

A general approach to this offseason (BB = ESPN Big Board):

Quarterback

6 teams project to have needs at QB this offseason (Browns, Giants, Jets, Raiders, Steelers, Titans). **Sam Darnold**, **Russell Wilson**, and **Cam Ward** will be the three big targets. With 6 teams needing a QB secondary targets will be important. That means we will then be looking at **Shadeur Sanders**, **Jaxson Dart**, **Justin Fields**, and **Aaron Rodgers** after he is presumably cut.

The plan: Outside of Sam Darnold and Cam Ward, there really aren't any long-term solutions at the position. It may be Darnold/Ward or bust.

Running Back

7 teams project to have needs at WR this offseason. **Najee Harris** and **Aaron Jones** project as the top two free agency targets. It is unlikely they will have strong markets, however, with such a deep draft at RB. With **Ashton Jeanty** (BB #5), **Omarion Hampton** (BB #26), **Kaleb Johnson** (BB #39), **TreVeyon Henderson** (BB #44), **Cam Skattebo** (BB #56), **Devin Neal** (BB #60), **Dylan Sampson** (BB #65), and **Quinshon Judkins** (BB #69) all projected day 1/2 picks, the draft is loaded. There is a plethora of value for the taking.

The plan: It would be wise to address this need on day 2 of the draft.

Wide Receiver

15 teams project to have needs at WR this offseason. It is a relatively strong free agent group, with 6 players (**Chris Godwin**, **Amari Cooper**, **Stefon Diggs**, **DeAndre Hopkins**, **Darius Slayton**, and **Keenan Allen**) expected to command over \$10M per year. However, there is no "Alpha" level WR set to hit free agency with Tee Higgins expected to stay in Cincinnati. The draft is a bit weaker than normal (**Tet McMillan** BB #15, **Matthew Golden** BB #17 as the only top 25 prospects) with no BB top 10 WR and a total of only 6 top 64 BB WRs. Chris Godwin, despite coming off of injury, could command a big contract as the top available player in a weak class.

The plan: Very situation dependent. For teams needing a WR1, overpaying for Chris Godwin or Tet McMillan may make sense. For teams needing a #2, one of the veteran free agents should make sense.

Tight End

5 teams project to have needs at TE this offseason. A very weak free agent class, teams will look towards a strong draft. **Tyler Warren** (BB #4) and **Colston Loveland** (BB #13) will be the top targets, with secondary targets **Mason Taylor** (BB #35), **Elijah Arroyo** (BB #48), **Juwan Johnson** (FA), and **Tyler Conklin** (FA).

The plan: I'm never going to suggest drafting a tight end in the first round due to years of data telling us it's a bad idea. I would go after one of the secondary targets.

Offensive Tackle

12 teams project to have needs at OT this offseason. The free agency market is relatively weak aside from **Ronnie Stanley** and **Cam Robinson**. Luckily, this draft is loaded with OT talent. There are FIVE top-32 BB OTs, led by **Josh Simmons** (BB #8), **Will Campbell** (BB #9), **Armand Membou** (BB #14), **Kelvin Banks Jr.** (BB #19), and **Josh Conerly Jr.** (BB #22). There will certainly be competition for these blue-chip prospects, but this is a great draft to walk into needing OT.

The plan: You can never invest too much in the OLine or DLine. This is a great year to use your first-round pick on an OT.

Offensive Guard

13 teams project to have needs at OG this offseason. Luckily, we see 13 top-100 prospects/top 100 free agents! **Will Fries**, **Tevin Jenkins**, **Mekhi Becton**, **Patrick Mekhari**, and **Aaron Banks** lead free agency. The draft is weaker, with **Tyler Booker** (BB #33), **Donovan Jackson** (BB #41), and **Marcus Mbow** (BB #62) at the top. Of course, there will be a few OTs in the draft that can be moved inside.

The plan: There are enough OGs here that the market shouldn't be too difficult. With the state of Guard salaries right now, a free agent acquisition may make the most sense.

Center

6 teams project to have needs at C this offseason. This is going to be a bloodbath. The highest ranked Center in the draft is Seth McLaughlin (BB #86), so you probably can't expect him to start right away. In free agency, there are really two guys: **Drew Dalman** and **Ryan Kelly**.

The plan: What a year to be Drew Dalman! I'd expect the market for Dalman will be massive. Overpaying Ryan Kelly for 1-2 years may not be the worst plan. There really may not be any good options here. Interested to see what these 6 teams do at Center.

Defensive Tackle

12 teams project to have needs at DT this offseason. The market is very very strong at DT this year. In free agency, expect **Osa Odighizuwa** and **Milton Williams** to lead the way. In the draft there are 7 top-64 BB DTs, led by **Mason Graham** (BB #3), **Walter Nolan** (BB #16), **Kenneth Grant** (BB #18), **Derrick Harmon** (BB #21), **T.J. Sanders** (BB #30), and **Tyleik Williams** (BB #37).

The plan: Cue old man yelling at the clouds—INVEST IN THE LINES. With 8 or so very valuable DTs available this offseason, there's no excuse not to walk away with one of the guys if you have a need at DT. Even teams without a need at the position should be watching very carefully. You can never invest enough in the position.

EDGE

19 teams project to have needs at DT this offseason. My favorite position in football is VERY strong this offseason. 5 free agents (**Khalil Mack**, **Malcom Koonce**, **Josh Sweat**, **Chase Young**, **Dayo Odeyingbo**) project to sign for over 16.5M AAV, while 7 prospects (**Abdul Carter** (BB #1), **Mykel Williams** (BB #6), **Jalon Walker** (BB #7), **Shemar Stewart** (BB #20), **Nic Scourton** (BB #23), **Donovan Ezeiruaku** (BB #25), **Mike Green** (BB #28)) are BB top-32 and 18 top-100.

The plan: To the surprise of no one that knows me, my recommendation is "yes." This is THE position to target this offseason. With the strongest draft for EDGES in who knows how long, I would advise any team to try to walk away with one of these guys. I would, however, be weary to overpay for a free agent when the draft is so strong.

Inside Linebacker

8 teams project to have needs at ILB this offseason. It's a relatively weak group. Free agency is led by 24.9 year-old **Nick Bolton**, **Zack Baun**, and **Ernest Jones** as the three ILBs projected \$10m+ AAV. The draft only really has two startable guys: Jihaad Campbell (BB #27) and Carson Schwesinger (BB #54). Secondary targets include **Robert Spillane**, **Jamien Sherwood**, and **Lavonte David**.

The plan: I don't love investing a ton in this position, and the free agents aren't too exciting. PFF ranked Bolton as the 84th of 189 LBs this year, so it's not exactly inspiring to hand him a big contract. Baun was obviously great, but you're talking about handing out a big contract to a formerly career backup. I'd opt for a cheap secondary target like Sherwood.

Cornerback

18 teams project to have needs at CB this offseason. Outside of EDGE, this is likely the strongest market, and it comes at a position that has recently become underpaid relative to its counterpart, Wide Receiver (<https://x.com/JakeCar120/status/1889435876331233753>). 8 free agents project for \$11M+ AAV (**Byron Murphy Jr**, **Charvarius Ward**, **Asante Samuel Jr**, **Carlton Davis**, **D.J. Reed**, **Paulson Adebo**, **Rasul Douglas**, **Mike Hilton**). The draft has 4 top-24 BB CBs, led by **Travis Hunter** (BB #2), **Will Johnson** (BB #11), **Jahdae Barron** (BB #12), and **Benjamin Morrison** (BB #24).

The plan: I would opt to target the free agent CBs. I believe that the position is currently financially undervalued, and I'd rather exploit that than draft a CB high when I could instead target OL/DL.

Safety

8 teams project to have needs at S this offseason. The market is pretty strong this year, with 5 free agents projected \$12.5M+ AAV(**Jevon Holland**, **Justin Reid**, **Trevon Moehrig**, **Camryn Bynum**, **Talano Hufanga**). In addition, 5 free agents are projected to receive between \$4.5M-9M AAV (**Andre Cisco**, **Harrison Smith**, **Jeremy Chinn**, **Julian Blackmon**, **Justin Simmons**, **Elijah Molden**). The draft is led by **Nick Emmanwori** (BB #29), **Malaki Starks** (BB #31), and **Xavier Watts** (BB #43).

The plan: With the top of the market so strong, I think that the mid-tier free agents may come at a nice discount. Players like Cisco, Chinn, and Molden are solid young starters who should be available at very reasonable costs.