**NFL DRAFT DATA ANALYZATION(2023)**

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# **Abstract:**

Not longer than 200 words. Describes findings and overall summary of paper

# **Highlights:**

Key Highlights found in research

# **1 Introduction:**

On February 8, 1936, at Philadelphia’s Ritz-Carlton Hotel the first ever NFL Draft was held. There were no formal scouting departments, no agents and no 24-hour sports media coverage. The list of eligible players was compiled from newspaper reports, visits to local colleges by team executives, and recommendations to front-office personnel. From this draft only 24 of the 81 players selected ended up playing in the NFL as most tended to opt out and pursue different careers such as the first overall pick, Jay Berwanger, who was the Heisman winner out of the college of Chicago. He ended up pursuing a career as a foam rubber salesman (operations.nfl.com. (n.d.)). Since then, the NFL Draft has had a great amount of change in how teams draft, how the draft is presented and how players are scouted. Today teams have very large scouting departments and managerial teams all designed to assemble the best roster in the NFL.

Data Analysis Introduction

Growing up, I always was so intrigued with the NFL draft that I would constantly be doing mock drafts, scouting college players, and creating my own franchises in Madden. This passion

# **2 Introduction to Data**

# **3 Question: How valuable is each pick in the NFL draft?**

3.1 Method:

3.2 Analysis:

Chart, scatter chart

Description automatically generated

Figure Average Value of each NFL Draft Pick

# **4 Question: What team has had the best drafts historically and which team has had the worst drafts historically?**

4.1 Method: For this study the data required a bit of conversion before processing because since 1993 many franchises have relocated and changed abbreviations. For example the Los Angeles Rams (LAR) are the same franchise as the St. Louis Rams (STL) and the Los Angeles Rams (RAM) they just relocated from Los Angeles to St. Louis in 1995 and then back to Los Angeles in 2016. Other teams that have relocated and changed abbreviations since 1993 were the Phoenix Cardinals (PHO) to the Arizona Cardinals (ARI) in 1994, the Los Angeles Raiders (RAI) to the Oakland Raiders (OAK) in 1995 and then to the Las Vegas Raiders (LVR) in 2020, and the San Diego Chargers (SDG) to the Los Angeles Chargers (LAC) in 2017. After cleaning the data to have every franchise represented once, the average weighted value for the average player (averagewAV) each NFL franchise has drafted was calculated and the NFL franchises were compared.

4.2 Analysis: The top 3 franchises with the highest averagewAV were the Steelers, Packers, and Ravens. The Steelers had the highest with an averagewAV of 17.95. The bottom 3 were the Browns, Commanders, and Raiders. The Browns having by far the worst with an averagewAV of 13.00. The data makes sense for all of these cases as the top teams have won multiple super bowls in the past 30 years while the bottom teams haven’t won much in the past 30 years. The Browns also having a very long stint in the past 30 years where they were by far the worst team in the league and they were only winning a few games for multiple years in a row.

Chart, scatter chart

Description automatically generatedFigure 2 Average Drafted Player Value Chart

# **5 Question: Which colleges produce the best NFL athletes?**

5.1 Method: For this study all the players from the dataset where at first grouped by the College/University they attended prior to being drafted into the NFL. The college that players were grouped to was their last college played for prior to entering the NFL draft. So for example, players like Jalen Hurts, a standout quarterback for Alabama and Oklahoma, were grouped with only Oklahoma because that was the last college he player for prior to entering the draft. After the players were grouped by their colleges the sum of all the players wAV (weighted average value) was calculated and then compared.

The study also compared the average for each player drafted from each college for colleges with at least 20 players drafted from 1993 to 2010. The reasoning for these specific parameters is because currently in the NFL 1,301 of the 1,884 players in the NFL are from Power Five colleges. There are 65 Power Five colleges, so that would equate to about 20 players from each Power Five college (Reubenking, D. (2021)). Then the specific time from 1993 to 2010 is because players drafted after 2010 are still finishing or even starting their career in the NFL, so they won’t have as high of a wAV as those drafted prior to 2010.

5.2 Analysis: The college with by far the most for sumwAV was the University of Miami Florida with a sum of 3435 wAV. The next four were Ohio St. with 3386, Florida St. with 3211, Alabama with 3085, and LSU with 3081. In the past 30 years this makes sense as these have been some of the best college football schools during that time with Alabama, LSU, and Ohio St. having more current success compared to Florida St. and Miami (FL). Although in the past Florida St. and Miami (FL) were powerhouses, so them being in the top five perfectly makes sense. I would not be surprised if I did this same study in the next 10 years if Alabama, LSU, and Ohio St. climb higher on these rankings because currently these are some of the best teams in college football today.

For the averagewAV of each college athlete drafted to the NFL from each college the top 3 colleges were Boston Col. with 30.26, Miami (FL) 27.69, and Michigan with 26.92. The bottom 3 colleges were BYU with 8.97, Minnesota with 11.04, and Northwestern with 11.14. The top team was kind of surprising at first, but after looking into the data it makes sense why Boston Col. has the top spot for players with successful NFL careers. The reason why they seem to not be as great is recently Boston Col. has not been a very successful college football program, but looking at the data Boston Col. had a lot of great players during the late 1990s and early 2000s. Most of these players also being linemen which tend to usually fly under the radar to the casual eye. Boston Col. has also produced some very well known players that have had very successful NFL careers, such as Matt Ryan, B.J. Raji, and Matt Hasselbeck. The main reason though why Boston Col. is so high though is because they don’t have a lot of players with very low wAV that busted in the NFL. They only have 14 of their 38 players drafted from 1993 to 2010 with a wAV below 10. The next best college was Miami (FL) which is very impressive considering they also had the highest sumwAV out of all colleges, meaning not only do they produce a lot of NFL talent, but a lot of successful NFL talent. When you also look at the players that Miami produced from 1993 to 2010 it is no surprise either why they stand out so much in the data. Ray Lewis, Warren Sapp, and Edgerrin James, who are all Hall of Famers, are just a couple of the elite players Miami produced during this time. Seeing these big name players leads to the question of why they were not above Boston Col. in the rankings and that is because 49 of the 100 players drafted from Miami (FL) from 1993 to 2010 had below a 10 wAV which is nearly 50 percent of the players drafted.

# **6 Question: Which was the best draft class?**

Method:

Analysis:

# **7 Question: When do positions tend to get drafted?**

Analysis:

# **8 Question: When is the optimal place to draft a certain position?**

Analysis:

# **9 Conclusion:**

# **Tables:**

Table 1:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Fran | averagewAV |
| PIT | 17.9561752988048 |
| GNB | 17.7977941176471 |
| BAL | 17.528384279476 |
| NOR | 17.4642857142857 |
| SEA | 17.2105263157895 |
| CAR | 16.9716981132075 |
| IND | 16.8786610878661 |
| NWE | 16.6125461254613 |
| HOU | 16.1809045226131 |
| NYG | 16.1644444444444 |
| DAL | 16.1411290322581 |
| PHI | 16.068 |
| ARI | 16.0127659574468 |
| CIN | 15.9372549019608 |
| LAC | 15.8982300884956 |
| ATL | 15.7946428571429 |
| BUF | 15.6285714285714 |
| KAN | 15.625550660793 |
| SFO | 15.476 |
| CHI | 15.4510638297872 |
| NYJ | 15.4330357142857 |
| MIA | 15.4159663865546 |
| TAM | 15.2094017094017 |
| DEN | 15.0983606557377 |
| JAX | 15.0431034482759 |
| LAR | 14.992337164751 |
| MIN | 14.8682170542636 |
| TEN | 14.7227272727273 |
| DET | 14.3039647577093 |
| LVR | 13.7391304347826 |
| WAS | 13.5198237885463 |
| CLE | 13.0044843049327 |

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