Jabari Smith

**Jabari Smith takes the top spot in my player rankings in large part because of his elite combination of length and shooting ability. His long 6’10’’ frame with a wingspan of over 7 feet, plus his 40% 3-point percentage make him a nightmare for offenses to guard, highlight the potential for Smith to become an elite shot-maker at the NBA level.**

Chet Holmgren

**Chet Holmgren has an especially unique skillset for an NBA draft prospect, possessing guard-like dribbling and shooting skills even though he is as tall as most centers at 7’0”. While weight is a concern for Holmgren, as he currently stands at 195 pounds, you will likely not find another player in college basketball averaging 3 blocks, 2 assists, and shooting around 45 percent from 3. The potential for him in the NBA is limitless.**

Paolo Banchero

**Paolo Banchero is another big man who possesses elite offensive upside, similar to Jabari Smith. He has very capably taken on the featured scoring role for a top-10 Duke team this year, and his ability to win in the post and off the dribble indicate he can find success as a lead scoring option in the NBA. The only things keeping him behind Smith and Holmgren at the moment are his average athleticism and struggling 3-point shot.**

Jaden Ivey

**Jaden Ivey is in the midst of a breakout sophomore year for Purdue in which he has vaulted himself to the top of draft boards. The 6’4” guard has always exhibited elite athleticism, but his significant improvement as a shooter (44% from 3) is what has helped him become an unstoppable offensive force at the college level. Ivey’s combination of scoring and playmaking ability give him the chance to become one of the premier guards in the NBA.**

Johnny Davis

**Johnny Davis is undoubtedly the most improved player in college basketball, going from a 6th man role as a freshman for Wisconsin to becoming arguably the best player in the country and a possible top-5 pick. Davis has led the charge for the Badgers this season with his uncanny ability to make tough contested shots, while also demonstrating outstanding rebounding ability for a guard at almost 8 rebounds per game. Davis does not possess the same athleticism as Ivey, but also has the potential to be a high-end NBA shooting guard.**

Bennedict Mathurin

**Bennedict Mathurin is yet another sophomore guard who has significantly improved his game in the past year. He has used his smooth left-handed shooting stroke, he has upped his scoring average from 11 points per game to over 17 points per game while leading Arizona to a top-10 ranking. He has been a consistently solid 3-point shooter during his 2 years with the Wildcats, shooting almost 40 percent from the 3-point line. Mathurin’s shooting ability and success as a primary offensive option in Arizona’s offense show he can be a strong initiator of offense in the NBA.**

AJ Griffin

**AJ Griffin has arguably the most potential in the entire draft, but he has only been able to show it in flashes while serving as the first man off the bench for the Duke Blue Devils. Griffin possesses elite athleticism, and in limited minutes he has been able to pair that athletic ability with a 50-percent mark from behind the 3-point line. Griffin also has a long 7-foot wingspan as a wing, which will allow him to be an elite defender. In the best case scenario, Griffin will emerge as one of the best two-way wings in the entire NBA.**

Keegan Murray

**Keegan Murray is yet another Sophomore playing in the Big Ten who has seen his performance skyrocket from Freshman to Sophomore year. The forward for the Iowa Hawkeyes is one of the top scorers in the country, averaging 22.3 points per game on around 55% shooting. Additionally, Murray averages over 2 blocks a game and 1.5 steals per game, as his near 7-foot wingspan allows him to be an impact defender. Murray is old for a sophomore at 21, so he may not have as much upside as his peers, but he looks to be a high-level role player in the NBA.**

Patrick Baldwin Jr.

**Patrick Baldwin Jr. is currently playing away from the spotlight at University of Milwaukee under the tutelage of his father, but Baldwin has one of the highest ceilings in this draft. In high school, Baldwin developed a reputation as a dangerous shooter and displayed high-level ball-handling skills which were all the more impressive when you account for his tall 6’9” frame. Playing on a low-level team at Milwaukee with minimal support talent has caused Baldwin Jr. to struggle this season, but if a team is willing to take a chance he could emerge as one of the elite offensive mismatches from this draft class.**

TyTy Washington

**University of Kentucky Coach John Calipari seems to send at least one high-level guard to the NBA draft every year, and this year TyTy Washington is next in line. His smooth offensive game has allowed him to seamlessly fit into Kentucky’s offensive scheme, where he is averaging 13 points per game and shooting almost 40 percent from 3. Washington projects to be a solid scoring option when he enters the draft, with underrated playmaking ability that could help him emerge as a successful playmaker as well.**

Jaden Hardy

**Coming into the year, Jaden Hardy was billed as a possible top-3 pick, and while he still possesses immense potential, his time in the G-League has exposed some flaws in his game. Hardy is clearly a score-first player, but his tendency to shoot the ball so often has caused his efficiency to plummet, as he is currently shooting around 35% from the field and under 30% on 3-pointers. If Hardy is able to improve his decision-making, he still has the athleticism and ball skills to be an elite scoring guard in the NBA.**

Jalen Duren

**Jalen Duren was initially expected to be a part of the 2023 draft class, but reclassified to join Memphis as a freshman this year and enter the 2022 draft class. As a result, Duren is one of the younger players in this draft class with a lot of upside, particularly on the defensive end. Despite being only 18 years old, Duren already has a chiseled 6’11”, 250 pound frame with a 7’5” wingspan, which he has used to block around 2.5 shots per game. If Duren develops a better shooting touch and expands his offensive skillset, he could emerge as one of the best big men in the NBA a few years down the road.**

Nikola Jovic

**The highest-ranked international prospect in these rankings, Nikola Jovic is a raw wing with high potential due to his rare skillset. While possessing 6’10” size, Jovic plays more like a guard, taking on a sizable amount of playmaking duties while playing overseas for Mega Mozzart. Jovic currently averages over 3 assists per game, while also shooting nearly 40 percent from the 3-point line. It may take a few years for Jovic to adjust to the NBA, but he has the potential to be a high-level offensive creator.**

Kendall Brown

**Kendall Brown’s value is derived from his elite athletic ability and strong defensive potential. Brown is still a work in progress on offense, but he knows how to get open with sharp cuts to the basket, and has produced almost a 65% field goal percentage by only taking high-percentage shots. While Brown still has to work on becoming a bigger shooting threat, his 6’8” frame on the defensive end allows him to guard multiple positions and highlights the potential for Brown to be a top-level defender in the NBA.**

Kennedy Chandler

**Kennedy Chandler is a small but dynamic point guard prospect. He is only 6-feet tall and 171 pounds, but his combination of superb quickness, ball skills, and a high IQ allow him to find success against taller opponents. Chandler is currently averaging around 5 assists per game and over 2 steals per game, indicating that he is able to use his smarts to make the right play on offense and defense. His ability to make plays for teammates and force turnovers on defense will allow him to find success as an NBA point guard.**

Dyson Daniels

**Dyson Daniels is current operating as a primary facilitator for the G-League Ignite team, demonstrating rare point-guard skills for a 6’6” player. Daniels is averaging over 4 assists per game, showing high-level passing skills against professional competition. Additionally, Daniels’ height advantage as a 6’6” guard allows him to be a defensive mismatch with his length, as he is averaging almost 2 steals per game. Daniels could work to improve his shooting touch, but already offers the potential to be an elite defender and primary facilitator in the NBA.**

Jean Montero

**Jean Montero is a 6’2” point guard with elite ball skills that have allowed him to find success on every level to this point in his career. Despite not possessing elite athleticism, Montero uses effective changes of pace to separate from defenders. His already high skill-level should make it easier to Montero to adapt to the NBA game than other prospects, but his ability to minimize his defensive deficiencies due to his small frame will determine how effective Montero can be in the NBA.**

Jeremy Sochan

**Jeremy Sochan is a 6’9” forward who has proved to be a versatile option for the Baylor Bears this year, helping them to a top-10 record by contributing at a variety of different positions. Sochan’s high IQ and good defensive instincts have allowed him to play anywhere from on the wing to serving as a small-ball center in certain scenarios. He already looks to be a valuable role player in the NBA, but becoming a bigger outside shooting threat would help him become a true all-around threat.**

Ochai Agbaji

**Ochai Agbaji is the lone senior in these player rankings, but it seems that he made the right decision by waiting to enter the draft, as he is currently in the midst of a career year. During his first few years at Kansas, Agbaji developed a reputation as an athletic, defense-first wing, but this year Agbaji has emerged as a scorer, averaging over 20 points per game while shooting over 45 percent from 3. As a senior, he may not have as much upside as other prospects, but he offers solid role player potential as an athletic 3-D wing.**

Wendell Moore

**Wendell Moore failed to meet high expectations at Duke as a five-star recruit his first two years, but he has taken a significant leap in his junior season to be considered a potential first-round prospect. He has raised his 3-point shooting percentage up to 40% compared to 21% his freshman year, and has also exhibited elite playmaking ability for a wing by averaging almost 5 assists per game. His on-ball prowess could allow him to function as a solid secondary ballhandler in an NBA offense.**

Rhyne Howard

**The top-ranked player in my WNBA rankings, Rhyne Howard is expected to be a star when she steps onto a WNBA court. At 6’2”, Howard has elite size for a guard, which she uses to her advantage on both the offensive and defensive end. Howard has averaged at least 16 points per game all 4 years she has played at Kentucky, but her assists total has risen to a career-high 4.1 per game this year, indicating the she can be an elite scorer and facilitator in the WNBA.**

NaLyssa Smith

**NaLyssa Smith is a skilled forward who is able to use her 6’4” frame to score over the top of defenders, while also displaying rare quickness and agility for a player so tall, which allows her to evade double teams. Smith already has the skillset to be a star in the WNBA, but the key to becoming an unstoppable offensive force will be to develop her perimeter shooting ability.**

Naz Hillmon

**Standing 6’2”, Naz Hillmon has established herself as a dominant force in the post during her time with Michigan. Her 20 points per game average on almost 60 percent shooting has led Michigan to a top-5 ranking this season. An underrated aspect of her game is her passing ability from out of the post, as she averages over 2 assists a game, demonstrating that she can be a threat as both a scorer and a facilitator.**

Ayoka Lee

**Ayoka Lee is currently one of the most dominant players in women’s college basketball, averaging around 25 points per game for the Kansas State Wildcats. At 6’6”, she is one of the players in the NCAAW, which helps her average over 3 blocks per game as a dominant defensive force. Lee technically has another year of eligibility, but her success at the college level proves that she is ready to join the WNBA ranks next year.**

Ashley Joens

**Ashley Joens has been a college basketball star since her sophomore year, as she has averaged more than 20 points over the past 3 years for the Iowa State Cyclones. While her overall field goal percentage is down to 38% this year, Joens 3-point percentage has risen to almost 37%, as she is becoming a threat to score from all areas of the court. Joens’ versatility combined with her 6’1” will allow her to be a seamless fit in the lineup of numerous WNBA teams.**

Shakira Austin

**Shakira Austin has a rare skillset that sets her apart from her fellow WNBA draft prospects, as she has a very tall 6’5” frame, yet also has shooting range that extends to the 3-point line. Austin is already very dangerous in the paint because of her size, so the fact that opponents have to watch guard her all the way out to the arc makes her even more of an offensive weapon. To maximize her potential, Austin just needs to find a steady balance of opportunities on jump shots and in the paint, so she can improve on her below 45% field goal percentage.**

Rae Burrell

**Rae Burrell has underperformed somewhat during her senior year at Tennessee so far, but during her junior year, Burrell showcased a skillset that would be very valuable in the WNBA. As a junior, Burrell averaged almost 17 points per game while shooting over 40% from behind the 3-point line. Burrell also has good size for a guard at 6’1”, which means defenders must be concerned about her bullying them in the paint as well as burning them from behind the arc.**

Veronica Burton

**Veronica Burton has consistently been one of the elite defensive players in women’s college basketball, and her steady growth on the offensive end has allowed her to develop into one of the top two-way prospects in this draft class. Burton averages an absurd 4 steals per game on the defensive end, while leading the Northwestern offense with around 17 points per game and 6 assists per game. Burton will be able to consistently force turnovers for opposing WNBA offenses, and has the potential to become a high-level offensive creator as well.**

Evina Westbrook

**University of Connecticut has long been known as the powerhouse of women’s college basketball, and Evina Westbrook is yet another talented Husky ready to head to the WNBA. Westbrook is a confident 6’0” guard who has stepped up in the absence of star Paige Bueckers for the Huskies. Her ability to finish through contact while also shooting 3-pointers at a respectable clip (career-high of 38% as a sophomore) will make her a valuable asset to any WNBA team.**

Destanni Henderson

**Destanni Henderson is one of the shorter prospects for the 2022 WNBA Draft, but she makes up for her diminutive stature with elite passing and shooting ability. Playing as the lead ballhandler for the top-ranked South Carolina Gamecocks, Henderson has averaged over 4 assists per game while shooting around 40 percent on 3-pointers. She figures to be an effective orchestrator of a WNBA offense once she enters the league.**

History of the NBA Draft

**The NBA Draft was first started all the way back in 1947, back when the league was known as the BAA and there was only 8 teams in the league. The draft consisted of 10 rounds, with 80 selections in total. Two years after that first draft, the BAA merged with the NBL to form the NBA that is still going strong today. In the NBA Draft, for players to be eligible they must be at least 19 years old by the end of the calendar year and one year removed from high-school graduation. For a period of time, players were allowed to enter the draft immediately after high school, but that was ruled against following the 2005 season. While the first NBA draft was 10 rounds, since 1989 the draft has consisted of two rounds, with 30 picks in each round and 60 players selected in total.**

History of the WNBA Draft

**The first WNBA draft was much later than the first NBA draft, as it did not take place until 50 years later in 1997, when the league was first started. Unlike the NBA draft, the WNBA draft requires that all eligible participants must be 4 years removed from high school, meaning most draft prospects are not eligible until the graduate college. The 1997 draft was unique because it was comprised of 3 parts: an initial allocation of players into individual teams, then a WNBA elite draft which was designated for professionals coming from other leagues, and then 4 rounds of a regular draft for incoming players. Since 2003, the WNBA draft has only consisted of a three-round selection process with 12 picks in each round, so 36 players are selected in the draft each year.**