

# FOR THE WIN

**VOLUME 5  
ISSUE 1  
APRIL ISSUE**

[https://www.golfchannel.com/sites/default/files/styles/lede/public/2019/04/14/woods\\_1920\\_masters19\\_gallery\\_celebration.jpg?i-](https://www.golfchannel.com/sites/default/files/styles/lede/public/2019/04/14/woods_1920_masters19_gallery_celebration.jpg?i-)

# Letter from the editing staff:

Just like the New York Jets, it is a new era for For The Win. We are very happy to put out this issue, and hope that it will enjoy our work.

Sincerely,  
FTW Editors

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# NBA Standings Predictions vs Reality

## Eastern Conference:

### 1) Toronto Raptors

The Toronto Raptors made the most of this offseason, acquiring one of the best players in the game, Kawhi Leonard. He has been putting up strong numbers on both sides of the court as he is top six in the league in points and steals. Kawhi's partner in crime, Kyle Lowry, is averaging a career high in assists and the second most in the league. Although the Bucks have been off to a fantastic start, the Raptors are trailing by only a few games and their experience, with the addition of 11-season veteran Marc Gasol, should allow them to close out the regular season stronger than a young Bucks team. Now that LeBron is in the Western Conference, it is time for there to be a new king of the East.

### 2) Milwaukee Bucks

All-Star captain, Giannis Antetokounmpo, has led the Bucks to the one seed in the East through half of the season. The MVP candidate is currently second in the league in efficiency and can do it all, leading his team in points, rebounds, and assists. He has a very underrated supporting cast led by a sharpshooter and first-time All-Star, Khris Middleton, and an athletic playmaker in Eric Bledsoe. The Bucks have also acquired scoring threat Nikola Mirotic in an effort to make a deep playoff run.

### 3) Boston Celtics

The Boston Celtics won 55 games last year despite Kyrie Irving and Gordon Hayward both missing significant time. They have one of the best young cores in the league and now a healthy Hayward and Irving. Although there has been doubts and struggles throughout the beginning of the season, the youthful Celtics are finding their stride, winning nine of their last ten competitions. This includes victories over the Raptors and Thunder.

### 4) Philadelphia 76ers

Joel Embiid and Ben Simmons have already established themselves as one of the NBA's most dominant duos and now with Jimmy Butler and Tobias Harris, the 76ers have the recipe for success. Butler and Harris are both phenomenal defensive stoppers and scorers. Also, the 76ers trading away former #1 pick Markelle Fultz indicates that they are looking to win now and cannot wait for player development. With these four young stars that can dominate on both sides of the ball, the 76ers have the potential to be a threat in the playoffs.

### 5) Indiana Pacers

Victor Oladipo, the 2017 Most Improved Player, suffered a season-ending injury recently, leaving the team with critics and doubts. Oladipo's significance to this Pacers team is great and they will undoubtedly struggle without him on the floor. However, due to Oladipo's absence, other players have stepped up, such as Bogdan Bogdanovic and Myles Turner. Since the Pacers have had a solid start in terms of their record, they should still be able to secure a mid-range playoff seed because of the East's relative weakness.

### 6) Brooklyn Nets

We did not see this one coming. The Brooklyn Nets are currently over .500 and possess two of the most prolific scoring point guards in the NBA, Spencer Dinwiddie and D'angelo Russell. Russell has earned his first all-star appearance this year averaging 19.6 points and 6.4 assists. Also, with Caris LeVert nearing his return, the Nets' young roster is about to look dangerous.

### 7) Charlotte Hornets

Kemba Walker has been on an absolute tear this season. He was selected as an All-Star starter for the first time in his career averaging 24.6 points. The quick guard is accompanied by first-round picks from the past two years, Malik Monk and Miles Bridges, who have flashed major potential. Also, with the constant rumors of the Hornets being buyers at the upcoming deadline, if they can land Kemba a sidekick, the Hornets should be able to secure a playoff spot.

### 8) Detroit Pistons

The former number one pick out of Oklahoma University, Blake Griffin, looks rejuvenated and better than ever. Griffin is top ten in the league in scoring and his partner in crime, Andre Drummond, is leading the league in total and offensive rebounds. The Pistons have started off well under their new coach, Dwane Casey. The 2017 Coach of the Year will need enhanced guard play to steer this team to the postseason.

## Actual:

- 1) Milwaukee Bucks
- 2) Toronto Raptors
- 3) Philadelphia 76ers
- 4) Boston Celtics
- 5) Indiana Pacers
- 6) Brooklyn Nets
- 7) Orlando Magic
- 8) Detroit Pistons

## Western Conference:

### 1) Golden State Warriors

These Warriors are one of the most talented teams of all time. They are running the same lineup from last year... plus arguably the most dominant center in the league, Demarcus Cousins. Through the first half of the season, the Warriors have two of the top five scorers in the league in Stephen Curry and Kevin Durant. The Warriors look more unstoppable than ever following the addition of Cousins. It is hard to see them losing a grip on the top spot in the West.

### 2) Denver Nuggets

Arguably one of the biggest surprises of the season, the Nuggets are second in the West, with an outstanding record of 37-18. They are playing both sides of the court well, and are second in the league in assists per game. The Nuggets arguably have the most depth in the league and are still waiting for former All-Star Isaiah Thomas to return. With one of the most formidable young backcourts in the league, Gary Harris and Jamal Murray, and the best passing center in the league, Nikola Jokic, who is a triple-double threat on any given night, the Nuggets future should look scary to competitors.

### 3) Oklahoma City Thunder

Russell Westbrook looks like a different player this year with his improved basketball IQ. He is sharing the ball more, focusing more on the defensive end and benefiting from his improved shot selection. This change in Westbrook's game has led to an MVP candidate in Paul George. George is currently fourth in the league in scoring, first in the league in steals, and second in defensive win shares. A rejuvenated Westbrook, paired with a more dominant than ever Paul George and a gritty Steven Adams, will be a tough team to handle in the playoffs if they continue to play the way they are now.

### 4) Houston Rockets

This Houston team came one half away from beating the Warriors in the Western Conference Finals last year. With Chris Paul out of the lineup, the ball-dominant Harden went on an absolute tear, averaging 43.6 points per game during the month of January. Harden said in an interview, "This way that we're playing won't happen in the playoffs, won't get us to where we want to go. But we haven't had a full roster yet, so I'm excited for that to come." Now with Paul back, the Rockets are beginning to find their stride.

### 5) Utah Jazz

The Utah Jazz earned 48 wins last regular season primarily due to their freakish athleticism and tough defense. Similar to the Rockets, the Jazz struggled in the early months of the season, but are winning games now and have a record of 32-24. Donovan

Mitchell led the Jazz past the Thunder last year in the playoffs with his outstanding scoring ability. The Jazz may be the Warrior's kryptonite as the Jazz beat the Warriors three out of four times last season and are currently split 1-1 with them this season. As a result, if any team can give the Warriors a run for their money in a seven-game series, it may just be Donovan Mitchell and his Utah Jazz.

### 6) Portland Trail Blazers

The Trail Blazers received a lot of criticism and skepticism after their sweep by the New Orleans Pelicans in the first round of the playoffs last year. In the 2017-2018 season, Portland secured the three seed with a 49-33 record. This season, through 54 games, the Trail Blazers are on pace to achieve an even better record. It will be interesting to see if the Blazers are able to prove their doubters wrong and advance in the playoffs.

### 7) San Antonio Spurs

Last season, the San Antonio Spurs placed as the seven seed in the Western Conference despite Kawhi Leonard only competing in nine games. They added a top-tier shooting guard to their roster this offseason in Demar DeRozan in exchange for Leonard. The efficient Spurs, who lead the league in three-point percentage and free throw percentage, under the experience of Coach Popovich, should be able to hold on to their seven seed.

### 8) Los Angeles Lakers

This year's Lakers team is unlike any team LeBron has ever been on before. He has plenty of young players with high potential, such as Lonzo Ball, Kyle Kuzma, Brandon Ingram, and Josh Hart. He also has plenty of veteran role players in Rajon Rondo, Lance Stephenson, and JaVale McGee. However, he is missing that second star player that he usually has, for example, a Kyrie Irving, a Dwyane Wade, a Kevin Love, or a Chris Bosh. Right now, the Lakers are sitting two games behind the eight seed, largely due to LeBron's extended absence. Now with the King back, the Lakers are looking to make a playoff push. But watch out for the young and hungry Sacramento Kings as a dark horse to steal this last playoff spot.

#### Actual:

- 1) Golden State Warriors
- 2) Denver Nuggets
- 3) Portland Trail Blazers
- 4) Houston Rockets
- 5) Utah Jazz
- 6) Oklahoma City Thunder
- 7) San Antonio Spurs
- 8) Los Angeles Clippers

# NBA AWARDS PREDICTIONS

## MVP: Giannis Antetokounmpo

Giannis Antetokounmpo came into the season as an MVP candidate, and he has performed just like one. Through only eight games played, he has put up 26 points, 14 rebounds, 6 assists, 1.3 steals, and has been shooting 53% from the field. Not to mention he has led the Bucks to an 8-1 record bringing them to second in the East. Over the past few years, Giannis has developed into a complete scorer, and he just keeps getting better and better. He is unstoppable in transition, and has the build of a center with skills of a guard. He is beginning to develop an iso game, which will really take him to another level. Giannis has gotten off to a great start this season, and I look forward to him making his case for MVP the rest of this year.

## DPOY: Kawhi Leonard

Kawhi is a two-time Defensive Player of the Year, and I see him getting his third this year. Seven games in, Kawhi is averaging 2 steals this year, but his overall intensity on the defensive end of the floor is what has lead the Raptors to a 9-1 start to the season. He has locked players such as Ben Simmons up on defense, with his deflections. The presence that Kawhi has on defense is an amazing

boost for the team, which is why I see Kawhi getting his third DPOY title since he joined the league.

## ROY: Luka Doncic

There is no doubt that the 2018 rookie class is dripping with talent, but Luka Doncic seems to be the one who has shown the most glimpses of greatness, and in the most consistent fashion. I believe Doncic is the most NBA-ready at this point in time, and so far he hasn't let us down. Doncic proved to be a stud through his performance in the Euro League last year. He led Real Madrid to a title, and was the youngest player to do this at only 19 years old. So far in the NBA, Doncic has averaged 19 points, 6 rebounds, and 4 assists. Just recently, he put on a show in San Antonio, putting up 31 on the Spurs. I believe Doncic will be able to keep playing this way, which is why he's my pick for Rookie of the Year.

## MIP: Zach Lavine

Zach Lavine entered the league as a flashy dunker, but has steadily improved every year, and this year he seems to have taken the biggest jump. In the 2017-2018 season Lavine put up 16 points, 4 rebounds, and 3 assists in 24 games before getting sidelined with a hip contusion in January. This year, however, he has come back a dif-

ferent person averaging 26 points, 5 rebounds, and 4 assists. He has become the star of the Bulls, and has been getting more and more minutes ever since coming back from his torn ACL. Lavine has also improved his FG% and efficiency since last year, which is why he's my pick for Most Improved Player.

## Sixth Man of the Year: Domantas Sabonis

Domantas Sabonis came into the league two years ago after being drafted by the Thunder, but got traded to the Pacers as a part of the Oladipo and Paul George deal. Throughout his two-year career, he has averaged around 20-24 minutes per game, and he is averaging the same this year. He is putting up 14 points, 8 rebounds, and 2 assists in 10 games, which results in 21 points and 13 rebounds per 36 minutes. He has been the rock of the Pacers second unit, and I would expect him to get more minutes as the season goes on, and hopefully improve his numbers even more.



<https://www.wsj.com/articles/giannis-antetokounmpo-nba-record-slam-dunks-1544110275>

# Why This Year's NBA Playoffs Actually Matter

**D**eMarcus Cousins is back and is now slotted in as center in the Warriors' All-Star starting five that will (obviously) run through the league en route to their fourth championship in the past five years. NBA fans have complained about the Warriors' dynasty ever since Kevin Durant joined Stephen Curry, Draymond Green, and Klay Thompson to create an A superteam to destroy all parity within the league, and I'm among those complaining. However, the dynasty may soon begin to crumble, as Durant will be surveying his options this offseason along with Cousins and Klay, while Draymond will be available the next year. All those guys are worth max dollars, and it's impossible for the Warriors to keep all of them, so something's gotta give. That means that this may be the final year of the Monstars in Oakland, and fans should begin to look at the NBA landscape that we'll be looking at come February of 2020.

The most interesting storylines pertaining to the future of the league will likely reside in the Eastern Conference, as the top of the East is full of deep young teams headed by superstars that have huge decisions to make in the upcoming offseason. The Bucks, Sixers, Celtics, and Raptors all have a real shot at making the NBA Finals this season, while the losers will be left scrambling to collect the finances to make another run at it.

In Boston, the team is struggling this year after coming a dreadful final quarter away from taking down LeBron in a Game 7 of the Eastern Conference Finals last year in a series where they were missing cornerstones Gordon Hayward and Kyrie Irving. Irving is a free agent at season's end, and while he verbally committed to Boston before the season began, recent rumblings have indicated that he is struggling in a pressure-filled leadership role and his options remain open. A trip to the Finals likely solidifies his spot in Boston's future and with a core of Jayson Tatum, Jaylen Brown, and Hayward that will include the possibility of combining assets to go star-hunting on the trade market. That is a team that could dominate for a decade, and this postseason may make or break its future.

In Toronto, Kawhi Leonard has been outspoken about his wanting to be in LA, but a trip to the Finals may compel him to stay as well. Think about it. The Lakers, Clippers, and Knicks spurned so that he could stay in...Toronto? Yep. And it would be on a team that has the depth and star power to also make a run at championships in the near future.

Philadelphia may have more potential than any of these teams but also has far more questions. The first question is about whether they truly want to max out their newly acquired All-Star guard during this offseason-Jimmy But-

ler. He has already butted heads with the coaching staff and fellow stars Ben Simmons and Joel Embiid, but his talent and ability to close games by hitting shots from the perimeter is undeniably valuable for Philly. The Sixers will be just fine for over a decade with whoever they surround Embiid and Simmons, as each is already a top-15 player before the age of 25. However, the prospect of having Butler round out that Big 3 is what takes this very solid team to a championship contender, and is the team goes on a run this postseason-say, beating one of the teams mentioned above- then we may be looking at an extended run of competitive basketball in the City of Brotherly Love.

The Milwaukee Bucks are led by MVP-candidate Giannis Antetokounmpo, and first-year head coach Mike Budenholzer has taken his stars-Giannis, Khris Middleton, and Eric Bledsoe- combined with shooters such as Ersan Ilyasova, Brook Lopez, and Malcolm Brogdon to create space for Giannis to dominate by driving into a more open paint than in past seasons. However, there will be numerous free agent questions here as well, as Bledsoe, Middleton, and Brogdon will each be in search of new lucrative deals. Middleton is the clear second star on the Bucks and will likely command well upwards of \$20 million annually, especially with interest already rumored to be high in the league with teams like the Lakers and

Trail Blazers already looking into the situation. Bledsoe and Brogdon will also need to get paid, and it's unlikely that the Bucks will be able to retain all these guys while still keeping the flexibility to have decent depth after their top five. That's why this postseason will be so crucial for the surprise contender in the Eastern Conference. Everything afterward will be full of question marks.

The Eastern Conference will be fun to watch come playoff-time this year, as it really is anybody's guess on who comes out on top. Then, each team has free agency questions that will decide the franchise's direction for the next decade. A decade is a long time. The Warriors have only been around for five years. That's why we should all be giving our attention to the young guns out East.



<https://www.nba.com/video/2017/06/12/004160946-clip-gsw-gm5-recap>



<https://www.cnbc.com/2018/11/20/the-nba-is-chinas-most-popular-sports-league-heres-how-it-happened.html>

# Analyzing Kyler Murray's Decision to Play Football

On February 11th, 2019, Kyler Murray publicly resolved his conflict between playing professional baseball or football. After being selected with the ninth overall pick in the 2018 MLB Draft on June 4th by the Oakland Athletics, the expectation was that Murray would play quarterback for one season at the University of Oklahoma, then end his football career and report to spring training. However, 5,362 yards, 54 touchdowns, and one Heisman Trophy later, the decision to give up football became even more difficult for Murray. Kyler Murray announced to the world that he plans on pursuing a career in the NFL, at the expense of one in the MLB. Many, including the A's organization, were shocked by his decision, but the reality is few people in this world have the opportunity to choose between a career in professional baseball or football. There is a strong, legitimate argument for choosing either sport, but unfortunately for the fans, Kyler Murray could only choose one.

The case for Kyler Murray playing baseball is considered more obvious to some than others. It seems compelling to be able to retire with a properly functioning brain, as advancements in brain research have shown football players are extremely likely to retire with chronic traumatic encephalopathy, better known as CTE. A 2017 study from the Journal of the American Medical Association estimates 99% of football players retire with CTE. Adding to the concern, the main criticism of Murray's NFL profile is his 5'10" height. In his prolific college career, he disguised his flaws with his extraordinary athleticism. However, the NFL has an abundance of extraordinary athletes, who have a better chance at matching Murray's speed. As a result, an increase in frequency and force of collisions is inevitable, thus the relatively smaller Murray is at a higher risk for serious injuries. Transitioning to the benefits of playing baseball, the average MLB player makes an annual salary of \$4.5 million, while the average NFL player makes \$2.1 million. In addition, the

average MLB career is 2.3 years longer than an NFL career. Murray's decision forces him to return a \$1.3 million signing bonus, and in the industry of professional sports, money cannot be taken for granted, as a single event could tragically end a career. Also, nobody, including Murray, has a clue where he will be under center next season. Numerous franchises have a history of turning talented quarterbacks at the collegiate level into busts with anemic offenses or poor development. With a single decision, Murray could be placed in a terrible situation. When considering financial and medical security, baseball appears to be the safer choice.

Nevertheless, Kyler Murray opted out of a baseball career and will pursue a career in the NFL. While this is a risky decision, there is reason to believe it will pay off in the long run. At this moment, the NFL is simply a more popular league than the MLB. To put it into perspective, the 2018 Super Bowl received nearly four times the number of views as Game Seven of the 2017 World Series. If Kyler Murray's intention is to gain fame, by all means, football is the correct choice for him. As a dynamic, electrifying, highlight-reel quarterback, fame shouldn't elude him one bit. Perhaps baseball is considered "boring" by the common sports fan, as the NFL has nearly triple the number of Instagram followers as the MLB. 23-year old recently-named NFL MVP Patrick Mahomes has 37 times the number of Instagram followers as two-time American League Cy Young Award Winner Corey Kluber. If you think that's surprising, want to know who has twice as many Instagram followers as Kluber? Patrick Mahomes' dog! The point is, the NFL is simply significantly more popular than the MLB is, and based off of recent trends, nothing suggests this will change anytime soon. While baseball seems to be the safer choice for Murray, it should be noted that he will have to have success in numerous levels of the minor leagues before even reaching the MLB. In the NFL, Murray will likely have a starting job

either immediately after the draft or within the next year. Prior to Murray, an eye-opening 36% of ninth overall selections in the MLB Draft have failed to play in the Major Leagues, and an additional 20% have had a negative WAR (wins above replacement). That means that 56% of previous ninth overall selections have either not played in the MLB or were below a replacement-level player. Becoming a major league starter from any draft spot is far from a guarantee, especially outside of the top five. Previous top selected quarterbacks have included rising stars, such as Baker Mayfield, Deshaun Watson, Patrick Mahomes, Jared Goff, and Carson Wentz. While football is full of uncertainties, it is reasonable to argue a successful NFL career is safer than a successful MLB career.

While there are compelling arguments for both options, the reality is, nobody aside from Kyler himself can definitively state what the correct decision is. If he believes that he will become an NFL star and football is his passion, then he made the correct choice. It seems likely that nobody will ever know how a baseball career would've turned out for Murray. Even if he is a mediocre quarterback, it doesn't seem likely we'll see him in a Major League batter's box anytime soon. It will probably require a huge failure as an NFL quarterback for Murray to attempt to transition to the MLB. However, through the heat of the fan and pundit debate, Murray's decision is his own, and as long as he followed his passion, he made the correct choice.



# Why the Future for the Cleveland Browns Could Be Different

If you don't already know, the Cleveland Browns are an NFL team that is known for breaking records. But they don't necessarily have to be good broken records. In the past seven seasons (not including this season,) the Browns have been last in their division, and have not won more than seven games since their 2007 season. The Browns have started 30 different quarterbacks since 1999, and they are the second team in NFL history to have gone 0-16 which was accomplished in their 2017 season. But if anyone reading this had watched the HBO series "Hard Knocks" where a camera crew documents the four weeks of preseason of an NFL team, you would know that the Cleveland Browns were being hyped to finally have their breakout season.

In the preseason, we saw sparks for the Cleveland defense led by Myles Garrett and Denzel Ward, 4th overall 2018 pick. The potential of the offense could be exponential with the acquiring of star wide receiver, Jarvis Landry, and the surge of young talent. Also during the 2018 season, we saw the potential of the #1 overall pick in the 2018 draft, quarterback Baker Mayfield. As he broke the most passing touchdowns by a rookie, his potential is limitless. But as he was planned to take some time to learn the game, the Browns had secured a stable QB placeholder named Tyrod Taylor. Tyrod was expected to put up solid numbers after leading the Bills to their first playoff berth in 17 years, ending the longest postseason drought held by any other sports team. But things change, and so did the direction of the Browns' season. In the first game, they had tied with the Steelers and had managed to secure three interceptions off of Ben Roethlisberger, two from the rookie Denzel Ward.

The next week was a frustrating

loss to the Saints 21-18. And they owe this loss to their kicker, Zane Gonzalez. After a big 47-yard touchdown catch on fourth down that tied the game at 18 with 1:16 left, Zane Gonzalez stepped up and missed the extra point. It was the third of his four straight missed kicks on his disaster day. This gave Drew Brees and the Saints an opportunity to win it 21-18 on a 44-yard Wil Lutz field goal with 21 seconds remaining.

But it took 2.25 games for the football world to realize that quarterback Tyrod Taylor was nothing more than another classic Cleveland QB. But this was our first look at how Cleveland's future franchise quarterback was able to handle the pressure of Thursday night primetime football after Tyrod Taylor put on a horrible performance in the first half and got injured while at it. Baker, in his first NFL regular season appearance, was able to pull off a 14 point comeback with the whole nation watching him. Fast forward to later in the season to record 2-6-1, after only one more win since their Jets comeback and multiple frustrating losses, the Browns decided to fire their head coach Hue Jackson. Hue had been the Browns coach for three seasons including this one and after his tough loss to the Steelers, GM John Dorsey was fed up with the losses Hue was producing.


After what was supposed to be a promising season, is another season without playoff fever on Cleveland. While this season may seem rather dull when looking from a microscope, when you look at as the bigger picture, this football team could eventually be something great. With an exciting offense containing franchise quarterback, Baker Mayfield, an explosive rookie running back named Nick Chubb, dangerous wide receivers such as Jarvis Landry and Anto-

nio Callaway, and a physical and well-coordinated tight end, David Njoku. For the defense, who is currently ranked second in interceptions amongst the league, with defensive players such as Myles Garrett and Denzel Ward, and on top of all of that, a most likely high first-round pick. So if the Cleveland Browns are able to make intelligent choices in the upcoming draft, find a strong head coach, and put all of the missing pieces together, we might just have a football team.



<https://www.newsweek.com/baker-mayfield-leads-browns-first-win-635-days-becomes-twitter-new-idol-1132245>





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## A CLOSER LOOK AT THE NFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME CONTROVERSY

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**T**he NFC championship between the Saints and the Rams was an extremely entertaining game until one call ruined the Saints' chances of making it to the super bowl. With the game tied at 20 points each on a third-down-and-ten at the Rams 13-yard line with 1:48 left to go in the fourth quarter, Saints quarterback Drew Brees threw a pass to Tommylee Lewis, the outside receiver. As the ball was thrown, Robey-Coleman, the Rams defensive player, delivered a blow to Lewis's head before Lewis was even able to make a play for the ball, which should have resulted in both a pass interference and unnecessary roughness call, both major penalties.

The officials, who all originated from California, failed to throw their flags which subsequently led to the Rams winning in overtime. The Rams had a great season finishing with an 11-4 record and an outstanding performance in the game, but they did not deserve to be in the Super Bowl. That "missed" call ruined the Saints' chances of making it to the Super Bowl and prevented Drew Brees from winning another ring. Skip Bayless, a sports analyst for Fox Sports, said that this event "was simply the worst blown call in the history of sports." It was only fitting that the Rams

did not win this year's Super Bowl. Sean Payton, the head coach of the Saints, was on the phone with the league office immediately following the game. In his post-game interview, he described the missed call as a "game-changing call." Saints players after the game were very frustrated with both the officiating and the NFL office because they didn't bother to comment on the situation. Players like Michael Thomas tweeted the NFL asking to enforce Rule 17, Section 2, Article 1, which states that, "the Commissioner has the sole authority to investigate and take appropriate disciplinary and/or corrective measures if any club action, non-participant interference, or calamity occurs in an NFL game which the Commissioner deems so extraordinarily unfair or outside the accepted tactics encountered in professional football that such action has a major effect on the result of the game" (NFL). Both players and fans were hoping that Roger Goodell, the commissioner of the NFL, would enforce this rule which has previously never been enforced. Two Saints fans were so upset by the penalty not being called, they decided to sue the NFL. The NFL publicly acknowledged that they blew the call after the game, but argued in federal court that authorities cannot force them to correct the error. Thomas Barrabi describes the situation:

"Because the officials on the field are humans, like the players and coaches, errors will happen," the NFL's attor-

neys said in a brief filed in U.S. District Court on Sunday and obtained by USA Today. "The NFL parties do not dispute that they have previously advised the Saints, including the club's head coach, that one or more penalties for pass interference or illegal helmet-to-helmet contact were mistakenly not called late in the NFC Championship Game, and that the NFL would like its officials on the field to make these calls."<sup>1</sup>

The NFL will most likely win this lawsuit, but there's something bigger at stake. People are finally holding the NFL accountable for their mistakes. A number of big games have been ruined because of the referees and the rules placed on reviewing penalties. This backlash and lawsuit finally forced the NFL to make some rule changes on reviewing penalties in games.

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1: <https://www.foxbusiness.com/features/nfl-admits-blown-call-in-saints-rams-game-amid-fan-lawsuit>



# SAINTS INSIDER



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[https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fancy-stats/wp/2018/04/26/saquon-barkley-is-a-risk-at-the-top-of-the-2018-nfl-draft/?utm\\_term=.6ab00713b0ac](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fancy-stats/wp/2018/04/26/saquon-barkley-is-a-risk-at-the-top-of-the-2018-nfl-draft/?utm_term=.6ab00713b0ac)

<https://www.truebluela.com/2017/6/19/15dodgers-rookie-history>

# 2018 NFL Re-Draft

STEVEN BORODKIN

## 1. Cleveland Browns:

Actual Pick: Baker Mayfield, QB

Do-over: Same

The Browns finally got their franchise quarterback. Mayfield brought winning back to Cleveland, and set the rookie record for most passing touchdowns in a season, and he didn't even play all 16 games. Given the chance, the Browns would easily take him again.

## 2. New York Giants:

Actual Pick: Saquon Barkley, RB

Do-over: Same

After Barkley was drafted, many people thought the Giants should have taken a quarterback instead, but Barkley proved his doubters wrong. The Offensive Rookie of the Year set a rookie record for most receptions by a running back in a season, and became just the third rookie to have over 2000 yards from scrimmage. In addition, Barkley provided highlight after highlight, and the Giants would no doubt take him again.

## 3. New York Jets:

Actual Pick: Sam Darnold, QB

Do-over: Same

Although he looked inefficient at times, he shined brightly at others, flashing tons of potential. He could easily be the best quarterback the Jets have had since Joe Namath.

## 4. Cleveland Browns:

Actual Pick: Denzel Ward, CB

Do-over: Same

The Browns again got their pick right the first time, as Ward had phenomenal rookie season, and played a big role in the Browns turnaround from 2017 to 2018.

## 5. Denver Broncos:

Actual Pick: Bradley Chubb, LB

Do-over: Josh Allen, QB

By all means, Chubb had a stellar rookie year, but Case Keenum is not the answer at quarterback, and Allen made a big impact with both his arm and legs with the Bills, and would certainly do much better with Broncos receivers.

## 6. Indianapolis Colts:

Actual Pick: Quenton Nelson, OG

Do-over: Same

Nelson was first team all-pro and made the Pro Bowl his rookie year. He was a huge reason why the Colts' o-line went from one of the worst in 2017 to one of the best in 2018, and the Colts would gladly take him again.

## 7. Tampa Bay Buccaneers:

Actual Pick: Josh Allen, QB (by the Bills)

Do-over: Derwin James, S

The Buccaneers have had struggles in their secondary for years now, and having Derwin James, a Pro Bowler, and runner up for defensive rookie of the year, would instantly improve their secondary by a huge margin.

## 8. Chicago Bears:

Actual Pick: Roquan Smith, LB

Do-over: Same

The Bears defense was one of the best defenses in the entire league in 2018, and Smith was a big reason why. While he didn't record many sacks and interceptions, he still had a huge impact on the field, as he led the team in tackles.

## 9. San Francisco 49ers:

Actual Pick: Mike McGlinchey, OT

Do-over: Bradley Chubb, LB

While McGlinchey was by far the best rookie tackle, and had a huge impact on the 49ers, pairing Bradley Chubb with former first round picks, Arik Armstead, DeForest Buckner, and Solomon Thomas, would give the 49ers one of the best front sevens throughout the league.

## 10. Oakland Raiders:

Actual Pick: Josh Rosen, QB (by the Cardinals)

Do-over: Mike McGlinchey, OT

While the Raiders took tackle Kolton Miller later on in the real draft, they'd much rather McGlinchey, who played much better this past year.

## 11. Miami Dolphins:

Actual pick: Minkah Fitzpatrick, S

Do-over: Same

Fitzpatrick had a great rookie year, and could easily develop into one of the best defensive backs in the league in the years to come.

## 12. Buffalo Bills:

Actual pick: Vita Vea, DT (by the Buccaneers)

Do-over: Lamar Jackson, QB

The Bills still get their franchise quarterback, who like Allen, is able to make big plays both running and throwing the football.

## 13. Washington Redskins:

Actual pick: Daron Payne, DT

Do-over: Calvin Ridley, WR

For several years now, the Redskins have had very little production from their wider receiver, but here they finally land a number 1 receiver, who shined during his rookie year.

## 14. Green Bay Packers:

Actual pick: Marcus Davenport, DE (by the Saints)

Do-over: Jaire Alexander, CB

In the real draft, Alexander was drafted by the Packers with the 18th pick, and they'd take him again here with the 14th. Alexander had a standout rookie year, and can be the cornerstone for the packers secondary for years to come.

## 15. Arizona Cardinals:

Actual pick: Kolton Miller, OT (by Oakland)

Do-over: Josh Rosen, QB

The Cardinals are still able to land their franchise passer, who flashed some potential during a rough rookie campaign.

## 16. Baltimore Ravens:

Actual pick: Tremaine Edmunds, LB (by the Bills)

Do-over: Nick Chubb, RB

Although the Ravens are unable to land their franchise quarterback, they still manage to get a playmaking running back, who would be able to take some of the pressure off of Joe Flacco.

17. Las Angeles Chargers:  
Actual pick: Derwin James, S  
Do-over: Darius Leonard, LB

While the Chargers aren't able to land their playmaking safety, they are able to get the Defensive Rookie of the Year in. Leonard, who would be able to improve the Charger's weak linebacker core, after Denzel Perryman's injury.

18. Seattle Seahawks:  
Actual pick: Jaire Alexander, CB(by the Packers)  
Do-over: Daron Payne, DT

After Chris Carson's breakout year, they'd no longer need to draft running back Rashad Penny, so instead they land a big defensive tackle who can make big plays on the defensive side.

19. Dallas Cowboys:  
Actual pick: Leighton Vander Esch  
Do-over: Same

Vander Esch was a big time playmaker as a rookie, and helped make the Cowboys defense one of the best in the NFL, There's no chance the Cowboys would pass on him, given the chance to draft him again.

20. Detroit Lions:  
Actual pick: Frank Ragnow, G/C  
Do-over: Same

While Ragnow struggled in pass protection at times, he was a monster run blocking, and played a big role Kerryon Johnson's breakout rookie season, before Johnson got injured.

21. Cincinnati Bengals:  
Actual pick: Billy Price, G/C  
Do-over: Same

Price did not have the best rookie season possible, but he has the potential to make him one of the best interior lineman in the NFL.

22. Buffalo Bills:  
Actual pick: Rashaan Evans, LB(by Tennessee)  
Do-over: D.J. Moore, WR

The Bills got their franchise quarterback earlier in the draft, and now they get a playmaking receiver to go along with him.

23. New England Patriots:  
Actual pick: Isaiah Wynn, G/T  
Do-over: Phillip Lindsay, RB

While Wynn missed his entire rookie year with a torn achilles, Phillip Lindsay was making big play after big play for the Broncos, and the Patriots would love for him to play alongside Tom Brady.

24. Carolina Panthers:  
Actual pick: D.J. Moore, WR  
Do-over: Christian Kirk, WR

While the Panthers are unable to land Moore this time around, they still get a playmaking receiver in Kirk.

25. Tennessee Titans:  
Actual pick: Hayden Hurst, TE(by the Ravens)  
Do-over: Marcus Davenport, DE

The Titans have a great defense, but they lack a top pass rusher. Here, they get someone who in the near future, he can be one of the best pass rushers in the league.

26. Atlanta Falcons:  
Actual pick: Calvin Ridley, WR  
Do-over: Will Hernandez, OG

The Falcons are unable to get their receiver so instead they land a solid guard, a position that has been the weak spot on their offense for years.

27. New Orleans Saints:  
Actual pick: Rashad Penny, RB(by the Seahawks)  
Do-over: Mark Andrews, TE

The Saints offense was amazing as is, imagine if they had a young playmaking tight end too.

28. Pittsburgh Steelers:  
Actual pick: Terrell Edmunds, S  
Do-over: Tremaine Edmunds, LB

The Steelers take the other Edmunds this time, who will fill the void left Ryan Shazier's injury.

29. Jacksonville Jaguars:  
Actual pick: Taven Bryan, DT  
Do-over: Vita Vea, DT

Bryan underwhelmed as a rookie, and the Jaguars would much rather Vea who had a much better year.

30. Minnesota Vikings:  
Actual pick: Mike Hughes, CB  
Do-over: Same

Hughes shined as rookie before getting injured, and the Vikings would no doubt take this ball hawking corner again.

31. New England Patriots:  
Actual pick: Sony Michel, RB  
Do-over: Terrell Edmunds, S

After already taking a running back in Phillip Lindsay, the Patriots are able to dress another team need here by taking Edmunds, who who would make a great pairing with Devin McCourty.

32. Philadelphia Eagles:  
Actual pick: Lamar Jackson, QB(by the Ravens)  
Do-over: Sony Michel, RB

After Jay Ajayi's injury, the Eagles had little production from the position, but now, they get a big time playmaker at running back.





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<https://dailynews.news/the-giants-should-sign-colin-kaepernick-right-now/>



# Should the Giants Sign Colin Kaepernick? Derek Carr?

ADRIAN ARNABOLDI

The New York Football Giants will continue to lose football games if Eli Manning remains under center. The quarterback play has been killing the Giants. Eli Manning isn't producing even though he is surrounded by weapons including star rookie Saquon Barkley, Odell Beckham Jr., Evan Engram, and Sterling Shepard. With Eli Manning struggling and aging, the Giants will need to find a new quarterback. In the 2019 free agent quarterback class, there aren't any great options. Tyrod Taylor, who isn't even starting for the Browns, will arguably be the best free agent quarterback. Without many quality options, the Giants might be forced to look into the controversial Colin Kaepernick.

Colin Kaepernick is a starting-caliber NFL quarterback, which the Giants desperately need. Kaepernick led the San Francisco 49ers to a Super Bowl in 2013, proving that he was a mobile quarterback with a gun for an arm. Both of these aspects of his game will translate well to the Giants offense. The Giants require a mobile quarterback that can evade pressure. The porous offensive line of the Giants will fre-

quently allow pass rushers to get in the quarterback's face, so it is crucial to have a quarterback that can escape pressure. Kaepernick's mobility will allow coach Pat Shurmur to be more creative in his playcalling. Shurmur could mix in some run-pass option and QB runs to make the offense less predictable. Kaepernick's strong arm will allow the Giants to stretch the field and open up the line of scrimmage. Eli and the Giants have been criticized for continuously throwing passes near the line of scrimmage. Kaepernick will be able to extend plays and throw the ball downfield to the star receiving core, and this will, in turn, open up the line of scrimmage for Saquon Barkley.

Similarly to the Giants, the Oakland Raiders are currently in turmoil. They traded Khalil Mack, arguably the best defensive player in the league, and former first-round pick Amari Cooper. There has been speculation that head coach John Gruden could be looking to ship off Derek Carr. This is definitely an intriguing option for the Giants, and at the right price, it would be wise for David Gettleman, to General Manager of the Giants, to pull the trigger on a

potential deal.

Some argue that the Giants should turn to rookie quarterback Kyle Lauletta or the 2019 NFL Draft to fix their quarterback situation. However, Justin Herbert, who is considered to be the best quarterback in the NFL Draft, might not declare for the draft. Kyle Lauletta is raw and probably won't be ready to take over the Giants in 2019.

Although Colin Kaepernick are options for the Giants, it's unlikely either of them will end up wearing blue jerseys in East Rutherford. It's hard to envision the conservative and cautious John Mara taking a risk by signing Kaepernick. John Gruden is also unlikely to deal Carr after receiving lots of scrutiny for making big trades. NFL teams also don't trade their franchise quarterbacks with regularity.

The best path forward for the Giants is to move on from Eli Manning. The Giants should either cut or trade Manning to a team in need of a quarterback, like the Jaguars, and pursue Kaepernick and Carr. If they can't sign Kaepernick and Carr, it is pivotal that they use their first round pick to draft their quarterback of the future.

# The Comeback of Novak Djokovic

ROBBIE WERDIGER

Novak Djokovic has defied the odds, returning back to prime form at the top of the men's professional tennis game. Over the last year and a half, Djokovic has been plagued by a series of injuries that kept him sidelined from the game. Now fully recovered, Djokovic is a force to reckon with and is an overwhelming favorite at almost every event.

In his quarterfinal match at the 2017 Wimbledon championships, Novak was forced to retire mid-match due to a long-term elbow injury. He opted to sit out for the rest of the 2017 season and made his anticipated return at the 2018 Australian Open. With his elbow still ailing, Djokovic endured a tough straight set defeat against the up and coming Korean, Hyeon Chung. Devastated, Djokovic decided to undergo surgery on his elbow to end the pain once and for all. In his absence, Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal combined to win nearly every major tournament, revitalizing their rivalry and the popularity of the game. Both greats won two grand slam titles during this period, which further increased the grand slam differential between Djokovic and Nadal. Andy Murray was also injured at the

same time, and it seemed that no one could compete with Federer and Nadal. It is believed that Federer and Nadal are the two greatest of all time, but it wasn't impressive to the tennis world that the two were facing little competition at the tail end of their careers.

Djokovic made his debut from surgery two months after the Australian Open at the prestigious Indian Wells Masters 1000. Djokovic was upset by 109th ranked Taro Daniel in the first round, and continued his spring slump at the Miami Open. After failing to win a match at either event, Djokovic had his hopes up for the clay court season. He gained some momentum back from lead up tournaments to Roland Garros, including a hard-fought semifinal loss to Rafael Nadal at the Italian Open. With a few wins under his belt, Djokovic was optimistic as he reached the quarterfinals of the French Open. However, to everyone's shock Novak was upset in the quarters by Marco Cecchinato of Italy, who was ranked outside the top 50.

Transitioning to the grass court season, Djokovic made

the final of Queens Club, losing to Marin Cilic after failing to convert on a match point. Entering Wimbledon, expectations were hard to gauge. Despite recent losses, Djokovic played spectacular tennis to reach the semi-finals and set up a highly anticipated matchup with Rafael Nadal. Taking five hours and fifteen minutes, Djokovic outlasted Nadal 10-8 in the fifth set in a match that will go down as one of the all-time greats. Djokovic steamrolled past Kevin Anderson in the finals to win his fourth Wimbledon title and thirteenth grand slam. Novak rose to top 10 on the ATP rankings, and he began to look like the pain-free Djokovic of 2015.

The US Open Series was up next on the ATP calendar, and Djokovic looked to accomplish something never done before. Djokovic had won eight different masters 1000 titles and needed to win the Cincinnati Masters to become the first player to complete the Career Golden Masters, which entails winning each of the nine masters 1000 titles. These tournaments are of the highest level on the ATP Tour below the grand slams, and each tournament grants 1000 ranking points to the vic-

tor as opposed to 2000 for the grand slams. Djokovic followed through on expectations to achieve an unprecedented feat and did so in fashion beating Roger Federer in straight sets in the final of Cincinnati. As expected, all eyes were on Novak Djokovic to win the 2018 US Open. Djokovic survived some tough four-set matches in the grueling New York August heat during the first week of the tournament. As conditions cooled off, Djokovic found his rhythm and defeated John Millman and Kei Nishikori to set up a final against the crowd favorite Argentine, Juan Martín Del Potro. In a flawless effort, Djokovic out steadied Del Potro in straight sets to claim his fourteenth grand slam title, tying Pete Sampras for third most grand slam titles of all time and reclaiming the number one ranking.

Flashing forward to the first slam of 2019, the tennis world watched Djokovic's title run at the Australian Open in astonishment. One year after being upset by Chung, the world number one breezed past Nadal in the final in a relaxed straight set victory, blasting 34 winners along the way. Djokovic himself said he couldn't have played better, and his stellar play reminded us of the prime Djokovic of 2011. The 2019 Aussie Open champion now trails Rafael Nadal by only two grand slams and Federer by five. If he continues to dominate, Djokovic might enter the conversation of greatest of all time as Nadal and Federer are nearing retirement, and the younger generation has yet to make an impact at the slams. Only time will tell.



<https://www.newyorker.com/sports/sporting-scene/at-the-us-open-novak-djokovic-isnt-the-most-beloved-player-but-he-is-the-best>

# How Chicago Kept Both MLB Teams

New York City and Los Angeles both have eight professional Big Four (MLB, NFL, NHL, NBA) teams, two in each league. This is normal for cities with the size of NYC or LA. Boston has four teams, one in each league, as do Philadelphia, Washington, Denver, the Twin Cities, Miami, Detroit, Phoenix, and Dallas. The San Francisco Bay Area is a strange case, as the area is actually made up of three cities. The entire metro area has 6 major league teams, with 2 in San Francisco, 3 in Oakland, and 1 in San Jose, for two each in MLB and the NFL, but both leagues have one team based in San Francisco and one in Oakland; the area has one team in both the NBA and NHL. Chicago is the outlier, with two teams in the MLB and one team each in the other three leagues, for a total of five. The reason for this is that neither the Cubs nor the White Sox were good enough or popular enough to force the other team to leave, unlike the Yankees, for example, which forced out both the Giants and Dodgers back in the 1950s. The other major reason that both teams stayed is that Chicago is essentially two cities merged into one, with the North Side being Cubs territory and the South Side being Sox territory.

There were five cities when MLB began play in 1903 with two or more teams: New York (3), Boston (2), Philadelphia (2), St. Louis (2), and Chicago (2). Of these, New York and Chicago still have two teams, although the Mets did not exist until 1961. Meanwhile, Boston, Philadelphia, and St. Louis have one. In each city, except for Chicago, one team was extremely successful at the same time the other was not. By 1958, the Yankees had won 15 World Series compared to the Dodgers' (1) and Giants' (5) six between them. In Boston, while the Red Sox had been "cursed" to not win the Fall Classic since 1918, the Braves had reached the World Series exactly twice, winning in 1914 and reaching it in 1948, while the Red Sox had won five between 1903 and 1918, including the 1946 American League pennant. The Braves, pushed by failing attendance, became the first MLB team to relocate, moving to Milwaukee

and later Atlanta. In St. Louis, the Browns were just as good as today's Cleveland Browns—they won one pennant and no titles in 50 years before being sold to a Baltimore-owned group, compared to the Cardinals, who have the second most championships, behind only the Yankees. Finally, in Philadelphia, the Athletics were utterly dominant over the hapless Phillies, but, buoyed by the "Whiz Kids", a team of mostly rookies, the Phillies reached, but did not win, the World Series in 1950, just as the financial struggles of the A's forced Connie Mack to sell the team. The new owner immediately moved the team to Kansas City to become essentially a farm system for the Yankees. This move was not exactly due to historical success, as the others are, this one was because one team was extremely bad while the other was mediocre. However, in Chicago, both teams were relatively futile for long, long stretches of time—the Cubs famously only breaking their curse in 2016, after 108 years of waiting, and the White Sox in 2005, after 88.

Prior to breaking the curses, the last time either the Cubs or the White Sox won the World Series, the Ottoman Empire still existed, WWI was still raging, the NFL did not exist, and Russia was not yet a Communist nation. Thus, neither team was ever good enough to dominate the market. The other main reason why Chicago was able to keep two teams is because of the North Side vs. South Side rivalry within the city, which in most cases embodies itself in the Cubs-Sox rivalry. The North Side of the city (anything above I-290, aka the Loop) is the more white-collar area, where people are more likely to be students or in a business field. The South Side is the industrial,

blue-collar half of the city, working in, for example, construction or government jobs. The city is also split by race, with the South Side being 93% black, and the North Side being a largely middle and upper class area. With the Cubs on the North Side and the Sox on the South, it only makes sense that there is more local pride in the Sox below the Loop and vice versa, essentially creating a dynamic in which the successes and non-successes of each team play into the emotions of the other team's fans, with some outwardly hoping that the Cubs/Sox lose depending on what their fandom is. In Chicago, fandom is a lifetime commitment often passed down from family to family and immigrants to the area often pick the team that is dominant where they settle. Just as New York is to Boston, the North Side is to the South Side, and just as the Dodgers are to the Giants (as San Francisco and Los Angeles have also been locked in a rivalry for supremacy over California), the Cubs are to the White Sox. The Cubs/Sox rivalry is really more of an extension of the North Side/South Side rivalry prevalent around Chicago than anything else—the "sides" are essentially two cities joined and separated in the middle by the Loop.

Neither the Cubs nor the Sox were ever particularly dominant, with one team on the North Side and one on the South Side, creating a natural and incredibly heated intra-city geographical rivalry. In addition, both teams had a long and famous championship drought at the same time, ensuring that neither team would be forced out by a lack of onfield success.





**#FTW**