The Hidden Accuracy of NHL Draft Prospects

ANNABEL CURRY

The NHL draft, which occurs annually in late June or early July, is a hot topic in the hockey world. The draft includes seven rounds with 32 prospects in each. For the first sixteen picks, a lottery is drawn by the teams that did not make the play-offs. The criteria for the lottery are based on standings. The worst team in the league has an 18.5% chance of a first round pick, while the second worst has a 13.5% chance and so on.

This year, with projected number one pick Connor Bedard, it is even more interesting. Prospects are evaluated at a range of events over the years, but the most important is the 17U World Junior Championship, which takes place in early January. The tournament is a great showcase for prospects to display their skills against the top players of their age group, while representing their country in a beloved tradition. An example is Slovakia’s Juraj Slafkovsky, who after a dominant WJC performance in 2022, was the first overall pick. But how does Bedard, Sidney Crosby, or McDavid over to the NHL?

Prospects are evaluated and ranked on a variety of factors, including performance at league championships, tournaments, and overseas leagues. The NHL draft is considered one of the most important events in the hockey calendar, with top prospects such as Bedard, Michael Frolik, Aleksander Barkov, and Connor McDavid all having successful careers in the NHL. The draft is also a showcase for teams to evaluate potential NHL prospects, with over 400 players invited to the NHL Draft Combine each year.

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What's Next For Brock Purdy After His Cinderella Season?

JOHN MORAN

Brock Purdy’s Cinderella story has finally come to an end after seven-game unbeaten streak. Purdy wasn’t able to make a comeback after being ruled out of the game in the first half. When asked if he could have slowed things down and taken his time, he said, “I don’t think Brock Purdy is the best quarterback.”

The New York Jets could be an excellent landing place for Purdy. The Jets have an excellent defense, similar to the 49ers, ranked fifth best for yards allowed, as well as a passing defense. The offense, though, is in need of a skilled QB like Purdy. Frequently, teams are said to be “a quarter back away” from being a contender. If there was ever an example of this, it was the Jets in 2022. Their offensive line has been solid, and most importantly, they have one of the most highly touted and most productive prospects in the league. Rookie Garrett Wilson was drafted by the Jets to be a lights out receiver, and he has shown the ability to perform, but lacks a proper quarterback to give him the support he needs.

Another possible home for Purdy is on the Las Vegas Raiders. They are likely to lose their long-time QB Derek Carr. The Raiders are slightly attractive for him, but they have an average pick in Davante Adams. Purdy would surely be a skilled player like Adams down the field, and he would also gain backfield support from Josh Jacobs, who was this season’s rushing leader.

While these are the most appealing options for Purdy, many other teams are in dire need of a QB or could use an upgrade. The Houston Texans and the Indianapolis Colts, who are both at the bottom of the league in most aspects, desperately need a quarterback, and Purdy could be an option. The Tampa Bay Buccaneers are an option as well, but they don’t have second round pick, Tyreek Hill, in the backup spot. Teams such as the Miami Dolphins might even need a quarterback depending on their incumbent starter Tua Tagovailoa’s health.

While Mr. Irrelevant didn’t get the fairy tale ending, this season, his stock has still increased. He has had an extra two weeks of rest to recover, which is more than most teams could ask for. No matter what happens, he decides to do, the world seems to be at his disposal. Hopefully, he will still get to do what he wants on the field.

Brock Purdy after his loss in the NFC Championship Game.

FEBRUARY 15, 2023

BEN SHEN

The Kansas City Chiefs and the Philadelphia Eagles are set to face each other on Sunday, February 12th. This year’s Super Bowl might be the most even matched game in all of Super Bowl history. Both teams have a 1-3 overall record and were both the first seeds in their conference. They both have also scored a season total of 246 points and have six All-Pro on their team. If they can’t get any closer, both of these teams are also the highest scoring teams and most responsible for their wins. In conclusion, the Eagles are neck and neck in level, predicting the winner of this year’s Super Bowl is extremely hard. We must look at the facts. The Eagles team is dangerous, especially with Jalen Hurts under center. When he started the game, they were 16-1 and he threw five touchdowns with zero interceptions. He also threw 22 touchdows and ran into the endzone a whopping 13 times. The Eagles team also has one of the best rosters in the NFL, especially on offense. Brown, Devonta Smith, and Miles Sanders are all very powerful and have led their team to this year’s Super Bowl. In the defensive side, the Eagles have a longer and elite line. Their elite cornerbacks, Darius Slay and James Bradberry, are both top candidates for not allowing opponents to get open. Bradberry allowed the least yards per coverage of any outside corner, 0.7 yards. Also, the Eagles’ amazing pass rush will add a lot of pressure to the Chiefs’ offense. They have three sacks in the NFC Championship Game, and have had a total of 70 during the regular season. Overall, the Eagles are very strong, as they are both well rounded and powerful. For the Chiefs, Patrick Mahomes, Travis Kelce, Ja’Marr Chase, and Chris Jones have a combined 15.5 sacks in the regular season, and two more in the AFC Championship game. His added pressure will make it even tougher for Eagles quarterback, Jermaine Hunt. However, I am confident Mahomes will be ready to play. He has had an extra two weeks of rest to get ready for this match up. Also, even though he is against the Bengals, he was still able to be very productive. However, he faces a tough Eagles defense, one of the best in the league. In the end, I think all of the Chiefs’ defensive weapons are enough to overpower the Eagles strong defense. The Chiefs defense is also very good, with Chris Jones having 15.5 sacks in the regular season, and two more in the AFC Championship game. His added pressure will make it even tougher for Eagles quarterback, Jermaine Hunt. However, I am confident Mahomes will be ready to play. He has had an extra two weeks of rest to get ready for this match up. Also, even though he is against the Bengals, he was still able to be very productive. However, he faces a tough Eagles defense, one of the best in the league. In the end, I think all of the Chiefs’ defensive weapons are enough to overpower the Eagles strong defense. 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Leading Candidates for NBA’s Sixth Man of the Year

HARRY MURPHY

The NBA Sixth Man of the Year Award is perpetually controversial in regard to the criteria that it takes to earn the award. The past five winners include: Tyler Herro, Jordan Clarkson, Montrez Harrell, and Lou Williams, who has won twice. Those winners share a common theme as they are all primary scorers and lousy defensive players. Though unfair, that trend has to be accounted for when trying to predict the next player to hold the title. Sadly, that immediately eliminates deserving players like Bobby Portis, Grant Williams, and Bruce Brown who are capable scorers but express most of their value on the defensive side of the ball. Taking into account the trend of criteria and the play er’s performance this season, there are a few players that can potentially win the award.

The odds for the award currently favor Russell Westbrook from the Los Angeles Lakers. Westbrook has a perfect storyline going for him. He is an aging star who has finally learned to embrace the bench role given to him, but his stats and impact don’t paint the same picture. He provides a solid scoring punch off the bench averaging 15 points per game. He holds the third-worst true shooting percentage — a metric to capture the scoring efficiency of players — of all players that have played at least 30 games this season. He is essentially a traffic cone on defense with no added value while constantly being exposed off the ball. He provides no spacing on offense; thus, he makes shot creation extremely difficult for other Lakers’ initiators. Despite his favorable odds, Russell Westbrook is not the best candidate for the Sixth Man of the Year.

Before getting into why Norman Powell is the deserving Sixth Man of the Year, it is important to highlight some honorable mentions. Malcolm Brogdon has been a consistent presence off the Boston Celtics’ bench and plays excellent ly as the lead guard for the championship contender. Mathurin has captured the attention of many NBA fans with his flair and ability to sufficiently score off the bench for the Indiana Pacers. The list for honorable is ongoing, but Norman Powell is the deserving winner of Sixth Man of the Year for many reasons. First, he fits the aforementioned criteria. He is scoring 14 points per game off the bench for the Los Angeles Clippers, who are second in the league in bench scoring. He scores those 14 points extremely efficiently with a diet of threes and shots inside the paint. In addition, he does not need the ball in his hands to cause damage, so he has the ability to fit in almost any lineup the Clippers have to offer. He is far from an exceptional defender, but he is a neutral presence and that is enough for the Clippers’ star-studded roster.

HARVARD EDGES OUT MEN’S COMPETITION AS YALE DOMINATES WOMEN’S BRACKET

WOORI LEE

From January 27-29, the annual Ivy League Championships took place at the Blodgett Pool in Cambridge, Massachusetts. This long lasting rivalry between the top Ivy League schools in the nation always marks a spectacle to look forward to. On both the men’s and women’s side, the competitive threshold did not disappoint as all teams clashed to come out on top.

On January 27th and 28th, all three men’s swimming and diving teams fought for the title. Even though Harvard had the home-field advantage, Princeton’s team was very close to snatching the trophy. Their performance was a standout, especially because Harvard has won for the last five years. Yale, however, was far more distant from victory; as the other two teams left them in the dust. Overall, Harvard’s close victory rested with Millard’s amazing performance, the competitive ivy league was far more distant from victory, as the other two teams left them in the dust.

On the women’s side, the competition lasted from January 28-29. This time, Yale pulled away from the rest with their second straight victory in the three-way dual meet. Their win streak is now an impressive 7-0. Key components of this meeting included a 100 freestyle galore, with second to fifth in the event all being taken up by Yale women. Sophomore Ava Franks ultimately propelled Yales into the lead before they finished it off in the 400 freestyle relay, demolishing the field by two seconds (3:18.33). Diver Gloria Lai also added a win in the 3-meter diving with 308.20 points. This three-way dual meet surely lived up to the expectations of the men’s competition as Yale women eked out a close victory.

Russell Westbrook, point guard for the Los Angeles Lakers, was removed from the starting line up for the second time this season.
HALFTIME
BY RISHI RANE AND MICHAEL MECHEGIA

BREAKING NEWS

-BREAKING: Even the 49ers' trainer gets injured after tearing ACL running on the field to help injured players.

-Chelsea signs kicker Justin Tucker to a $300 million contract after hearing he kicks a lot of "goals".

-Tom Brady retires with 7 Super Bowls, 3 MVPs, and the biggest fumble, Gisele.

REPORTS BY PLAYER

KYRIE IRVING
Fuck This Shit I'm Out - Youngblaze

JOSEPH OSSAI
Everybody Hates Me - The Chainsmokers

ENZO FERNÁNDEZ
Robbed You - KINGMOSTWANTED, Peysoh

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Lamar Jackson
Ravens QB

Tyler Huntley
Ravens QB

Photo pulled up on the camera Pat Bev brought out now revealed...

If you have any ideas or jokes for Halftime, please reach out to us at rrane25@andover.edu and mmechegia25@andover.edu
Bears With The #1 Pick: What Will They Do?

For weeks, the NFL community has been discussing which player will be chosen first in the 2023 NFL Draft. It was generally agreed upon that the Houston Texans would obtain this valuable pick, as they were firmly in last place for much of the season. But disaster struck for Houston: they won against the Colts. Usually, for them, it would be a blessing, but it was a curse. The Texans victory against the Colts in Week 18 of the regular season took them from last to second-to-last, placing the vaunted first pick into the hands of the Chicago Bears. This shift from the Texans to the Bears has turned the draft conversation completely on its head. Both teams are looking for very different things in this draft, making the landscape totally new now.

The question that we are left with is: what will the Bears do? Typically, the first pick of the draft is used on a quarterback prospect. In fact, in 15 out of the last 20 first picks, a quarterback has been chosen. But the Bears don’t need a quarterback. They already have their franchise starter, Justin Fields, who they drafted in 2021 as the 11th pick. He had an incredible year, including a rushing season of 1,435 yards, the 7th best in the league. But even with this solid quarterback play, they still have the worst record in the league. So what exactly is the problem?

Well, everything. To be quite honest. Their receiver core is supposed to be built around Darnell Mooney, who had a poor 493 yards over 11 games. The Bears lead running backs, David Montgomery and Khalil Herbert, ranked 28th and 37th in yards this season, leaving them in the bottom 10 for starting running backs. And their defense is even worse than the offense. The Bears ranked close to last in most team defense stats, including fourth in total yards allowed. More specifically, their run defense was terrible, leaving them at second in rushing yards allowed. Furthermore, their D-line is the worst in the league. Truly, the Bears have problems everywhere. So the question becomes, what draft prospects would be the most useful in solving some of these problems?

One great option would be this year’s most touted defensive prospect, Jalen Carter, the nose guard for the championship-winning Georgia Bulldogs. Carter would be the perfect piece to help the Chicago run defense. He was one of the best run stoppers in college football this year, dominating with his explosiveness and speed, and a best-in-class swim move. Carter would be able to clog up holes in the middle of the line and force running backs to bounce outside, which is exactly what the Bears need. However, Carter will almost certainly be picked within the first three picks of the draft, which means that the Bears wouldn’t be able to trade down their first pick and still get Carter. This could limit them in the total value that they can get out of the first pick, but Carter just might be worthwhile.

Another possible option for the Bears would be edge rusher Will Anderson Jr. out of Alabama. As one of this draft’s most highly rated prospects, Anderson is a very versatile player who uses his knowledge of his opponent’s playbooks to decipher plays as they happen and attack the most important points on the field. This ability makes him one of the most effective run defenders in college football. The Bears desperately need a player who can put pressure into the backfield like Anderson, as they ranked last in the league in both quarterback hurries and sacks. Anderson could absolutely have a massive effect on these stats. Another advantage with Anderson is that he will likely fall in between picks three and six, making it easier for the Bears to trade down a couple picks and obtain him along with some other pieces. A trade with the Colts seems likely, with the Bears’ pick being swapped for a first round this year as well as a future pick package. However, the defense isn’t the only department in need of aid. The offense definitely needs some tools for quarterback Fields to utilize. The primary receiver prospect is Jordan Addison out of the University of Southern California (USC), but he is projected as a later draft pick, around 12 or 14. Would it be worth it to trade for a prospect who isn’t as highly ranked as the more exciting defensive players? Fields certainly needs a receiver to open up the offense, and Addison fits the bill. One option is Ohio State’s Jaxon Smith-Njigba, who is a technically skilled and intelligent receiver who’s crisp route running could add a lot of vertical threat to the Chicago offense.

Overall, the Bears have a wealth of options, and with the empty cap space and high picks they have, this will be a massive off-season for them. What they end up doing won’t be known until draft day, and the NFL wills with bated breath to see what the Bears will do to their team before the season starts back up again.

Jalen Carter (right) and Will Anderson (left), 2023’s greatest prospects.
Who Should Replace Graham Potter as Head Coach at Chelsea?

Chelsea owner Todd Boehly made his expectations clear when he sacked Thomas Tuchel in September, who less than just two years prior had won them the Champions League. Boehly told Tuchel they “want a new start.” Not long after, Chelsea brought in Brighton’s Graham Potter.

Now, despite spending £123m in the winter transfer window, Potter’s team sits in 9th place in the Premier League, 10 points adrift of the top four. As Boehly has shown, he is willing to make impactful, bold decisions, meaning that Potter could soon find himself without a job if he cannot turn around their current run of form.

While there is still a chance that Potter keeps his job, I’ve identified three possible candidates to replace Graham Potter if Boehly decides to sack him.

The first option is Brendan Rodgers, the current manager of Leicester City. Rodgers is experienced, with just under 700 games of professional managerial experience, and is familiar with the Premier League. Though Leicester have recovered slightly from a poor start to the season, Rodgers has voiced his frustration over Leicester’s lacklustre transfer activity, suggesting that if given the opportunity, he would be open to moving clubs. So far Rodgers has stayed loyal to Leicester and has done a good job there, most notably winning the English FA Cup in the 2021 season. Since Rodgers has spent time at Chelsea previously, acting as the head of the reverse team and working within the youth programs, a move back to Chelsea is more likely. Chelsea would further provide him with the financial resources to bring in players that were not available at Leicester, as well as give him the opportunity to elevate his status as a manager.

Another potential candidate is Luis Enrique. Despite not managing club football since 2017, Enrique was with the Spanish national team until he was sacked after the World Cup in Qatar. He became renowned for his success at Barcelona, where he won 9 trophies, including a treble in 2015. In his time at Barcelona, he utilized a 4-3-3 formation, prioritizing possession based play and high intensity pressing. This is a similar system to what Chelsea have been using, so Enrique wouldn’t cause too much of a change to their style of play. If he can transfer his success from Barcelona to London, Chelsea’s future is in good hands.

The third, and in my opinion, most likely replacement is Mauricio Pochettino. Like Enrique, Pochettino is currently without a job after being let go from PSG at the end of the 21/22 season. Although he won the Ligue 1 title with them that season, his stint at PSG is regarded by most as unimpressive due to the team’s lack of success in the Champions League. The main reason for his link to Chelsea, however, is his time at Tottenham. Pochettino took the job in 2014, leading the club to their highest Premier League finish ever in 2017. Two years later he took Spurs to their first Champions League final ever. While they did come short in the end, Pochettino became admired by their fans due to his remarkable advancements he brought to the club. Now that a managerial spot looks to be opening in London, he remains the likely candidate to take over at Chelsea and start their push for the top four.

Of course, the job is still currently Potter’s, so he should be given the chance to prove himself and improve Chelsea’s performances. Potter has certainly shown previously at Brighton that he is a good manager, so fans can remain optimistic that things will turn around for him. It is also necessary to acknowledge that many Chelsea supporters are not calling for his dismissal. The purpose of this article was simply to analyze the potential replacements should Boehly decide it is time to move on.

ALEX LEE

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MLB Trade Fails That Will Hurt Teams in 2023

HENRY HANSEN

The most notorious trading flop in baseball history is one that is known by everyone, whether they meticulously follow the sport or not. On January 5, 1920, a seemingly mediocre pitcher was given to the New York Yankees. The trade would spark one of the most famous sports rivalries of all time, and haunt the Boston Red Sox until almost a century later. This trade, of course, concerns the legendary Babe Ruth, who upon arriving to the Yankees, began an entirely new era of home-run hitting.

In today’s age, influential trades occur constantly and can cause seasons to be ruined and careers to be broken—all due to poor management. Take, for example, the Boston Red Sox’s trade of Mookie Betts to the Los Angeles Dodgers. Betts was sent to Los Angeles on February 10, 2020, which may seem like a long time ago, but both teams are still feeling the effects now. Betts played the all-star team for the sixth time. His batting was solid, as usual, and he received his 5th Gold Glove Award for the best defensive right fielder of the season. On the other hand, the Red Sox had their worst season in 2015, with a winning percentage of 0.481. It seems as though the Red Sox giving up Betts in order to gain some younger stars, such as prospects Connor Wong and Jeter Downs, really cost them.

A more recent trade, just after the all-star break of 2021, gave the Yankees an excellent addition to their pitching roster. Clay Holmes, an amazing closer, was traded by the Pittsburgh Pirates for Diego Castillo and Hoy Park. Holmes had his first all-star appearance last season and finished with a 2.51 earned run average (ERA). In his previous years on the Pirates, he had a 6.84 ERA in 2018, and a 5.58 ERA in 2019. Although the Pirates weren’t able to predict that Holmes would be able to take his sinker to a whole new level, they certainly got the short end of the stick in the trade by losing him.

And yet, what comes around goes around, and the Yankees learned that the hard way. In a deal finalized right before the 2022 trade deadline, the Yankees decided to give the St. Louis Cardinals starter, Jordan Montgomery, in return for Harrison Bader, a center fielder. Bader certainly delivered in the 2022 season, hitting 35 home runs and making the all-star team for the sixth time. His fielding was solid, and he received his 5th Gold Glove Award for the best defensive right fielder of the season. On the other hand, the Red Sox had their worst season in 2015, with a winning percentage of 0.481. It seems as though the Red Sox giving up Betts in order to gain some younger stars, such as prospects Connor Wong and Jeter Downs, really cost them.

Francis Ngannou Ends Contract Dispute with UFC, Seeks New Opportunities

FRANK MOORE

Francis Ngannou’s two-year standoff with the UFC since 2019, stemming from his feeling of being underpaid and mistreated by the promotion, has now come to an end. This past week as the former heavyweight champion and the world’s second highest paid fighter parted ways with the organization.

Ngannou had been in a contract dispute with the UFC since 2019, stemming from his feeling of being underpaid and mistreated by the promotion. He had asked for a release from the contract, citing a lack of clarity in the fighter’s pay and the disparity between his pay and that of other titleholders in the organization.

Ngannou had previously said that he felt as though he was being taken advantage of, and that he would never apologize for his decisions to move on. Despite speaking out against UFC, Ngannou has no ill will and hopes his former employer will “find the right path” moving forward.

Ngannou’s next steps are uncertain, however, reports seem to suggest that he will transition into boxing. He already has a training program set up and, as it’ll be a new challenge for him, he is expected to rise to the occasion. Many even speculate that he could become one of the top boxers in the world due to his many years of training in MMA. This move also looks to be beneficial for Ngannou financially, as boxing is often known to offer a significantly higher pay than MMA. Whether this means that Ngannou is ready to hang up his gloves in boxing is yet to be seen. One thing is for certain though—fans should expect Ngannou to put on a show no matter what his next career choice is.