

Way too Early Fantasy Football Mock Draft Review

Contributed by Dave Steiner, Fantasy Football Editor
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Lounge Football Editor Dave Steiner breaks down the Fantasy Lounge's early mock draft.

Fantasy Lounge Mock Draft Standard Scoring

In an effort to get you ready for your upcoming drafts, we gathered together ten of our fantasy football fanatics for the first of our mock drafts. Many things may change between now and the start of the season, but this mock will give you a good idea of the value of certain players, so that you can plan for when to take them in early drafts. We've also followed up each round with my overall thoughts as well as comments from the participants. Feel free to add your own comments and/or questions at the bottom. Positions: QB, RB, RB, WR, WR, WR, FLEX, TE, D/ST, Bench, Bench, Bench Round 1

1. John - Chris Johnson (TEN - RB1)
2. natsfreak - Maurice Jones-Drew (JAX - RB2)
3. Big Boss - Drew Brees (NO - QB1)
4. Andy - Adrian Peterson (MIN - RB3)
5. Kevin - Ray Rice (BAL - RB4)
6. thewise - Michael Turner (ATL - RB5)
7. Nick - Andre Johnson (HOU - WR1)
8. mighty - Steven Jackson (STL - RB6)
9. Santa - Frank Gore (SF - RB7)
10. dbacksfan - Rashard Mendenhall (PIT – RB8) Overall Thoughts: Leave it to the guys here at the Lounge to shake things up right off the bat! I'm a little surprised that A.P. lasted until the 4th pick, considering I have him at #1 overall, and Drew Brees going at #3 is too early for any QB, especially when my #1 QB went to Nick in Round #2 (#14 overall). I could see taking him at the end of the first, but not in the top 4, where I feel like A.P., Chris Johnson, MJD, and Ray Rice are the cream of the fantasy crop. The other RB's all have question marks surrounding them, which leads me to my pick. I chose Steven Jackson before I knew about his back surgery (the news surfaced two days later), and I would have definitely passed on him here had I known. Andre Johnson was a solid pick; he's my #1 WR and in a tier all by himself. Kevin: “I was extremely pleased with getting Rice. I knew going into last year that this guy was going to be special.” thewise: “While I like Wayne's strategy in retrospect, I wouldn't have passed on AP. Also, I like Rodgers better than Brees this year, and he went 11 picks later.” dbacksfan: “Mendenhall is going to have to carry a huge workload since Big Ben is suspended the first six games, but I think he can handle it. He's constantly going to face eight men in the box, but I still like him a lot this year.”

Round 2

11. dbacksfan - Randy Moss (NE - WR2)
12. Santa - Larry Fitzgerald (ARI - WR3)
13. mighty - Shonn Greene (NYJ - RB9)
14. Nick - Aaron Rodgers (GB - QB2)
15. thewise - Peyton Manning (IND - QB3)
16. Kevin - Cedric Benson (CIN - RB10)
17. Andy - Ronnie Bown (MIA - RB11)
18. Big Boss - Reggie Wayne (IND - WR4)
19. natsfreak - Vincent Jackson (SD - WR5)
20. John - Roddy White (ATL - WR6)

Overall Thoughts: Another solid round from the guys, but there were some slight reaches in this round. I took Shonn Greene earlier than he'll likely go, but I plan on driving his bandwagon this year, so why not. Plus, he wouldn't have been there for me in the 3rd round, and I think he is going to finish the year as a Top 10 RB, so I drafted accordingly. Cedric Benson still scares me even though he's the feature back for the Bengals and has been great since they signed him. I guess I'm still just a little gun-shy due to his unproductive years with the Bears. Will Ronnie Brown be healthy? High risk/high reward pick there. Finally, I'm a big fan of Vincent Jackson, but I have to think that the league is going to suspend him after his DUI arrest this offseason, and depending on the length of the suspension, his numbers could take a big hit. Kevin: “I wasn't really thrilled with my Benson pick. I hope he can build on what he did last season, but he could, of course, revert to the guy that we saw in Chicago when he started out his career. It probably would have been better if I had gone with a stud receiver in this spot instead.” Nick: “Not gonna lie Andy, that Brown pick is super-risky and ballsy; his injury is serious. Didn't he have a lisfranc fracture a couple years ago, too? It could pay off, though.” Andy: “When Brown is healthy, he's as money as they get. I think he'll be good to go when camps open up, and I'm banking on a bounce back season.” Nick: “Wanted to address my Rodgers pick here. I have a new way of thinking, I will absolutely not reach for a RB in the first and second rounds. There is too much of a drop-off and I would rather have a couple of studs at WR and QB than two high end RB2 options.”

21. John - Matt Schaub (HOU - QB4)
22. natsfreak - Calvin Johnson (DET - WR7)
23. Big Boss - Brandon Marshall (MIA - WR8)
24. Andy - Tom Brady (NE - QB5)
25. Kevin - Miles Austin (DAL - WR9)
26. thewise - DeSean Jackson (PHI - WR10)

27. Nick - Ryan Grant (GB - RB12)
 28. mighty - Greg Jennings (GB - WR11)
 29. Santa - Beanie Wells (ARI - RB13)
 30. dbacksfan - DeAngelo Williams (CAR – RB14) Overall Thoughts: Matt Schaub led the league in passing yards and started all 16 games in a season for the first time in his career. If he's put the injury bug behind him, he's a great value here. Don't worry about Brandon Marshall catching passes from Chad Henne in Miami; if he can put up 1,120 yards and 10 TD's with Kyle Orton taking snaps, he'll do just fine and should be drafted with confidence. Oh, and his hip will be fine as well. Can Miles Austin repeat his sensational 2009? Absolutely. Beanie Wells might be a bit of a reach here if Leinart can't keep opposing defenses from loading the box, and even then he has Tim Hightower replacing him for most 3rd downs. Nick: “One thing is sure, the addition of Brandon Marshall will force the Fins to be less gimmicky on offense, because you need to feed the beast.” Kevin: “Another round where it looks as though everyone got pretty solid value. Getting a stud receiver was a must here for me so getting Austin here was great. Hopefully last year wasn't a fluke.”

Round 4

31. dbacksfan - Marques Colston (NO - WR12)
 32. Santa - Phillip Rivers (SD - QB6)
 33. mighty - Tony Romo (DAL - QB7)
 34. Nick - LeSean McCoy (PHI - RB15)
 35. thewise - Jamaal Charles (KC - RB16)
 36. Kevin - Chad Ochocinco (CIN - WR13)
 37. Andy - Anquan Boldin (BAL - WR14)
 38. Big Boss - Knowshon Moreno (DEN - RB17)
 39. natsfreak - Matt Forte (CHI - RB18)
 40. John - Steve Smith (CAR – WR15) Overall Thoughts: When Santa grabbed Rivers right before me, I knew I couldn't wait any longer to get my last “sure thing” QB in Tony Romo. I hate worrying about my QB from week to week, and Romo will be good every game. After going WR-QB in the first two rounds, Nick fills out his RB's with Grant and McCoy, fulfilling his promise to not reach for one in the first two rounds. Jamaal Charles was one of the better backs in the league over the 2nd half of the season, averaging 164.5 yards and 1 TD in his last 4 games. I have to believe he would have been drafted earlier if the Chiefs hadn't acquired Thomas Jones from the Jets. Matt Forte was a huge bust in 2009. Will the arrival of Mike Martz lead to his resurgence? If it does, this could be the best pick of the draft. thewise: “Tony Romo's my top QB once the big 3 have gone, and mighty got him as the 7th QB taken. Terrific value.” Nick: “Nice pick on Charles there wise, I was looking at him, but I just am not sold especially after they signed Thomas Jones. He did fall.” thewise: “I had passed on him until now for the same reason, but in the 4th round I thought I'd pull the trigger. He was projected as a borderline 1st rounder before the Jones signing, that will limit his value now but will also keep him fresh. We have seen that the guy is skilled. On another note, I think Chad Ochocinco was a questionable pick from Kevin. 13th WR off the board, really? TD total aside, I'm seeing his numbers decline. I would not take him as a WR2, and I would not take him at all when I have his teammate Cedric Benson on my team already.” Kevin: “Ochocinco is Mr. Consistent so I like adding him here alongside Austin for my receiving core to start things off.”

Round 5

41. John - Ryan Matthews (SD - RB19)
 42. natsfreak - Jonathan Stewart (CAR - RB20)
 43. Big Boss - Joseph Addai (IND - RB21)
 44. Andy - Dallas Clark (IND - TE1)
 45. Kevin - Antonio Gates (SD - TE2)
 46. thewise - Steve Smith (NYG - WR16)
 47. Nick - Sidney Rice (MIN - WR17)
 48. mighty - Michael Crabtree (SF - WR18)
 49. Santa - Vernon Davis (SF - TE3)
 50. dbacksfan - Pierre Thomas (NO – RB22) Overall Thoughts: Matthews becomes the first rookie off the board, and I would think that that will continue to be the case in every draft this year. Jonathan Stewart will give you roughly the same rushing yards as DeAngelo Williams, but you can get him later in your draft. Plus, he'll probably score more TD's, which is why I have him ranked ahead of his backfield mate. Make sure you check the status of Antonio Gates before your draft. He's dealing with plantar fasciitis, which is an ailment that can linger and even re-occur, so draft accordingly. Sidney Rice's value is tied directly to whether Favre returns. If he does, Rice's value goes way up; if not, his value goes way down, along with every other Vikings receiver. As long as Alex Smith continues his strong play, I'm a big fan of Crabtree's heading into this season. John: “Matthews is the unquestioned starter and is looking at a 250-300 carry season in an explosive San Diego offense. Should he stay healthy, Matthews is a lock for 1,000+ yards and solid touchdown totals. Also, three tight ends ended up being drafted in this round and although I don't necessarily have a problem with it, I think it's important to note that there is a lot of fantasy talent at the position this year.” Andy: “I was down to Rice and Clark for my pick. I went with Clark since I know for certain Peyton Manning will be there next season. Rice will be good, but I don't think he's going for 1300 and 8 with Tavaris Jackson at the helm.” Kevin: “Nick got one of the biggest steals of the draft up to this point with drafting Rice here. Favre's return was in question so his value dropped a bit, but it looks like he is going to return now, so that means

another big year from Rice. Gates is coming off of one of the best years of his stellar career so I was happy to get him here.”

Round 6

51. dbacksfan - Dwayne Bowe (KC - WR19)
 52. Santa - Felix Jones (DAL - RB23)
 53. mighty - Robert Meachem (NO - WR20)
 54. Nick - Jahvid Best (DET - RB24)
 55. thewise - Hines Ward (PIT - WR21)
 56. Kevin - Brandon Jacobs (NYG - RB25)
 57. Andy - Donald Driver (GB - WR22)
 58. Big Boss - Jason Witten (DAL - TE4)
 59. natsfreak - Tony Gonzalez (ATL - TE5)
 60. John - Mike Sims-Walker(JAX – WR23) Overall Thoughts: Each player chosen in this round has questions surrounding him. Starting at the top: Which Bowe will fantasy owners get this year? The stud from 2008 who put up 1,022 yards and 7 TD's or the bust from 2009 who had 589 yards and 4 TD's? Can Felix Jones stay healthy? If he does, can he overcome the presence of Marion Barber and Tashard Choice to be worth a 6th round pick? Will Meachem become a consistent threat to go along with his big play ability? (I say yes.) Will Best's history of concussions affect the way he attacks defenses in the NFL? How much will Ward's numbers suffer with Big Ben suspended to start the year? Other than Forte, was any RB a bigger bust than Jacobs last year? Can he turn it around in 2010? Will age finally catch up to Driver? Will Witten ever find the endzone again? (Of course, he will, but after only 2 TD's in 2009, we've gotta wonder.) Is this the season that Father Time slows down the best TE in NFL history or will Tony G push it off for another year? Is Mike Sims-Walker a one-hit wonder and can he stay healthy long enough to prove that he isn't? I raise these questions because these are the rounds when fantasy championships are won and lost. Owners who are able to determine who will excel and who will flounder are the ones that will be competing for a title at the end of the year..
 thewise: “Jahvid Best is the guy I wanted for my flex spot, but Nick picked him right before my turn.”
 Jason Witten was, in my eyes, another solid pick. All the guys going right before and right after him, I'm wary about for one reason or another.”
 Kevin: “I think mighty reached a bit here for Meachem. Brees really doesn't have a favorite target after Colston. I am not as high on Jones as others are. Is he getting RB1 type carries or is he still going to share the load with Barber? As far as my pick goes, here is to Jacobs rebounding after a poor season last year.”

Round 7

61. John - Kevin Kolb (PHI - QB8)
 62. natsfreak - Steve Slaton (HOU - RB26)
 63. Big Boss - Santana Moss (WAS - WR24)
 64. Andy - Jeremy Maclin (PHI - WR25)
 65. Kevin - T.J. Houshmandzadeh (SEA - WR26)
 66. thewise - Jermichael Finley (GB - TE6)
 67. Nick - Wes Welker (NE - WR27)
 68. mighty - Hakeem Nicks (NYG - WR28)
 69. Santa - Percy Harvin (MIN - WR29)
 70. dbacksfan - Pierre Garcon (IND - WR30)Overall Thoughts: With so many weapons at his disposal and a pass happy offense, Kolb has the opportunity to make an immediate splash, provided he can handle the pressure of being Philly's QB. Slaton was just plain bad last season and with the drafting of Ben Tate, I don't like his chance of returning to his rookie production. Jermichael Finley is going to be a stud this year; bank on it. Bold pick by Nick taking Wes Welker, but it looks like it might pay off since he recently returned to practice. Check his progress before you make a similar leap of faith in your draft. Hakeem Nicks is one of my sleepers this year, but that doesn't mean that you should sleep on him..
 thewise: McNabb's presence makes me like Santana Moss better than in past years, and I'm curious to see what numbers he can put up with a star QB getting him the ball. Wasn't Chad Pennington the best passer he had previously played with?”
 John: “Kevin got a WR in T.J. Houshmandzadeh, who until last year, was a lock for 100+ receptions and 1,000 yards. If Hasselbeck can stay healthy, T.J., more than anybody, will be the biggest beneficiary. The best pick of the round is Hakeem Nicks. Steve Smith will get drafted ahead of Nicks in pretty much every fantasy draft this season, but Nicks will finish as the best Giants WR to have on rosters. I think he’s in for a big year."
 Kevin: “Take it for what it is worth, but Arian Foster is running with the first team for the Texans during OTAs, which means that the Slaton pick is certainly a reach at this point. Plus, he is coming off of an injury and he was in Kubiak's dog house last year. Housh was probably the worst pick that I have made in this draft up to this point.”

Round 8

71. dbacksfan - Eli Manning (NYG - QB9)
 72. Santa - Mike Wallace (PIT - WR31)
 73. mighty - Marion Barber (DAL - RB27)
 74. Nick - Steve Breaston (ARI - WR32)
 75. thewise - LenDale White (SEA - RB28)
 76. Kevin - Jerome Harrison (CLE - RB29)
 77. Andy - Braylon Edwards (NYJ - WR33)
 78. Big Boss - NY Jets (D/ST1)
 79. natsfreak - Joe Flacco (BAL - QB10)

80. John - Brent Celek (PHI - TE7)

Overall Thoughts: If Eli wasn't on your team last year, you probably don't know that he threw for a career-high 4,021 yards, 27 TD's, and completed 62.3% of his passes, making him a solid value at this point of the draft. Marion Barber may or may not start over Felix Jones, but he should be the back finishing off drives at the goal line. Thewise grabbed LenDale White before he was released by the Hawks, so we'll cut him some slack here. The Browns aren't convinced that Harrison can be an every down back, but he looked pretty good against Kansas City, Oakland, and Jacksonville at the end of last year, when he averaged 187 yards on 35 carries and over 1.6 TD's per game. He's a great pick as the 29th RB off the board. Leave it to Big Boss to be the first team to take a D/ST; not my style, but at least he grabbed the clear-cut #1. thewise: I used to like Braylon a lot before his breakout year, but now I don't trust him anymore. Hard to rely on him when he doesn't get enough receptions.” Kevin: “Another great pick by Nick, Breaston is a stud. I am never a fan of taking a defense this early, even one as good as the Jets. I think I got good value out of Harrison in this spot. He isn't big enough to be an every down back, but he is very effective when he gets touches.”Round 9

81. John - Reggie Bush (NO - RB30)

82. natsfreak - Matt Ryan (ATL - QB11)

83. Big Boss - Derrick Mason (BAL - WR34)

84. Andy - Clinton Portis (WAS - RB31)

85. Kevin - Jay Cutler (CHI - QB12)

86. thewise - Devin Aromashodu (CHI - WR35)

87. Nick - Owen Daniels (HOU - TE8)

88. mighty - Zach Miller (OAK - TE9)

89. Santa - Darren McFadden (OAK - RB32)

90. dbacksfan - CJ Spiller (BUF – RB33) Overall Thoughts: Matt Ryan failed to live up to the preseason hype in 2009; expect a much better 2010. Can Mike Martz work his magic with Cutler? I don't know or care; Cutler won't be on any of my teams this year. I'll likely pass on Owen Daniels. A stud when healthy, he's coming off of his 3rd ACL surgery and there's still no timetable for his return. JaMarcus Russel threw for 1287 yards last season, and Zach Miller caught 66 of his 120 completions for 805 yards, and all 3 of his TD's. Miller's good and will be even better now that he has a real QB throwing to him. Speaking of Jason Campbell, will an improved aerial attack help McFadden reach his potential? Drafting him here could pay big dividends if he does.

Kevin: “Everyone knows how much I love Mason. The guy is one of the most underrated receivers in the game and he keeps chugging along even when he is getting up there in age. If Daniels is healthy, he is a huge steal in this spot. I am iffy on the McFadden pick, simply because you don't know what to expect out of the Raiders offense. I sure hope Cutler can cut down on his turnovers or else this looks like a reach.” thewise: “I hope to be wrong, but I'm afraid Portis is done.” John: “Two picks stood out to me in this round. First, selecting Matt Ryan here is great value. He's getting rave reviews early during the offseason and while that may not excite fantasy owners, the weapons Ryan has on offense should. You know, it pains me to keep boasting about Nick's picks, especially since he's let you know about it after you do, but Owen Daniels here, three rounds from the end of the draft, is a great pick. Don't forget, before Daniels blew out his knee last year, it was him, not Clark, not Gates, who was the best tight end in fantasy football.” Round 10

91. dbacksfan - Visanthe Shiancoe (MIN - TE10)

92. Santa - Antonio Bryant (CIN - WR36)

93. mighty - Ricky Williams (MIA - RB34)

94. Nick - Michael Bush (OAK - RB35)

95. thewise - Cadillac Williams (TB - RB36)

96. Kevin - Kenny Britt (TEN - WR37)

97. Andy - Terrell Owens (FA - WR38)

98. Big Boss - Thomas Jones (KC - RB37)

99. natsfreak - Dez Bryant (DAL - WR39)

100. John - Laurence Maroney (NE - RB38)

Overall Thoughts: If Farve returns, Shiancoe will easily outperform his draft position here. Call me crazy, but I think Ricky Williams will outperform Ronnie Brown again this year. Kenny Britt's got skills, and I like him as a breakout candidate in 2010. T.O. could be a wasted pick if the NFL decides to pass on him, but if not, he's a solid pick here. Does Thomas Jones have anything left in the tank? I think he does. Good pick. Kevin: “The Owens pick really stands out here. You know the guy is going to sign with someone eventually and when he does, you should expect his typical numbers. Great pick by Andy. Britt is an upside pick. He struggled down the stretch last year, but I don't see anyone on that team that should get more looks than him from Vince Young.” John: “I really messed up not locking down a good backup RB just in case I do lose either Ryan Matthews or Chris Johnson. Laurence Maroney and Reggie Bush as depth? Ouch.”

Round 11

101. John - Roy E. Williams (DAL - WR40)

102. natsfreak - Minnesota Vikings (D/ST2)

103. Big Boss - Donovan McNabb (WAS - QB13)

104. Andy - Baltimore Ravens (D/ST3)

105. Kevin - Tim Hightower (ARI - RB39)

106. thewise - Carson Palmer (CIN - QB14)

107. Nick - Ahmad Bradshaw (NYG - RB40)

108. mighty - Brett Favre (MIN - QB14)

109. Santa - Cincinnati Bengals (D/ST4)

110. dbacksfan - Julian Edelman (NE - WR41) Overall Thoughts: Roy Williams promises to be better this year. If he isn't, he'll fade into obscurity, and be replaced permanently by Dez Bryant. I may have Brandon Jacobs ranked ahead of Ahmad Bradshaw, but Bradshaw is the better back and the more reliable fantasy option. Jacobs killed me last year, and I'm holding a grudge! Edelman was an okay pick, but now that Wes Welker looks good to go, he doesn't have quite the upside he did when we thought Welker wouldn't be ready to start the season. I would have rather have had Lee Evans or Austin Collie, who went undrafted. Kevin: "I really liked both the McNabb and Favre picks here. I don't remember the last time these two guys fell this far in a draft. I think Williams flat out sucks, but he is coming off of a solid year, so I can see why you would take him in this spot. Hightower is getting most of the carries with the starters so far and he is still going to be a useful guy in the red zone, so I will happily take him as my RB5." John: "The biggest value pick of the round was Brett Favre. It's all but a lock that Favre will be back, and mighty getting a top fantasy player at the position in round 11 did not go unnoticed." Round 12 111. dbacksfan - Pittsburgh Steelers (D/ST5) 112. Santa - Donald Brown (IND - RB41) 113. mighty - Philadelphia Eagles (D/ST6) 114. Nick - Dallas Cowboys (D/ST7) 115. thewise - Green Bay Packers (D/ST8) 116. Kevin - San Diego Chargers (D/ST9) 117. Andy - Ben Roethlisberger (PIT - QB15) 118. Big Boss - LaDainian Tomlinson (NYJ - RB42) 119. natsfreak - Armanti Edwards (CAR - QB16, WR42) 120. John - San Francisco 49ers (D/ST10) Overall Thoughts: I'm proud of the guys for waiting until the end of the draft to scoop up their D/ST's. Do yourself a favor and follow our lead in your draft; don't waste an early pick on D's. There are plenty of solid D/ST's available, so there's no need to grab one early. I'm sure you noticed that we're not picking kickers in this mock because there's absolutely no reason to. Pick a kicker's name out of a hat, choose a kicker that has a Week 10 Bye so you can start him Week 1 and forget about him, or just pick the kicker who's team mascot you like the best; it doesn't matter. A kicker's, a kicker's, a kicker's, a kicker. Kevin: "Defenses were the name of the game in this round. I am still kicking myself for taking the Chargers over the 49ers because I think their defense has a lot more upside. Edwards was an interesting pick to say the least." John: "Rounds 11 and 12 sparked the massive run on defenses, which was predictable seeing as the mock draft was coming to an end. I'd like to say which one I like more than the other, but every year picking a defense tends to be more luck than anything else. I do know that the number one ranked defense going into the year rarely ends up finishing that way and actually ends up disappointing more than it lives up to its draft slotting (the Steelers, Bears and Ravens of the past immediately come to mind)." Do you have questions about your team? Want to get some opinions on a particular player? Looking for a competitive league? Come check out our Fantasy Sports Forums for any and all of your fantasy sports needs: <http://www.fantasyloungesports.com/forums>