

The Story of the NFL Draft

Brock Etzel

Timeline of

Major American Sports Leagues

Timeline of Major American Sports Leagues											
Concept				Process				Final product			
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
NFL Playoffs								NFL Regular Season			
NBA Regular Season			NBA Playoffs							NBA Regular Season	
			MLB Regular Season						MLB Playoffs		
NHL Regular Season			NHL Playoffs						NHL Regular Season		
NFL Break The NFL has the longest break of any major sports league in America of 6 months.			NFL Draft Due to the long break NFL fans want something to talk about and watch so the NFL draft is held at the end of April.			Playoffs Despite all 3 other major leagues playing, the NBA and NHL of which are airing their playoffs, the NFL draft still draws immense attention.			Viewership The first round of the the NFL draft had more than double the amount of viewers as the most viewed matchup of the opening weekend of the NBA playoffs.		

Viewership Continued

1.

The first weekend of the NBA playoffs averaged 4.4 million viewers. Meanwhile the last 4 rounds of the NFL Draft averaged 4.3 million.

2.

The first round of the NFL Draft drew an average of 13.6 million viewers. While the highest viewership for the first weekend of the NBA playoffs was only 6.6 million.

3.

The second round of the NFL Draft also outpaced the NBA with 7.5 million viewers.

4.

The NHL has greatly struggled only drawing an average of 700,000 viewers for playoff games so far in 2025.



Agenda

1. Pick Quality by Team

A look at each teams draft success across rounds.

2. Picks by School

A look at the schools with the most picks for different positions sorted by conference.

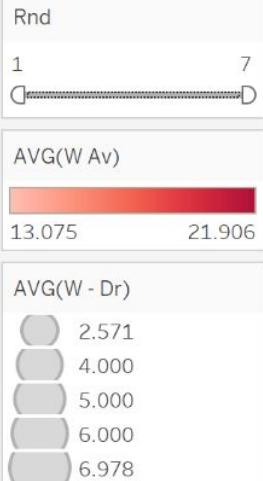
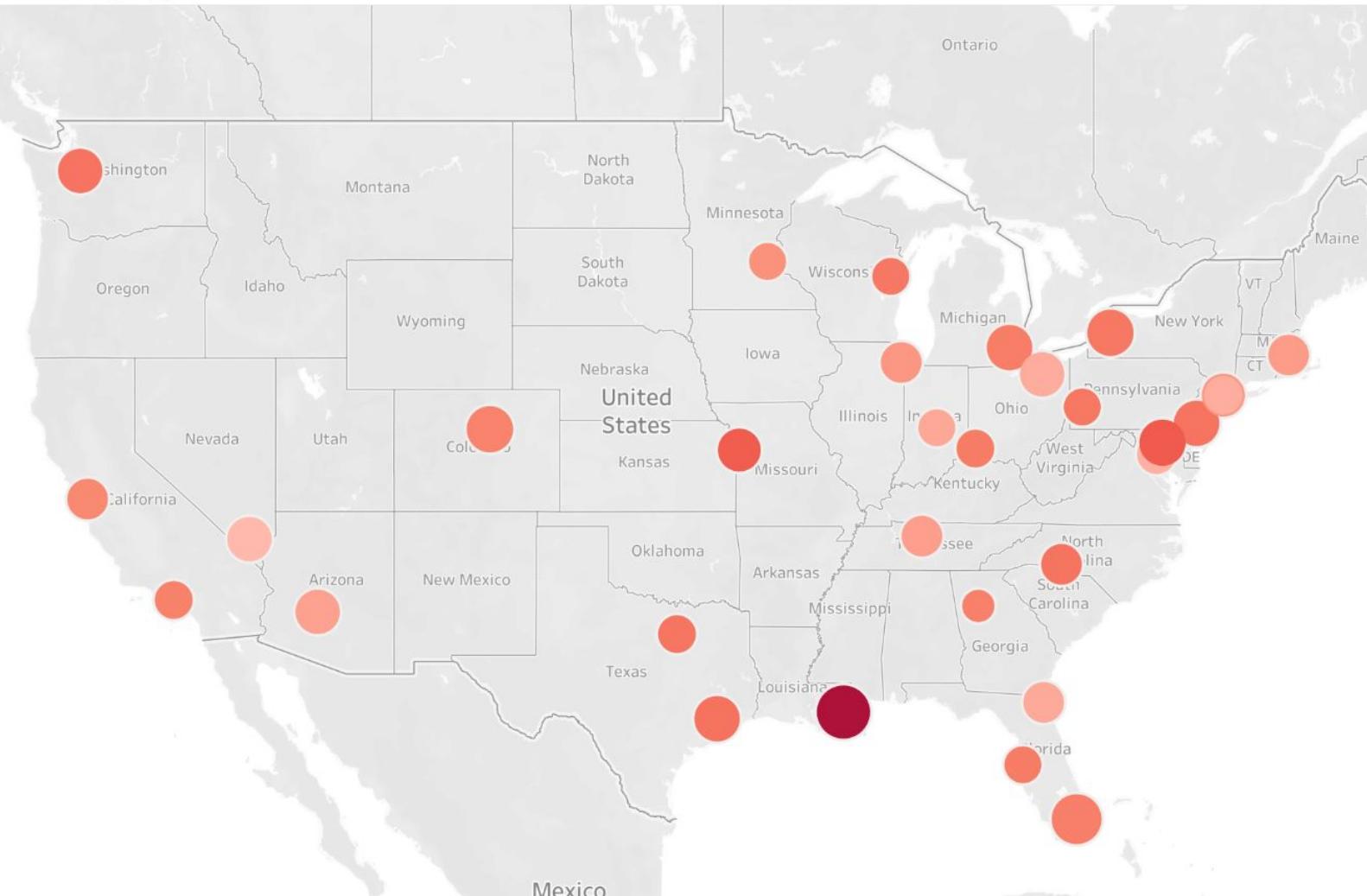
3. Picks by Year

The number of picks each year across rounds and positions.

4. Quality by Round and Conference

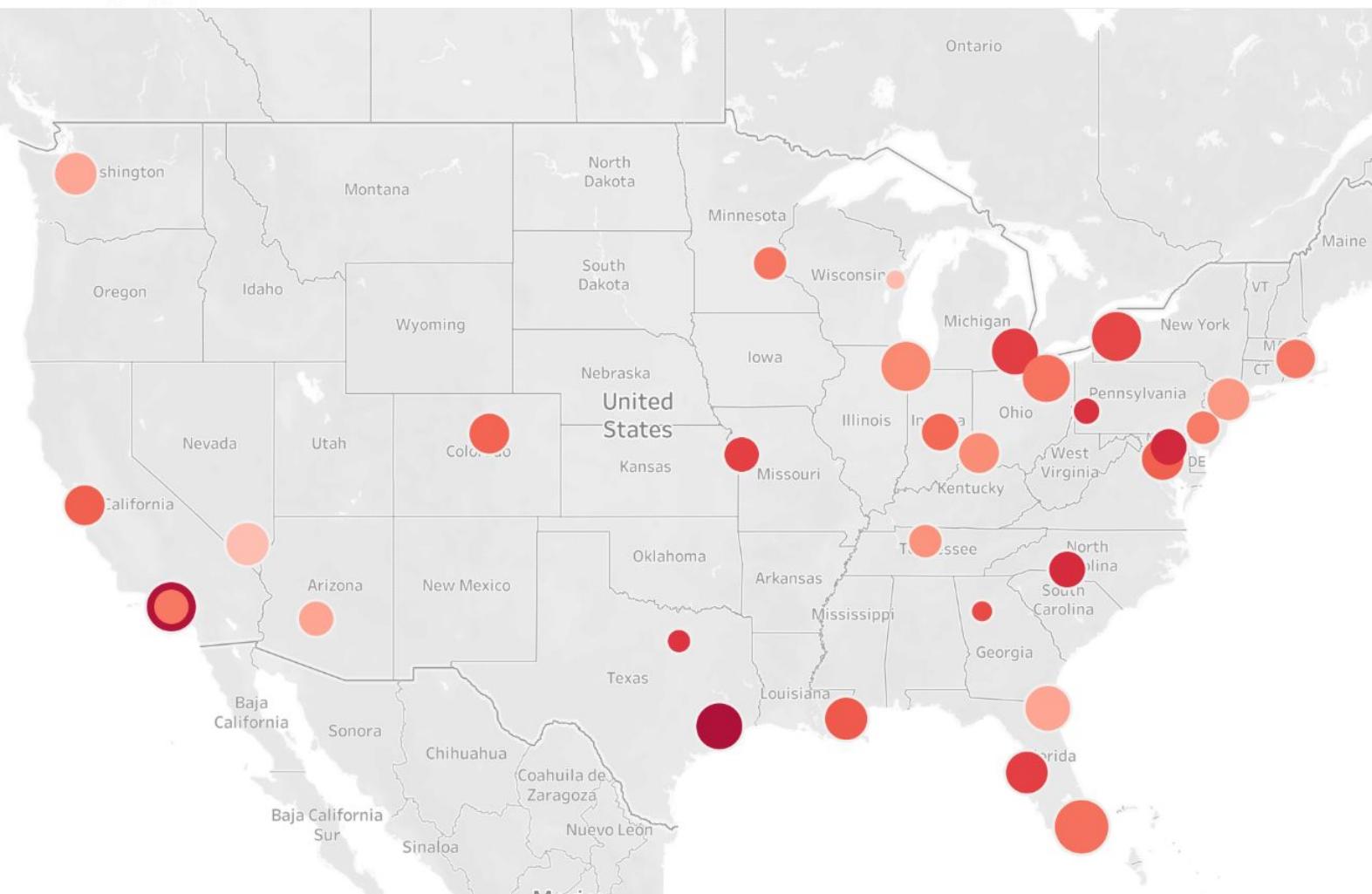
A look at how many star players have come from each round and conference.

Team Average Aggregate Value



Darker circles indicate better players drafted and smaller circles indicate retention of talent

Team Average Aggregate Value



Key Findings

1.

The Houston Texans have drafted the best players on average in the first round. However they have struggled to maintain these players.

46.82 Avg Value
9.94 Difference

2.

The Dallas Cowboys and Pittsburgh Steelers have had the most success retaining first round talent.

41.11 Avg Value
2.03 Difference

3.

The New Orleans Saints have had the most overall success in the draft on average.

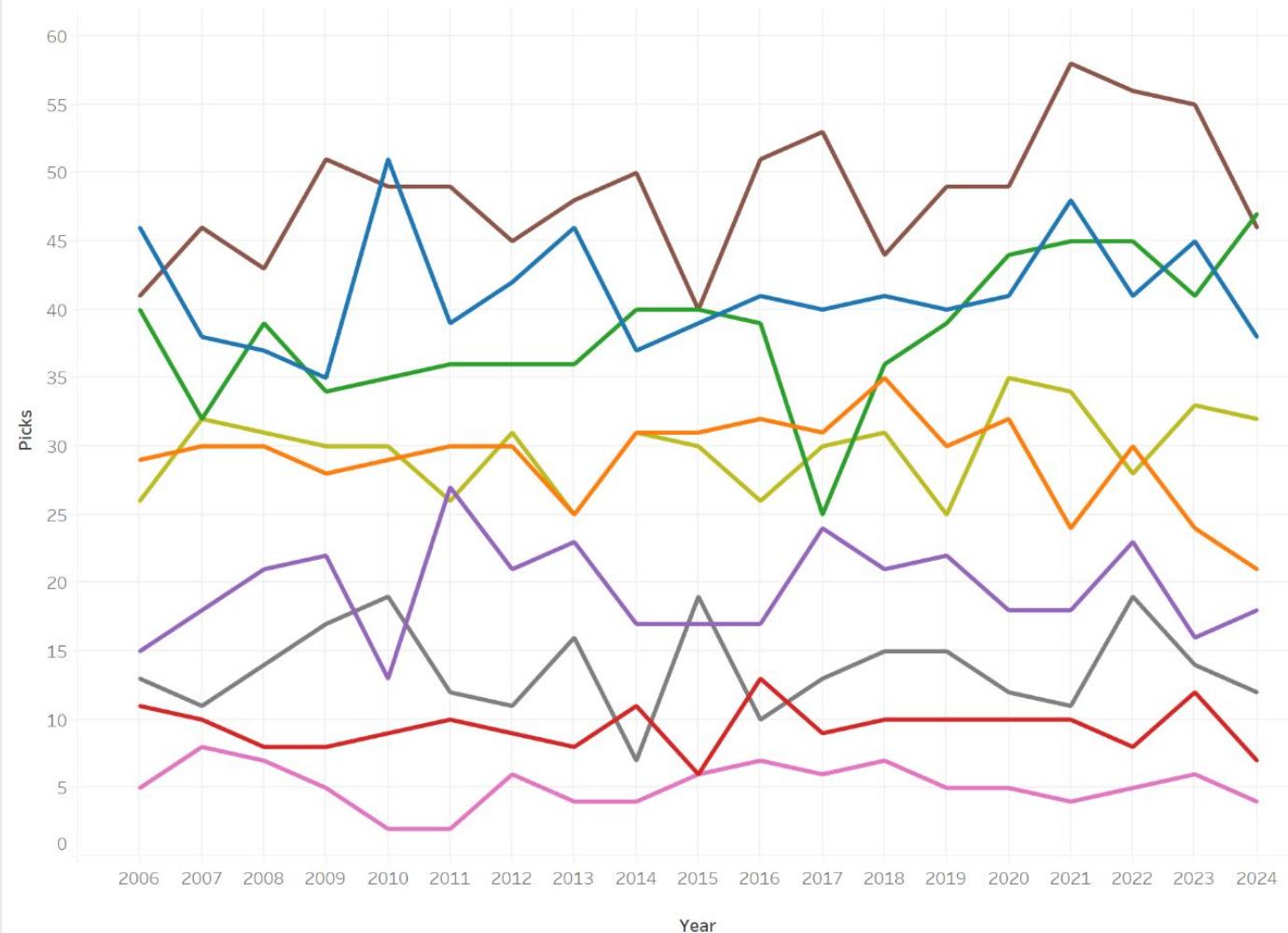
21.91 Avg Value
6.98 Difference

4.

The Las Vegas Raiders have struggled the most in the draft. Drafting poorly and not retaining the talent they do draft.

13.29 Avg Value
4.75 Difference

Picks per Position per Year



Rnd

1



7



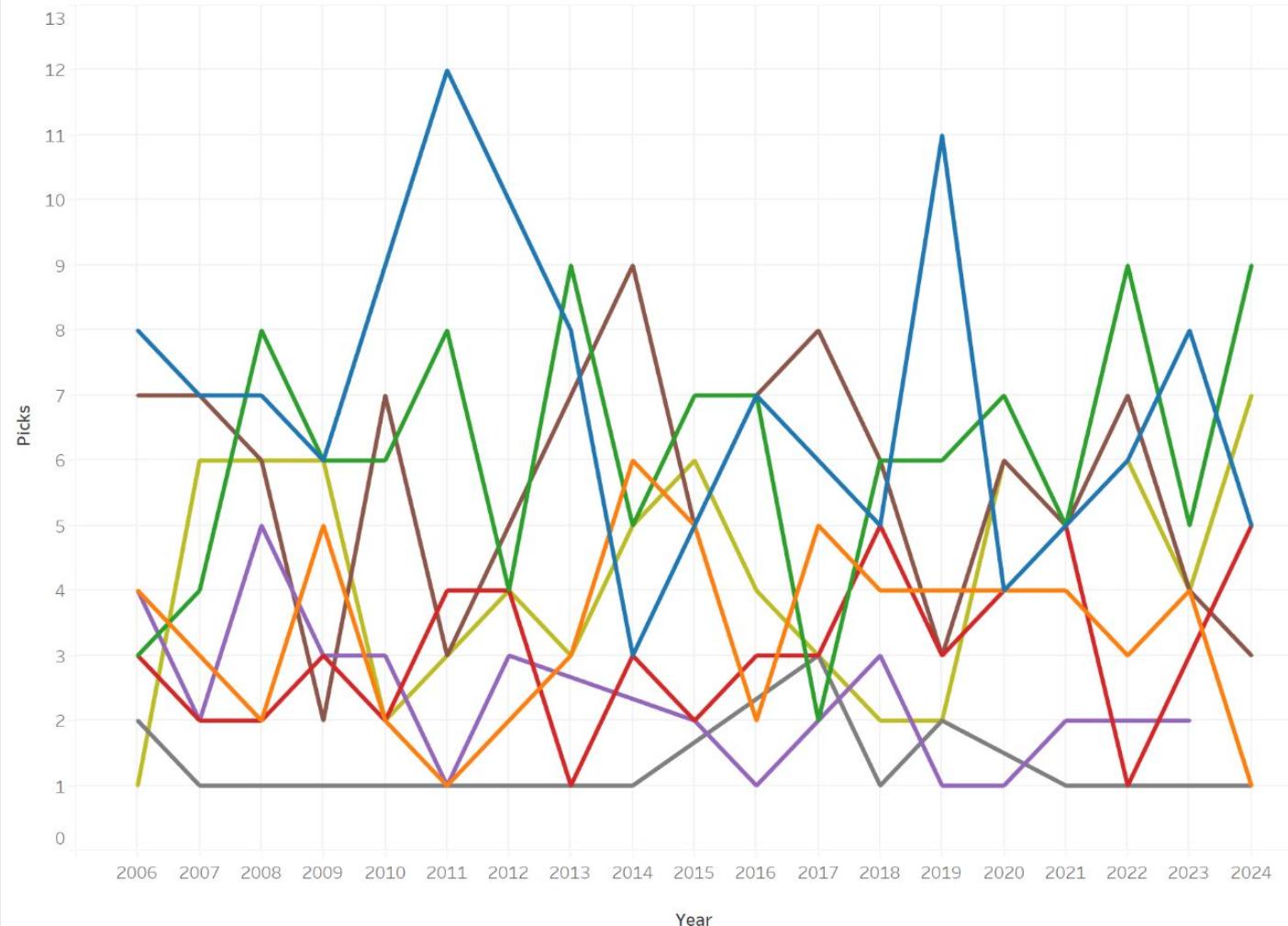
Pos (group)

 (All) DL LB OL QB RB Secondary Specialists TE WR

Pos (group)

 DL LB OL Secondary Specialists TE WR

Picks per Position per Year



Rnd

1 1

Pos (group)

- (All)
- DL
- LB
- OL
- QB
- RB
- Secondary
- Specialists
- TE
- WR

Pos (group)

- DL
- LB
- OL
- QB
- RB
- Secondary
- Specialists
- TE
- WR

Key Findings

1.

There is a clear hierarchy in the total amount of picks by position. Secondary, offensive and defensive line, wide receivers and linebackers, running backs, tight ends, and finally quarterbacks.

This makes sense as it reflects how many players at each position a team needs. Teams tend to only have two or three QBs on a roster while often having 10 or more secondary players.

2.

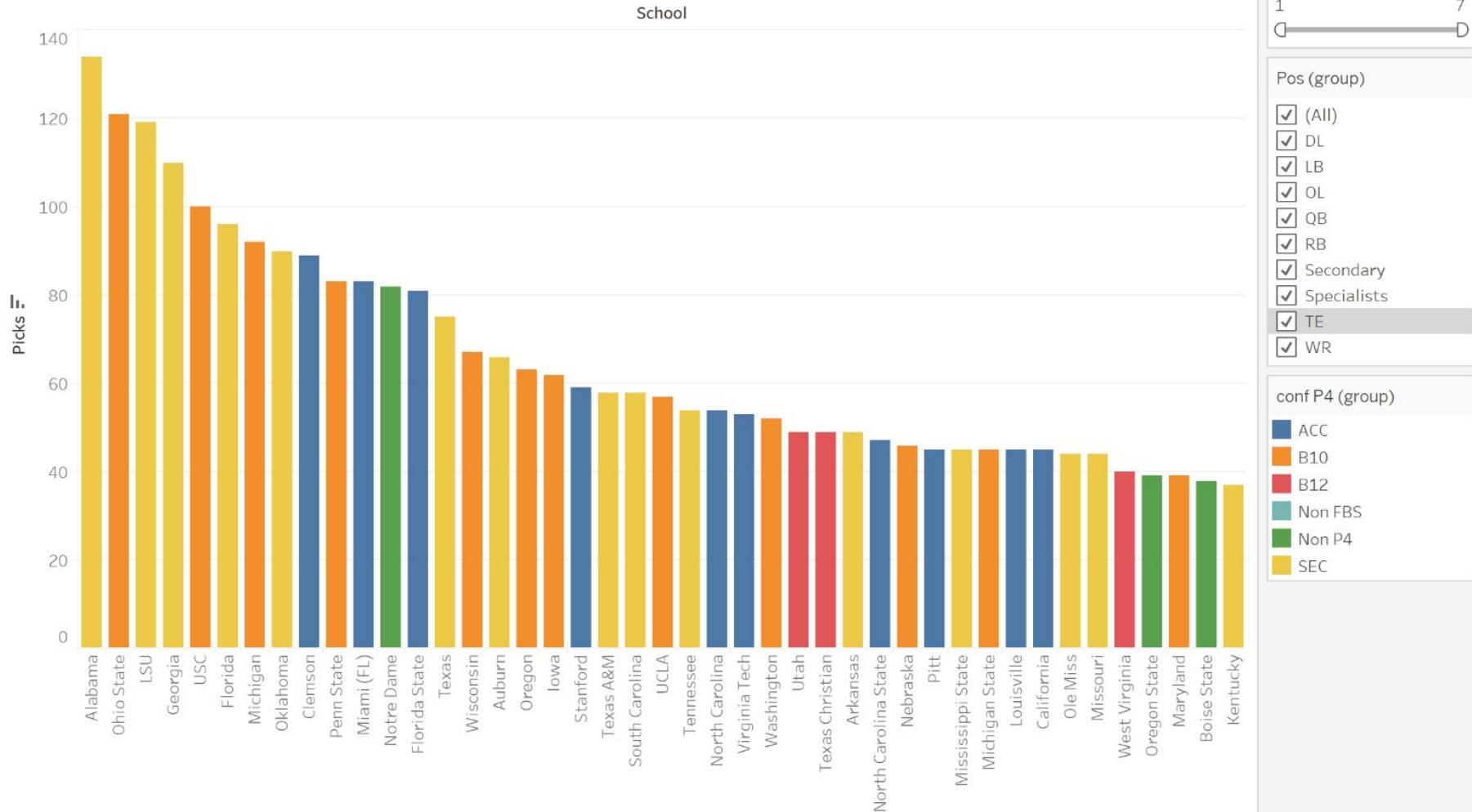
The first round tells a different story. Quarterbacks and defensive line get a massive bump while linebackers and running backs take a hit.

4.

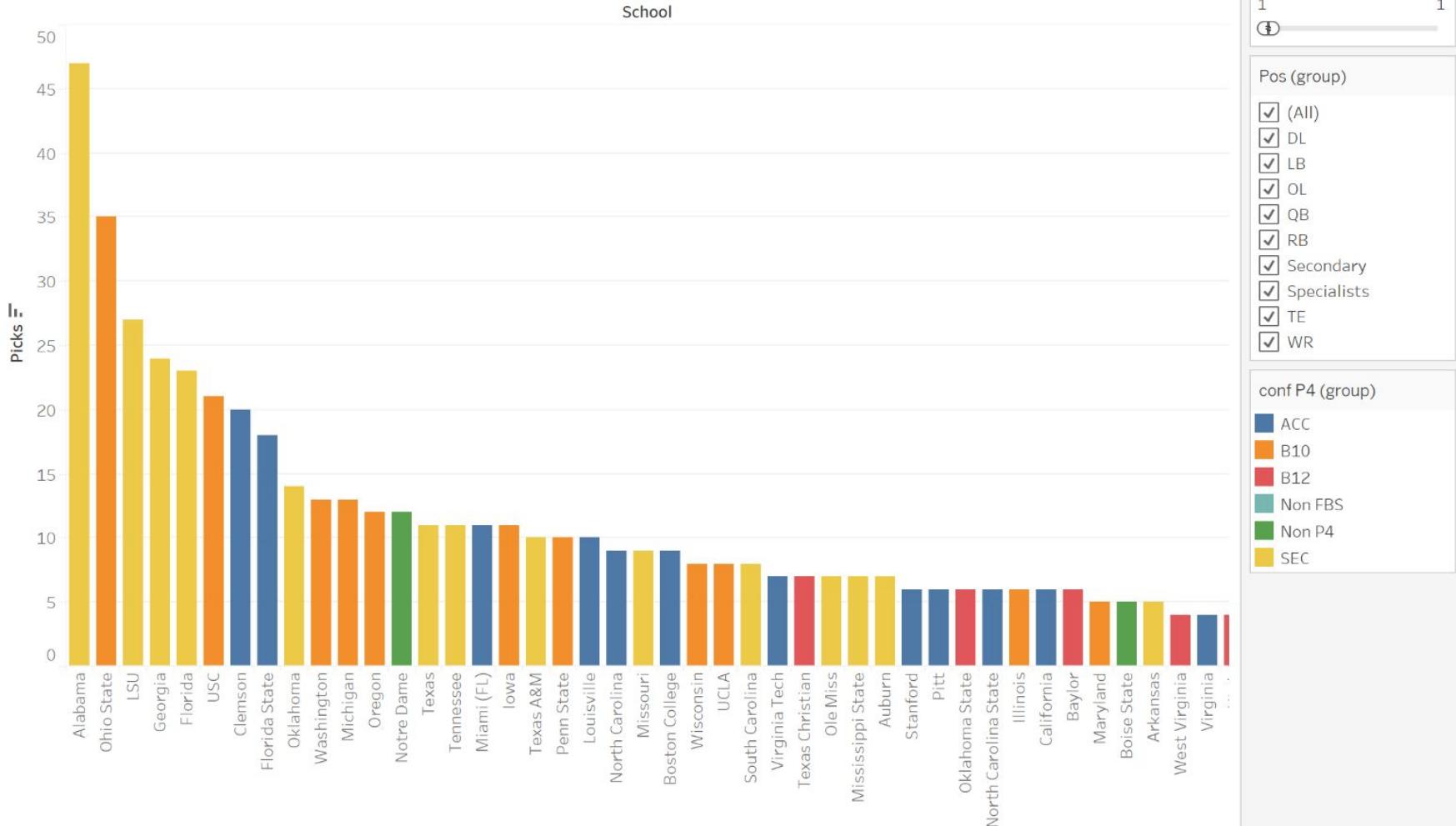
This reflects the value of players position as well as the ability to find talent later in the draft or through other means. Running backs, while valuable are extremely abundant and it is rather easy to find a serviceable or above average one. The same cannot be said for Qbs and defensive linemen.

0 1st Round RBs
in 2024

Draft Picks by School



Draft Picks by School



Draft Picks by School

School

Rnd

1

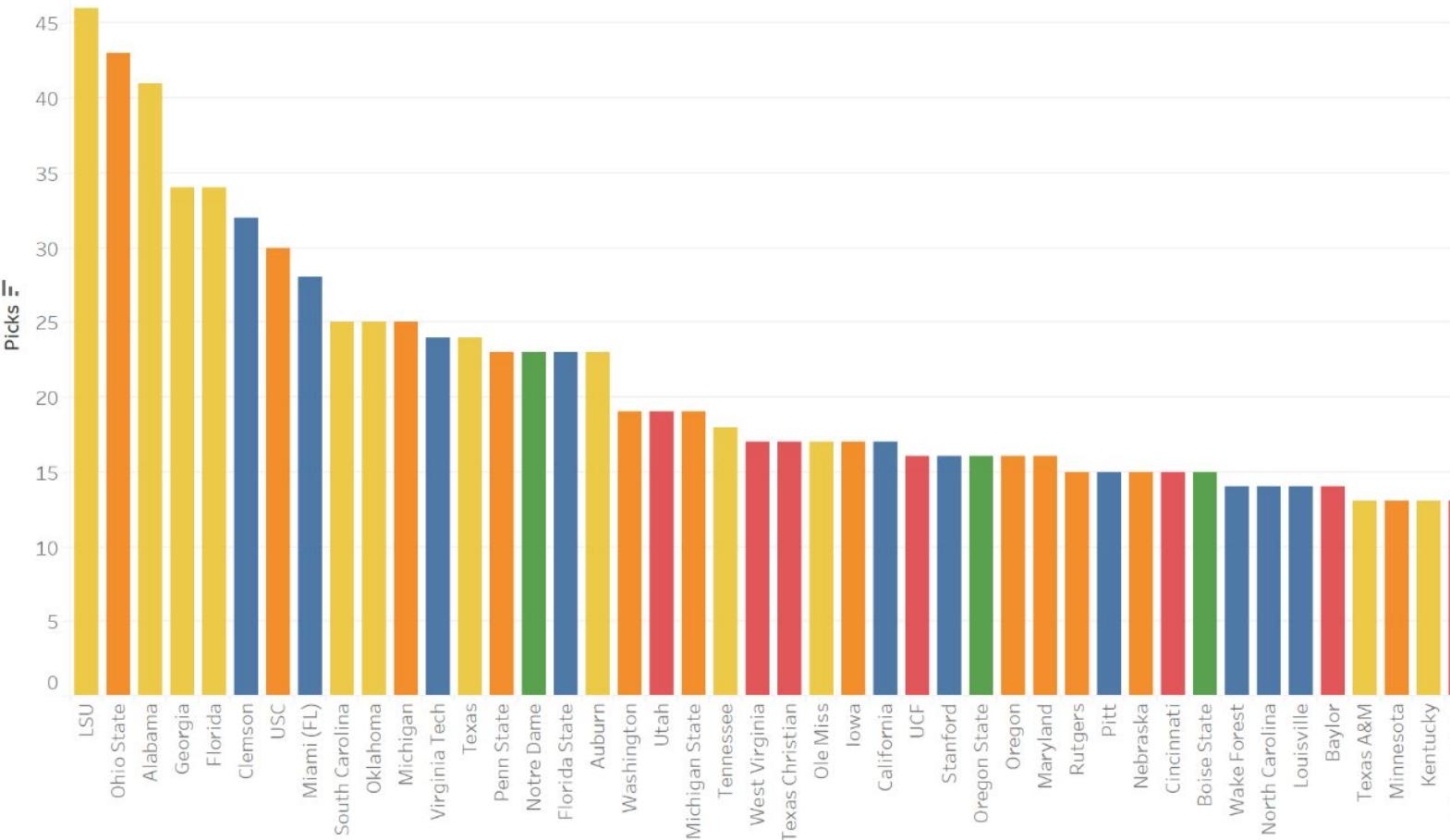
7

D

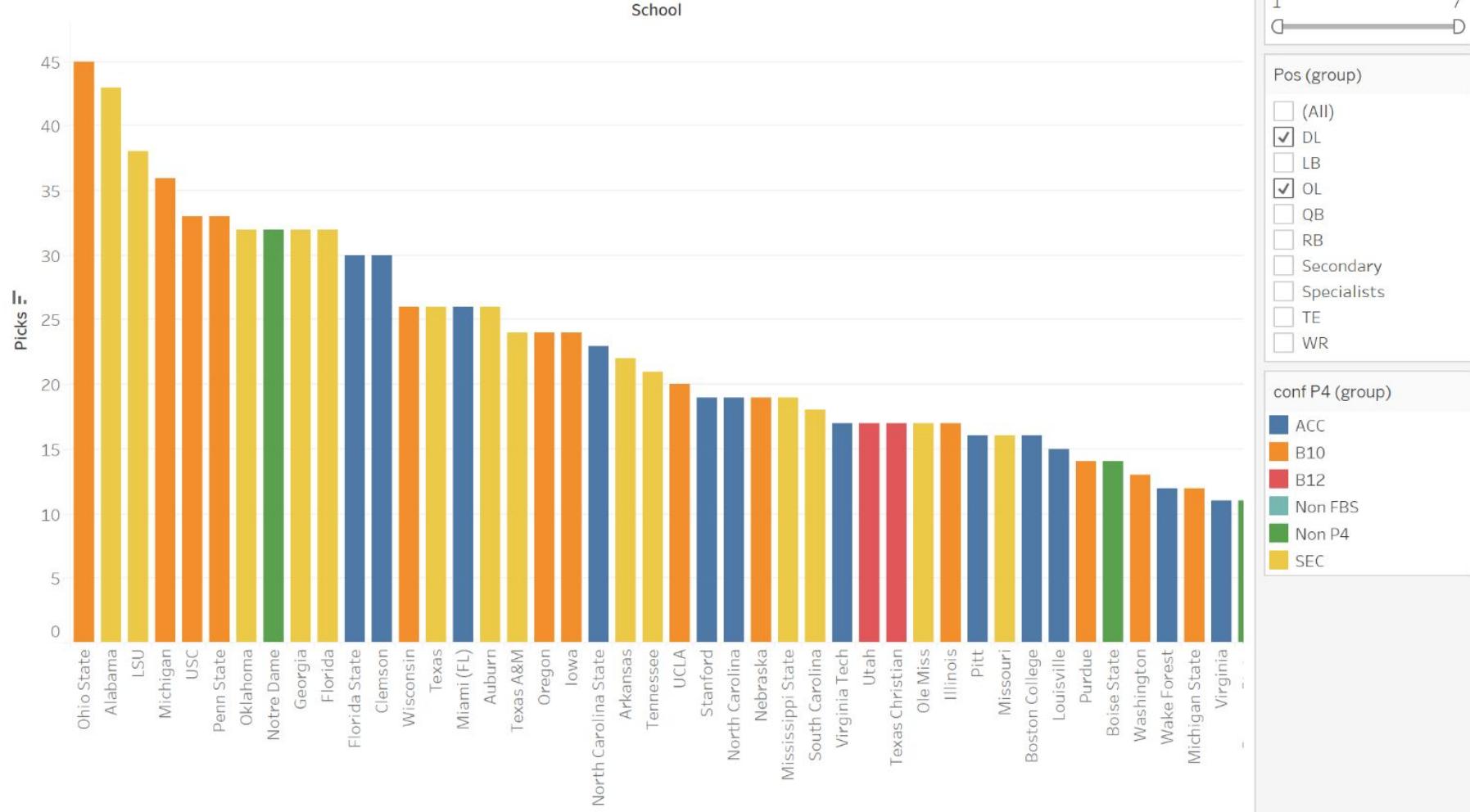
Pos (group)

 (All) DL LB OL QB RB Secondary Specialists TE WR

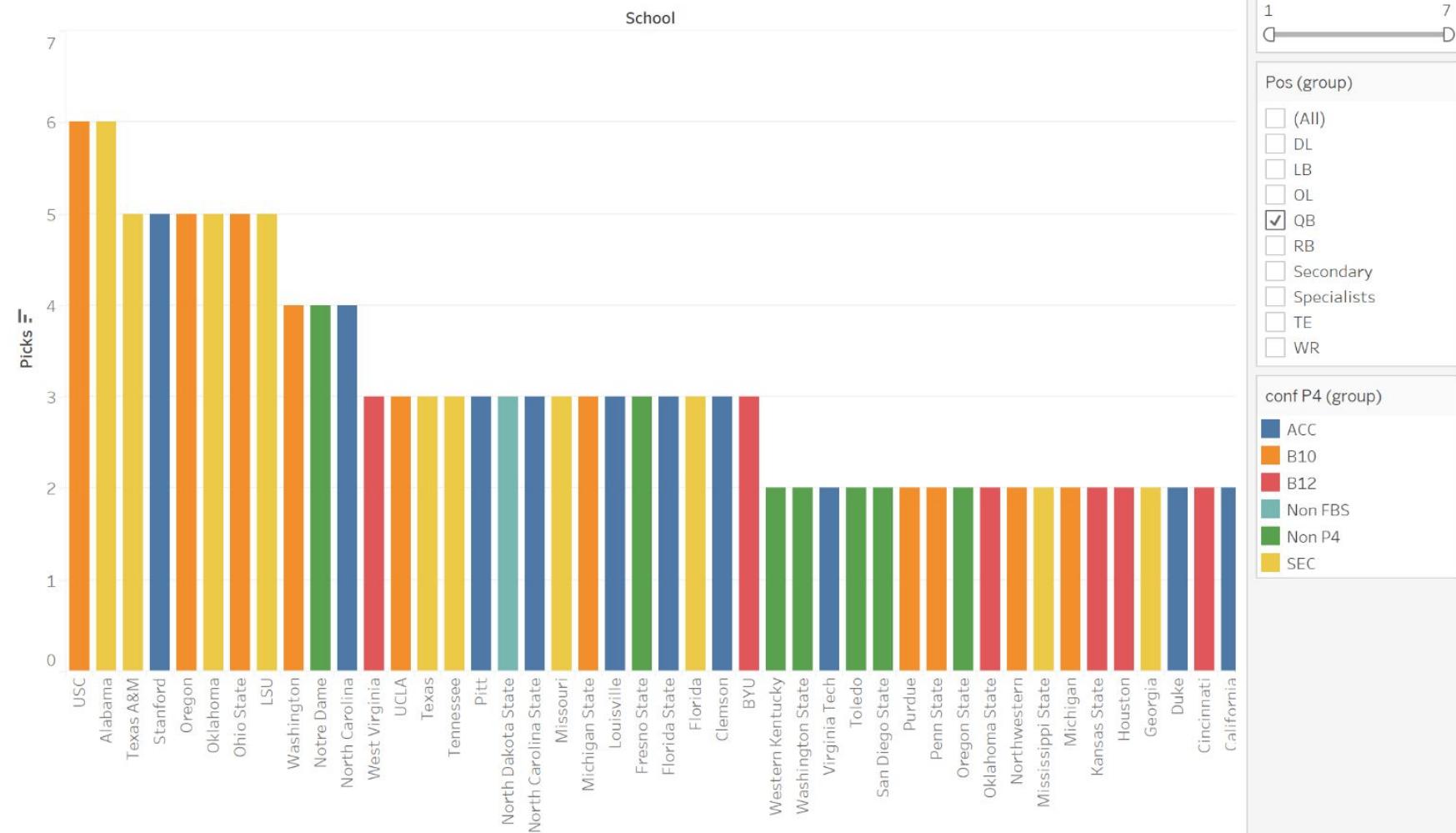
conf P4 (group)

 ACC B10 B12 Non FBS Non P4 SEC

Draft Picks by School



Draft Picks by School



Key Findings

1.

The SEC and Big 10 dominate the draft. Teams like Alabama, Ohio State, and LSU far outpace the rest of the nation.

134 Picks from
Alabama
9 of the top 10 from
B10 or SEC

2.

In terms of first round production the story is much the same. Alabama has an even more firm hold on the first place spot and the SEC shows considerable prowess when it comes to the top picks.

47 1st Round Picks
from Alabama
4 of the top 5 from
SEC

3.

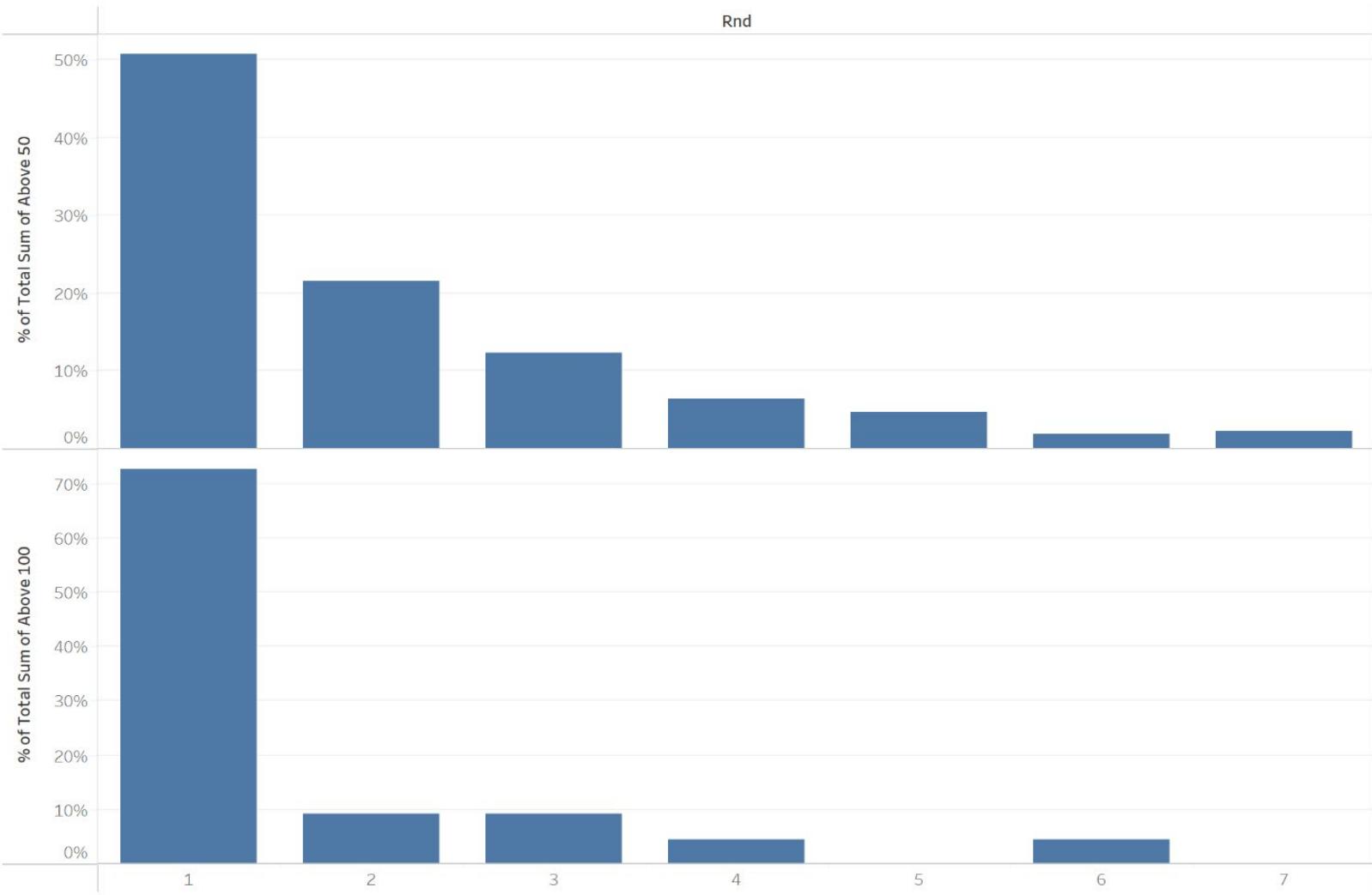
Looking at specific positions the SEC dominates the more athletic positions such as WR and the secondary while the Big 10 shines when it comes to the bigger players.

45 Linemen Picked
from OSU
20 WRs Picked from
LSU

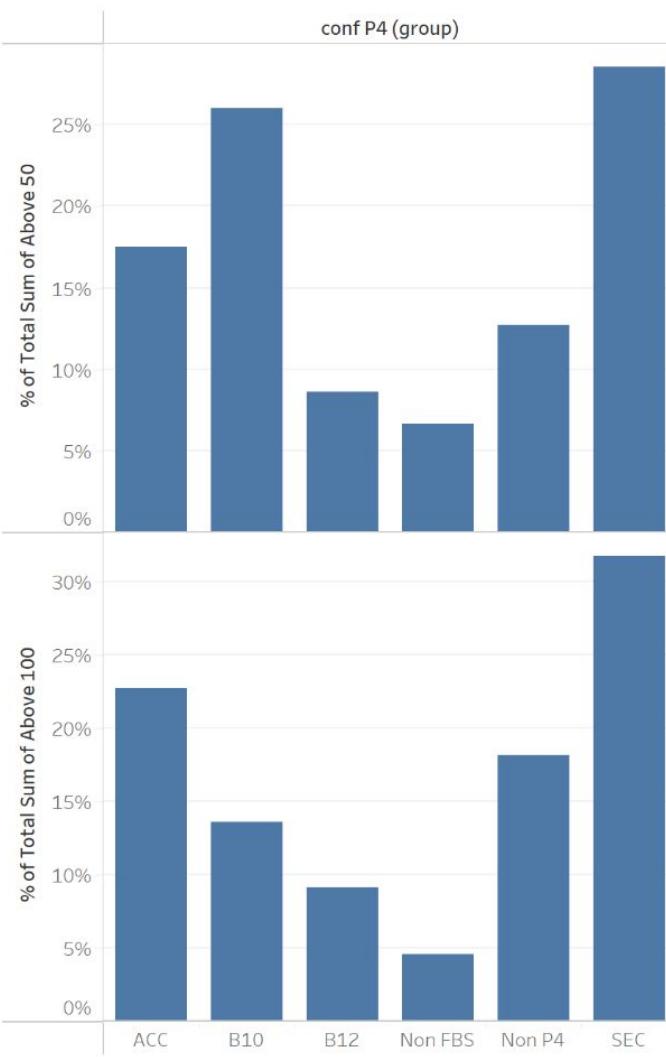
4.

Quarterback is much more of a toss up with no school or conference clearly standing above the rest however there are a few notable findings.

4 1st Round USC QBs
3 QBs Picked from
NDSU (non-FBS team)



conf P4 (group)



Works Cited

Snel, A. (2025, April 23). *NHL playoff TV ratings in U.S. down from last year, while NBA's early postseason games showing increase over 2024*. LVSportsBiz.

<https://lvsportsbiz.com/2025/04/23/nhl-playoff-tv-ratings-in-u-s-down-from-last-year-while-nbas-early-post-season-games-showing-increase-over-2024/>

National Basketball Association. (2025, April 22). *2025 NBA Playoffs opening weekend delivers most-watched in 25 years*. NBA.com.

<https://www.nba.com/news/2025-nba-playoffs-opening-weekend-delivers-most-watched-in-25-years>

National Football League. (2025, April 29). *2025 NFL Draft is second most-watched draft ever*. NFL.com.

<https://www.nfl.com/news/2025-nfl-draft-is-second-most-watched-draft-ever>

Sports Reference LLC. (n.d.). *Pro-Football-Reference.com – Pro football statistics and history*.

<https://www.pro-football-reference.com/>