

Trends in NFL Player Representation from SEC Schools (2011–2025)

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Abstract

The NCAA SEC is one of the premier conferences in college football from recent years, but how much is each program represented in the draft? We collected our data from Pro-Football-Reference.com and combined each program in the SEC data sets into a singular Excel file and analyzed the data by distinguishing which players came from which college program, seeing if the player was drafted, then drafted within the years 2011-2025.

Introduction

The purpose of this analysis is to highlight which schools in the NCAA SEC (South Eastern Conference) have gained representation in the draft and which programs have lost representation in the draft over the last 15 years. This will answer the question: “How has the number of NFL players from each SEC school changed over time (e.g., 2011–2015, 2016–2020, and 2021–2025), and which schools have shown the most growth or decline in player representation?” This analysis may benefit various groups, including NFL scouts/teams, sports analysts/journalists, or other researchers looking to see which college improved the most. The goal is to understand patterns and changes throughout the 2011 - 2015, 2016-2020, and 2021-2025 time periods.

Data

```
library(readxl)
library(dplyr)
```

```
##
## Attaching package: 'dplyr'

## The following objects are masked from 'package:stats':
##
##   filter, lag

## The following objects are masked from 'package:base':
##
##   intersect, setdiff, setequal, union
```

```

# Read the Excel file
data <- read_excel("College Dataset.xlsx")

## Warning: Expecting date in H2740 / R2740C8: got '0-0'

## New names:
## * ' ' -> '...3'
## * ' ' -> '...11'

# Rename columns for clarity (based on the header)
colnames(data) <- c("Pos", "Player", "College_Stats", "AP1", "PB", "St", "wAV", "Ht", "Wt", "Yrs_Num", "Yrs_Range")

# Extract the start year from Years_Range
data <- data %>%
  mutate(start_year = as.integer(sub("-", "", Years_Range)))

# Filter to keep players who started in 2011 or later
filtered_data <- data %>%
  filter(start_year >= 2011)

# Select only the specified columns
fixed_data <- filtered_data %>%
  select(Pos, Player, Yrs_Num, Years_Range, School)

# Rename columns as per user labels if desired
colnames(fixed_data) <- c("Position", "Player", "Years Played in NFL", "Years Played in NFL (From-To)", "School")

# View the selected data (or you can use write_excel_csv to save it)
head(fixed_data)

## # A tibble: 6 x 5
##   Position Player           'Years Played in NFL' Years Played in NFL ~1 School
##   <chr>      <chr>                <dbl> <chr>                <chr>
## 1 DT        Jonathan Allen              9 2017-2025           Alaba~
## 2 CB        Trey Amos                  1 2025-2025           Alaba~
## 3 OLB       Ryan Anderson              5 2017-2022           Alaba~
## 4 LB        Will Anderson              3 2023-2025           Alaba~
## 5 DB        Jalyn Armour-Dav~          4 2022-2025           Alaba~
## 6 DB        Terrion Arnold             2 2024-2025           Alaba~
## # i abbreviated name: 1: 'Years Played in NFL (From-To)'

```

The data set used for this analysis, “College_Dataset.xlsx,” contains information on NFL players and the colleges they attended. The data was obtained from Pro-Football-Reference, a reliable source that collects and publishes official NFL statistics, including player backgrounds and school affiliations. Relevant variables include each player’s name, the college they attended, and the range of years they played in the NFL. During the cleaning process, unnecessary columns such as AP1, PB, St, wAV, Ht, and Wt were removed, keeping only the relevant variables. Additionally, since the data set included players from earlier eras, we extracted the starting year from each player’s career range and filtered the data to include only those who began their NFL careers in 2011 or later. The data is entirely real and will not be generated through any randomized simulation.

Visualization & Analysis

```
# Load necessary libraries
```

```
library(tidyverse)
```

```
## -- Attaching core tidyverse packages ----- tidyverse 2.0.0 --
```

```
## v forcats 1.0.1 v readr 2.1.5
```

```
## v ggplot2 4.0.0 v stringr 1.5.2
```

```
## v lubridate 1.9.4 v tibble 3.3.0
```

```
## v purrr 1.1.0 v tidyr 1.3.1
```

```
## -- Conflicts ----- tidyverse_conflicts() --
```

```
## x dplyr::filter() masks stats::filter()
```

```
## x dplyr::lag() masks stats::lag()
```

```
## i Use the conflicted package (<http://conflicted.r-lib.org/>) to force all conflicts to become errors
```

```
# Read the CSV file (update the path if needed)
```

```
df <- read.csv("my_updated_dataset.csv")
```

```
# Convert 'Years Played (From-To)' into numeric start and end years
```

```
df <- df %>%
```

```
  separate(`Years.Played..From.To.` , into = c("Start", "End"), sep = "-", convert = TRUE)
```

```
# Define year ranges
```

```
df <- df %>%
```

```
  mutate(YearRange = case_when(
    Start >= 2011 & Start <= 2015 ~ "2011-2015",
    Start >= 2016 & Start <= 2020 ~ "2016-2020",
    Start >= 2021 & Start <= 2025 ~ "2021-2025",
    TRUE ~ NA_character_
  ))
```

```
# Count players per team and year range
```

```
team_summary <- df %>%
```

```
  filter(!is.na(YearRange)) %>%
```

```
  group_by(School, YearRange) %>%
```

```
  summarise(Players = n(), .groups = "drop")
```

```
# List of teams
```

```
teams <- unique(team_summary$School)
```

```
# Set up 4 plots per image (2 rows, 2 columns)
```

```
par(mfrow = c(2, 2), mar = c(4.5, 4.5, 3, 1)) # Adjust margins for better visibility
```

```
# Loop through teams and plot
```

```
for (i in seq_along(teams)) {
```

```
  team <- teams[i]
```

```
  team_data <- team_summary %>% filter(School == team)
```

```
  barplot(
```

```
    team_data$Players,
```

```
    names.arg = team_data$YearRange,
```

```
    col = c("#66c2a5", "#fc8d62", "#8da0cb"),
```

```

main = team,
xlab = "Year Range",
ylab = "Number of Players",
ylim = c(0, max(team_summary$Players) * 1.2), # consistent y-axis height
cex.names = 0.9,      # make x-axis labels readable
cex.main = 1,         # title size
cex.lab = 0.9,        # axis label size
las = 1               # make y-axis labels horizontal
)

# After every 4 plots, start a new image
if (i %% 4 == 0 && i != length(teams)) {
  dev.new() # open a new plotting window
  par(mfrow = c(2, 2), mar = c(4.5, 4.5, 3, 1))
}
}

```

These preliminary visualizations support our future analysis by allowing us to compare the number of NFL players produced by various SEC colleges across different time periods. By examining the bar plots, we can identify early patterns of growth or decline in player representation for each school. In later stages of the analysis, we will compare these bar plots in greater detail to draw conclusions about which colleges have shown the most progress or decline in producing NFL players over the years.