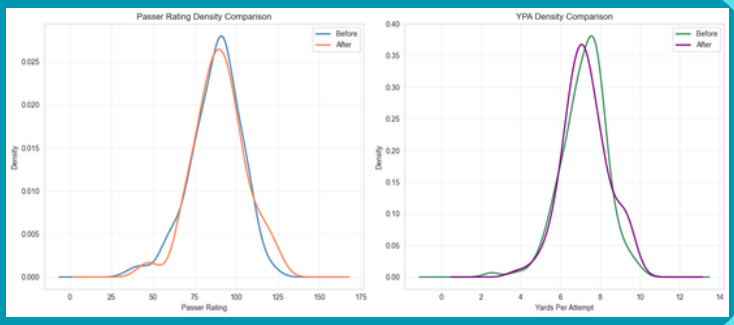
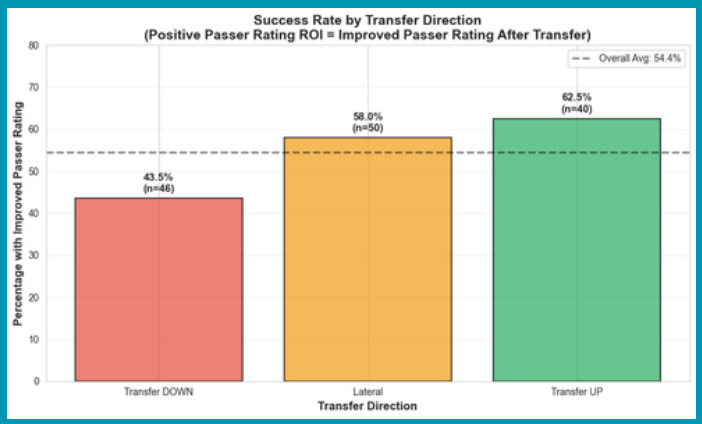
Does Transferring Help College QBs?

An Analysis Using 2021–2024 FBS Efficiency and Volume Metrics

Efficiency Data Distribution

The KDE plots reveal a small but consistent trend: although most quarterbacks post similar efficiency metrics before and after transferring, the post-transfer distribution shows a longer right tail. This indicates asymmetric upside—quarterbacks are more likely to experience large improvements than large regressions.



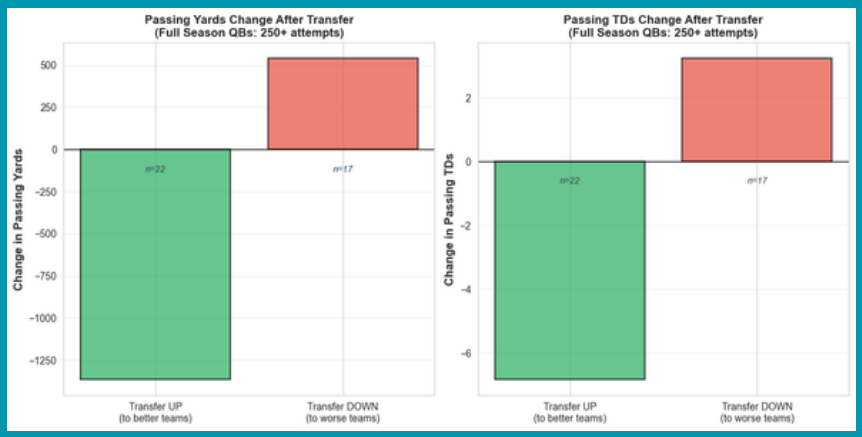


Is It Really Just the Team?

Analysis shows that while overall averages don't change much post-transfer, who improves is not random. Performance shifts are largely associated with whether a QB moves to a stronger or weaker team. This plot highlights that QBs transferring to better teams tend to improve, whereas those moving to weaker teams tend to regress.

What About Volume?

It makes sense that QBs on better teams are more efficient because they have stronger defenses, run games, and game scripts. Among full-season starters, QBs who transfer up in team strength throw for less yardage, while those who transfer down throw for more. This matches the efficiency trend: QBs on good teams are asked to manage games, while QBs on bad teams must take a higher volume of risky shots just to keep their teams competitive.



Conclusion

It's hard to say whether or not transferring helps college QBs, but the data is clear about the tradeoffs: transferring up means doing less but being more efficient; transferring down means doing more at the cost of efficiency.

About the Data

CollegeFootballData.com provides college football statistics sourced from web scraping and public data feeds. Their API is widely used in sports analytics for its depth and accessibility. This project is limited by the small sample of NCAA transfers available since NIL began (2021–2024) and by the lack of public data on NIL transfer incentives, which can influence why QBs move between programs.