

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 playoffs. The odds of this 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 U20 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 battle. An example is Slovakia's Juraj Slafkovsky, who after a dominant WJC performance in 2022, was the first overall pick. But how do strong performances carry over to the NHL?

Usually, players that dominate at age 16 have strong NHL careers. Since 2000, the leaders have been Connor Bedard, Sidney Crosby, Michael Froklick, Aleksander Barkov, and Connor McDavid. With the exception of Bedard who has yet to be drafted, all of these players became impressive captains, all-stars, and players. This includes McDavid who is regarded as the best player in the world at this moment, and Gretzky, who

is widely accepted as the greatest player ever, holding countless NHL records such as the most goals and points of all time. Players that begin their WJC career at 16 generally translate well into the NHL.

What about all the players who don't fall into this specific category? One way to see how top performers compare is through points per game (PPG). In single tournament records, Peter Forsberg, who was 19, was first with an average of 4.429 points per game. Forsberg went on to have an extremely successful career in the NHL, winning two Stanley Cups and being inducted into the hall of fame. Second is Raimo Helminen who at age 19 totaled 3.429 PPG. Helminen's NHL career was a bit rockier, with a good rookie season (40 points in 66 games), only to be traded and end up in the minors the following season. Back problems also lead to his transfer to the Swedish league. The third person is Markus Niskanen with 3.429 PPG who also had a successful NHL career. Other players with a high PPG include Wayne Gretzky and Esa Tikkanen. As shown above, players who achieve this level of average points per game tend to do well at the next level. However, dominating at a junior's level does not always directly translate to the NHL immediately. Players sometimes need more time to develop, especially in the current era. Players like Juraj Slafkovsky or Shane Wright proved their value after their rookie season. Jack Hughes and Rasmus Dahlin have also shown that it takes time to develop into the high level play of the NHL.

Another way to evaluate

prospects is through their careers in leagues like the Canadian Hockey League (CHL). The CHL is made up of three leagues: the Ontario Hockey League (OHL), the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League (QMJHL), and the Western Hockey League (WHL), which in the end compete for the Memorial Cup. Great players tend to do quite well in the CHL, but great players in the CHL do not always translate to the NHL.

While some players make it to the NHL, many do not. Out of the top scorers in the CHL from 2009-2018, few have been consistently in the NHL. For example, Connor Brown, who captained the Erie Otters alongside McDavid and Dylan Strome played for 15 seasons. The rest have mostly had successful AHL or minor league hockey careers, but have not consistently played at the NHL level. So what does this mean? This means that

the CHL and minor league level hockey may showcase talent, but there is no telling sign of what will carry over to the NHL. This is even more apparent than in the World Juniors because the competition is not as fierce.

But how do today's prospects line up? Obviously, the projected number one pick Connor Bedard is high in the rankings. People have called him the most exciting prospect since McDavid and Crosby. The best tournament for Crosby was 9 points in six games. The best tournament for McDavid was 11 points in 7 games. Bedard scored 23 points in seven games which blows the others out of the water. He will certainly be someone to watch out for.

In the CHL, Crosby has the best stats with 303 points in 121 games. McDavid had 285 points in 166 games, and Bedard currently has 219 points in 115 games. The PPG average is 2.5 for Cros-

by, 1.72 for McDavid, and 1.9 for Bedard. It is important to keep in mind that both McDavid and Crosby were on good teams with other great players while Bedard is mostly left on his own. When playing for Canada in the World Juniors, Bedard also showcased his ability to make the people around him better, contributing to 65% of Canada's goals.

So overall watching prospects is a great way to scout out future talent and the possible future of your favorite team, but there are no exact answers or telling signs. Players are not in their prime at 18 years old and will need time to develop. However, players to be on the lookout for in the recent or upcoming draft include Connor Bedard, Luke Hughes, Adam Fantilli, Logan Cooley, Leo Carlsson, and Simon Nemec.



Soccer Superstar Cristiano Ronaldo Becomes Highest-Paid Player of All Time Following Transfer to Saudi Club

CHARLES VEST

Cristiano Ronaldo. Who doesn't know the name? Considered by many to be the greatest soccer player of all time (a title often challenged by the likes of Lionel Messi, Pelé, and Diego Maradona), Ronaldo stands as one of the most famous people on the planet. Originally from the Portuguese parish of Santo Antonio, Ronaldo grew up very poor. Forced to share a room with his three siblings, Ronaldo didn't have much to himself as a child. However, at seven years old, Ronaldo began playing soccer, which changed his life forever. For the first few years, he played for local club teams, standing out among his peers as an exceptional talent. At age 14, Ronaldo ceased his academic pursuits al-

together in order to focus on soccer, and, even though illness, teachers, and poverty stood in his way, 14-year-old Ronaldo made his professional debut in the Primeira Liga — Portugal's highest league.

A year after his debut match, Ronaldo joined the big leagues by signing with Manchester United. Proving to be quite the powerhouse, Ronaldo broke a world record in 2009 by transferring to Real Madrid for an 80 million euro contract, now worth 94 million euros today. Last December, Ronaldo proved that history always repeats itself by signing to Al-Nassr, a Saudi soccer club, and breaking yet another world record by becoming the highest-paid player of all time with a staggering salary of 75 million dollars a year. Ronaldo seemed pleased with the transfer, stating in a

press conference following the announcement that he was "excited to experience a new football league in a different country." He then went on to say, "the vision of what Al Nassr are doing and developing in Saudi Arabia both in terms of men's and women's football is very inspiring. We can see from Saudi Arabia's recent performance in the World Cup that this is a country with big football ambitions and a lot of potential." In the same conference, Ronaldo left fans in awe by saying that he "won everything [he] set out to win in European football and feel now that this is the right moment to share [his] experience in Asia." The statement sparked discussion online over whether or not Ronaldo had the right to claim he had done everything there was to do in Europe. Many peo-



Ronaldo left Manchester United to join Saudi Arabian Club al-Nassr in December of 2022.

ple believed that Ronaldo hadn't yet surpassed Messi, and therefore still had a goal left in the Premier League.

What makes someone a GOAT? Winning the most championships? Having the most goals? Making 75 million dollars a year? Though the topic is fiercely debated, the simple answer is that there isn't one. The greatest

player of all time will forever be, across all continents and leagues, up to oneself. So, all we can do is wait and see how Ronaldo's time in Saudi Arabia will pan out. Will he continue to be one of the best, or will he tarnish his great legacy? Stick with The GOAT to find out.



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

JOHN MORAN

Brock Purdy's Cinderella story has finally come to an end. After a seven-game undefeated streak, Purdy wasn't able to get home before midnight, and now he, and the San Francisco 49ers, will watch the games from the couch just like the rest of us. Purdy's winning streak broke during the NFC Championship game: when the 49ers lost to the Philadelphia Eagles. The loss wasn't necessarily Purdy's fault, as he was sidelined earlier in the game after being tackled by Eagles edge rusher Haason Reddick—Purdy tearing his UCL in the impact. The 49ers then moved to their fourth-string QB, who was also taken out of the game due to a concussion. The game finished with a crushing 31-7 loss.

So where does Purdy make his next move? His recovery could last six months or more, and by that time, what will the 49ers think of him? Will he be seen as a true starting quarterback, or will he be seen as the guy who got lucky for a few games? What are Brock

Purdy's next steps?

The dilemma for the 49ers doesn't lie in Purdy himself, but in their original starter, Trey Lance. We all know the story of how Lance was supposed to be their big new starter (he certainly has the price tag of a big-time quarterback) before he was taken out for the season with an ankle injury. The 49ers still hold on to veteran Jimmy Garoppolo as another backup option. One way to look at it is: who was winning games for the 49ers this season? Lance certainly wasn't. Garoppolo did well, but Purdy was the one who carried them into the playoffs. He established himself as a hard worker and as a guy who could take the pressure. Lance, although it isn't necessarily his fault, has shown none of that due to his injuries. Purdy definitely has a bit of a headstart over the rest of the quarterback room, so he should still have a chance in the 49ers' quarterback spot.

But what if he doesn't get it? There are still a lot of teams who don't have the wealth of skilled quarterbacks that San Francisco happens to have. For example, 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 having the third-best passing defense. The offense, though, is in great need of a skilled QB like Purdy. Frequently, teams are said to be "a quarterback away" from being a contender. If there ever was 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 underused receiver prospects in the league. Rookie Garret 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. Purdy could fit the bill.

Another possible home for Purdy is on the Las Vegas Raiders, who are likely to lose their long-time QB Derek Carr. The Raiders are slightly less attractive to play for than the Jets, but they have an excellent receiver in Davante Adams. Purdy would surely love to have a skilled player like Adams down the field, and



Brock Purdy after his loss in the NFC Championship Game.

he would also get backfield support from Josh Jacobs, who was this season's rushing leader.

While these are the more appealing options for Purdy, many other teams are in dire need of a QB or could just use an upgrade. The Houston Texans and the Indianapolis Colts, which 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 now a possibility, although they do have second round pick, Kyle Trask, in the backup spot. Teams such as the Miami Dol-

phins 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 story hasn't reached its end. Purdy has proven himself as a talented and level-headed player, and that's more than most teams could ask for now. No matter what he decides to do, the world seems bright for Brock Purdy. Hopefully, he finds the team that will give him his glass slipper.

Arsenal Begins To Break Away From Manchester City

ANTHONY DIAZ

Arsenal's participation in the 2022-23 season of the Premier League has been significantly greater than previous years. Now, you may ask, what makes this year's Premier League great for Arsenal? Throughout this year's tournament, the English soccer club has had a streak with an impressive 19 wins out of the 23 matches in the Premier League, greater than other teams in the Premier League. Arsenal is a strong competitor for two-time Premier League champion Manchester City's claim over the EPL. Let's dive into their organized maneuvers and abilities of Arsenal's lineup:

Throughout its most recent matches, Arsenal has noticeably improved upon its offensive plays this season. In the current season, Arsenal utilizes the 4-3-2-1 lineup, a very common position. When in action, Arsenal employs six out of the ten players to stay besides the goalkeeper: three midfielders, two attackers, and one striker.

When watching Arsenal matches, the offense outmaneuvers the opposing side's defense which allows Arsenal to invade through the exposed center and score. These attacking plays are what separate Arsenal from every other team thus far in the tournament.

Arsenal's success in the Premier League comes with decisive moves that involve one attacker opening the box for a pass into the center. Once the offense drives the defenders out of the box, it leaves an open field for a quick goal. These goals are scored by the more agile and quicker players like Bukayo Saka and Gabriel Jesus, who are able to promptly advance into the middle. The midfielders in each situation were very vital components to the organization of the attacking line.

Furthermore, the capabilities of this Arsenal's lineup of players like Bukayo Saka have recently made headlines in the Premier League. Bukayo was a more prominent player in the tournament, and being an attacker, he's fast and over-

takes the field. Bukayo scores with precision and swiftness that also carried Arsenal during the Premier League. His abilities continue to speak for themselves.

Another athlete coinciding with Saka is Aaron Ramsdale, the frequent goalie in many games thus far. When I watch Ramsdale in matches, I see great participation on his end. There were instances where he made great long passes, and blocked many shots on goals in the last couple of games. According to ESPN, Ramsdale has collected a total of 47 saves on goal in the 23 matches; that's about two saves per match.

In conclusion, Arsenal is looking more like they will win this season's Premier League based on the more efficient offensive actions in each of their matches, and their up and coming new players showing their skills on the field and dominating the competition. It will be interesting to see how Arsenal will continue to keep its lead in the league and I guess I'll have to watch the next couple of games for certainty.

Predictions for the 57th Super Bowl

BEN SHIN

The Kansas City Chiefs and the Philadelphia Eagles will face off on Sunday, February 12th for Super Bowl 57. This year's Super Bowl might be the most evenly matched game in all of Super Bowl history. Both teams have a 16-3 overall record and were both the first seeds in their conference. They also have both scored a season total of 546 points and have six All-Pros on their team. If it couldn't get any closer, both of these teams are also the highest scoring teams and most respected sack leaders in their conference. Because these teams 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 in the game, they were 16-1 and he threw only six interceptions. He also threw 22 touchdowns, and ran into the endzone a boggling 13 times. The Eagles team also has one of the best rosters in the NFL, especially on offense. AJ

Brown, Devonta Smith, and Miles Sanders are all very powerful and have helped lead the team to this year's Super Bowl. On the defensive side, the Eagles are even stronger. Their elite cornerbacks, Darius Slay and James Bradberry, led the secondary for not allowing opponents to get open. Bradberry allowed the least yards per coverage of any outside corner, 0.7 yards. Also, the Eagle's amazing pass rush will add a lot of pressure to the Chief's offense. They had 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, Isaiah Pacheco, and Chris Jones will play a huge role in the outcome of this match. This year, the Chiefs have looked unstoppable on offense with Mahomes leading the way. He is expected to win MVP, as he leads the NFL with 5,250 passing yards, 41 touchdowns thrown, and total Quarterback Rating of 77.5. Of course, his number one option, Tra-

vis Kelce, will have to be productive to secure a win due to Mahomes' slight ankle injury. 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 when he was injured 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' offensive 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 difficult for Eagles Jalen Hurts to be as productive, which I think will be a huge factor in this year's Super Bowl outcome.

I anticipate a close high scoring game, that could honestly go for either team. However, I have to choose the Chiefs to be the Super Bowl 57 champions because of their great coaching staff and dynamic offense.



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, Montrezl 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 excellently as the lead guard for a championship contender. Benedict 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 cri-



Russell Westbrook, point guard for the Los Angeles Lakers, was removed from the starting line up for the second time this season.

teria. He is scoring 14 points per game off the bench for the Los Angeles Clippers, who are second 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 HYP (Harvard-Yale-Princeton) 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 for-

ward 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

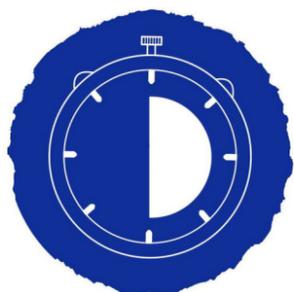
team was very close to snatching the trophy. Their performance was a standout, especially because Harvard has won for the last five years. Yale, however, was far more distant from victory, as the other two teams left them in the dust. Overall, Harvard's close win rested on their wins of all four relays, in which they

picked up huge gains in points. This portrayed Harvard's all-around speed throughout their entire roster. Yale also had a few key swimmers who shone during the competition, such as sophomore Noah Millard. Millard earned maximum points for his individual events in the 200 free (1:34.38), 400 IM (3:48.94), and 500 free (4:19.28). Even with Millard's amazing performance, the competition was still mainly between Harvard and Princeton. Harvard's junior Marcus Holmquist's crazy anchor split of 42.74 set the stage for their dominance and propelled them to their win. On the diving side, Taso Callanan, one of two twins on Princeton's team, won the 3m event with 355.30 points. On the other hand, Adam Wesson of Harvard finished ahead of Yale's Aidan Thomas with 337.95 points. Overall, Harvard barely beat out Princeton 181-172 and Yale 239-113. Princeton gained victory over Yale 231-122.

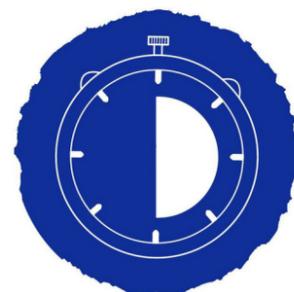
On the women's side, the competition lasted from January 28-29. This time, Yale pulled away from the rest with their second straight victory in the three-way dual meet. Their win streak is now an impressive 7-0. Key components to their triumph included a 100 freestyle galore, with second to fifth in 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.

With a glimpse into the competitive ivy league swimming scene, we can look forward to the Ivy League Championships held at Brown University's aquatics center, which starts on February 22nd.





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.

Spotify® Reports by Player

KYRIE IRVING

Fuck This Shit I'm Out - Youngblaze



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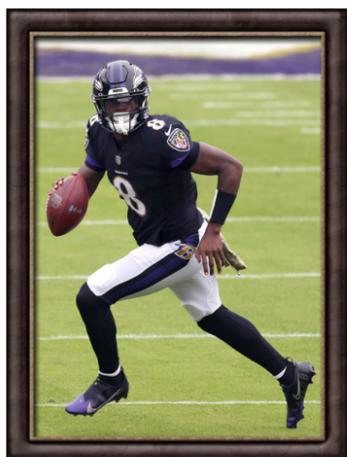


ENZO FERNÁNDEZ

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?



Jalen Carter (right) and Will Anderson (left), 2023's greatest prospects.

JOHN MORAN

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, this would be a blessing, but for them, it was a curse. The Texan's 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 1,143 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 tier of 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 worth it.

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 Bear's pick being swapped for a first round this year as well as a future pick package.

However, the defense isn't the only depart-

ment 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 waits with bated breath to see what the Bears will do to their team before the season starts back up again.



Who Should Replace Graham Potter as Head Coach at Chelsea?



Graham Potter during Chelsea's game against Fulham.

ALEX LEE

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 £323m 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 lackluster 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 20/21 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 acknowl-

edge 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.



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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 baseball or not. On January 5, 1920, a seemingly mediocre pitcher was given to the New York Yankees, a trade that 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 Dodgers on February 10, 2020, which may seem like a long time ago, but both teams are still feeling the effects now. Betts played a top-notch, consistent game throughout the

2022 season, hitting 35 home runs and making the all-star team for the sixth time. His fielding was solid, as usual, and he received his 5th Fielding Bible Award for the best defensive right fielder of the year. On the other hand, the Red Sox had their worst year since 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 2.54 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 cer-

tainly delivered in the postseason—hitting 0.333 and going long five times—but losing Montgomery struck the Yankees hard. Montgomery won six games in 63 days with an ERA of 3.11 with the Cardinals, after previously only winning three in 137 days. Something must have clicked in Montgomery because he pitched like an en-

tirely different person after the trade.

It can be challenging for baseball organizations to foresee how a player may do after a trade, and sometimes teams just get unlucky. They all essentially took a gamble as they believed their decisions would pay off, but ultimately, they were far worse off because of it.



Mookie Betts celebrates after hitting a home run for the Los Angeles Dodgers on May 25, 2022.

Francis Ngannou Ends Contract Dispute with UFC, Seeks New Opportunities

CYRUS K. SIGNAN

Francis Ngannou's two-year standoff with the UFC finally came to an end this past week as the former heavyweight champion and the world's second best fighter parted ways with the franchise.

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—citing the unfairness of the deal, he sought to renegotiate his contract. After failing to meet a resolution with the UFC, Ngannou sought the help of executive agency CAA (Colo-

nia Athletic Association) Sports and UFC Executive Hunter Campbell to resolve the matter. Despite having a successful run in the UFC, and winning the heavyweight title in 2020, he was unable to reach an agreement with the organization and ultimately resulted in his release.

Since the official announcement of his departure from the UFC, Ngannou has been vocal about his former employer. In a recent interview, he claims the disparity between fighter pay and that the lack of transparency was egregiously unfair, contributing to his decision to seek release.

"It's not simply money," said Ngannou. "I don't feel like I have been treated good at the end of the day we put a lot of work into this job and we take a lot on our bodies, I think we should at least have a fair and square deal."

Given the difficulties he encountered in resolving the contract dispute, many think Ngannou's

decision to move on is a sensible one. Despite speaking out against UFC, Ngannou holds 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 of-

ten 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.



Francis Ngannou announces his leave in front of the UFC 270 press conference, January 22, 2023.