

Reynolds: Offensive & Defensive Player of the Year Awards Analysis

RYAN REYNOLDS // AUG 22, 2025



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As Opening Day approaches, I'll be previewing each NFL awards market through the end of next week. That march continues with the Offensive and Defensive Player of the Year markets.

[MVP Preview](#) | [Protector of the Year Preview](#)

Leading into Week 1, any Offensive or Defensive Player of the Year updates will be dropped into the betting channel of our Discord.

Offensive Player of the Year Preview

The Offensive Player of the Year (OPOY) has historically been the most erratic NFL awards race, which is why I paid the least attention to it when I began tracking awards markets over a decade ago. However, in recent years, the OPOY has gradually become the best skill player award. With that in mind, here are some OPOY trends to have on your radar:

OPOY Trends

- Quarterbacks and running backs have won most of the OPOY races.
- There hasn't been a back-to-back OPOY winner since **Marshall Faulk** won the OPOY three years in a row back in 1999-2001.
- MVP quarterbacks have also won the OPOY in the same year.
- Non-MVP quarterbacks have won the OPOY.
- Running backs and wide receivers have won the OPOY.
- However, a skill-position player has won each of the last six OPOY races and seven of the last eight.
- Not only did each of those six skill players play for teams that made the playoffs, but each of those teams won their division.
- Three running backs and three wide receivers have won the OPOY during this six-year stretch.

What We're Looking for in an OPOY Candidate

I have not completely taken quarterbacks out of consideration in this race, but when I make an OPOY bet, I'm now betting on a skill player who plays on a playoff-caliber team who can also conceivably finish the year as the top producer at their position. Going forward, I'm interested in quarterback options in very close MVP races, as voters could conceivably split the difference in those situations.

OPOY Notes

- Early this offseason, both Evan Silva and I liked Texans wide receiver **Nico Collins** in the 25:1 range. Collins fell all the way down to the 15:1 range, before rising back to his current +2000 price.
- If you look at **Silva's Top 150**, his highest-ranked player who doubles as an OPOY long shot is Jaguars receiver **Brian Thomas Jr.** (+3500). The AFC South is very winnable, which gives Thomas a fair shot to meet the team success requirement in this race.
- Falcons wide receiver **Drake London** (+4000 to +5000) is a first-round pick in Silva's Top 150, he's the clear top option in Atlanta's passing attack, and the NFC South is another very winnable division. London can be had at a solid value of +5000 on DraftKings.
- I am not bullish on the Green Bay Packers, but **Josh Jacobs** (+4000 to +6000) comes at a good value on both DraftKings and FanDuel.
- Cardinals wide receiver **Marvin Harrison Jr.** (+5000 to +10000) comes with team success concerns and would really need to take a major leap in his sophomore season to contend, but he's currently an exceptional value on FanDuel at +10000.

Defensive Player of the Year Preview

Some of our subscribers had epic 400:1 hits in this market on **Patrick Surtain II** last year — congratulations to each of you on your all-timer type win.

The conditions that allowed Surtain's win last year are worth discussing. As we'll discuss more in Defensive Player of the Year (DPOY) trends, pass rushers usually win this award, but last year:

- Most of the top-of-the-food-chain pass rushers missed significant time and/or played on teams that didn't make the playoffs.
- Sack leader **Trey Hendrickson** played on a Bengals team that missed the playoffs and had a bottom-tier defense.
- **T.J. Watt** was the primary DPOY contender among pass rushers late in the year, but his 11.5 sacks were six behind Hendrickson. Despite also having six forced fumbles, Watt didn't have a sack in any of his final three regular-season games last year.
- Broncos edge **Nik Bonitto** had a really nice year, but he was four sacks behind Hendrickson and is a much less well-known player than teammate Surtain.

DPOY Trends

- Nine of the last 11 DPOY winners were pass rushers.
- Each of those pass rushers were first-round picks on teams with winning records.
- **Aaron Donald** and **J.J. Watt** won six of the last 11 DPOY awards.
- **Stephon Gilmore** and Surtain are the only non-pass rushers to win during that span.
- Both corners are also the only DPOY winners during that span who had longer than 15:1 odds.
- Splash plays (sacks and turnovers) have been the biggest factors in this race, with the exception of Surtain's campaign last year.
- Playing on a winning team has been a consistent factor in this race, but playing for a high-performing defense has not.

What We're Looking for in an DPOY Candidate

A blue-chip pass rusher who plays on a playoff contender who has a path to leading the league in sacks should still be the target. However, if another season happens like last year, where the star pass rushers in the league underwhelm across the board while most of them play for teams that miss the postseason, that's when we should start to look at things differently.

DPOY Notes

- Among the five favorites in this market, **Micah Parsons** (+750), **Myles Garrett** (+850), and **Maxx Crosby** (+1300) are each on teams with sub-.500 win totals.
- Parsons, who is currently in what feels like a real feud with the Dallas Cowboys, is now the pass rusher that "deserves" a DPOY the most, which is the position **T.J. Watt** (+950) used to be in.
- Given the Steelers' long-term consistency, Watt is always a factor in this race unless he misses significant time.
- Lions EDGE **Aidan Hutchinson** (+700) is the favorite and he's coming off a season-ending knee injury, which makes him a Comeback Player of the Year factor as well. Detroit also lost both of their coordinators and huge chunks of their overall coaching staff this offseason, while playing in, arguably, the NFL's deepest division.

- 49ers EDGE Nick Bosa (+1100 to +1500) won this award in 2022, and he'll benefit from the league's easiest schedule. He can be had at a solid value on DraftKings and BetMGM.
- Matthew Stafford's health status is very important for Jared Verse (+1200 to +1500 DraftKings), who could become a serious factor in this race going forward, similar to how Texans EDGE Will Anderson Jr. (+1300 to +1600 FanDuel) reached that status in his sophomore season last year.
- Bosa and Verse are my favorite options in this race.
- Adam Levitan and I recently had a chat about Bonitto's status in this race. Long story short, Levitan had interest at 60:1, where I told him I thought he should be around 30:1, which is where Denver's ascending EDGE now sits.
- If you're looking for a deep long shot, Bears EDGE Montez Sweat (+10000 to +12000 FanDuel) is my favorite that you can get at a value. He's a former first-round pick coming off a down year on a Bears team that isn't drawing dead at the postseason.

[Jared Verse, Los Angeles Rams, Betting, NFL Draft Kit Pro, Ryan Reynolds' Awards Betting Analysis](#)



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