Benjamin Martin

2025 NFL Draft Analysis

Quarterbacks

February 12, 2025

Introduction

Every year, top college football players are selected in the NFL draft. There are 7 rounds plus a pool of players that go undrafted. It's each teams' jobs to scout the players thoroughly by determining their skill, team fit, ability, talent, and transferable skills to each football team. It's a multi-billion dollar industry for the NFL as teams are put under immense pressure to perform well when selecting players for the team. Drafting the right rookies can be the difference between bad and mediocre teams to drafting Hall of Fame type players and building a dynasty. It is about finding the right players in the early rounds, but also finding high value in the later rounds. There are 32 teams in the league, so everyone is competing to find the best players, utilizing the best strategies. Finding the sweet spot between refueling your roster and finding the next superstar can be tricky, so using the right statistics and organizing them can be greatly beneficial to the pre-drafting process. The most important position in all of sports, and especially in football is the quarterback position. So the purpose of this research paper is to find the best quarterbacks in the 2025 NFL draft by looking at the top prospects comparatively among how their statistics stack up with each other and to discover any potential red flags that may be useful in staying away from prospects that may be fools' gold. Therefore, the research questions are: How do the quarterbacks match to

their cumulative rankings? Are there any hidden gems worth pursuing? Which quarterbacks are seen as good prospects but the statistics tell a different story? What can be concluded about this 2025 NFL draft class?

Methodology

There are a consensus top sixteen prospects in the 2025 NFL draft. These include players that are expected to go first overall, top three, the first round, the middle rounds, and all the way to undrafted. The players that will be in this analysis include Cam Ward, Shedeur Sanders, Dillon Gabriel, Jalen Milroe, Will Howard, Riley Leonard, Quinn Ewers, Kyle McCord, Kurtis Rourke, Max Brosmer, Tyler Shough, Jaxson Dart, Seth Henigan, Brady Cook, KJ Jefferson, and DJ Uiagalelei. There were four main data sources used for this research analysis. The first one is from ESPN. They are a major sports website that has a proven track record of having the correct statistics on players. The website used in this research paper is https://www.espn.com/college-football/stats/player. This includes each of the players' names, their position of quarterback, total completions, total passing attempts, completion percentage of those attempts, the total yards thrown, the average yards thrown per completion, their longest play in yards, total passing touchdowns that counted, total interceptions that counted, the number of sacks they took, and their passer rating. All of these are based on the 2024 season.

The next data source is from FOX sports. This specifically states their fumbles, which is extremely important in determining how well they handle ball security. A game

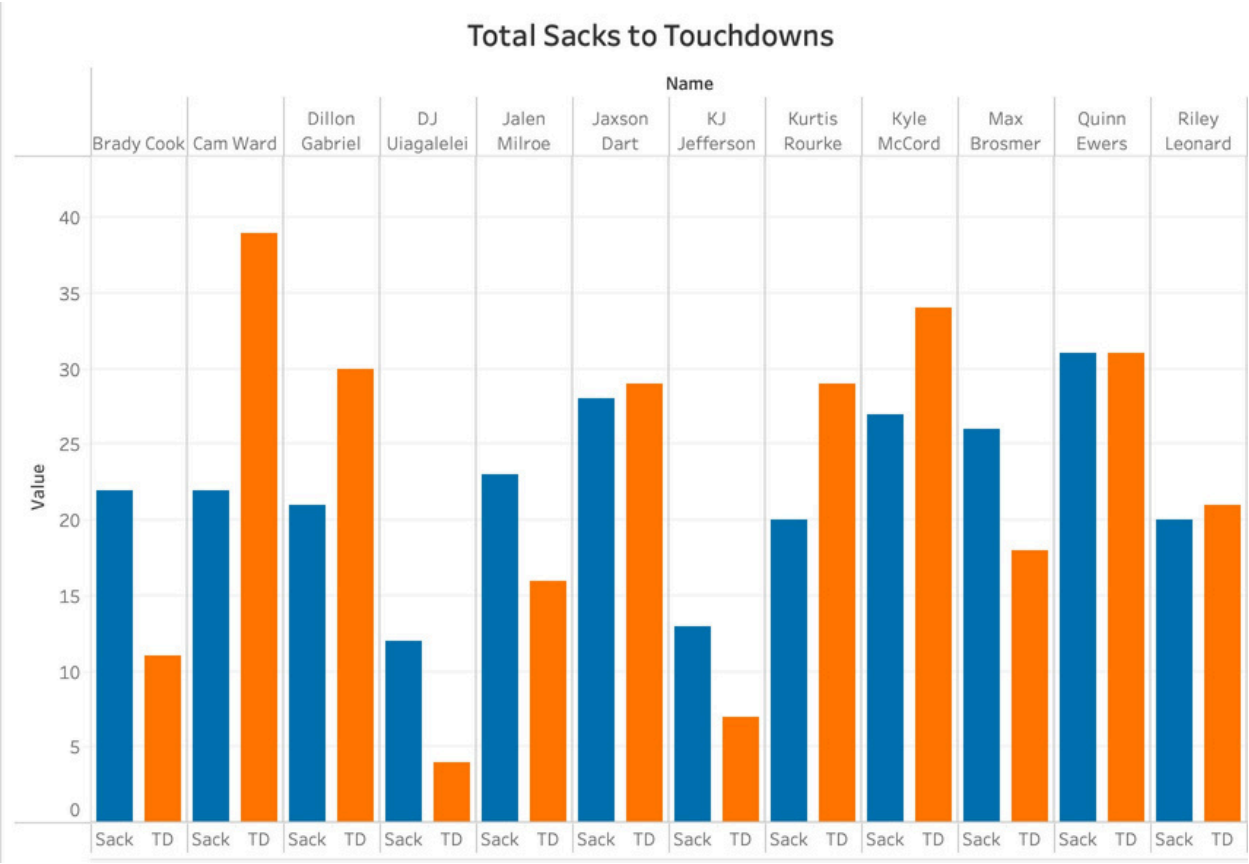
can be won or lost based on turnovers, so if they tend to fumble a lot, even if they are able to recover it, that may be a huge issue. The website used in this research paper is https://www.foxsports.com/college-football/kyle-mccord-player-stats?category=rushing&seasonType=reg (and each subsequent player's name). This includes the players' names, total fumbles, and fumbles lost. All of these are based on the 2024 season. The third data source is from PFF. They are a relatively newer sports analytics company that looks at other minor statistics to give a more complete grade on a player. While they do list all of the main statistics that are included in ESPN, I specifically wanted to add their grade for each of the sixteen players. So included in the data is the players' names and their PFF grade. This is based on the 2024 season. The website used to obtain this in- formation is https://www.pff.com/draft/nfl-mock-draft-simulator?ref=ecda9694-640b-46ac-a5b2-f018815ae2b1.

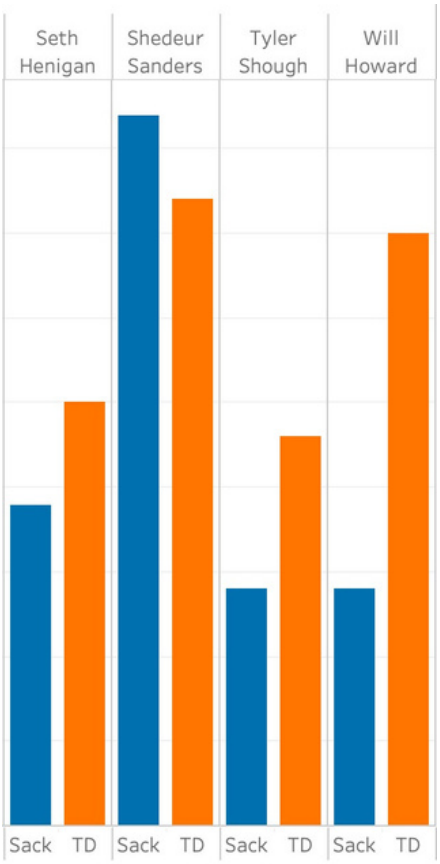
The last data source is from NFL Draft Buzz. This is an alternative sports statistics website that adds a lot of information for the players that aren't the main statistics. It's always helpful to consider these extra statistics and insights to get a more complete profile for each prospect. The website used for this data source is https://www.nfldraftbuzz.com/Player/Cameron-Ward-QB-IncarnateWord (and for each subsequent player). The dataset includes each player's names, the NFL Draft Buzz rating, the opposition rating which shows how hard their competition was to play against, their release speed rating when throwing the ball, their rating for short passing, rating for medium passing, rating for long passing, their rating for their ability to rush or scramble from the designed play, plus it shows other websites' ratings for the players including ESPN, 247 which specializes in college football statistics based on high school pro-

files, and rivals which is a football news source that gives another opinion for rankings, as well as each of the players' weight and forty yard dash time. These are all based on the 2024 season. Note: the same color key will be used for each color-coded graph of the sixteen prospects. Also the scoring system will be 6 being a star, 4 being great, 2 being noteworthy, 0 being indifferent, and -4 showing to stay away in each category.

Analysis

The research is to find the best prospect among the consensus top sixteen, with identifying any more value quarterbacks that would be worth drafting, and flagging any quarterbacks that may be worth staying away from, even with a high draft rating. Let's start by looking at the sixteen quarterbacks with how their total sacks compare to their total passing touchdowns.





Looking at this bar graph easily shows all of the quarterbacks' sacks and touch-downs and how they compare to one another. While the sacks can show how good their protection is from their offensive line, it can also show that they may hold onto the ball too long and either don't throw it to a receiver, throw the ball away, or scramble out of the play. A sack is also a negative play that is either no gain or loses yards on the down. There are only four downs in football in a sequence, and the team normally

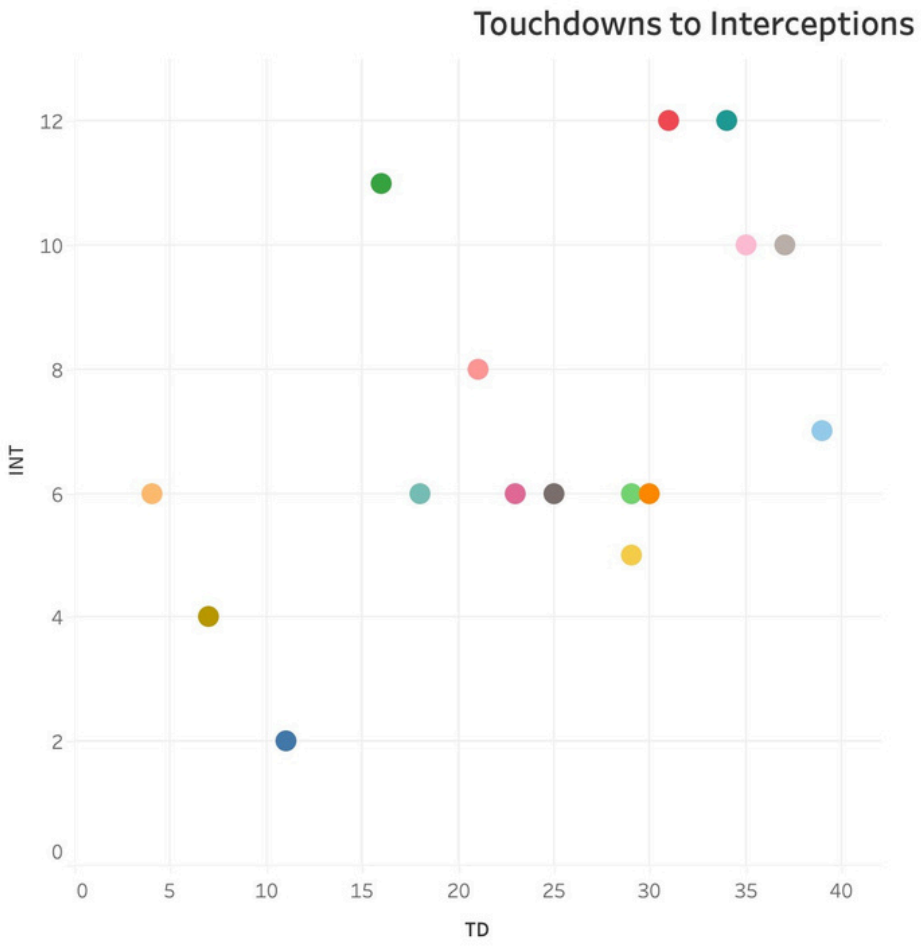
punts on the fourth down, so wasting a down on a sack is considered bad for his team. Passing touchdowns on the other hand show how productive the quarterback is to his team in scoring. So this bar graph compares how productive the quarterback is compared to how many bad decisions he makes on the season in terms of sack numbers. After studying this graph, it looks like Cam Ward sticks out for having a lot of touchdowns when compared to sacks. On the other hand, Brady Cook would be someone to stay away from because he's making way more bad decisions than producing for his team. Let's keep a tally throughout this analysis to show who may be the best by the end. So let's give a grade for each, with 6 being a star, 4 being great, 2 being noteworthy, 0 being indifferent, and -4 showing to stay away in each category. So based on this bar graph, we can conclude:

Name	Score
Cam Ward	6
Shedeur Sanders	-4
Dillon Gabriel	4
Jalen Milroe	-4
Will Howard	6
Riley Leonard	0
Quinn Ewers	0
Kyle McCord	2
Kurtis Rourke	4
Max Brosmer	-4
Tyler Shough	4
Jaxson Dart	0
Seth Henigan	2
Brady Cook	-4

Name	Score
KJ Jefferson	-4
DJ Uiagalelei	-4

It looks like Cam Ward and Will Howard ended up being the stars while Shedeur Sanders, Jalen Milroe, Max Brosmer, Brady Cook, KJ Jefferson, and DJ Uiagalelei look like they have serious problems in this category.

The next chart is the touchdowns to interceptions. Just like fumbles showed ball security and decision making, interceptions also are a key indictor for the quarterback's decisions. This chart shows how productive each quarterback is versus how many bad game-changing decisions they're making. Interceptions are a lot worse than sacks as it turns the ball over to the other team and they lose possession. Let's look at the chart:

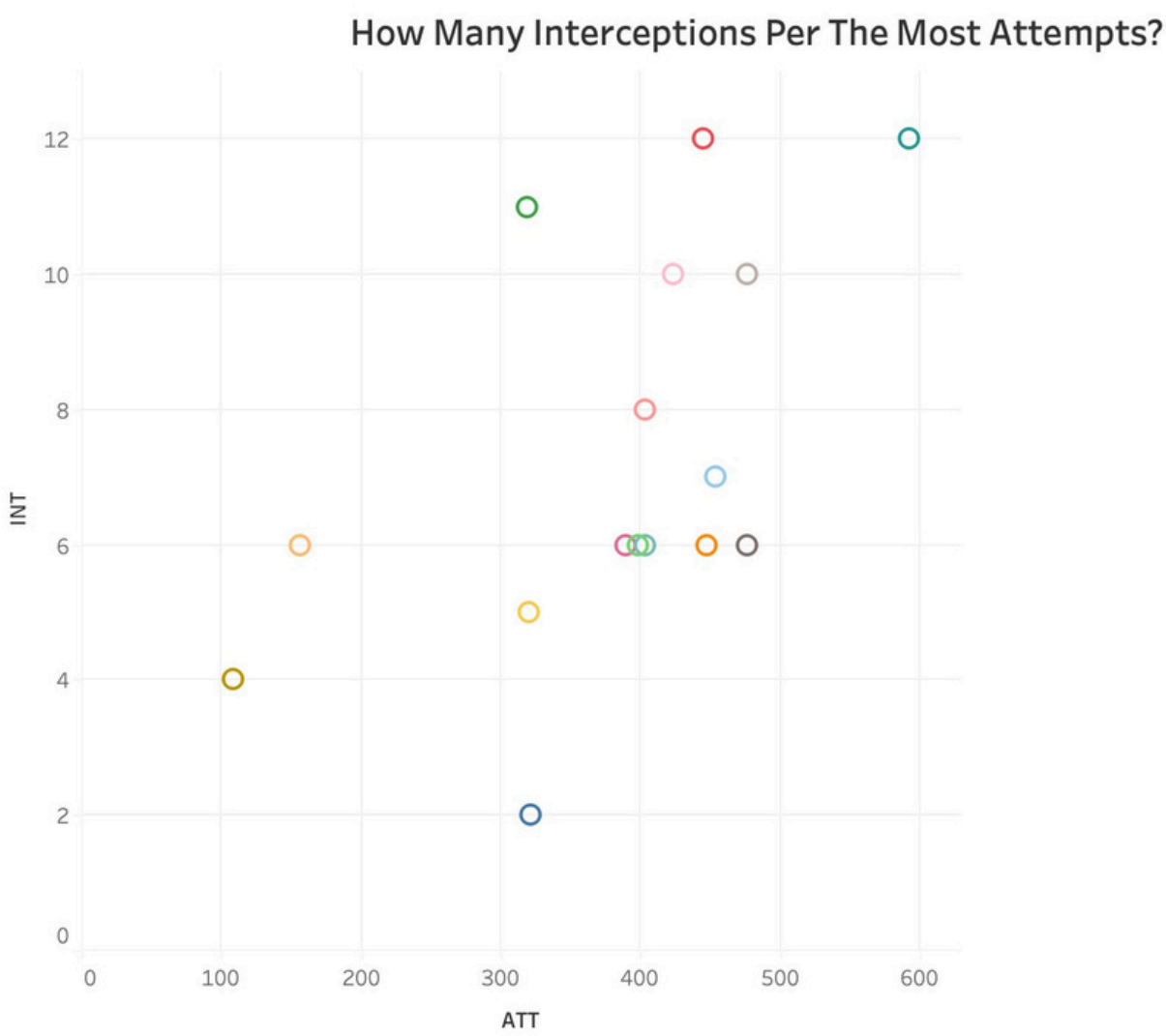


*This will be the same color key for each color-coded graph.

Looking at the bottom right quarter of the graph will show the most productive quarterback prospect compared to those that also make good decisions when throwing the ball to take care of their team's possessions. It doesn't look like there are any major outliers for stars, but the best ones include Kurtis Rourke and Cam Ward. The next grouping then includes Dillon Gabriel, Jaxson Dart, Seth Henigan, and Tyler Shough. It also shows that even though Kyle McCord and Quinn Ewers had a lot of touchdowns, they are showing signs to stay away since their interceptions are so high comparatively that their ball security is highly questionable. Likewise, even though Brady Cook has only two interceptions, he also only has eleven touchdowns which could imply a smaller sample size. Let's add the values to the table.

Name	Score
Cam Ward	4
Shedeur Sanders	0
Dillon Gabriel	2
Jalen Milroe	-4
Will Howard	0
Riley Leonard	-4
Quinn Ewers	-4
Kyle McCord	-4
Kurtis Rourke	4
Max Brosmer	0
Tyler Shough	2
Jaxson Dart	2
Seth Henigan	2
Brady Cook	0
KJ Jefferson	-4
DJ Uiagalelei	-4

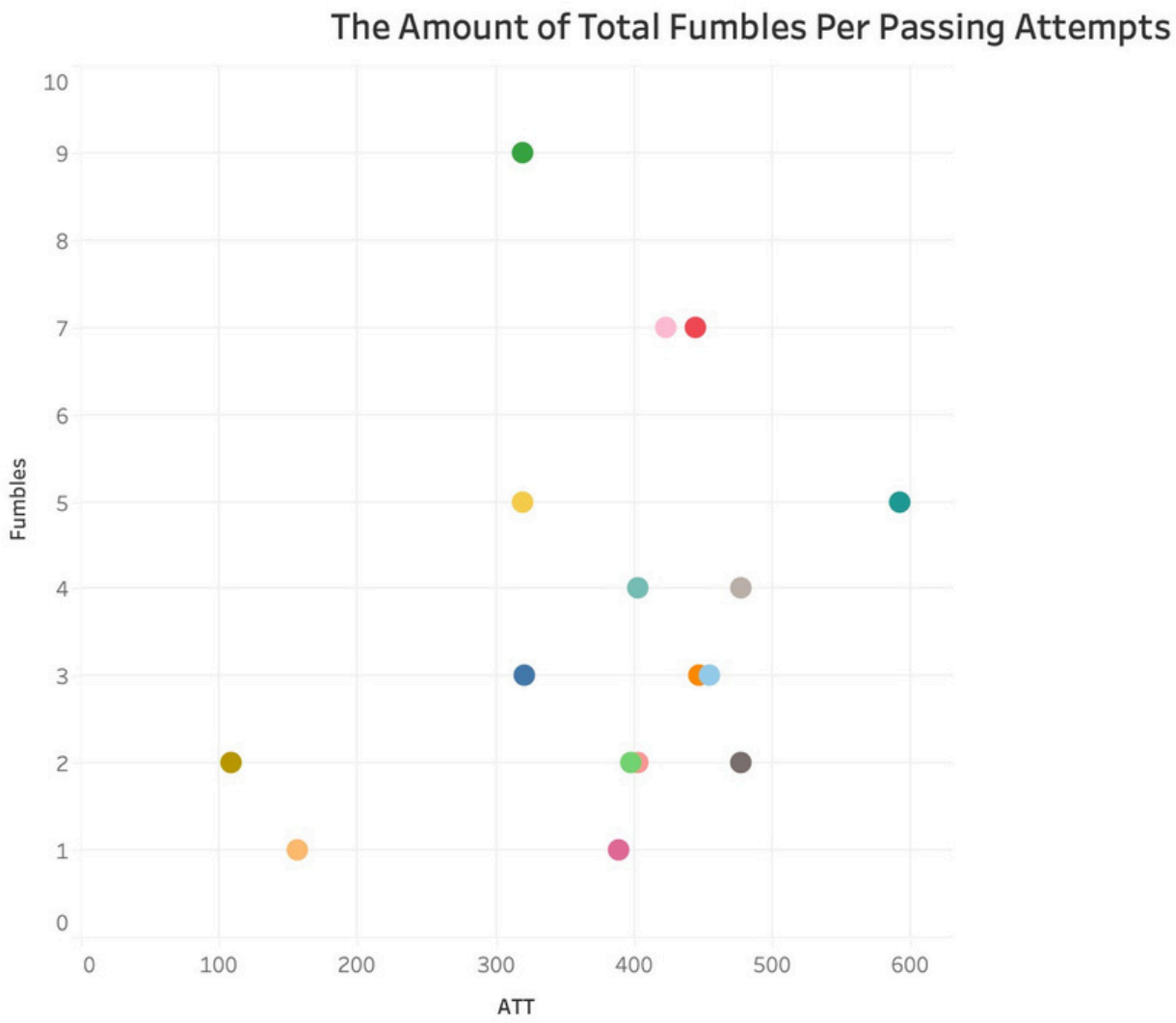
So far over two graphs, Cam Ward is showing that he's at the top of his class. Comparatively, Shedeur Sanders is one of the worst. This is valuable because Cam Ward and Shedeur Sanders are both expected to go top 3 in the 2025 NFL draft. This may be useful for some teams if the statistics at the end of this research shows that Shedeur Sanders is not expected to be a great player. Let's continue to the next graph.



This scatter plot shows how many interceptions were thrown per total attempted passes. It gives a more in depth view of how often these quarterbacks are making a mistake when passing the ball. For example, if one of the quarterbacks threw 500 passes and had 10 interceptions, that's actually really good, even though the interception number is high. That means for every 50 throws, he makes 1 mistake and that's noteworthy. On the other hand, if the quarterback only has 5 interceptions but also has only thrown 100 pass attempts, that is not good because even with the small sample

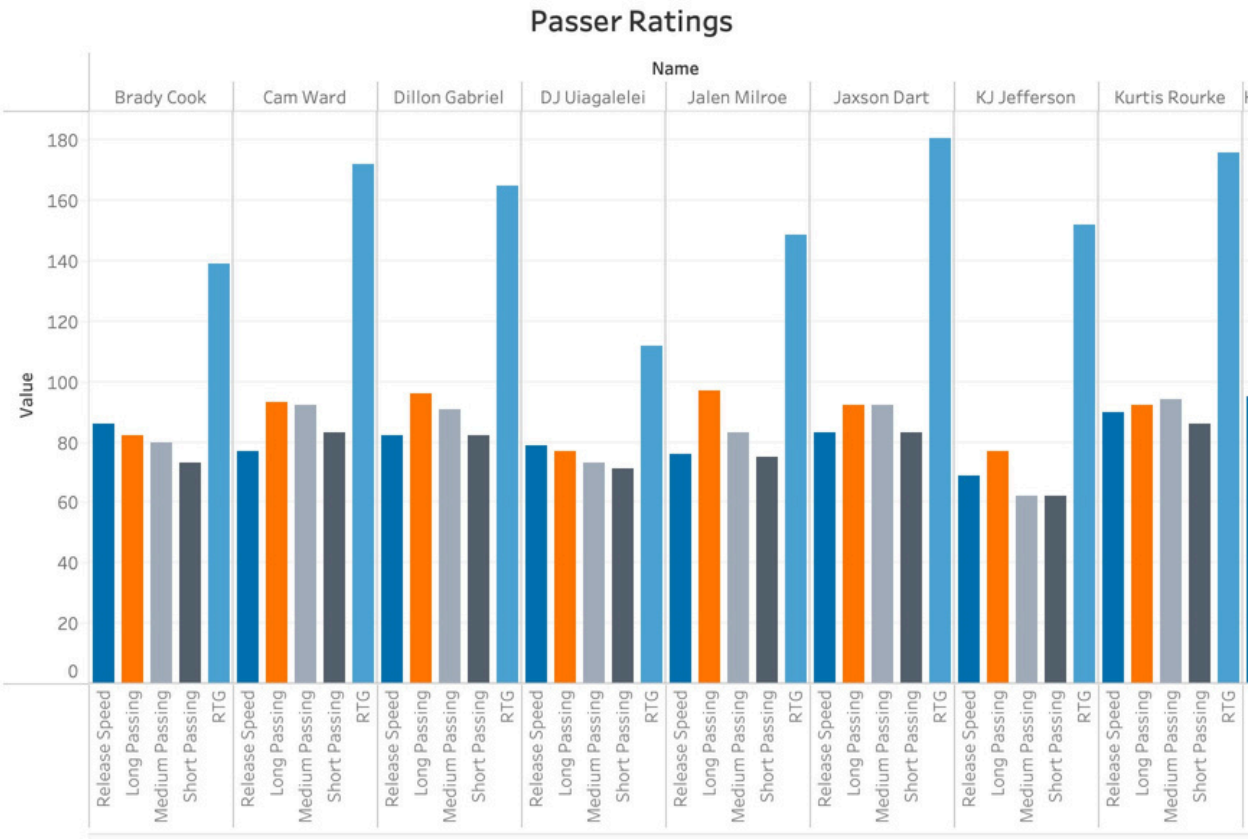
size, it shows the quarterback is prone to making bad choices when passing. This scatter plot shows that there are no star statistics but the best players comparatively include Seth Henigan and Dillon Gabriel. We can also include Tyler Shough, Jaxson Dart, Max Brosmer, and Cam Ward in the same conversation. While Brady Cook was a question mark in the last graph, this graph shows him as someone who really takes care of the ball, in terms of interceptions per attempts. Let's tally the numbers.

Name	Score
Cam Ward	4
Shedeur Sanders	2
Dillon Gabriel	4
Jalen Milroe	-4
Will Howard	0
Riley Leonard	2
Quinn Ewers	-4
Kyle McCord	0
Kurtis Rourke	2
Max Brosmer	4
Tyler Shough	4
Jaxson Dart	4
Seth Henigan	4
Brady Cook	4
KJ Jefferson	-4
DJ Uiagalelei	-4



This scatter plot shows the fumbles per passing attempt. This does not show the fumbles lost, rather the total fumbles. The reason is because the fumbles lost could show 2 while total fumbles could be 9. 2 fumbles on the season is fine, where 9 fumbles shows a real problem. So Seth Henigan having only 2 fumbles on 477 passing attempts is extremely impressive. Let's lump in Tyler Shough, Riley Leonard, and Jaxson Dart as well. Meanwhile, Jalen Milroe is expected to go in the top 100 of players drafted, however he had 9 fumbles on the season and has been lacking in other categories. He's looking like he might be a bust statistically so far. Here's this chart's tally.

Name	Score
Cam Ward	4
Shedeur Sanders	2
Dillon Gabriel	4
Jalen Milroe	-4
Will Howard	-4
Riley Leonard	6
Quinn Ewers	-4
Kyle McCord	2
Kurtis Rourke	0
Max Brosmer	2
Tyler Shough	6
Jaxson Dart	6
Seth Henigan	6
Brady Cook	2
KJ Jefferson	-4
DJ Uiagalelei	0



Looking at the passer ratings for the quarterbacks, nothing sticks out as odd or different from one another. Therefore, we'll add a 0 score for each quarterback for this category. It is good to know that while each quarterback is highly regarded for a chance to be drafted in the 2025 NFL draft, they all have the arm strength and ability to back up the hype.

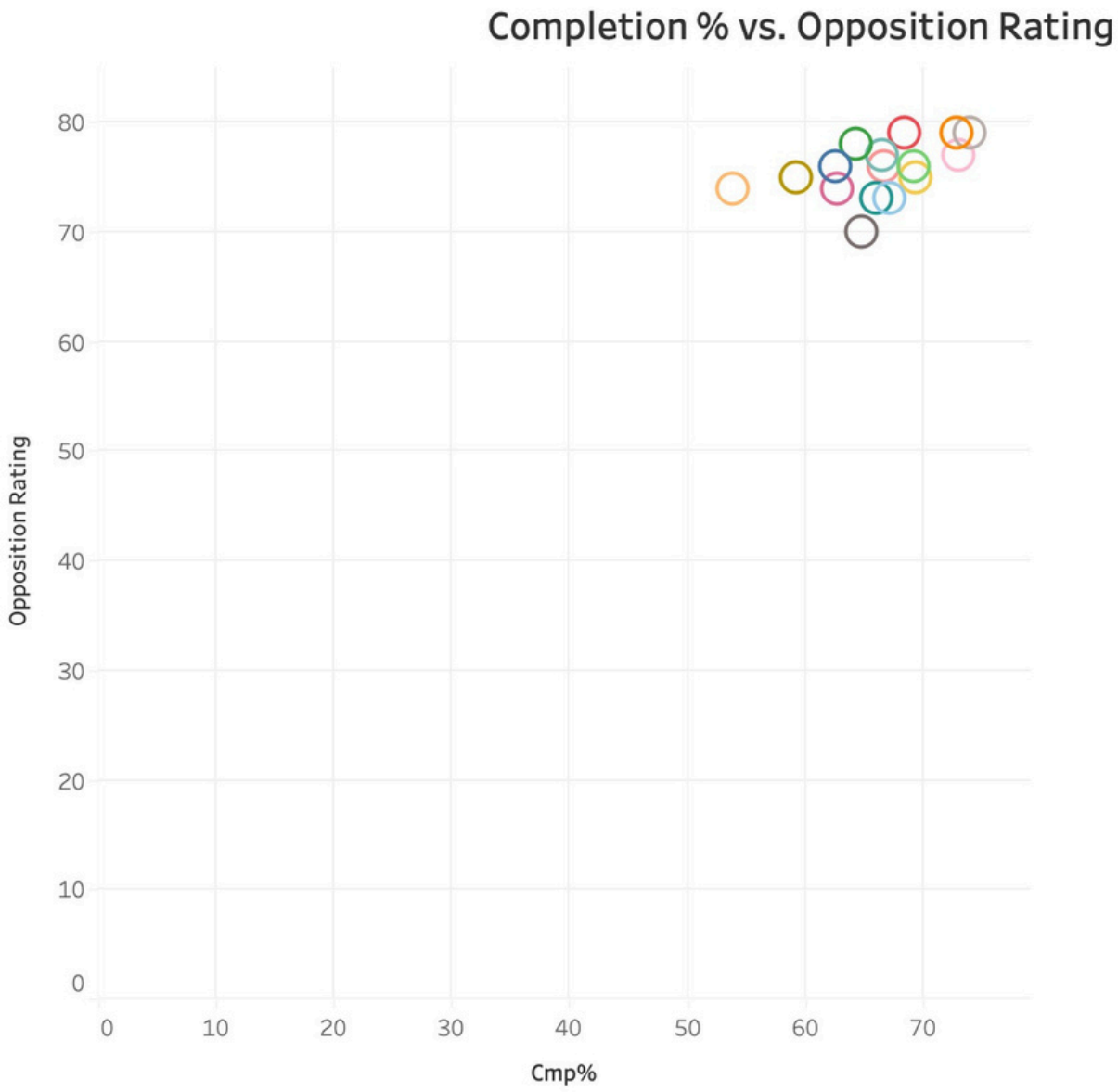
Name	Score
Cam Ward	0
Shedeur Sanders	0
Dillon Gabriel	0
Jalen Milroe	0
Will Howard	0
Riley Leonard	0
Quinn Ewers	0
Kyle McCord	0
Kurtis Rourke	0
Max Brosmer	0
Tyler Shough	0
Jaxson Dart	0
Seth Henigan	0
Brady Cook	0
KJ Jefferson	0
DJ Uiagalelei	0

Next we'll look at each quarterback's ability to escape when each play breaks down. We'll also be looking at their 40 yard dash time to show if they were able to escape into the open, how far they could go down the field based on their speed. While

Jalen Milroe has been struggling in other categories, he looks to be the best at escaping and running. His speed is fast for a quarterback at 4.60 and he has the highest rushing ability of 87, which is 6 points higher than the next best prospect. He'll receive a star grade of 6 for this. Riley Leonard is also really fast, as 4.52 is normally the 40 yard dash time for receivers, not necessarily quarterbacks. On the other hand, Seth Henigan, who was doing relatively well in other charts, has the worst grade here. He's got a very slow time of 4.90 and a rush scramble ability of 55. That is not at all his strong suit. Let's look further at the breakdown for each player.

Name	Score
Cam Ward	4
Shedeur Sanders	4
Dillon Gabriel	2
Jalen Milroe	6
Will Howard	2
Riley Leonard	6
Quinn Ewers	0
Kyle McCord	4
Kurtis Rourke	-4
Max Brosmer	-4
Tyler Shough	-4
Jaxson Dart	4
Seth Henigan	-4
Brady Cook	4
KJ Jefferson	2
DJ Uiagalelei	2

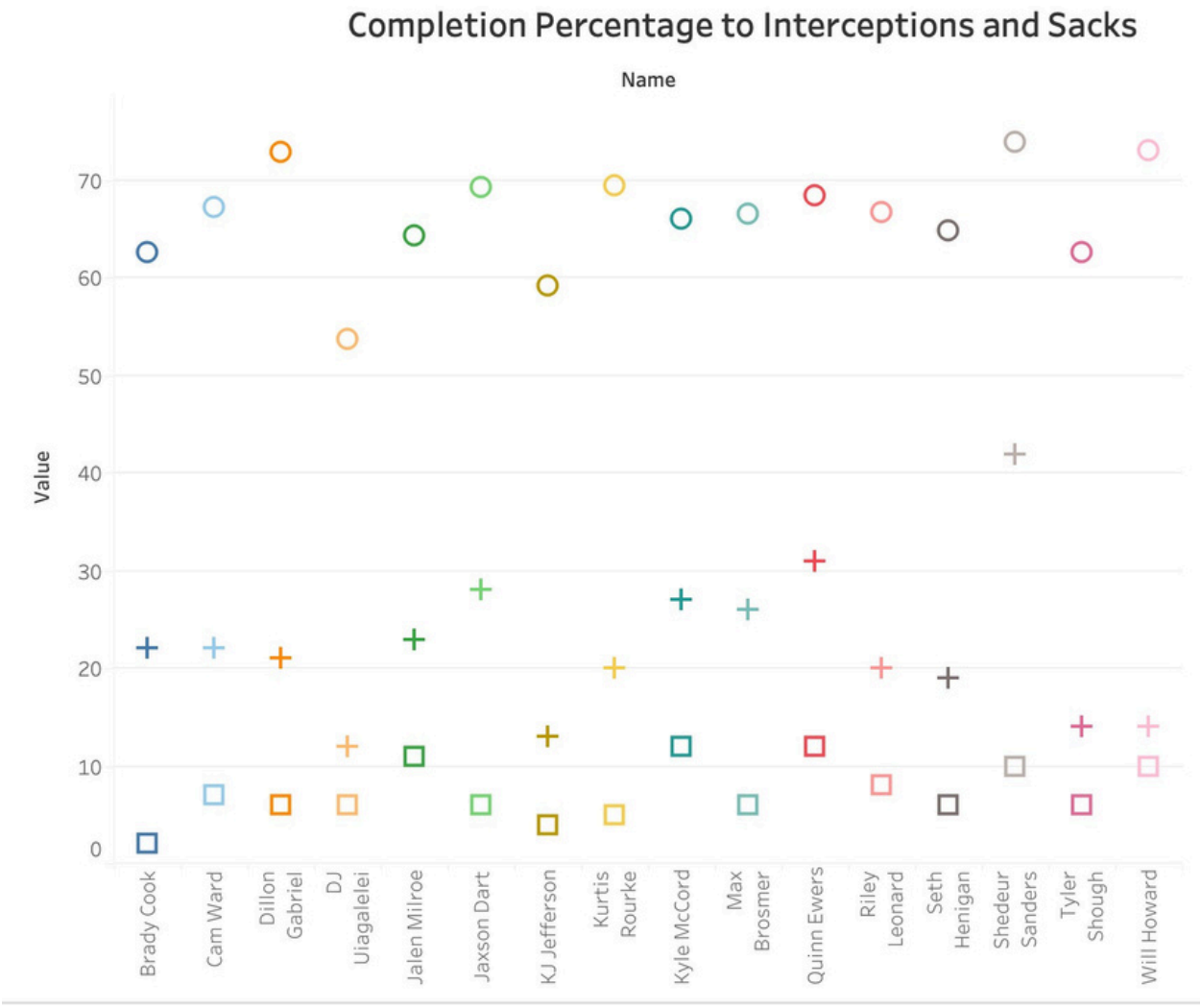
This next scatter plot shows how good each quarterbacks' average completion percentage versus the level of opposition they played. Some quarterbacks are only good versus weaker competition. It shows a lot about how the quarterback will be if they played well against stronger opponents.



It looks like Shedeur Sanders had a very impressive 74% completion versus a 79 score for opposition. While he's been struggling in other categories, this stat shows

why he’s been considered to be such a high draft pick. Other notable stars for this category include Dillon Gabriel and Will Howard. The ones that don’t measure up in this category are most notably DJ Uiagalelei. He doesn’t seem to do well in any of these categories.

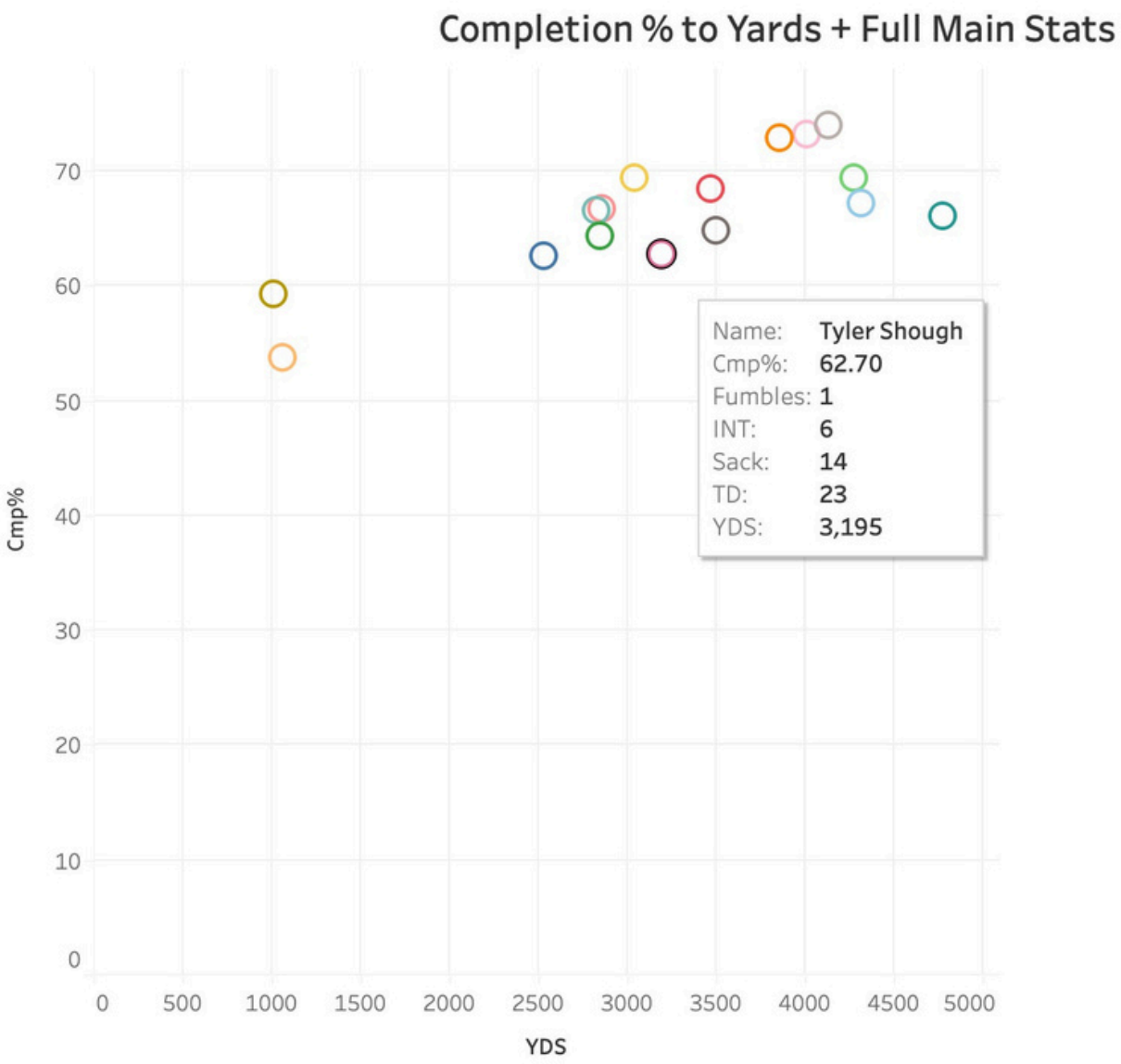
Name	Score
Cam Ward	2
Shedeur Sanders	6
Dillon Gabriel	6
Jalen Milroe	2
Will Howard	6
Riley Leonard	2
Quinn Ewers	4
Kyle McCord	2
Kurtis Rourke	4
Max Brosmer	2
Tyler Shough	0
Jaxson Dart	4
Seth Henigan	0
Brady Cook	0
KJ Jefferson	0
DJ Uiagalelei	-4



This next chart shows how each quarterback stacks up with their competition percentage, interceptions, and sacks. It's a great way to see the prospects' good decision making stacked up with their bad decision making, compared to the other quarterbacks. The lower the squares, the better. The lower the plus sign, the better. The higher the circles, the better. Shedeur Sanders has an abnormally high plus sign, showing a major red flag among prospects. On the other hand, Will Howard seems to have a good combination of a low enough square, low plus sign, and high circle. Let's do the combination of each to determine the scores.

Name	Score
Cam Ward	2
Shedeur Sanders	0
Dillon Gabriel	4
Jalen Milroe	0
Will Howard	6
Riley Leonard	2
Quinn Ewers	0
Kyle McCord	0
Kurtis Rourke	4
Max Brosmer	2
Tyler Shough	2
Jaxson Dart	2
Seth Henigan	2
Brady Cook	0
KJ Jefferson	2
DJ Uiagalelei	2

This next chart shows all of the main stats on one chart to see how the prospects stack up. It specifically compares the quarterbacks' completion percentage to the amount of yards thrown on the season. For the more yards thrown and the high- er completion percentage, these will have the most impressive players. We'll be focus- ing on the upper right quadrant of the chart to find the best prospects. Kyle McCord really sticks out as the star here. The next group includes a lot of great players as well including Dillon Gabriel, Will Howard, Shedeur Sanders, Jaxson Dart, and Cam Ward.


Completion % to Yards + Full Main Stats
Cmp%
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
0
500
1000
1500
2000
2500
3000
3500
4000
4500
5000
YDS
Name: Tyler Shough
Cmp%: 62.70
Fumbles: 1
INT: 6
Sack: 14
TD: 23
YDS: 3,195

Name	Score
Cam Ward	4
Shedeur Sanders	4
Dillon Gabriel	4
Jalen Milroe	0
Will Howard	4
Riley Leonard	0
Quinn Ewers	2
Kyle McCord	6
Kurtis Rourke	2
Max Brosmer	0
Tyler Shough	2
Jaxson Dart	4
Seth Henigan	2
Brady Cook	0
KJ Jefferson	-4
DJ Uiagalelei	-4

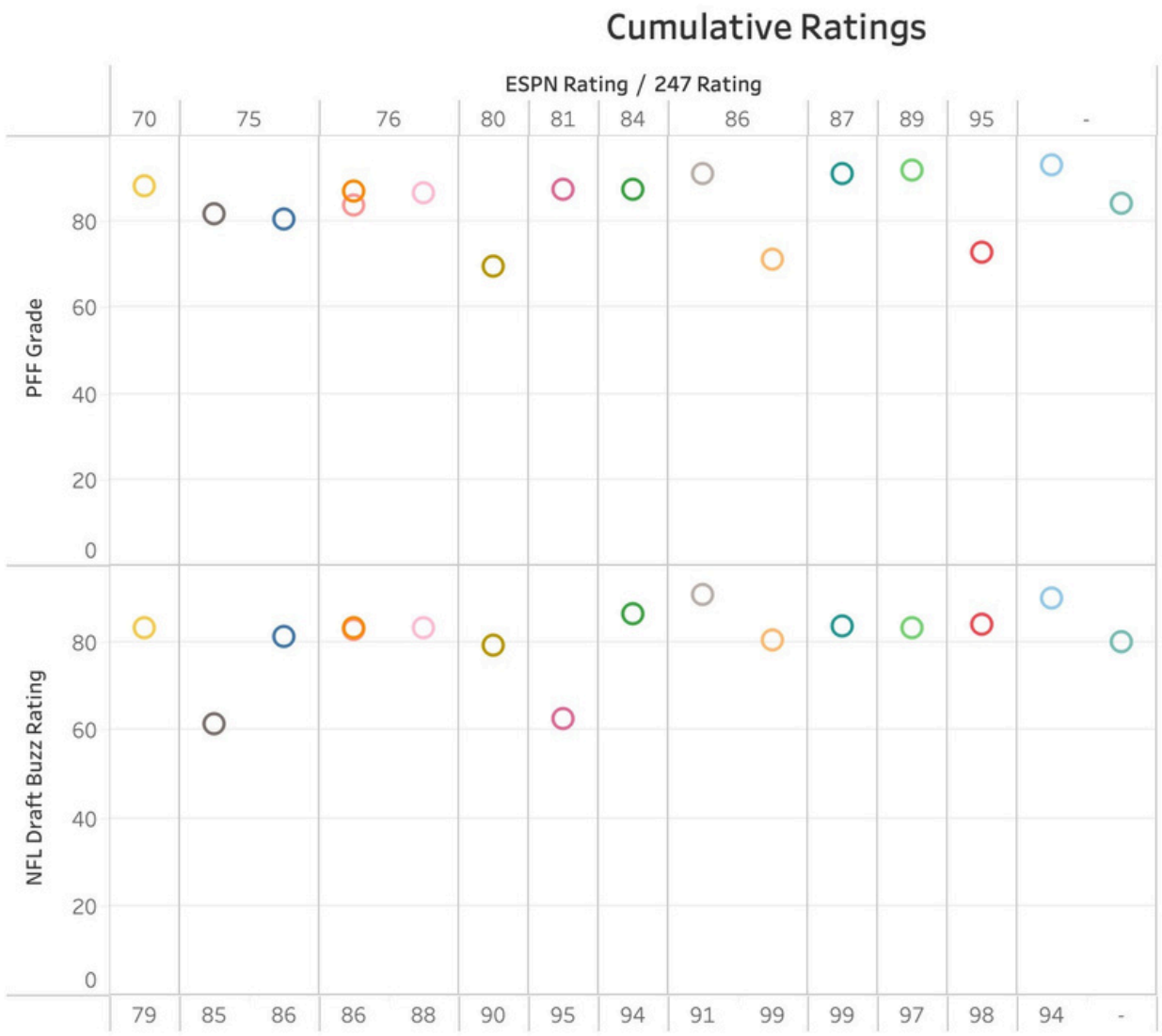
Let’s look to the conclusion now to tally up all of the combined scores and com- pare it to the news and sports media rating. We’ll go over who to prioritize when draft- ing, who to take a shot on, and who we recommend to completely take off of the NFL team’s draft board.

Conclusion

All of these charts had some winners and losers. Some players dominated certain categories and completely failed others. Other players were bad throughout. Let's combine all of our numbers for each player and see how each of the quarterback prospects stack up. The higher the score, the better the prospect based on this research analysis.

Name	Score
Cam Ward	30
Shedeur Sanders	14
Dillon Gabriel	32
Jalen Milroe	-8
Will Howard	20
Riley Leonard	14
Quinn Ewers	-6
Kyle McCord	12
Kurtis Rourke	16
Max Brosmer	2
Tyler Shough	16
Jaxson Dart	26
Seth Henigan	14
Brady Cook	6
KJ Jefferson	-16
DJ Uiagalelei	-16

Now let's compare the cumulative ratings of how these major sports networks and websites view each player. They each have a different set of parameters that they use to determine who they think will be the best. It's interesting to compare what they think versus what the actual important statistics displayed in this research analysis shows.



So now let's compare our findings to these ratings for each player. Let's start with Cam Ward. He's got one of the highest combined scores in terms of rating. He's also talked about being a top 3 pick. While there are more things to consider before drafting a quarterback like attitude, work ethic, height, injury history, etc., it looks like Cam Ward fits the bill statistically if an NFL team chooses him early in the draft. Looking at Shedeur Sanders comparatively, he's also very highly rated on the cumulative ratings. That being said, he seemed to fail a lot of this research analysis' tests. He scored very middle of the pack. If I'm an NFL team drafting at the top of the first round, I'd be very cautious about drafting him as it looks like he'll have a lot to work on and fix for him to match with the best statistically.

Let's look at the biggest surprise of this whole research analysis. Dillon Gabriel scored the highest from these tests, even though he's not the highest rated on the cumulative ratings. This could signal a diamond in the rough opportunity for an NFL team. If he's expected to go in the third round based on these ratings, a team could snatch him up and have a good chance at getting a great quarterback prospect starter to add to their team. He's definitely a name to watch. On the other hand, Jalen Milroe is a highly touted quarterback that did terribly on this analysis. In fact, he's the third worst quarterback that was graded here. He did show he had some rushing ability, so maybe an NFL team can still utilize him. But as far as this quarterback analysis goes, he's looking to be a bust and should be taken off of the team's draft board if they were only planning on using him at quarterback.

Moving along to the next prospect, Will Howard. He's very intriguing as he just led his team to a college football national championship. The question is, how does he

stack up as an NFL quarterback prospect? He got the fourth best score, but he is 12 points behind the highest. It looks like he's also just above the middle of the pack. So he may be someone that a team takes a chance on in the middle to later rounds if they need quarterback depth on their roster. The next prospect is Riley Leonard. He was the quarterback that played Will Howard's team in the national championship. However, his grade is right about average, so he's not too exciting for a team to add him. He may go in rounds six to seven or even undrafted, again if only there's a need for someone cheap on the NFL team.

Quinn Ewers is an interesting find here as well. He's very well regarded on the cumulative ratings, but not so much with his PFF grade. He was once considered to go in the first round of the draft, but after looking at this analysis, he looks like fool's gold. He's got a negative score that shows he's more bad than good. A team might still take a shot on drafting him if he falls in the draft to the later rounds, but based on this analysis, it'd be wise for teams to take him off of their draft boards for rounds one through three at least. Kyle McCord is the next man up. He was the quarterback of the team that won the national championship this year, last year, but went to a smaller school to try to prove himself more. The question is, did he? It looks like he failed to separate himself from the pack as his score is just below average of the players. He'll be a round five through seven or undrafted type of quarterback, but again it's more what the NFL team is willing to bet on fixing him to fit what they need, rather than be- ing ready to go from the time he gets drafted.

Another quarterback is Kurtis Rourke. He's decently regarded among the cumulative ratings and his score per this analysis is in the middle of the pack. He may be a

decent quarterback in the NFL, but he's not worth drafting high at all. This is something that NFL should note when deciding who to draft. The next quarterback prospect is Max Brosmer. He was a bit of a lesser known name, and this analysis really helped determine if he was worth looking more into. Unfortunately, he was not. He scored just above a zero, which is terrible, so I'd recommend an NFL team only adding him to their roster in training camp if he goes undrafted, and it costs them nothing but one of their ninety roster spots so that they can get a better look at his ability in person.

Tyler Shough is another middle of the road ranking for quarterback prospects among this group. He did some things really well like less interceptions, but was just ok for a lot of other categories. He's going to be someone a team may take a flyer on in rounds six, seven, or undrafted. Jaxson Dart on the other hand tested extremely well on this research analysis. He was actually the third best quarterback scored. The cumulative rankings seem to agree that he's pretty good as well. His draft range before this analysis was about the second to third round, but since his numbers have come back extremely positive, he could be a dark horse to sneak into the first round or be a steal for a team looking to add a quality quarterback from this 2025 NFL draft.

Seth Henigan is another lesser known name. Some of the cumulative ratings graded him poorly while others graded him ok to pretty good. So it's interesting to see where this research analysis puts him at. He's sitting at a score of 14, which is very middle of the pack. Therefore, he'll probably be someone a team takes a flyer on if needed from rounds five through seven or undrafted. Brady Cook unfortunately didn't do too well for himself. He only scored a 6 on this analysis, showing that even though he has decent cumulative ratings, he'll only be worth adding to the team if he goes un-

drafted. KJ Jefferson and DJ Uiagalelei tied for the worst grades on this analysis. Both of them got a negative 16. I'd recommend staying away from both of them and they may have to change positions or do a lot of makeup work to make themselves better quarterbacks to make any impact in the NFL. A team should only get a second look on either one of them if they go undrafted.

After looking at all of the quarterbacks, we found some top prospects, some fool's gold, some diamond in the rough, and some absolute red flags to stay away from. We were able to answer the research questions by comparing the quarterbacks to their cumulative rankings. We found some hidden gems in the process as well. We were able to identify a few quarterbacks that were highly touted that we recommended staying away from based on these statistical analyses. We concluded who is worth taking in the draft and where, and who may need to work harder to give any sort of value to their eventual teams if given an opportunity. Before the analysis, these sixteen prospects were highly touted, but now they are sorted and ready to be further analyzed by NFL teams for drafting. Comparing these statistics helped gain a consensus and find the deeper story when evaluating each of the prospects to one another for NFL teams looking to draft.