• Rankings
  ○ Weekly
    ▪ Standard
    ▪ Half PPR
    ▪ Full PPR
    ▪ Custom
    ▪ Rest-of-Season
    ▪ Printable Cheat Sheet
    ▪ IDP

• Research
  ○ Analysis
    ▪ All Articles
    ▪ Full Schedule
    ▪ Waiver Wire
    ▪ Streaming
    ▪ The Rundown
    ▪ Traders Alley
    ▪ Sneaky Starts
    ▪ Betting
    ▪ Injuries
    ▪ IDP
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  ○ Strength of Schedule
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    ▪ Positional Rankings
    ▪ Schedule Grid
    ▪ Playoff Matchup Planner
  ○ Reports
    ▪ Avg Draft Position (ADP)
    ▪ Red Zone Statistics
    ▪ Box Score Forecasts
    ▪ RBBC Report
    ▪ Def Knowledgeseeker
    ▪ More
DFS MVP Podcast

Fantasy First Podcast

- Tools
  - Weekly
    - LeagueSync
    - Custom Scoring
    - Trade Evaluator
    - Weather
    - Mobile Apps
  - Stats
    - Fantasy Points Browser
    - Player Snaps App
    - Player Targets App
    - Player Touches App

- DFS
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    - All Articles
    - Strategy Hub
    - Cash Games
    - DraftKings
    - FanDuel
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    - GPPs
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    - Leverage Scores
    - Ownership Projections
    - Pricing CSV
Expert Fantasy Football Mock Draft Recap: 12-Team PPR

Greg Smith
Author twitter link
Jun 10, 2019
Welcome to the first article in my series of expert mock draft recaps for the 2019 season. This kickoff installment featured the 12 analysts listed below drafting for PPR scoring with rosters composed of 1QB, 2 RB, 3 WR, 1 TE, 1 RB/WR/TE Flex and 8 bench spots (no kickers or team defenses).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Draft Pick</th>
<th>Drafter</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>JJ Zachariason (@LateRoundQB)</td>
<td>FanDuel / numberFire</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Travis May (@FF_TravisM)</td>
<td>Rotoviz / Dynasty Command Center</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Pete Davidson (@Rotobahn)</td>
<td>Rotobahn / WEEI</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Scott Barrett (@ScottBarrettDFB)</td>
<td>Pro Football Focus</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Matt Harmon (@MattHarmon_BYB)</td>
<td>Yahoo!</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Josh ADHD (@FantasyADHD)</td>
<td>Fantasy Insiders / Rotogrinders</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Pat Thorman (@Pat_Thorman)</td>
<td>Parts unknown...</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Evan Silva (@evansilva)</td>
<td>Rotoworld</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Anthony Amico (@amicsta)</td>
<td>FantasyLabs / Rotogrinders</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>TJ Hernandez (@TJHernandez)</td>
<td>4for4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Melissa Jacobs (@thefootballgirl)</td>
<td>The Football Girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Michael Beller (@MBeller)</td>
<td>Sports Illustrated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Be sure to give each analyst a follow on Twitter!

When sharp fantasy footballers with diverging #brands like these get together and draft, the results are always fascinating. Who is willing to pay up for the “onesie” positions of quarterback and tight end? How do the values of running backs and wide receivers compare when receptions are so valuable? Who is
willing to jump on potential grenades with injury risks and questionable workloads? Let’s dig into the results and find out.

**Rounds 1 & 2**

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**Positions Drafted:** 0 QBs, 13 RBs, 9 WRs, 2 TEs

Our first seven picks were all running backs, and before you spring toward “So much for PPR!” on your jump-to-conclusions mat, note that all seven of those players are also competent receivers. Considering the league’s continuing trend toward split backfields, it makes sense to chase after the limited number of rushers who could be true every-down contributors. In the second round, Pat, Matt, Scott, and Travis doubled down on running backs to leverage the advantages they gained at that position in the first round.

This draft had its fair share of receiver truthers, though, as the back half of the pick order featured three teams avoiding running backs outright in these rounds. One of those drafters was Evan, who made Davante Adams the first wideout off the board at eighth overall, wisely coveting the top pass-catcher for Aaron Rodgers. Evan then paired Adams with Mike Evans in the second round to lock up the players with the second- and fourth-most receiving touchdowns over the past three seasons, respectively.

Finding the end zone was a theme with other receivers drafted in this range, too. In that same three-year span, Antonio Brown (0.82 TD/game), DeAndre Hopkins (0.60), Odell Beckham (0.59), Michael Thomas (0.49), Travis Kelce (0.47) Julu Smith-Schuster (0.47) and Zach Ertz (0.45) all joined Adams (0.78) and Evans (0.53) in the top-20 of touchdowns per game among receivers. PPR scoring inflates the value of all pass-catchers, even the bad and mediocre ones, so it figures that our experts used their high-end draft capital on players able to differentiate with more red zone production.

**Reaches & Steals**

No pick in these first rounds stands out as an obvious reach, but I would nitpick Pete’s selection of Ertz if forced to choose. I don’t like paying up for tight ends and have concerns about DeSean Jackson, Dallas Goedert and JJ Arcega-Whiteside siphoning some of Ertz’s volume. On the flip side, Pete identified Melissa’s pick of DeAndre Hopkins as likely the best value in these opening rounds, and I’m inclined to agree with him. Hopkins is ADP’s top wide receiver, typically drafted in the middle of the first round, and Melissa managed to land him as the WR5 at 14th overall.

**Rounds 3 & 4**

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All but two of the picks in these next rounds were running backs or wide receivers, as most drafters opted to balance their rosters a bit. Anthony was one exception. He stayed true to his Zero-RB stripes by piling Brandin Cooks and Sammy Watkins on top of his WR-TE start (Smith-Schuster and Kelce). The other exception was Scott, who drafted his third ball-carrier in the third round, then broke the quarterback seal with Patrick Mahomes in the fourth.

Reaches & Steals

I see the value in hammering the running back position early, especially with the backdrop of PPR scoring in place to boost the value of mid-round wide receivers, but I can’t get on board with a quarterback in the fourth round. That said, I can’t help but appreciate the non-traditional stack of Mahomes and Damien Williams. Despite the assumed loss of Tyreek Hill, the Chiefs’ offense should remain potent, and Scott’s squad will be involved most of Kansas City’s scoring plays because he drafted both their quarterback and lead rusher.

My favorite value here was Derrick Henry as the RB21. With that fourth-round pick, Pat scored the last guy in the tier of running backs with locked-in lead roles. There are concerns about Tennessee’s offensive approach and Marcus Mariota’s ability to lead that offense, but considering how Henry ran over the league in the second half of last season, I’m amazed he lasted as long as he did, regardless of his limitations as a pass-catcher.

Rounds 5-8

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Pass-catchers dominated these next four rounds, as most running backs drafted after the fourth round are slated for timeshares. Deciphering split backfields is a difficult task, but a necessary one, especially for drafters who didn’t invest more early picks in rushers.

Josh only took one ball-carrier in the first five rounds, so he had to bite the bullet on Lamar Miller in Round 6, a risky pick considering flimsy state of Houston’s offensive line and the potential emergence of D’Onta
Foreman. Josh took a different sort of risk later with rookie Darrell Henderson, who could usurp the lead rushing role for the Rams if Todd Gurley’s health remains an issue. Whether you like either pick or not in a vacuum, this is a good example of mixing a known “floor” commodity (Miller) with an unknown “upside” commodity (Henderson) to balance the risk profile of a team.

Speaking of rookies, Travis told me after the draft he thought they were being discounted too much. (Spoiler Alert!) Vader is Luke’s father, and Travis ends up with seven rookies in this draft—four wide receivers, two tight ends, and one running back. Add in Derrius Guice, who didn’t play as a rookie last season, and half of Travis’ roster hasn’t logged a regular season snap in the NFL. I couldn’t help but push back against Travis and question the potential for rookie bias based on his background in dynasty formats, but he held firm in his statement within this redraft context.

No one else drafted as many first-year players as Travis, but these middle rounds featured plenty of youngsters being drafted by all teams. Thanks to the NFL’s collective bargaining agreement and how it incentivizes teams to build rosters, professional football has largely become a young man’s game. These analysts have certainly taken note, evidenced by their prioritization of youth and upside with the picks above.

I really enjoyed the competing picks of Golden Tate and Sterling Shepard going back to back in the seventh round. The Giants’ offense is difficult to sort out, and I’d love to see a good-natured wager between Scott and Matt as to which wideout scores more this season. Tate won the head-to-head last season (12.2 PPR points per game compared to Shepard’s 11.4), but 4for4’s PPR projections for 2019 narrowly side with Shepard.

**Reaches & Steals**

My least favorite pick in this range was Jordan Howard to Melissa. In PPR formats, I’d rather throw darts at split-backfield running backs with more receiving ability. With that said, it’s not like she took Howard ahead of his running mate Miles Sanders. Maybe Melissa really believes in Philadelphia this season and projects enough positive game script plus goal-line work for Howard to return value at his cost.

On the other hand, TJ’s pick of James Washington felt like the biggest steal. The targets vacated by Antonio Brown in Pittsburgh present a huge opportunity for Washington, so much so that I would have drafted him ahead of the two wideouts TJ picked just before. Tyler Boyd and DeDe Westbrook should see similar usage, but I prefer Washington’s quarterback situation.

**Rounds 9-16**

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If James Washington can’t fill the void left by Antonio Brown, that responsibility could fall to Vance McDonald, who JJ selected at the top of the ninth round. Question marks and red flags are common for late-round tight ends, but McDonald’s talent and opportunity are undeniable. Later, JJ insured himself against McDonald’s injury history with another cheap but ascending tight end in Austin Hooper, and eventually, Mr. Late Round Quarterback stayed on-brand by making Lamar Jackson the last pick of the draft.

He wasn’t the only drafter snoozing on quarterback, though. TJ also waited until the last round to make Jared Goff his fantasy signal-caller, and Melissa snagged Jimmy Garoppolo only four picks prior. Meanwhile, Anthony and Josh didn’t draft their first passers until Round 14 (Cam Newton and Dak Prescott, respectively), then Anthony followed up with Jameis Winston in the 16th. Pat was surprised by the quarterback position’s lack of interest from most drafters, saying, “It was pretty aggressive, even for an analyst draft.”

Those who spent higher picks in this range on quarterbacks didn’t necessarily overpay, though. Michael, in particular, didn’t care that his opponents were able to get good-to-great passers late. He believes Baker Mayfield will be the No. 1 quarterback in fantasy this year. I’m sure Matt believes something similar with Aaron Rodgers, as does Evan with Andrew Luck. And while they can’t all be right, the opportunity cost of spending a ninth- or 10th-round pick on the position isn’t too steep to take those chances. Just look at the non-quarterback names going in that part of the draft. How confident can anyone be that 10th-rounders like Anthony Miller or Austin Ekeler will outproduce players like Marquez Valdes-Scantling or Damien Harris being drafted later, alongside cheaper quarterbacks? Hits can come from anywhere in the later rounds, and you can set yourself up for success if you manage to combine deep RB/WR hits with an elite quarterback from a slightly earlier round.

Reaches & Steals

Picking the right players is easier said than done, though, and the depth of quarterback can’t be overstated. So on the unlikely chance that I do pay up for a passer, I want that player to have a sustained track record of high-level production. With that in mind, Carson Wentz in Round 10 as the QB7 feels like a reach to me. His supporting cast in Philadelphia is strong, but he’s only ever shown flashes of brilliance. I don’t see much difference between Wentz and Matt Ryan, who Travis drafted three rounds later.

Meanwhile, Ryan’s teammate Ito Smith might end up as the biggest steal from this draft. He’s not a tremendous talent, only averaging 4.0 yards per touch in his rookie year, but Smith doesn’t have much competition aside from Devonta Freeman, who has only played a full season once in his career. If Freeman falls to hold up yet again, and Smith becomes the Falcons’ starter, his pedigree will become somewhat irrelevant.
My other favorite potential value in the back half of this draft was Pat’s pick of Damien Harris. The Patriots picked him only 17 spots after the Rams took Darrell Henderson in the NFL Draft, and Henderson went 71 spots earlier in this mock. There appears to be more competition in New England’s backfield than Henderson will face in Los Angeles, but any playing time downside for Harris is already baked into his cost. Bill Belichick routinely surprises his opponents and fantasy players alike with unpredictable running back usage. Harris could very well climb this depth chart, especially if he’s given footholds in the form of the braces and slings so often found on the limbs of Sony Michel and Rex Burkhead.

Draft Strategy Highlights
All in all, this was an interesting mock draft. The strategies that JJ and Pat employed most closely mirror how I would approach this format. I admire JJ’s discipline in waiting on both tight end and quarterback. When he finally pounced on the onesie positions, I liked the players he chose. What impressed me about Pat’s draft is how established the real-life roles of his players seem to be. And it helps that I see a lot of touchdown upside within those projected roles.

Of the strategies that don’t line up with my sensibilities, I’m most intrigued by Anthony’s results. He didn’t go full Zero-RB, but he wasn’t far off, either. Despite waiting on the position, all of the running backs he picked profile as quality pass-catching options out of the backfield for their respective teams. Meanwhile, some portion of the risk he took on at running back should be mitigated by his hyper-stable tight end group. Travis Kelce should remain a fantasy monster and O.J. Howard could unseat George Kittle, Zach Ertz, or both from the top-three at their position. I wouldn’t have drafted in the same way, but Anthony’s starting lineup looks formidable in this full-PPR context.

Which picks and rosters stand out to you? Let me know on Twitter (@gregsauce), and stay tuned for a different twist when I review 4for4’s next analyst mock draft later this month.

Draft Strategy

About Author
Greg Smith

Follow on twitter
Greg Smith is an engineer and an enthusiast in the strategy and design of variance-based games. When it comes to fantasy football, he prefers the added complexity and emphasis on quarterbacks in 2QB and Superflex leagues, but Greg enjoys formats of all types. He co-founded TwoQBs in 2016 and finished 11th in FantasyPros' in-season rankings accuracy in 2017.

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