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Fantasy football rankings for 2025: D/ST

6d - Fantasy staff

Schefter's cheat sheet: Value picks and sleepers to target

9d - Adam Schefter

2025 Fantasy Football Draft Guide: Rankings, mock drafts and analysis

3d - Fantasy staff

Hill not among Fins' captains following apology

MIAMI DOLPHINS 7m - Marcel Louis-Jacques

Steelers starting RB Warren inks 2-year extension

PITTSBURGH STEELERS 7m - Brooke Pryor

Jets GM: Fields can follow Mayfield, Darnold path

NEW YORK JETS 4d - Rich Cimini

Parsons traded to Packers, gets record contract

DALLAS COWBOYS 3d - Todd Archer

Broncos get 'good news' on Mims' groin injury

DENVER BRONCOS 4d - Jeff Legwold

Packers' Love OK playing with repaired thumb

GREEN BAY PACKERS 4d - Rob Demovsky

Fins WR Hill practices; RB Wright has procedure

MIAMI DOLPHINS 4d - Marcel Louis-Jacques

Jags' Hunter 'rolling full speed,' OK for Week 1

JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS 4d - Michael Diocco

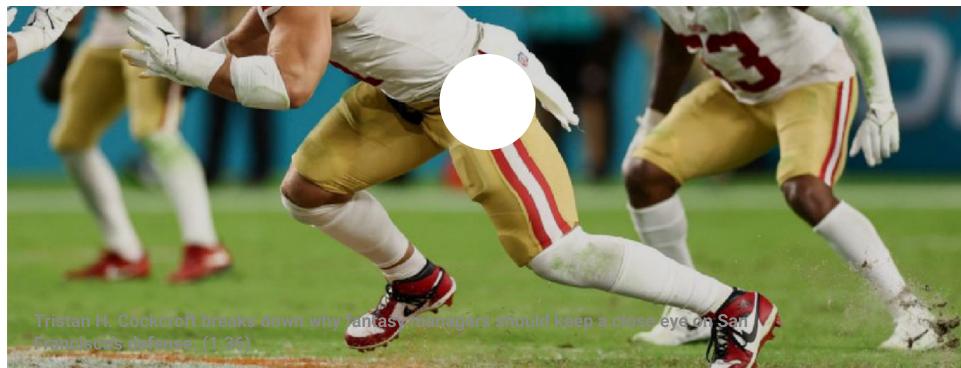
'Not doing that': 49ers won't trade WR Jennings

SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS 4d - Nick Wagoner

Fantasy football rankings for 2025 season

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Fantasy football draft rankings 2025: D/ST



Fantasy staff

Aug 27, 2025, 12:09 AM ET

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2025 Fantasy Football Rankings & Depth Charts

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Our analysts update their rankings throughout the preseason, valuing players as if drafting today.

2025 Defense/Special Teams Rankings

Player	Bowen	Clay	Cockcroft	Dopp	Karabell	Loza	Moody	Yates	Avg
49ers D/ST, Bal	1	4	3	2	5	1	4	1	2.6
Texans D/ST, Hou	2	3	4	1	1	2	6	4	2.9
Broncos D/ST, Den	4	2	1	9	3	3	1	2	3.1
Eagles D/ST, Phi	3	11	2	5	4	4	2	3	4.3
Steelers D/ST, Pit	5	1	5	11	2	5	3	7	4.9
Rams D/ST, Min	6	5	6	4	7	6	5	5	5.5
Packers D/ST, GB	7	10	10	6	6	9	13	6	8.4
Patriots D/ST, NE	8	8	18	3	8	7	11	10	9.1
Lions D/ST, Det	9	7	7	14	10	8	8	11	9.3
Seahawks D/ST, Sea	10	6	11	8	9	10	9	15	9.8
Bills D/ST, Buf	13	12	9	19	12	12	7	19	12.9
Jets D/ST, NYJ	11	13	13	10	16	11	14	16	13.0
Chiefs D/ST, KC	15	17	8	16	14	13	10	12	13.1
Buccaneers D/ST, TB	12	15	17	13	13	14	19	13	14.5

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49ers D/ST, SF	14	NR	15	15	17	16	15	20	16.6
Colts D/ST, Ind	18	9	NR	12	19	19	NR	17	17.0
Rams D/ST, LAR	NR	19	12	NR	NR	20	16	NR	18.9

Adam Schefter's fantasy football cheat sheet: Value picks and sleepers to target



Adam Schefter

Aug 23, 2025, 06:50 AM ET

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Each year, we at ESPN Fantasy endeavor to help with your *fantasy football* draft prep, including sleepers lists and cheat sheets. In this column, you will get the best of both worlds, as ESPN NFL Insider Adam Schefter offers his personal list of early-, mid- and late-round targets in 2025 fantasy leagues.

Below are some players who could be fantasy standouts this season and outperform their current average draft position (ADP). If given a choice at certain junctures in the draft, or in tiebreaker situations, these are players who will receive strong consideration.

Fantasy Football Gridiron Gauntlet

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For context, I am in a 12-team league, in which some of these players will not need to be drafted, and a 16-team league, in which some of them might be more valuable. As always, consider the size of your league and your scoring system in any player evaluation, but I believe the players below hold strong value relative to their ADPs and are poised to have productive seasons.

I hope this list is helpful. Good luck this season!

Quarterback

Just as the NFL has elite quarterbacks, so does fantasy. **Josh Allen, Lamar Jackson and Joe Burrow** have racked up huge numbers for their teams and fantasy managers, but there is plenty of depth this year, and quality quarterbacks can be found in later rounds, if you choose to wait at the position.

Early rounds

Lamar Jackson, Baltimore Ravens: Coach John Harbaugh believes Jackson is one of the best passers -- yes, *passers* -- in NFL history. But Jackson's running makes him one of the best fantasy quarterbacks in history.

Josh Allen, Buffalo Bills: In the past year, Allen has won an MVP, gotten married and restructured his contract as he looks to duplicate -- and even improve upon -- his incredible 2024 season.

Middle rounds

Baker Mayfield, Tampa Bay Buccaneers: From the time he turned up in Tampa, Mayfield has exceeded expectations while the Buccaneers have assembled potent offensive options.

Bo Nix, Denver Broncos: Nix is a better dual threat than people realize, and can rack up fantasy points with his legs as much as his arm.

Late rounds

Drake Maye, New England Patriots: A bigger version of Bo Nix, in the junior mold of Josh Allen, Maye can score points in the air or on the ground.

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been put in a position to achieve his potential.

Running back

A case can be made to draft either **Bijan Robinson** or **Jahmyr Gibbs** with the No. 1 pick this season. Coming off a deep running back draft in April, this crop of running backs has been elevated by a number of rookies who have a chance to make meaningful fantasy contributions this season.

Early rounds

Bijan Robinson, Falcons: He would be my No. 1 pick this year.

Jahmyr Gibbs, Detroit Lions: Gibbs might just be the most dynamic offensive player in the NFL, not to mention a touchdown machine.

Chase Brown, Cincinnati Bengals: On a team that could be involved in high-scoring affairs, Brown can catch as effectively as he runs.

Bucky Irving, Buccaneers: Irving emerged in his rookie year and seized control of the Buccaneers' No. 1 running back spot.

Middle rounds



Field Yates: Fantasy managers are likely overlooking Isiah Pacheco Field Yates explains why Chiefs RB Isiah Pacheco is likely being undervalued in drafts.

Omarion Hampton, Los Angeles Chargers: Few coaches love to run the football as much as Jim Harbaugh and Greg Roman, and Hampton is expected to be the lead back.

TreVeyon Henderson, Patriots: Demonstrated speed, elusiveness and big-play ability this preseason and will be used in conjunction with Rhamondre Stevenson.

RJ Harvey, Broncos: Rookie running backs sometimes are brought along slowly in Sean Payton's offense, but as the season progresses, so should Harvey.

Isiah Pacheco, Kansas City Chiefs: An injury derailed a strong start to his 2024 season. Pacheco is healthy this year.

Late rounds

Jacory Croskey-Merritt, Washington Commanders: There has been an inordinate amount of hype surrounding this seventh-round pick.

Quinshon Judkins and Dylan Sampson, Cleveland Browns: Cleveland needs, and is expected to have, one of its rookie running backs to be a factor.

Bhayshul Tuten, Jaguars: The rookie will likely contribute early and be consistent this season. He has too much speed not to.

Will Shipley, Philadelphia Eagles: Shipley is solid insurance for managers who roster running back Saquon Barkley.

Wide receiver

With the NFL's reliance on the passing game, so many receivers have been developed that this could be the deepest group of wideouts in fantasy history. Catching contributors are available at all levels of the draft, but especially up high.

Early rounds

Ja'Marr Chase, Bengals: There is no contract drama this year, and the connection he has with Burrow is next level.

EDITOR'S PICKS



2025 Fantasy Football Draft Guide: Rankings, mock drafts and analysis
3d • Fantasy staff



The best picks for each draft slot in Rounds 1 and 2 in 12-team leagues
11d • Tristan H. Cockcroft



Tough draft-day decisions: Can you pick a top-5 QB and top-3 TE and like your team?
10d • Daniel Dopp

Amon-Ra St. Brown, Lions: Target machine who is as tough and dependable as they come.

Nico Collins, Houston Texans: When healthy, he has the ability to be one of the top fantasy receivers.

Malik Nabers, New York Giants: Has a lingering toe issue and, were it not for that, his talent is on par with any receiver in the league.

Middle rounds

Marvin Harrison Jr., Cardinals: He will not be drafted as high as last year, but he likely will produce more this year.

Jaxon Smith-Njigba, Seattle Seahawks: Showed how productive he could be during his rookie season and should continue to shine.

Rome Odunze, Chicago Bears: He has already built a rapport with QB Caleb Williams that will connect them for years.

Ricky Pearsall, San Francisco 49ers: There have been so many injuries to 49ers wideouts that someone has to produce for them. Pearsall can.

Later rounds



Why Jordan Addison still has fantasy appeal despite suspension Mike Clay explains why WR Jordan Addison still has plenty of appeal despite his 3-game suspension and being ranked as a WR40 option.

Jordan Addison, Minnesota Vikings: A three-game suspension dings his value, but once he returns, he is expected to be a force.

Matthew Golden, Green Bay Packers: Like Pearsall, injuries have impacted the Packers' wide receivers. Someone has to produce, and their first-round pick is as good a bet as any.

Emeka Egbuka, Buccaneers: The team has been pleased and impressed with how its first-round pick has looked in camp.

Keon Coleman, Bills: Coleman has looked good during training camp, like he's ready to make a second-year jump.

Marvin Mims Jr., Broncos: He began to emerge last season and it should continue this season.

DeMario Douglas, Patriots: New England needs its receivers to step up, and Douglas did at camp.

Dyami Brown, Jaguars: Follow the money. The Jaguars paid him about \$10 million per year as a free agent.

Jaylin Noel, Texans: With Tank Dell out indefinitely, Houston needs the type of big plays that Noel can provide.

Troy Franklin, Broncos: The Broncos have a lot of wide receivers, but Franklin -- who played with Nix in college -- is capable of making plays.

Tight end

This is a top-heavy position, with Brock Bowers, Trey McBride and George Kittle being the headliners. Once it gets past them, there is uncertainty and some risk.

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Trey McBride, Cardinals: There were times last season when he played like a baby Gronk.

Middle rounds

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Sam LaPorta, Lions: Flashed superstar potential as a rookie in 2023, when the Lions featured him.

Evan Engram, Broncos: Sean Payton has been waiting for an effective pass-catching tight end, and now he has one.

Jake Ferguson, Cowboys: Coming off an injury, Ferguson is poised to resume his production in Dallas' offense.

Later rounds

Isaiah Likely, Ravens: He could be the No. 1 tight end on many teams. Things are tougher in Baltimore with Mark Andrews around, but the Ravens know how talented Likely is.

Theo Johnson, Giants: Johnson was a factor as his rookie season progressed and should be even better this season.

Ja'Tavion Sanders, Carolina Panthers: He flashed during his rookie season as well, and has a chance to take a meaningful jump in Year 2.

AJ Barner, Seahawks: Seattle needs a tight end to step up, and Barner might be up to the task.

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