team to select: “The 20-year-old said he received a text from Allen on Friday, before he was drafted that said (via the team’s official website), “You’re the guy that I want. I watched a lot of receivers and I want to play with you.”

The duo’s on field rapport has been strong in training camp so far, particularly in red zone drills. Hype includes Coleman “put on a show” and “hauled in multiple TDs in the back of the End Zone” almost every day. Coleman’s currently on the second-team in the Bills’ first depth chart, but he has plenty of time to climb.

He may start slower than Samuel or **Khalil Shakir,** but by the end of the year, Coleman could be the one you want the most.

Khalil Shakir
Continuing the theme of directional bets, I am also well-ahead of ADP on Khalil Shakir, even if he is my third-ranked Bills WRs. In fact, Shakir might be the safest of them all, as the only holdover WR to catch a pass from Allen! In fact, over the Bills’ final 10 games, Shakir outproduced Diggs – on 42 fewer targets!

Even if Shakir’s not as physically gifted or diverse as Coleman and Samuel, this “trust factor” is a key reason why Shakir is a strong bet to emerge as the top-guy here. Multiple outlets have had lines resembling the New York Upstate’s Matt Parrino, who wrote “Khalil Shakir, the guy who looked like the number one receiver in practice on Thursday and for most of this week. He looks like a superstar.”

Parrino emphasized a single-play that I think speaks volumes. I know, I know, we don’t want to overreact to ONE TRAINING CAMP play. Still, *this* is the type of play that can teach us a lot about a rapport and trust:

> *“Shakir caught a touchdown pass during 11-on-11 red zone team drills that was simply jaw-dropping. Shakir, working against All-Pro slot cornerback Taron Johnson, was up against superb coverage. Johnson had him under wraps, and it didn’t look like Allen had anywhere to throw the ball.*
>
> *But Allen trusts Shakir. “Got a lot of faith in him,” Allen said after practice. “He’s a smart player (and) he’s much faster than you think. He’s got a very big catch radius for (a guy with) smaller arms, too. He finds ways to go up and get the ball.”*
>
> *As soon as Allen unleashed the pass, Shakir somehow opened up the smallest amount of a window, located the ball, and made the contested catch against Johnson. The entire offense stormed over to Shakir to celebrate the score.*

We also saw this trust during the 2023-24 playoffs, where Shakir became Allen’s top WR in the most crucial moments. Shakir racked up 3 rec, 31 yds, 1 TD (12. 1 FPs), and then 7 rec (9 tgt), 44 yds, 1 TD (17.4 FPs) across those two playoff appearances.

Curtis Samuel🐺 - While his turf toe injury may stall his rise to the WR1 role in Buffalo, there’s still a real chance Samuel ends the season as THE BUF WR you need. Here’s why I’ll keep buying at discounted prices:

Curtis Samuel could be in line for a career year after a move to Buffalo. In an offense with plentiful opportunity, Samuel promises to be a key part of the attack, especially given his experience with **Joe Brady.** Last time they played together, Brady fed Samuel 118 opportunities (2nd most among WRs, with 97 targets and 41 carries. Early in their reunion, it seems Samuel's again in that diverse role. Training camp reports indicate that Samuel is lining up all over the formation, including reps out of the backfield (even in the Red Zone). He's been especially active in Red Zone drills. As Joe Brady said:

"He can play any of the positions — play inside, play outside, play in the backfield… The more Curtis Samuels on our football team, the better."

He's like Buffalo's Deebo Samuel! In an elite offense, Samuel has a realistic shot at a WR2+ finish. He's probably the highest floor play among WRs here. The ceiling, however, likely belongs to…

Ultimately, I rank the Bills WRs Shakir > Coleman > Samuel but have all within my Top 120, and all +20 above ECR. The answer very well could be *all three* if Brady's history holds over with a better QB. And if it ends up being just 1-2, that means it's truly a league-winner. Don't leave your drafts without at least one Bills WR.

Rashid Shaheed
Heading into his third NFL season, Rashid Shaheed will likely be a full-time player for the first time in his career. In six games last season with a route participation above 80 percent, Shaheed cleared 15 PPR points three times (50%). Shaheed himself has indicated that offensive coordinator Klink Kubiak wants to keep him on the field and use him in a variety of ways. His vertical skill set, combined with more intermediate routes could allow him to provide more consistent production.

Remember, Kubiak comes from the Shanahan-ian tree that generates tons of run-after-catch opportunities, a role in which a return-specialist like Shaheed should thrive. Shaheed will also be deadly off of play-action and in motion, which the Saints ranked last and second-to last in last year. He's a phenomenal pick at his ~140 or so price tag.

Romeo Doubs & Dontayvion Wicks
The Packers wide receiver room is quite murky, but after Jayden Reed, **Romeo Doubs** and **Dontayvion Wicks** may be the best options. For lovers of advanced metrics, Wicks may be your option. His 1.94 yards per route run were among the best in the rookie class last season. On the field, he looked to be far better than his 4th round draft capital would indicate. If he can climb the depth chart to earn a regular role, he has the talent to succeed.

Doubs on the other hand seems to have a locked in role within the offense. He has been praised by the Packers players and coaching staff for his play as one of the Packers go-to outside receivers. Packers All-Pro corner **Jaire Alexander** was one of those commending Doubs during training camp, "I think Doubs is a close second for my top receivers in the league. I always want to go against Doubs. That dude is really freaking good." High praise from one of the league's best corners.

Ultimately, this may be too much of a "spread-the-wealth" attack for any of the Packers WRs to gain real consistency. Nonetheless, these two guys are the cheapest ways to access what I expect to be a Top-6 passing game, with Doubs being the floor play, and Wicks more of the ceiling.

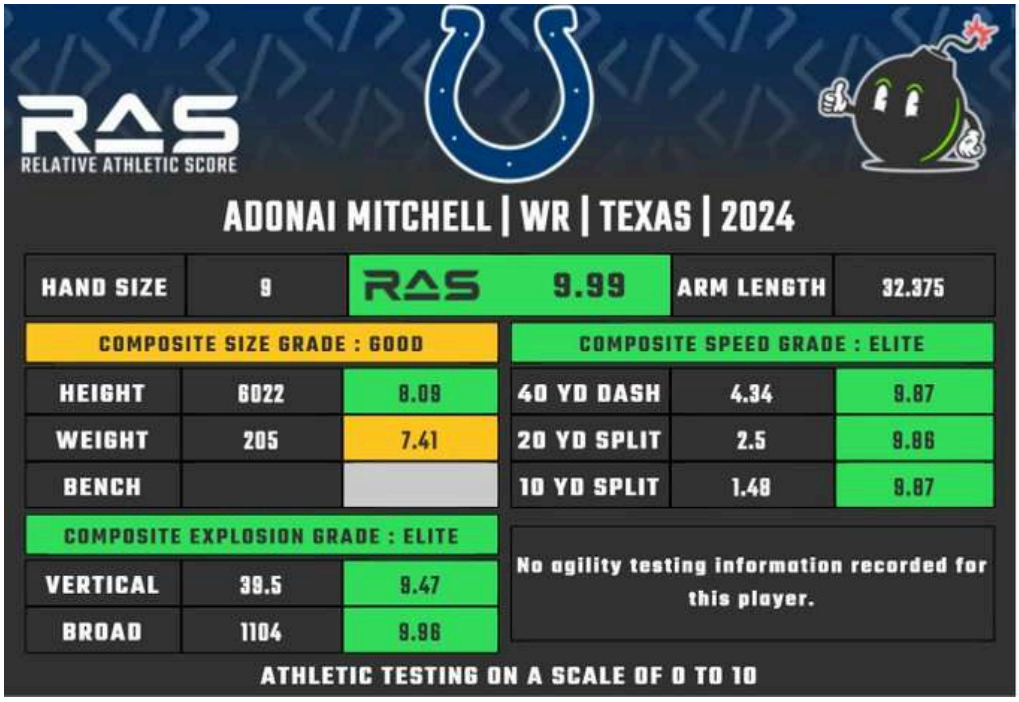
Brandin Cooks
Drafting a 31-year-old Brandin Cooks may not be the sexiest pick, but don't discount what he can achieve in the Dallas offense. Last season, the Cowboys ultimately ranked first in points (30.1), pass yards (265.8), pass attempts (37.4), and passing TDs (2.2) per game, despite offensive struggles to start the year. Cooks massively benefitted from the Cowboy's shift to a pass-heavy offense following their Week 7 bye.

From Week 8 on, he was the WR19. **Jake Ferguson** may establish a larger role in the offense, but Cooks is still capable of paying off in a big way thanks to a WR59 ADP. Cooks is the *boring* pick that won't draw any oooohs and ahhhhs, but Cooks will be a phenomenal depth piece that you can comfortably plug into your WR3 or flex spots during Bye Weeks. Plus, if **CeeDee Lamb** *does* hold out or get hurt, Cooks would become the No.1 weapon in a sling-it-out attack. .

Adonai Mitchell (8/27 Update)
Originally, Josh Downs was in this section. Yet, he suffered a bad high-anke sprain in practice, and his Week 1 status is up in the air. Even if he plays, those injuries often linger. I can still get down with Downs at the right price, but instead, I prefer targeting his less-drafted, more-explosive teammate: rookie **Adonai Mitchell**.

AD Mitchell was far from a clean college prospect. His efficiency metrics, especially yards per route, were embarrasingly low, and some mild effort concerns led to him falling out of Round 1 where many expected him to go.

Yet… AD is also built out of a lab. His 9.99 RAS score rams 5th out of 3402 WRs ALL-TIME!



Mitchell also seemed to show up on the brightest stages and against the toughest competition, and it's hard to truly evaluate the player when his QB play was dreadful – his 535 unrealized Air Yards was by far the most among consensus Top-30 WRs!

I trust **Shane Steichen**, too. He couldn't have been happier on draft day, noting, ""I think he's got a rare ability to separate at the top of routes. He's got an arsenal of releases versus press man, you can see it show up on tape… To get him where we got him, I couldn't be more fired up about it."

In Downs' absence, Mitchell has gotten a chance to get extended time with Richardson & the ones, especially with some increased slot work. While he took a little while to get rolling, all beats, coach speak, and preseason play suggest Mitchell has begun to thrive.

On he Presason, Mitchell had an 86% route participation and 22% target share with the ones. A lot of it has come from in the slot– which will likely be Downs' main role, but still opens up more paths for Mitchell to hit a ceiling, and emphasizes the coaching staff's trust in AD's versatility. If nothing else, it expands his range of outcome for the better.

While Mitchell has reportedly been in a battle with Alec Pierce, he's played ahead of him thus far in 2 WR sets (75% snaps compared to 25% for Pierce). It's a small sample size, but maybe a hint AD has indeed won the No.3 role at worse.

In Preseason Week 3, Mitchell led the Colts with 4 targets, and ultimately hauled in 2 for 18 yards & a TD. He's on a mission to prove he was overlooked wearing #10 as a reminder of where he went in the draft, and how many players he needs to prove he's better than. He certainly has the physical gifts, and has shown flashes of being a true No.1 – perhaps with more upside than even **Michael Pittman**. He just needs to put it all together consistency – and is with the right minds to help him do so!

Ja'Lynn Polk
Ja'Lynn Polk was forced to live in the shadow of **Rome Odunze** last season at the University of Washington. But Polk is incredibly talented as well. He is among the best contested catch receivers in the 2024 rookie class. The most intriguing aspect of Polk's 2024 outlook is the availability in New England's offense. With no true WR1, Polk has the opportunity to earn targets rather quickly. Polk has been getting starter's reps during training camp and Chad Graff of The Athletic believes, "Polk has a chance to be the Patriots' No. 1 by the season opener." Evan Lazar expanded even further:

"[Ja'Lynn] Polk has been featured with other regulars in the Patriots offense as a reliable underneath target. Polk has also made a few downfield grabs, showing off those strong hands and body control in contested situations. But most of his catches are on quick outs and in-breakers at the first two levels. From this perspective, he's a **Jakobi Meyers** clone, winning with a sudden release and fluidity at the top of routes to glide through breaks."

By all accounts, Polk's has been the most reliable guy day-to-day. Bourne's injury continues to linger, which has kept Polk in the clear No.1 driver's seat, even with **Javon Baker** impressing too

Despite preseason shenanigans so far with usage (behind Thornton? Osborne???), Polk continues to flash a strong rapport with Maye in games. Playing the long-game, I think that duo is going to make some real magic for major chunks of the season.

DEEPER WR SLEEPERS (175-200 Range)

Jalen McMillan - UPDATE - He's secured the No.3 role & is an even better pick

Jalen McMillan was the third University of Washington receiver drafted in the 2024 class. While he came off the board later than his teammates, his talent should not go overlooked – in fact, he outplayed and outproduced Polk when the two were both healthy and on the field.

McMillan's diverse skill set provides him with inside-out versatility, which should give him a leg-up in seeing consistent reps as a rookie. McMillan is reportedly already on track to start the year as Tampa Bay's WR3, with the writers calling him "a DAWG waiting to be unleashed."

Writers mention "McMillan has 'put on a show' so far in camp. **Baker Mayfield** has routinely connected with him, and called him a "young stud" with "a ton of potential."

The article continued that, "That potential has started to flash two days into training camp, and it is clear that he is already on the same page with Mayfield. The two linked up several times throughout Thursday's practice, including one for a touchdown in tight coverage.

"One of my biggest goals for camp is to make Baker trust me with everything in his body," McMillan said. "Whenever he throws the ball my way, I just want to be able to catch it, bring it in, and make myself a target for him."

Given new OC **Liam Coen** hails from the McVay tree, we should expect tons of 3-WR sets. It sounds like McMillan is the early favorite for this role, which gives him plenty of stand-alone value. Yet, he also carries MASSIVE contingency upside should any injury strike Evans or Godwin.

Demarcus Robinson
Demarcus Robinson isn't an exciting young player, but seems locked into a role that will provide ample opportunity for fantasy production.

Robinson has reportedly already won the Rams' WR3 job through two weeks of training camp, and has been even labeled "one of the stars." as many expected. This role will have him on the field for close to 100 percent of offensive snaps. The Rams were in 11 personnel (3 WRs) on 93 percent of snaps last season, the highest rate in the league. Sean McVay's disdain towards substitutions means it's the same three receivers out there all game.

After taking over the WR3 role late last season, Robinson was a fantasy asset. In the final five games of the fantasy season, Robinson averaged 15.4 PPG and was the WR12 during this stretch. He never dipped below 10 FPs while leading the Ram in total routes, and his season-long pace as a starter was: 90 tgts, 60 rec, 904 Yds, 11 TDs & 224 FPs. For a last round stab, it's tough to find someone this usable, that also has contingency upside if Puka or Kupp got hurt.

Andrei Iosivas
Until positive training camp reports began to crop up, Andrei "Yoshi" Iosivas was largely disregarded. But Yoshi is an athletic freak who is reportedly in the lead to replace **Tyler Boyd** & his 824 vacated snaps as the WR3 in Cincinnati's offense.

Just look at these measurables:

RAS
RELATIVE ATHLETIC SCORE

ANDREI IOSIVAS | WR | PRINCETON | 2023

HAND SIZE	8.75	RAS	9.96	ARM LENGTH	32
COMPOSITE SIZE GRADE : GREAT			COMPOSITE SPEED GRADE : ELITE		
HEIGHT	6031	8.82	40 YD DASH	4.43	9.00
WEIGHT	205	7.31	20 YD SPLIT	2.54	9.39
BENCH	19	9.11	10 YD SPLIT	1.5	9.74
COMPOSITE EXPLOSION GRADE : ELITE			COMPOSITE AGILITY GRADE : GREAT		
VERTICAL	39	9.26	SHUTTLE	4.12	8.67
BROAD	1008	9.25	3-CONE	6.85	8.17

ATHLETIC TESTING ON A SCALE OF 0 TO 10

This is unsurprising, considering he was an All-American Heptathlon athlete at Princeton.

He barely played football til his final two years at Princeton, but once he was more developed, he thrived – Yoshi ultimately finished with the third most career touchdowns, sixth most receiving yards, and 12th most receptions in school history while tallying nearly 40% targets-per-route-run. I know, this is Princeton – it's still nice to see production to support the athletic profile, especially from someone who hadn't played football as his primary sport.

Iosivas has been taking the vast majority of slot reps during early training camp practices. He will have to fend off rookie **Jermaine Burton**, but if Iosivas can be Joe Burrow's go-to slot receiver, he'll have an opportunity to eat into the 259 vacated targets in Cincinnati.

"Andrei's going to have a big year," Joe Burrow told reporters. "I'm really excited about how he's coming along. Wherever he ends up playing, whether it's outside or inside, he's able to do it all."

Meanwhile, The Athletic's Paul Dehner recently labeled Iosivas as Cincinnati's "offensive star of camp."

Yoshi reportedly worked out with WRs coach Drew Lieberman all offseason. Lieberman has worked with Brandon Aiyuk, Evan Engram, Jakobi Meyers and Dontayvion Wicks. Yet he said Iosivas "made the fastest improvement of any players [he's] ever had."

Just like many names on this list, Iosavis appears to be a clear No.3 in a strong passing-game, while carrying league-winning upside if something happens to Chase or Tee.

Greg Dortch

Greg Dortch is the epitome of "great things come in small packages." Dortch may be compact (5'7", 175 lbs), but he is incredibly talented. **Kyler Murray** had this to say of Dortch, "I feel like Dortch is unguardable.

One-on-one, knowing where to be in the zones, he's got the nuance and savvy in him that you want in a receiver, and not everyone has that. It's not very common. If he were 6-3 he'd have been a top-five pick."

Dorth is a phenomenal man coverage beater who can thrive out of the slot alongside **Marvin Harrison Jr.** and **Trey McBride**. He's reportedly locked-in with the ones all camp, and besides MHJ, has been the biggest standout: "Dortch continued his big camp by making multiple impressive catches in 7-on-7, including an impressed one-handed grab"

HC **Jonathan Gannon** has been gushing, too: The look in his eye gives me confidence… He's got major ball skills. I don't want to live in the past, but he had a catch in OTAs in the red zone — it's probably one of the top three catches I've ever seen in my life….He thinks that if he's out there, he can help the team win. And I think that, as well… He's going to have a big year"

In games with more than 66% route share, Greg Dortch has averaged 14.8 FPPG. He's in line to be a near every-down player, and even with MHJ and McBride ahead of him, Dortch seems like he'll be a major piece of an ascending Cardinals attack. I love him, late.

Jalen Tolbert
Like Brandin Cooks, a prominent role in the Cowboys' offense (no.1 in passing yds, total TDs, total plays) would put Jalen Tolbert in a rather favorable position for fantasy production. One of the stars of Cowboys' camp, Tolbert remains the favorite to win the WR3 job, which creates a ton of breakout potential.

Tolbert reportedly worked out with Cooks and Prescott all offseason, and has taken a huge step forward. **Mike McCarthy** was asked about the biggest improvenet he's seen from Tolbert, and he replied: "Everything. I think he's just really completed his game… I think JT's taken a big, big step."

OC **Brian Schottenheimer** added: "I see a player that's matured, and a player that's just ready for his opportunity."

It doesn't appear to be just coachspeak, either. All the beat reporters are gushing on a daily basis:

"The Jalen Tolbert hype is real. It needs to carry over to regular-season games, but Tolbert has been the No. 2 receiver and drawn the attention of some of the top players in the Cowboys' secondary, which is a talented group. Tolbert has responded by consistently getting open, and Dak Prescott has gone his way a lot. They haven't always connected, but Tolbert has rarely dropped catchable passes and made a lot of great plays along the sidelines."

Tolbert and Prescott have reportedly shown an increased rapport and have looked good together throughout training camp in the absence of CeeDee Lamb. They're connecting on back-shoulder throws and timing routes that require trust, and Tolbert's coming through.

It's rare for a player to be as inefficient and flat out bad as Tolbert has been through two seasons to then breakout. Yet, "Third Year Breakouts" used to be the norm, and this is an environment to absolutely foster one if Tolbert proves to be truly ready. It's a stab worth taking in your last rounds regardless.
MARVIN MIMS UPDATE 8/26 - While it appeared Tim Patrick had beaten out Marvin Mims, the Broncos actually plan to move on from the veteran. Mims is a definite dart throw, but an explosive one who's path to relevancy just got a lot clearer, especially with Bo Nix looking so good

Marvin Mims was rather irrelevant as a rookie, clearing double-digit fantasy points just twice. But there's still reason to hang onto the prospect who posted 2.95 YPRR across his collegiate career. Mims' fantasy production was limited by a part-time role in Sean Payton's offense. With **Jerry Jeudy** shipped off to Cleveland, Mims is in line for a starter's workload in year two–Payton mentioned Jeudy as the main roadblock to getting Mims playing time last year, so removing that while adding minimal extra is huge.

When Mims is on the field, he's capable of doing great things.

This was just through one month of the season, but demonstrates the explosive nature of Mims' game. Mims has reportedly dominated first-team reps and "done well" throughout camp so far.

"I've said this a number of times, I think you're going to see a lot of growth with this player. He's tough, he can run and we're certainly excited that we have him," Payton said in February.

Mims himself said he's much more "comfortable in the offense… Knowing what I need to do, knowing what the coaches want, knowing what the quarterback wants and just going out there, running my route, and not having to think too much. The less you think, the faster you can play. Honestly speed is my best thing and as long as no one touches me I'm good.".

Sleeper RBs (130-170)

Jaylen Wright
Speaking of the Miami backfield, they added another exciting talent in this year's draft. Mike McDaniel got his guy, trading up to select Tennessee's Jaylen Wright in Round 4.

We know McDaniels' scheme is a goldmine for speedy RBs – **Raheem Mostert** & **De'Von Achane** finished RB3 & RB4 in FPPG respectively. Wright, meanwhile, brings 4.38 speed (98th percentile) and freakish athleticism to the table – his 9.82 RAS score ranks 37th of 1903 RBs all-time. In fact, Wright's first five yards of his 40-yard dash were faster than Achane's, showing you the type of acceleration this guy has.

Wright's not just timed speed, either. The explosiveness absolutely pops on the tape and in games. A whopping 26% (30 total) of his rushes went for 10+ yards, while 19 runs went for 15+. He topped over 1,000 yards on just 137 carries--insane! This equated to a whopping 7.4 YPC, with an equally impressive 4.53 yards coming after contact.

Once he finds a crease, Wright is gone. This is absolutely perfect, considering McDaniels and the Dolphins offense specializes in creating space for RBs in their 49ers-inspired wide-zone scheme.

No, the path to playing time isn't immediate. But both Mostert and Achane have dealt with injuries in their career, while Mostert also will be 32 this season. If just one gets nipped by the injury imp, Wright will vault into a timeshare of the best run-game in the NFL. He is my favorite handcuff after Blake Corum.

He's excited so far this preseason, too. 7 att, 36 rush yds (5.1 YPC) + 4 rec, 41 rec – 76 yds on 11 touches

Rico Dowdle
Success in fantasy football can often be found by leaning into uncertainty within elite offenses, especially with ambiguous backfields. Look at the Dolphins' backfield last year. Those who embraced uncertainty and drafted Raheem Mostert and De'Von Achane were rewarded in a big way.

We are looking at a similar situation in Dallas this year. No one is sure what to make of the backfield in one of the league's best (No. 1 scoring offense in 2023) offenses. As a result, Dowdle features an incredibly cheap price. To this point, Dowdle has shined in camp and it would not be a shock if he emerges from the pack to lead the Cowboys' backfield.

The Athletic predicts Dowdle will lead the Cowboys in rushing in 2024, while **Ezekiel Elliott** has looked awfully dusty in camp so far. While I ultimately expect Zeke to dominate the GL touches and receiving work, Dowdle undoubtedly has the higher ceiling, and comes at a significantly reduced price.

Tyler Allgeier
Outside of Corum and Wright, Tyler Allgeier is perhaps the best pure handcuff in fantasy this year. Coach speak coming out of Atlanta indicates that Allgeier will have a "big role" in 2024. This is intriguing, but the most likely outcome is that **Bijan Robinson** dominates this backfield. But if Robinson misses any time, Allgeier immediately slots in as a top-20 back with real Top-10 upside. He already has a 1000-yard season under his belt and would thrive in an improved offense with **Kirk Cousins** under center and **Zac Robinson** calling plays.

Whereas so many handcuff picks are speculative, we have already seen what Allgeier can do as the starter. He was the RB5 as a rookie from Weeks 15-18 when he took over the Falcons backfield, ripping off Top-12 games in 3-of-4 contests. Yet, his upside would be even higher in Zac Robinson's Rams-inspired scheme, making Allgeier the ultimate handcuff, and possibly with benefits if he does carve out some GL usage.

Ray Davis - UPDATE - Loving Davis even MORE after preseason Week 2. Looked DAMN good..

A common theme of these running back sleepers is investing in the secondary pieces of elite offenses– "handcuffs with benefits" as we like to call them.

This continues with Ray Davis in Buffalo. Davis will almost immediately slot in as the RB2 behind **James Cook**. This role offers values through its potential to find the endzone. Buffalo has simply refused to use Cook at the goal line, giving him just four goal line carries last season.

Meanwhile, **Latavius Murray** finished Top-12 in inside-the-five carries with 12. Davis's 220-pound frame will be an asset when it comes time to punch the ball in. There is also room for Davis to get work in between the 20s. Cook handled 51 percent of the Bills' rush attempts last season due to multiple backs siphoning work.

Plus, Davis is getting a ton of buzz for "big plays" and "monster runs" in camp, surprising with his speed and ability to outrace the defense at his size. There's real 10+ TD upside here, with league-winning upside if James Cook gets hurt.

We saw that in Preseason Week 2 action, too. Davis was the secon back in behind James Cook, and he rumbled for 8 carries & 58 yards (7.2 YPC). 40 of those yards came after contact, and Davis forced 5 missed tackles on just those 8 touches! He's damn good, and the ultimate handcuff-with-benefits.

Kimani Vidal (added 8/27)
What a roller coaster Preseason it's been for Kimani Vidal, a 5'8" tackle-breaking fire hydrant out of Troy University. He went from the Charges roster bubble to "Week 3 starters rest treatment" in the blink of an eye!

Despite the small school status, Vidal brought a ton to the table. He was a true workhorse, shouldering 315 touches his senior year for 1862 YFS and 15 TDs. He ranked second in missed tackles forced (94), first in explosive run plays (47), and his 83.5 PFF pass-blocking grade was second among backs. Vidal drew MJD comps for his tackle-breaking, three-down skill set in a compact package, and I totally see it.

We only caught a brief glimpse of how it could translate at the NFL level… and it was juicy. In Preseason Week 2, Vidal took 13 touches (2 rec) for 57 yards, gaining 28 yards after contact and forcing three miss tackles. Every other Charges RB averaged below 3.5 YPC.

OC Greg Roman said of Vidal: ""Extremely productive. Maximizes runs. Really good vision, his brain and his feet are kinda connected quickly, so when he sees something, his feet are moving right there"

The revamped Chargers line has facilitate the most yards before contact this preseason. We know Greg Roman's scheme is going to allow RBs to eat (see Edwards, Gus). While **Gus Edwards** and **JK Dobbins** are ahead right now, neither are mountains to overcome. By midyear, Vidal could be the clear lead-back in an uber productive run scheme, in an offense led by **Justin Herbert.** He would absolutely smash in this ceiling outcome that doesn't feel all too unlikely.

MarShawn Lloyd - UPDATE 8/27 - While I was close to burying Lloyd after his hammy injury + low depth chart rank, AJ Dillon suffered a season-ending neck injury. While Lloyd will be unavailable to start the year, he now has a much clearer path to flash his explosive upside at some point in 2024:

MarShawn Lloyd joins the Green Bay Packers from the University of Southern California. At USC, he demonstrated exceptional levels of elusiveness and burst– which showed up at the combine; while a 4.46 forty is solid, when you adjust it for his weight Lloyd's speed score is 97th percentile!

LaFleur and the Packers have already mentioned the Packers reportedly "seeing shades of Aaron Jones" in Lloyd with his speedy rushing ability and also his ability to catch passes out of the backfield." LaFluer has always been philosophically committed to RBBCs (to the point he forced **Derrick Henry** to split time with **Dion Lewis**!), which he has reiterated all offseason despite **Josh Jacobs'** monster deal Another RB will ensures be getting work in a surging Packers offense that scored 27+ points in 5 of their last 9 games. I have no faith that RB2 will be AJ Dillon, no matter how many "best shape of his career" camp puff pieces come out.

The receiving upside gives Lloyd a day one path to value. Lloyd's 17.8 YPR was best among Power-5 RBs, and he was split out wide over 10% of the time. He can also churn on the ground too , though, with - 7.0 YPC, 177 elusive rating, and 41% yards after contact. Thus, Lloyd should provide plenty of standalone value, with league-winning upside if anything happens to Jacobs (who's already dealt with hamstring and groin issues already this offseason.

Lloyd was dinged up himself, but recently returned to camp and immediately started ripping 50+ yard TD runs. He was one of the standout players on team scrimmage night.

If you need further confirmation, just listen to Packers OC **Adam Stenavich** on Lloyd's role: "No, I would like to get him out there as much as possible. He's got a skill set that's a little bit different than AJ's, as far as his speed… It'll be nice to get him the ball in space and just see what he can do, 'cause I think he's gonna add a good explosive element to the offense, for sure."

This is a massive example of a "handcuff-with-benefits" in one of the league's best offenses. Lloyd is one of my favorite picks in all of fantasy right now.

With AJ Dillon done for the year, Marshawn Lloyd zips RIGHT back into my top sleeper RBs for 2024

DEEP RB SLEEPERS (170-200+)

Jordan Mason (8/27 Addition)
Within the blink of an eye, **Jordan Mason** became the single-most valuable handcuff in all of fantasy football. **Eli Mitchell** has been placed on season-ending IR, making Mason the clear-cut No.2 back within the most valuable RB environment in the entire NFL.

The **Kyle Shanahan** zone-blocking scheme makes mortals into monsters, and talented RBs into Gods. This is especially true when attached to this explosive 49ers unit. On a less explosive 49ers team, Mitchell was the RB12 in Half FPPG as the starter here just two seasons ago. CMC has been a been a legend with the 49ers.

Mason himself looks damn solid. This preseason, through ~2.5 quarters of action, he's taken 14 att for 76 yards (5.4 YPC) & 2 TDs, hauling in a 7 yard catch too.

With the 49ers pledging to reduce CMC's workload, Mason could offer some standalone value as a likely "mop-up" guy in blow-out situations. He would be a fringe Top-10 guy should injury strike CMC, and he's going undrafted right now. Make him your last round pick in every draft!

Jordan Mason = the new No.1 Handcuff in all of fantasy, and he's going completely undrafted

Bucky Irving

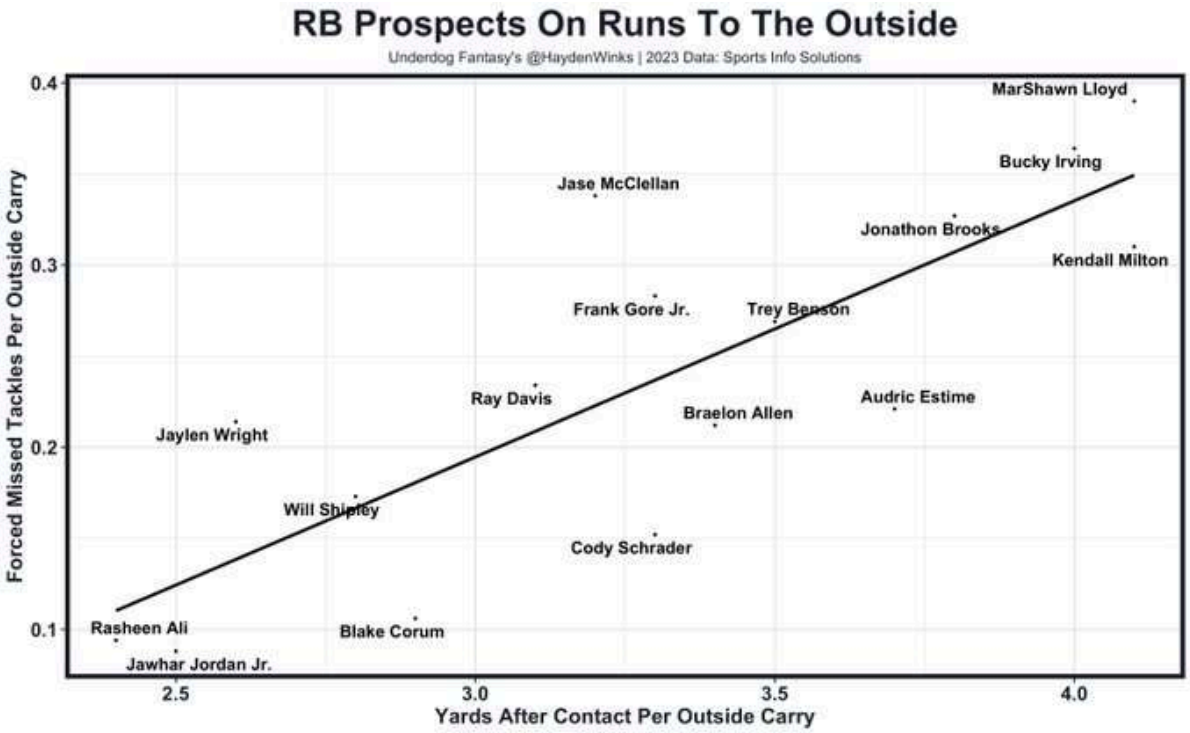
Rachaad White is fresh off the second-most touches in the league… despite not being very good, at least as a runner. White's success rate and yards over expectation were towards the bottom of the league, and his massive 270 carry load was likely a result of "nothing else was there," rather than an indication of his talent.

Enter Bucky Irving. Indeed, his combine was dreadful. Yet, his play speed was much better – Irving clocked the fourth fastest MPH time on the field last year. Since 2022, Irving has forced a missed tackle on 17.2% of his collegiate rushes, which ranked ahead of Bijan Robinson, Jahmyr Gibbs, and Trey Benson.

Ultimately, Irving produced 2,950 YFS and 21 total TDs. He was particularly deadly on outside runs, which project to be a staple of new OC **Liam Coen**'s Rams-Inspired attack.

In fact, Brianna Dix of the team's official site reported Irving "looks like an ideal fit for the versatile run scheme within new offensive coordinator Liam Coen's system."

White is truly elite as a pass-catcher, but Irving is no slouch here, either. He led all FBS RBs with 56 receptions (on 58 targets), ultimately hauling in 95 passes across three years. Irving could push for rushing work from day one, and has an every-down skill set if he's thrust into any starting duty.



Khalil Herbert (8/27 Addition)
Consistently one of the most efficient rushers in the league, Herbert has continued to dazzle as a runner this preseason, taking 18 carries for 97 yards (5.4 YPC). Last year, he ranked 12th in explosive run rate and ninth in missed tackles forced. Herbert has at least two Top-12 games in every year of his career, including over 30 FPs just two seasons ago. He has consistently played well when given the volume, finishing as a Top-12 RB in all three games he has seen 20+ touches.

We don't even need that level of volume for Herbert to pan out. Look at his splits with just 11+ carries:

RotoViz

Khalil Herbert Splits 2015 - 2023

Per Game / Full Season Pace

Statistic	In Split	Out of Split
Games	13	28
PPR	15.52 / 264	3.91 / 66
reRECS	1.85 / 31	0.68 / 12
reTDS	0.15 / 3	0 / 0
reTRGS	2.31 / 39	1.04 / 18
reYDS	12.08 / 205	4.64 / 79
ruATTS	17.62 / 300	4.82 / 82
ruTDS	0.46 / 8	0.07 / 1
ruYDS	87.77 / 1492	22.68 / 386

In Split: from week 1 to 18, from 2000 to 2023, Khalil Herbert played w/ ruATTS >= 11, *out of split evaluates to all games the subject player played that don't meet the in-split criteria

15.52 FPPG over 13 games with 11+ caries! Nearly 1700 YFS & 11 TD pace!

Granted, the Bears did just throw a ton of money at D'Andre Swift. But he's missed 3+ games in every season but last year. He's also one of the least efficient runners, constantly ranking low in success rate and doing far too much dancing rather than just hitting the hole. There's a non-zero chance this situation mimics **Miles Sanders** & **Chuba Hubbard** last year.

Ultimately, whether as a handcuff or just as the better pure runner, Herbert will likely see some meaningful volume in an offense set to explode this season. Now that he's gone from "Roster Bubble" to "Preseason Starters Rest," Herbert is a phenomenal late round target.

Braelon Allen

Braelon Allen was a bit of a viral sensation this offseason thanks to his impressive, MASSIVE physique. This is typically the wrong reason to be "in" on a player, but Allen impressed coaches this offseason on top of fans on social media. Allen's work during preseason activities have solidified him as the RB2 behind **Breece Hall**. The handcuff in the Jets' offense hasn't typically been the most appealing, but with **Aaron Rodgers** returning, this should be a new era of Jets football on the offensive side of the ball. Allen does not offer the same upside of Hall, but he will be a weekly starter if Hall goes down. He's reportedly been surprisingly impressive as a pass-catcher, and seems to have three-down upside if thrust into starting duty.

Again - an exciting talent, in an offense that should be solid, with a path to change leagues if unfortunate injuries strike.

Imagine filling the A-Gap against this thing? Good lord….

Audric Estime- 8/27 Update - Estime's outlook got that much stronger with Samaje Perine officially released. He's still a distant third here, but has a much clearer path & far more contingency upside now
I already raved about the value of the Payton-led Broncos Backfield as a whole, but to reiterate:

Sean Payton-led backfields are typically fantasy gold mines. In 12-of-17 years calling plays, Payton has ranked Top-2 in total backfield points. This is largely due to the amount of receiving volume he funnels to RBs – across those 17 years, Payton has never had an offense finish outside the top five in receiving expected points to the backs. Last year's Broncos led the NFL in RB targets (after Russ Wilson had rarely targeted the position in his career).

Estime is reportedly a Sean Payton favorite. He said after the draft: "When the draft started, every once in a while there's a player you'd say, 'When this thing's all over with, I'd love to have this player.' And, fortunately, we were able to get this player… He's smart, he's tough, and I like his size."

"The first vision would be first and second down runner… We'll kind of see how that unfolds, but he's strong. I think he has real good vision, contact balance."

Indeed, he's got size. Estime's a 240 lb monster who also had the most 15-yard-plus runs, most yards after contact, and fewest negative runs of any back in the draft. He definitely could bring a "Mark Ingram Thunder" style element to this backfield, even if in the No.2 role.

Yet, if **Javonte Williams** falters or gets hurt, Estime has the upside to go nuclear. Albert Breer called Estime "one of the stars of camp" during his visit to Denver. Taking stabs at the Broncos backfield is a wise choice, and Estime is particularly appealing at his cost (free).

Dylan Laube 8/27- I wish he flashed a bit more in his preseason action, and while I still think there's paths to upside for Laube, I'm far more likely to go any of the other names listed ahead here.

While he's bound to go undrafted in the vast majority of leagues, Dylan Laube is my favorite "Hail Mary RB" call to make a monster impact at some point in 2024 fantasy.

Yes, he comes with low draft capital. Yes, he hails from a FCS pedigree (UNH). Yet, in Laube, I see a talent and skill set I really like that's entering a wide-open depth running back room– and was selected by an evaluator (Tom Telesco) with a penchant for nailing pass-catching RBs.

Laube is incredibly shifty, which popped in his testing: he scored ELITE in RAS' agility grade, while ranking in the 97th percentile for PlayerProfiler in the same category. This showed up as a runner, as Laube is incredibly adept at bouncing and cutting back to the open lane. He also regularly makes defenders miss in open space and, even more impressively, in congested, "phone booth" situations.

Where Laube's agility really shines, though, is as a pass-catcher. He is a phenomenal route runner, with an expansive tree that extends far beyond the typical screens and dump-offs. He is a mismatch nightmare for linebackers, and can also attack defenses deep in the wheel game, too.

Even for a smaller school, the production was nothing short of remarkable: Laube's college production was nothing short of remarkable. He led the FCS in all-purpose yards in both 2022 (194.3 yards per game) and 2023 (209.5), racking up 37 TDs across those two years (tops in the nation). Laube ultimately accounted for a whopping 36.5% of UNH's total yards and TDs, ranking 86.5% in this "dominator" metric.

Yes, facing low competition played a major role. Yet, in UNH's toughest matchup vs. D1 Central Michigan, Laube hauled in an absurd 12 catches, 295 yards, and 2 TDs (NCAA record). He also was among the biggest standouts during the Senior Bowl, against some of the nation's top talent. "One of the biggest winners of the week... there is a strong argument that no player in Mobile raised his stock as much as Laube."

The Raiders vacated 289 opportunities (sixth-most, 63.3%) and added no other RBs to a fairly barren depth chart, with only **Zamir White** as the lead threat. White was solid as the starter last year, but he's not a world-beater. As discussed in Round 6 busts, White has had 2 knee surgeries and hasn't topped 175 carries since his sophomore year of *High School!*

Also… Telesco, the current Raiders GM formerly of the Chargers, previously picked up UDFA **Austin Ekeler,** right after squeezing massive years out of **Danny Woodhead**. Telesco has a type, and Laube seems to fit it.

This was all hypothetical, pre-Training Camp speculation on my end. Yet, I feel more validated than ever. No one is more well-read in Laube literature, and the hype has been pouring in from all angles. A few favorites:

HC Antonio Pierce: Dylan Laube is "making the most out of his opportunity…That dude is special. I like him. He just walks around with kind of that Long Island smile and talk, and he's gritty. He's a gritty running back.

One thing about it, he surprises you with his speed. Really good with the ball after catch… I think he gives you a value of a third-down back and some special teams value, as well.

Tom Telesco: “Really instinctive running back. He just has a great feel for the position, both as a runner and in the passing game. He’s a fun player to watch… It’s still early but he’s got some traits we like.” (Meanwhile, he said White “has a lot to learn in the passing game as far as pass protection.”)

OC Luke Getsy: “He’s off to a great start… The game comes naturally to him. He’s got a great feel for it, so decisions he has to make, they come to him naturally. As far as responsibility-wise, he doesn’t have the errors, and so that’s really cool to see from such a young guy.”

Vincent Bonsignore of Review Journal: “The Raiders have put a lot on Dylan Laube’s plate. It’s not unusual to see him lined up in the backfield, the slot or out wide. They have handed him the ball, pitched it to him, thrown it to him on screens, intermediate routes and down the field.”

“Despite the offensive struggles, rookie running back Dylan Laube has quickly made a strong impression. He’s started to get reps with the first-team offense as a third-down running back… Laube has looked smooth as a receiver. Pierce described him as “special” last week, and Getsy raved about him Monday.”

RB Coach Cadillac Williams: “He's wise beyond his years. He shows up like a vet. ... He can take what he learns from the classroom and apply it on the field. He's always going to be in the right spots. Got really good hands, quick, explosive. Just a very cerebral player that can do a lot of things.”

Just what you needed - 2 pages of hype on a small RB out of UNH!

Still, I think there’s room for Laube to win this job. Pierce went as far as to remind the media that the backfield “is wide open, it’s wide open everywhere. It’s competition, and I know it’s kind of cliche, but it’s true. … Zamir’s gotten better as far as catching the ball out of the backfield and blitz pickup, and there are some rookies out there that we see flashing.”

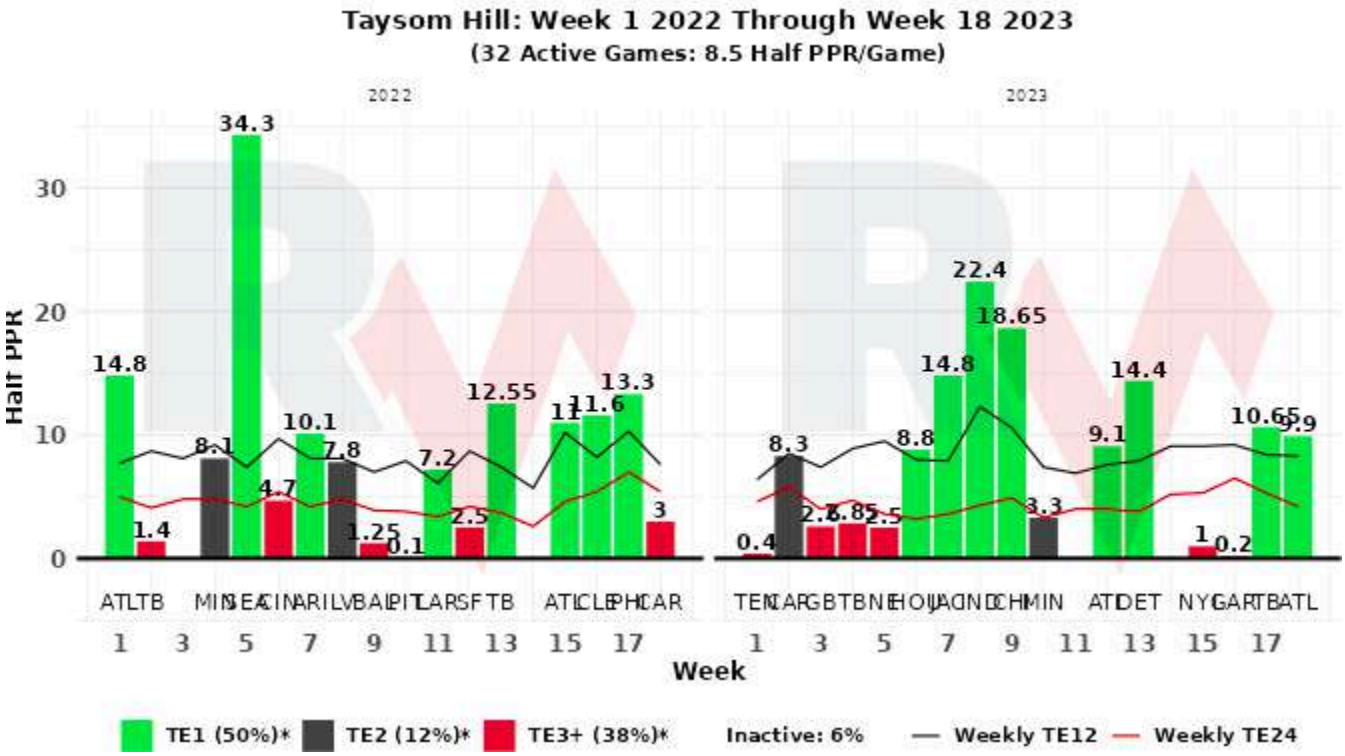
At minimum, Laube seems in-line for a third-down RB role on a team that’ll likely play from behind quite often. At best, he’s just flat-out better than Zamir White and Alexander Mattison, and can’t be kept off the field.

TE Sleeper Targets (130-170)

Hunter Henry
Despite subpar QB play and awful play-calling, Hunter Henry has been Top-3 in TE TDs in two out of three seasons with the Patriots. In 2024, whether it's **Jacoby Brissett** or **Drake Maye** under center, Henry will be playing with the Top QB of his New England tenure. **Alex Van Pelt** should be a marked upgrade over any Patriots' OC since Josh McDaniels, too. Just last year, AVP dialed up David Njoku 122 times -- third most among TEs. At the position, Njoku finished 5th in receptions, 6th in yards, third in TDs, and 5th in FPs. In a receiving room without a clear No.1, Henry could breach 100 targets this year at a Round 14-15 fantasy price.

Taysom Hill
If you don't go Elite TE, you basically rely on "TD or Bust" options. Why not go for a guy who can TRULY spike in Taysom Hill?

He's the TE7 and TE12 in FPPG the past two seasons, ranking 2nd and 2nd in TE TDs the past two years. He has been a Top-12 TE in 50% of his games across the past two seasons, which includes a 34.3 and 22.4 FP spike, too:



Perhaps Hill's volatility will improve in the new 49ers-inspired Klint Kubiak offense. They've reportedly been using Hill at RB, FB, TE, QB and WR, and he's been one of the more featured players in this diverse role. When you're rolling around in this mud, go for the guy who has legit 2+ TD upside any given week.

Tyler Conklin
I also love Tyler Conklin as a late-round fantasy TE pick. Oddly, he's seen exactly 87 targets in three straight years. Unfortunately, they've largely been from Zach Wilson or another atrocity. Even still, Conklin has managed TE16, TE16, and TE18 finishes, so you are buying him at his absolute floor as the TE21 in Underdog.

Yet, Conklin will now catch passes from *checks notes* **AARON RODGERS**! This is a HUGE upgrade. We've seen the likes of Robert Tonyan score 11 TDs and finish as the TE4 with Rodgers before. Even just a bump to 6-7 TDs would make Conklin a fringe top-12 TE in 2024 fantasy. He's also motivated to ball out in a contract year, and Conklin reportedly was "a star" at OTAs:

“TE Tyler Conklin: One of the stars of OTAs. He made multiple acrobatic catches and next to Wilson stands to benefit the most from competent quarterback play. He’s in the last year of his contract with a lot to prove.”

Jonnu Smith
Jonnu Smith had been my clear-cut, no-brainer, no.1 Late Round TE target. I still love his ceiling, but reports that **Durham Smythe** is splitting first-team reps is… annoying. Smith should be able to beat him out in the end, but if it’s more of a time-share, Smith’s floor and ceiling will take a big hit.

Let’s dive into that ceiling, though. True, Dolphins TEs rank dead last in total targets (120) since Mike McDaniel got to town back in 2022. Yet, who has he had to throw to? Durham Smythe? C'mon!

When asked about his lowly TE usage and how Jonnu fits in, McDaniels himself said, "Some people think that just ‘whatever it was, it will always be...there’s opportunities there, for sure.”

McDaniels is an absolute master at maximizing speed in space. Perfect. Jonnu was responsible for the top-two ball carrier speeds at TE last year. In fact, he was the only TE to hit 20+ MPH all year!

Another strength of McDaniels' is his screen game, and the way he puts players in advantageous spots to generate YAC. Incredibly, Jonnu averaged second-most yards on screen passes (12.6) in the ENTIRE NFL!

McDaniels called Jonnu "a fast, dynamic football player... a tonality, a master of YAC -- not only because of speed, but because of a mindset."

Yes, Smith will be well-behind Tyreek Hill and Jaylen Waddle for targets, and probably the RBs too. Still, he will undoubtedly rip off some monster big plays, and find a ton of space with defenses accounting for the other two target hogs.

Noah Fant
Noa Fant is, quite literally, the most physically gifted TE in the game. Per PlayerProfiler:

He ranks in the 96h percentile or better in EVERY SINGLE WORKOUT METRIC. A 4.51 forty at 249 lbs is simply INSANE.

I get it - we aren't trying to "be the best at exercising." Thus far, all it's yielded TE17, TE13, TE13, T18, TE34 results. Nothing too thrilling there.

In 2024, Fant will see his clearest path to volume. He played just 54.4% of the snaps last year, sharing the field in a three-man TE committee that included **WIll Dissly** and **Colby Parkinson**. Both of them have since departed, opening up the door for Fant to command an every-down role. So far, he's impressing, according to Mike Macdonald:

"We're really excited about Noah, and the type of player that he is… When he's out there making plays, you feel that the process is coming to life and you're excited for him that there's results on the field"

Indeed, Fant's behind some target monsters in DK and Lockett, while JSN has reportedly taken a massive step so far this year. Still, **Ryan Grubb** used his TEs very creatively at Washington, and if his high-pass rate continues, there should be enough volume to go around to make Fant a reliable option.

Colby Parkinson
Surprisingly, Parkinson landed a BAG from the Rams, netting a three-year, $22.5M deal with $15.5M in guarantees! Whenever guru **Sean McVay** identifies a player he loves, and goes out of his way to get him, we should be paying attention.

Granted, beat writers have noted heavy involvement from **Davis Allen** and even **Hunter Long** with the ones as well. But Parkinson is the one making the bank, and also the one standing out the most.

In OTAs, McVay noted Parkinson "will add real value" and that "he's impressed in practice already with his size and catch radius at 6-foot-7." That's carried over into camp, where OC Mike LaFleur also hyped up Parkinson's size:

"He's had his best two days," offensive coordinator Mike LaFleur said Wednesday. "He's a long, strong, sturdy individual. ... He's a good-sized dude and he's got great athleticism. He can handle those edges."

At minimum, Parkinson should be a deadly red zone weapon for a pinpoint passer like **Matthew Stafford**. The Rams also like to limit substitutions, so the fact Parkinson excels as a run-blocker too is huge – he ranked 8th out of 83 TEs in PFF's run-blocking grades.

When you're hunting in the Round 17-18 range, Parkinson reminds me of **Jake Ferguson** from last year – a big body that could be a near every-down guy in an explosive passing attack. He's got as much TD upside as any player at any position in that price range.

Quarterback Sleepers

Note: I don't typically recommend drafting more than 1 QB in a one QB format, as the bench space is much better spent on upside Rookies or Handcuffs in strong offenses.

That being said, if you are in a 2 QB / SuperFlex league, or have very deep benches and are worried about your QB depth, here are a few targets

Prioritize Stafford & Cousins in the 120-140 Range
I assume **Matthew Stafford** and **Kirk Cousins** are gone, but I often see them go undrafted. They both have genuine 4500 & 40+ TD offenses given their play-callers and weaponry, so I LOVE those guys if I punt QB but want something safe. They are a perfect pairing with **Jayden Daniels**, which is an instance where I would prioritize two QBs (since he is not 100% certain).

Will Levis:
Levis flashed the arm talent last year especially in his 4 TD, 29 fantasy point TNF debut. The only problem? He only threw four more TDs the entire rest of the way (8 starts).

I had a hard time judging Levis for anything last year. He never topped 23 attempts, and was below 20 passes in 7 of 9 games. No QB can rack up stats on that low volume! Vrabel's offenses have been bottom-3 in pass attempts in 5-of-6 seasons, so getting a new HC should be a major first step for Levis.

Especially since that new HC is former Bengals OC **Brian Callahan**. His offenses continually rank in the Top-7 of pass rate over expectation. In Burrow's two full seasons, they ranked Top-7 in yards and TDs. Callahan has experience coaching Peyton Manning and Matthew Stafford, too. He certainly knows what it takes to be great, and if Levis has *it*, Callahan will squeeze it out of him.

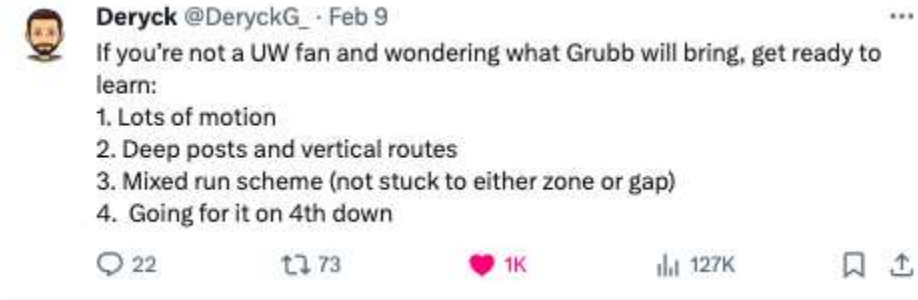
Plus, the weapon upgrades are big. You already saw my love for **Calvin Ridley,** but the team also drafted **JC Latham,** a beastly tackle, No. 7 overall to help address one of the worst lines in the league. Levis is far from a guarantee to "be the guy," but at least the team is putting everything in place around him to get a real evaluation at it. **Tyler Boyd** should be a reliable slot weapon, too.

Levis played like Drunk Jameis Winston last year, leading the NFL in "Hero-Worthy Throw Rate" (8%), as well as "Highest Turn Over Worthy Throw %." He's not afraid to sling it, and Callahan + these weapons will let him fire away at will. Whether he's actually good? We don't know. But the camp hype is fast and furious, and the set up is ripe to find out.

QB: Geno Smith
Every year, at least one new play caller comes in to spike fire for an entire offense and produce massive fantasy values as a result. **Sean McVay** took the Rams from literally worst to first in scoring when he arrived. **Mike McDaniel** has made the Dolphins an annual juggernaut. Shoot, just last year **Bobby Slowik** helped **CJ Stroud** and the Texans develop into an Aerial Bonanza.

This year, there's a ton of new playcallers with upside. I'm most intrigued by Seahawks OC **Ryan Grubb,** who entered the NFL after calling plays for the high-powered Washington Huskies last year.

Washington ranked 9th highest pass play rate in the nation, while also helping three WRs get drafted in the top-3 rounds. If you're wondering what to expect in this scheme, here's a strong summary:



In Seattle, Grubb inherits three dangerous WRs who perfectly fit the roles he built around in college. **DK Metcalf** would be the X (Odunze), **Jaxon Smith-Njigba** the H (McMillan) and **Tyler Lockett** the Z (Polk). This could be the most dangerous 3 WR group in the NFL if used properly and complementarity.

If the talent is right and Grubb proves to be the real deal, Geno will be set up for massive fantasy totals. This far, Geno reported "loves" Grubb and the offense, and he spent the summer working out in Los Angeles, Dallas and Fort Lauderdale, Florida, with teammates to get it down, which has allowed "Smith to start camp on a hot streak."

Geno's skills should fit this offense like a glove, particularly his deep passing. In 2022, Smith was THE best deep passer in NFL per PFF: 99.2 Rating (no.1), 47.1% comp % (no.2) & 15 TDs (no.1), on just the 10th most attempts!

Last year, he was reined in quite a bit more by **Shane Waldron,** but still finished 6th in Deep Passer Rating.

Grubb described his quarterback as "awesome." (& hinted at some untapped Konami Upside)

"I think that there is a really good marriage there with some of the skill set that Geno has. We asked our quarterbacks to do a lot. Luckily for us, Geno's really athletic as well. We don't have to limit it to just drop back. I think he's really good in the play action game, as well.

"Smith continued to spin it on Saturday, demonstrating a lightning quick release and elite accuracy dropping deep balls into the hands of his receivers."
"Continuing to shine and demonstrate excellent command orchestrating Grubb's offense, Smith turned in another outstanding practice on Friday, launching the ball downfield with great success all afternoon."

Grubb suggested allowing Geno to run more, and Smith is all about it: "Last year, really midway through the season, I felt I could have used my legs a little bit more," said Smith, whose 155 rushing yards on 37 carries

were down from 366 yards on 68 attempts the previous season. "That's something I want to continue to do. I'm still very athletic. I play within the pocket, that's the base of my game, but I think I could add an extra element to what defenses have to account for if I get a couple extra first downs or a couple of extra touchdowns."

Given this is essentially a contract year for Geno (no guaranteed money in 2025), he'll definitely be fired up to put his best ball on tape. The line is definitely a concern, but if Grubb (originally an OL coach) can help mask their deficiencies, this could be the perfect marriage of Skill Set + Weapons + Play Calling to invoke a nuclear fantasy reaction.

The Wolf is high on Ryan Grubb sparking a massive fantasy explosion in a Seattle offense loaded with weapon. All of Geno, DK, and Walker are on his target list, and even JSN and Lockett could be nice values at their depressed prices.

8/15 UPDATE - Sam Darnold - now a viable sleeper?!

Under Kevin O'Connell, the Vikings have accrued & ranked:

- Pass Attempts: 672 (3rd) and 631 (4th)
- Passing Yards: 4818 (2nd) and 4700 (1st)
- Passing TDs: 30 both years, 4th both years

Is Darnold great? No. Is Nick Mullens? No, and he topped 300+ yards in 3 of 4 starts, including 411 and 396 in two of his games! He was the QB10 in this span.

I truly believe Darnold could be this year's "Baker Mayfield" comeback

Draft Day Cheat Sheet: Targets / Value + Fades By Round

🐺 = **Top Targets** *- ADP Based on FantasyPros, Yahoo, & ESPN for Redraft*

Round 1 (1-12):

GOAL: Hero Worthy RB (CMC, Breece, Bijan) or Target Hog WR

- **RB Target: CMC, Breece 🐺, Bijan Robinson, Jonathan Taylor, Saquon**
- **RB Fade:** Jahmyr Gibbs w/ hammy sketchiness (8/13 update)
- **WR Target: All WR1s! Lamb🐺 > Tyreek > JJeff > ASB🐺 > Chase > AJB > GW**
- **WR Fade: Chase** should go after **Jefferson** or **ASB,** not before; Puka more Round 2 now

Round 2 (13-24):

GOAL: Opposite of Round 1 - Go RB if you got a WR; Go WR if you got RB. Or RB-RB solid, too

- 🐺 **RB Target:** If **JT** or **Barkley fall**; **Kyren Williams > De'Von Achane (Rd. 3?!) 🐺> Pacheco**
- **WR Target**: **If Puka or GW fall; Marv Harrison; D.Adams, Drake London (Rd 3?!)**
- **Fade: Travis Etienne, Chris Olave, Brandon Aiyuk, Josh Jacobs**
- **Soft Fade: Derrick Henry (gimme Achane or Pacheco instead!)**

Round 3-5 (25-60):

Goal = Achane or Elite Onesies! + WRs Gold

- **RB Target: De'Von Achane🐺, if Pacheco Falls. Otherwise NO OTHERS in Rd 3 (WRs / Elite QBs)**
- **If Desperate for RB: Ken Walker Rd 4** (James Cook & Kamara are *fine* here too)**
- 🐺 **Elite QB1 Target (Round 3): Josh Allen🐺 > Jalen Hurts > Lamar > Pat Mahomes**
- 🐺**WR Target**:
  - **RD 3: Drake London🐺, Deebo🐺, Nico Collins🐺, Cooper Kupp🐺 Mike Evans all = HUGE WR1 values**
  - **Rd 4: Jaylen Waddle, DK Metcalf, Malik Nabers🐺**
  - **Rd 5: DeVonta S, Amari Cooper, M.Nabers🐺 & Dell(if you don't think they'll fall to Rd. 6)**
- 🐺 **Elite TE1 Target (Round 5): Mark Andrews> Trey McBride > Dalton Kincaid**
- **Fade:**
  - **Anthony Richardson, Joe Burrow**
  - **Almost All RBs (Jacobs, Rachaad W, Mixon, A.Jones, Rhamondre, Montgomery)**
  - **WR: Michael Pittman**
- **Soft Fade: CJ Stroud (go Rd 3 QB instead); Kittle (go Kincaid cheaper); S. Diggs (Tank in Rd. 6)**

GOAL BUILD THROUGH ROUND 5 = Top-4 QB1, Hero RB, Top-12 WR1, + Top-5 TE & 1 more RB or WR*

Rounds 6-8 (61-96) = WR Gold Mine

Incredible WR Depth here. Most QBs, RBs, & TEs are overpriced. Set yourself up to HAMMER WR in this range.

- **WR Targets**: (Could honestly go 3 Straight WRs in RD 6,7,8!)
  - **~Rd 6: Tank Dell🐺, Zay Flowers, RASHEE RICE🐺!**
  - **~Rd 7: Terry McLaurin🐺*, Calvin Ridley, & XAVIER WORTHY🐺***
  - **~Rd. 8: Diontae J, Chris Godwin, (if either Chiefs WR falls*******)**

- **RBs to Consider:**
  Round 6: James Conner🐺, Najee Harris(Maybe?)
  Round 7-8: Tony Pollard*, BRob, Singletary
- **TE Target: Evan Engram🐺 & Jake Ferguson🐺 - GREAT VALUES here!**
- **Round 6-8 Fade:**
  - **QBs: Almost all QBs due to opp. Cost (Esp. Tua @ 92 + Brock @ 78)**
  - **RBs: Almost all RBs, but esp. Zamir White, D'Andre Swift, Nick Chubb**
  - **TEs: David Njoku at 75-80 feels rich**

Rounds 9-11 (97-132) = Elite Depth Pieces (or RB2s for Zero RB builds)

-Jayden Daniels = must-draft for non-elite QB builds
-Round 9-11 RB Talent Pool not far off from all the guys from Round 3-8
-Explosive WRs (& exciting rookies) still available

- **🐺QB Target: Jayden Daniels at ~108 = Best Pick of Draft (savior if non-elite QB approach)**
- **RB Target: Chase Brown🐺, Javonte W, Jonathan Brooks, Gus Bus, Corum**
- **WR Target: Brian Thomas🐺 Jame-o WIlliams, Ladd McConkey**
- **TE Target: Brock Bowers🐺**
- **Fade**
  - **ALL KICKERS**
  - **QB: Justin Herbert, Aaron Rodgers, Deshaun Watson**
  - **RB: Jerome Ford**
  - **WR: Jerry Jeudy**

Round 12-15+ (133-180+) = Home Run Swings (esp RB & WR)

Build that bench! SWING FOR THE FENCES & Target "Back-loaded Production" (Rookies, Handcuffs)
GOAL: Add a mix of "Upside / Ceiling" vs. "Usability / Floor" at all positions

WR Targets
Sleepers: Keon Coleman, & Khalil Shakir -Hunt for the Bills WR1🐺, Rashid Shaheed, Romeo Doubs & Dontayvion Wicks, Brandin Cooks, *AD Mitchell

DEEP Sleepers: Jalen McMillan, Demarcus Robinson🐺, Jalen Tolbert🐺 Andrei Iosivas🐺, Greg Dortch, Tim Patrick, Jalin Hyatt, Darius Slayton

RB Targets:
SLEEPERS: Rico Dowdle, Jaylen Wright🐺, Tyler Allgeier, Ray Davis🐺, Mashawn Lloyd, Braelon Allen

DEEP SLEEPERS: JORDAN MASON, Bucky Irving🐺, Khalil Herbert*, Audric Estime**

TE Targets: Hunter Henry, Taysom Hill, Tyler Conklin, Jonnu Smith, Noah Fant
DEEP: Colby Parkinson🐺

QB Targets: Matthew Stafford, Kirk Cousins, Geno Smith
DEEP: Will Levis, Sam Darnold, Drake Maye**

UPDATE LOG:

8/12 - Preseason Week 1

We covered all the meaningful Preseason Week 1 Takeaways, Risers, Fallers, and Usage on this show, but the nuggets specifically impacting this guide & cheat-sheet

-**Hollywood Brown** suffered a shoulder injury & his Week 1 status is now in question. While I still like him in the later rounds (especially if people overreact to this news), he is no longer Round 6-8 WR target.

Meanwhile, **Xavier Worthy** rises big, as does **Rashee Rice**. Worthy played nearly every snap with Mahomes and the starters even before Brown's injury. Now, Worthy will be leaned upon even more. If Rice is suspended for any length, there's a very real chance Worthy is the Top WR for Mahomes.

Rice remains a must-buy at his depressed price while we await news of his suspension. He already was set to dominate the "Lay Up" targets alongside Kelce, and should see even more volume while Hollywood is out.

~~-**Marshawn Lloyd** played as the fourth string runner for GB, and only last one carry (albeit a nice 8 yard run) before suffering a hamstring injury. He could still be a solid late round dart throw, but I now prefer targeting **Jaylen Wright**, who looked damn good in his NFL debut (10 att, 55 yards, 1 TD)~~

-**Tony Pollard** (57% of starter snaps & 6 opps) was in a rotation exactly as expected with Spears (43% of snaps, 4 opps, 1 TD). Yet, Pollard looked MUCH more explosive than he did last year, especially on his 25 yard scamper. He was always better in a split, and is no longer a hard fade for me.

8/13 - Dreaded Injury News!

--**Jahmyr Gibbs** suffered a hamstring injury in practice, his second soft-tissue injury this offseason. While he's expected to be ready for Week 1 (as of now), the nagging + re-occuring injuries do have me a bit scared for his floor + ceiling now. The missed reps as the possible slot WR definitely hurt his upside, and the risk of re-aggravation or another overcompensation injury has increased. Gibbs is now more of a Round 2 target for me than 10th overall.

-Tyrone Tracy, one of my deep RB sleepers, needed to be carted off with an air-cast after a non-contact injury. While we're awaiting final word, this unfortunately sounds like a season-ender. **Eric Gray,** meanwhile, enters the late round sleeper list. He scored 2 TDs in the preseason opener & looked damn solid, and now has a clear path to the RB2 role behind a fine, but just fine, starter in **Devin Singletary**.

This does also boost **Singletary**'s floor a bit, as Tracy seemed likely to mix in for 3rd down looks. Singletary was already a nice Round 8-9 RB Volume bet, and he's even stronger now.

TYRONE TRACY UPDATE X 2: It looks like Tracy's injury is not overly serious, and is just a sprain. He was back in team meetings later that day. There's no word yet on how long Tracy will officially be sidelined, but at least it's not a season-ender. Nonetheless, this does increase the odds Tracy starts slow, and makes him more of a "Watch List" player in redraft, rather than a draft-and-stash. **Eric Gray** is tougher to push as a sleeper now.

8/14:

JJ McCarthy will be out for all of 2024 following a full meniscus repair. He was very impressive in Preseason Week 1, and the floor and ceiling for the Vikings passing game takes a slight hit here.

Still, **Sam Darnold** also looked damn good. We've seen the impact a coach can have on a QB (**Dave Canales** reviving Geno Smith and then Baker Mayfield), and I believe in O'Connell. Since he took over two seasons ago, the Vikings have accured (ranked):

- Pass Attempts: 672 (3rd) and 631 (4th)
- Passing Yards: 4818 (2nd) and 4700 (1st)
- Passing TDs: 30 both years, 4th both years

Is Darnold great? No. Is Nick Mullens? No, and he topped 300+ yards in 3 of 4 starts, including 411 and 396 in two of his games! He was the QB10 in this span.

I truly believe Darnold could be this year's "Baker Mayfield" comeback and he's now a sleeper of mine in 2 QB leagues.

I also still keep Justin Jefferson as my WR4 and #6 overall player, behind only CMC, Lamb, Hill, Breece, and Bijan.

Jordan Addison also suffered an ankle injury. Though he got carted off, Addison appears to be OK, with Kevin O'Connell saying, "I don't see him missing any extended time." It appears Addison's bigger concern is his impending DUI charges and if/when a suspension could land (Otob

8/20 - Preseason Week 2 Updates:

Chiefs WRs Xavier Worthy & Rashee Rice

Both Worthy & Rice were already in my Round 8 Must-Target WRs. Their ADPs still hover around this range, so you don't want to overpay– but I have both WRs inside my Top-50 Overall now. Yes, I'd consider them worth Round 5 consideration!

Per **Dwain McFarland,** Rashee Rice has a 94% route participation rate and 38% target share on plays with Mahomes this preseason! The low aDot role (3.7) is still mildly concerning, yet it shows how clearly the team wants to funnel looks to Rice and let him do his thing. Reminder: Rice became a near full-time starter in Week 12, seeing 70%+ of routes from that point on. He thrived, finishing as the WR8 in FPPG over this span (15.2 Half-PPR). He was on pace for 162 targets, 122(!) receptions, 1468 yards, and 8 TDs– good for 259 Half-PPR FPs.

Perhaps the more shocking development is how fast the Chiefs are throwing Worthy into the fire. He's been a near every-down WR, with an 89% route participation with Mahomes. He played all but 3 snaps with the starters last week, and now has 25% target share & 68% Air Yard share! In Week 2, he rcked

up 4 touches (3 rec) for 73 yards & 1 TD. He's moving around more than any other WR, with his TD coming out of the slot. He's getting designed runs and screens. The speediest player to ever touch an NFL field is being used early and often, and should break out HUGE. I have him at 50 overall – he goes around 100 right now in Redraft ADP, but be prepared to spend what you need to lock up at least one, if not both, of these WRs.

Ultimately, the Chiefs and Mahomes seem due to erupt for another 5K & 50 TDs, and the weapons have never been cheaper. BUY BUY BUY in all formats!

Malik Nabers

Speaking of rookie WRs rising… **Malik Nabers** continues climbing! He posted 33% target share and 35% target-per-route, seeing 6 looks, 4 receptions, and 54 yards. Many of his grabs were contested circus grabs, too. Yes, **Daniel Jones** looks like dog mess (2 ints) – but we should also notice him & Daboll's desire to sling the rock deep. Jones may never be *good*, but with he rust shaken off, he can be better.

Jaylen Warren
Warren suffered a hamstring injury that could sideline him into 2024. Perhaps even more concerning, the Steelers offense looks downright dreadful. Despite playing Russel and Fields the entire game, the Steelers mustered 3 total points and 139 passing yards. The "revamped" offensive line was allowing pressure all night and providing minimal rushing lanes (while also suffering some injuries). Warren is no longer a target until later, while Pickens, and even Najee, took some slight bumps. I will likely target another player (i.e. Conner over Najee; McLaurin over Pickens) over adding any Steelers to my 2024 Rosters here on out.

~~**Broncos WRs Updates: Marvin Mims = SCARY, Tim Patrick = Sleeper?!**~~

~~Marvin Mims logged all of *checks notes* ONE snap with Bo Nix and the starters in Preseason Week 2. While he will undoubtedly mix in for some field stretching and explosives, Mims is impossible to trust in redraft with such minimal field time. He's still a talent I believe in, so if it seems like he is carving out a steady role in-season, Mims will be one of my fastest Waiver Wire adds (& he's still a decent click towards the end of Best Ball drafts).~~

~~Still, **Tim Patrick** seems to be the clear No.2 WR here behind **Courtland Sutton**. In Week 2, Patrick led the team with 4 tgts, which he turned int 4 rec, 30 yards, and 1 TD. Despite suffering back-to-back season-ending injuries in the 2022 and 2023 preseasons, Patrick looks as smooth as ever. In his last two seasons, he finished as the WR41 in back-to-back years. Earth shattering? No – but a fringe WR3 at the WR100+ price?! Patrick's style of play greatly fits Sean Payton + Bo Nix's quick-strike, rhythm-based mode of attack. Patrick's a great last round Best Ball and deeper league stab.~~

Curtis Samuel - Turf Toe! Samuel is now week-to-week, dealing with turf toe. While some upbeat reports suggest he could be back for Week 1, this is the type of injury that can linger. In the mean time, the hunt for Allen's WR1 now boils down to **Khalil Shakir** and **Keon Coleman**, who both rise.

JaLynn Polk

While I'm not giving up fully, I am just expressing my concern that Polk has been unable to lock in any work with the starters this preseason. He's behind Osborn, Tyquan Thornton, and Reagor as of now, playing just 2-of-15 snaps with the 1st team offense. Even wit the second team and Drake Maye, Polk was outtargeted by **Javon Baker**. The practice reports continue to praise Polk, but the on-field action has yet to match, so I am starting to cool off

Update x 2: The papers continue to single Polk out as the single-most consistent WR of the group in every practice, regardless of the odd preseason usage. I still have faith he'll emerge as the clear No.1 here, especially if Maye is inserted sooner than later

Preseason Week 3 & other updates - 8/27/24

With the Preseason now wrapped up, I did a MASSIVE Guide Update over the past two days.

More drafts are in the books and ADP has been shaken up quite a bit, so I have made appropriate changes to the Cheat Sheet & inside the guide. The most notable changes:

- **Cooper Kupp** has risen into Round 3, where he's still a great buy

- **Malik Nabers** now goes in Round 4-5 range. I have him at 32 overall, so I'm still buying big time

- **Rashee Rice** and **Xavier Worthy** continue to climb in ADP… and I continue to remain +20 picks ahead. I'd take Rice and Worthy in Round 5, so check where your site will let them go– typically Rice is there in Round 6 & Worthy in Round 8-9

- **Tony Pollard** is completely off my fade list, and is even a Round 7-8 "target" at this point. He's playing firmly ahead of **Tyjae Spears** this preseason & looks fully back to the explosive RB we knew and loved. Pollard is up +5 RB spots to my RB24 and now a target in the Round 7-8 range

- You can't get **Xavier Worthy** in Round 10 or **Malik Nabers** in Round 6 anymore, so I sifted through the ADP to update the guide & cheat sheet.

PENNY STOCKS: Many of my original sleepers have suffered injuries or fallen out of favor, so I have updated the list to include new ones who have emerged:

Removed (for now): Javon Baker, Josh Downs

Added: Adonai Mitchell, Khalil Herbert, Kimani Vidal, Jordan Mason***

TE Changes: Additionally, **Evan Engram** reminded me he is incredibly undervalued in Round 6/7 right now & I added the following write-up:

"It took Preseason Week 3 to wake me up.. But **Evan Engram** might be the single-best TE value of 2024.

Last year, Engram was THE TE2(!) in fantasy! He had more catches (114) than everyone in the NFL besides CeeDee Lamb, Tyreek Hill, and Amon-Ra St. Brown. It was the second-most catches by a TE in NFL history, and his 143 targets led the position.

With a little TD luck, Engram could break fantasy. This is where **Calvin Ridley**'s departure could be huge. Ridley was third in the NFL with 25 Red Zone targets, 54.3% of the Jags looks inside-the-20! He vacates a total of 136 targets. Yes, **Brian Thomas** will soak up a bunch of that, and is an elite TD scorer.

Yet, Engram is a massive and nimble body. He scored 2 TDs in Preseason Week 3 on 2 End Zone targets. He was lining up in the backfield and moved everywhere.

Yes, his best games came with **Christian Kirk** out of the lineup – as a Jag, Engram averaged 19.3 FPPG without Kirk, compared to 10.4 with him. Still, if the "Elite TE thesis" is access to spike weeks, Engram had the second-highest single-game FP total (32 PPR FPs, 27 Half) in 2023. He had a 39.2 spike in Week 14 of 2022!

Ultimately, I have grown much more confident in waiting on TE with Engram available late-6th, Early-7th. He has maybe the highest floor of anyone at the position, and we may not have seen the ceiling yet.

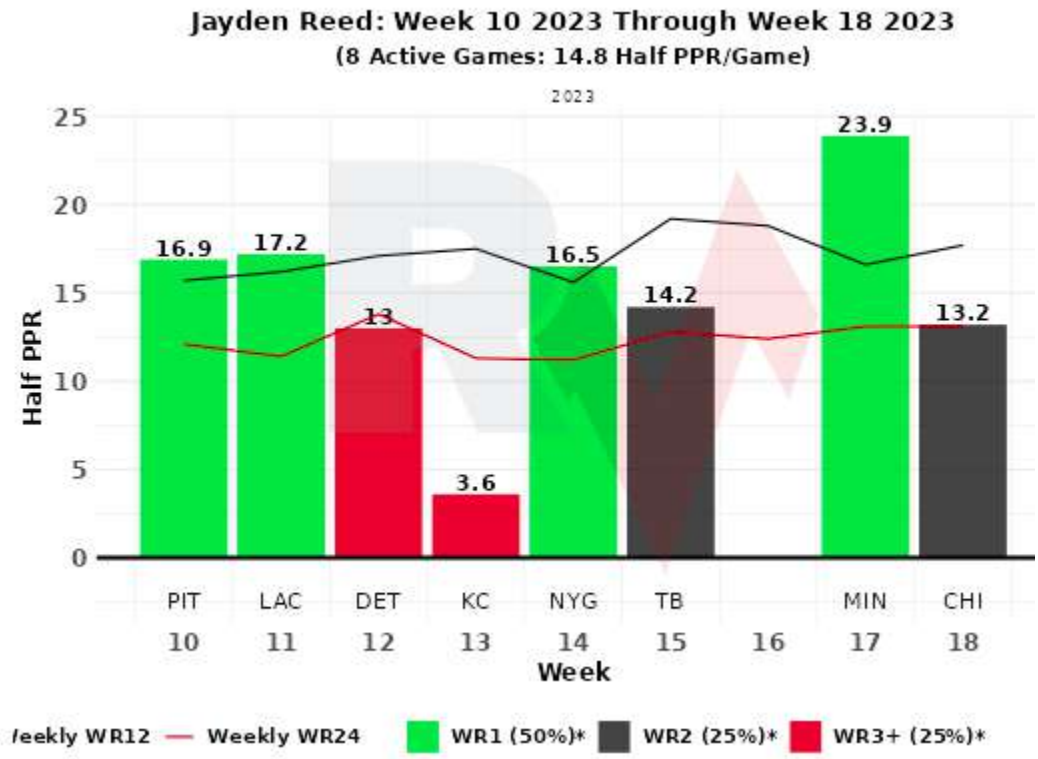
While the Round 4-5 TEs are still great buys, both Engram & Ferguson have me really re-considering just how highly I need to prioritize them – especially if a WR is available in Round 5 that I love. This is a key change to my draft philosophy in the late draft season!?|"

WR Target Change: Last - I am noticing **Jayden Reed** is now going in the late 7th through 9th rounds, so I am adding him into my WR Targets in this range. He's yet another reason why punting WR to the Round 5-8 range is totally viable if you miss out on one of the true 5-6 "Alpha WR1s."

While this Packers rotation could get messy, and he hasn't consistently played 2 WR sets, I feel this prices is far too low for a guy who flashed as brightly as him.

Historically, Rookie WRs who post over 200+ PPR FPs almost always explode in Year 2. They may not face quite as crowded WR rooms as Reed currently does, but also consider – Reed only crested 70%+ of the snaps 3 times last year. He had a 26.9 FP day on just 31.9% snap share in Week 17. He does not need a full-time role to make a massive impact, he just needs steady touches. As his role evolved into a "Deebo-lite" hybrid, steady touches are exactly what Reed got.

From Week 10 onward, when the Packers offense began to really take off, Reed ranked as the WR9 in fantasy, averaging 14.8 Half-PPR FPPG. 50% of Reed's remaining games were Top-12 WR1 performances (his 4 total in this span were more than Olave all year), and he dipped below 13 FPs only one time:



While this GB Room projects to be volatile, Reed feels like the best bet for steady, designed looks. His 653 yards from the slot were behind only CeeDee Lamb and Amon-Ra St. Brown, and his average depth of target of 11.9 yards was the fifth-highest, and his deep target rate of 26.2% was the third-highest (per PFF)

In Round 8, Reed can be had as your WR3 or Flex, but offer week-swinging upside.

8/27 Update ROSTER CUTS & IR MOVES – more detailed breakdowns in Penny Stock Section:**

Some HUGE roster moves that are shaking up the fantasy landscape just in time for draft season:

- **AJ Dillon** is on season-ending IR, clearing the runway for **MarShawn Lloyd** to regain explosive sleeper status. He's right back into my Top-3 Sleeper RBs
- **Eli Mitchell** is also on season-ending IR, which makes **Jordan Mason** among the most valable handcuffs in all of fantasy & a must-draft Penny Stock
- **Samaje Perine** has been cut by the Broncos. He could definitely mess up a backfield as a capable volume hog, especially in the receiving game (rumor = Bengals). This also frees up the third-down role for **Jaleel McLaughlin** – who now becomes draftable, while also increasing **Audric Estime**'s ceiling
- **Tim Patrick** looked locked into a starting role after an impressive 4, 40, 1 TD PSzn Week 2… and now he's cut? Rumblings he'll land with the Lions (beautiful fit)-- but either way, **Marvin Mims** is right back to sleeper status