

DRAFTMETRICS

THE NFL'S MINOR LEAGUE – REVIEWING THE COLLEGES

Part 1

With rare exceptions, there is only one path to the NFL - - through the colleges. In the first part of a two-part article this analysis will focus on the big picture regarding the colleges that supply the most players and how successful those players have been. Part 2 will focus on analysis of a group of individual colleges.

It is not surprising that the 65 Power 5 schools are the training ground for most NFL players. Based on a study of the 2012 through 2020 drafts, about 75% of all draftees are from Power 5 schools. This study excludes special teams selections. Here is a list of conferences and the number of draftees from each school in each conference:

ACC	319	Big 10	341	Big 12	193
Clemson	48	Ohio State	63	Oklahoma	46
Florida State	45	Michigan	42	West Virginia	27
Miami	43	Penn State	36	Baylor	24
No Carolina State	28	Wisconsin	33	TCU	24
No. Carolina	24	Iowa	30	Texas	21
Virginia Tech	22	Michigan State	26	Oklahoma State	15
Louisville	22	Nebraska	20	Kansas State	12
Boston College	19	Maryland	15	Texas Tech	11
Pitt	15	Rutgers	15	Kansas	7
Virginia	14	Minnesota	15	Iowa State	6
Wake Forest	13	Illinois	13		
Georgia Tech	11	Indiana	11		
Syracuse	10	Purdue	11		
Duke	5	Northwestern	11		

Pac 12	286	SEC	487	Notre Dame	45
Stanford	37	Alabama	79		
USC	35	LSU	64		
UCLA	32	Florida	53		
Washington	31	Georgia	47		
Oregon	30	Auburn	33		
Utah	29	Arkansas	31		
California	23	Texas A&M	31		
Arizona State	19	South Carolina	30		
Oregon State	16	Mississippi State	28		
Colorado	14	Mississippi	22		
Washington State	11	Missouri	22		
Arizona	9	Tennessee	19		
		Kentucky	14		

		Vanderbilt	14		
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It should be noted that Boise State had the most draftees (22) from schools outside the Power 5. Digging a little deeper, 31 colleges (called “the Group” in the rest of the article) in the Power 5 accounted for over half of all drafted players. The 31 schools and the number of draft from each are:

Alabama	79	Stanford	37	Oregon	30
LSU	64	Penn State	36	South Carolina	30
Ohio State	63	USC	35	Utah	29
Florida	53	Auburn	33	No. Carolina State	28
Clemson	48	Wisconsin	33	Mississippi State	28
Georgia	47	UCLA	32	West Virginia	27
Oklahoma	46	Arkansas	31	Michigan State	26
Florida State	45	Texas A&M	31	North Carolina	24
Notre Dame	45	Washington	31	Baylor	24
Miami	43	Iowa	30	TCU	24
Michigan	42				

It is no surprise that SEC schools dominate the list with nine schools, representing nearly 18% of all draft selections. The Big 10 is a distant second representing just over 10% of all draft choices.

The Group tends to be most dominant in the early rounds of the draft. This table compares the percentage of drafted players from three categories of schools in each segment of the draft. The categories are 1) Group of 31, 2) the other 34 Power 5 colleges and 3) everyone else.

Category	Round 1		Rounds					All	
	1-20	Rest	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th		7 th
Group of 31	79%	65%	60%	51%	57%	48%	42%	38%	52%
Other P5	13%	24%	20%	22%	20%	23%	26%	26%	22%
Others	8%	11%	20%	27%	23%	29%	32%	37%	26%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
# Drafted	180	107	284	331	344	312	344	346	2248

Do players from one category tend to be more successful than the others? This can be reviewed from both an absolute and relative (i.e., considering when draft choices were made) perspective. The following data summarizes the data, with fullbacks excluded due to their small number of draft choices, Major Contributors and Contributors.

Category	Major Contributor				Contributors			
	Actual		Projected		Actual		Projected	
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
Group of 31	407	57.3%	423	59.6%	552	56.7%	566	58.2%
Other P5	149	21.0%	143	20.1%	195	20.1%	199	20.4%
Others	154	21.7%	144	20.3%	226	23.2%	208	21.4%

Total	710	100%	710	100%	973	100%	973	100%
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As the table shows, in absolute terms the Group dominates, producing 57% of all Major Contributors. But there is a different result when an algorithm is used to calculate how many Major Contributors and Contributors those draft choices should have produced and that is compared with the actual number.

This table compares the variances by playing position and overall between actual and projected for each category of schools. A plus sign (+) indicates that actual exceeded projected and a minus sign (-) indicates the opposite.

	Group of 31	Other Power 5	All Others	Total
Quarterbacks				
Draftees	52	26	27	105
Major Contributors Variance	0	0	0	0
Contributors Variance	-2	+2	0	0
Running Backs				
Draftees	104	34	51	189
Major Contributors Variance	0	0	0	0
Contributors Variance	-1	0	+1	0
Wide Receivers				
Draftees	145	71	71	287
Major Contributors Variance	-1	-3	+4	0
Contributors Variance	-2	-2	+4	0
Tight Ends				
Draftees	69	22	33	124
Major Contributors Variance	+2	-1	-1	0
Contributors Variance	0	0	0	0
Offensive Line				
Draftees	201	83	92	376
Major Contributors Variance	+2	-2	0	0
Contributors Variance	+1	-3	+2	0
Defensive Line				
Draftees	207	75	94	376
Major Contributors Variance	-9	+5	+4	0
Contributors Variance	-10	+1	+9	0
Linebackers				
Draftees	168	73	75	316
Major Contributors Variance	+3	+1	-4	0
Contributors Variance	0	+4	44	0
Defensive Backs				
Draftees	215	107	131	453
Major Contributors Variance	-7	+8	-1	0
Contributors Variance	0	+2	-2	0
All Positions				

Draftees	1161	491	573	2225
Major Contributors Variance	-16	+6	+10	0
Contributors Variance	-14	-4	-+18	0

As this table indicates, the Group produced 16 fewer Major Contributors than would have been expected. This is just over 1% less than expected, so not a great difference but a difference nonetheless. Draftees from schools outside the Power 5 produced over 1% more than expected. This could be interpreted to indicate that players from the Group are a tad over-drafted. As you can see most of the differences are on the defensive side of the ball.

This table provides a summary for offense and defense.

	Group of 31	Other Power 5	All Others	Total
Offense				
Draftees	570	236	273	1079
Major Contributors Variance	+3	-6	+3	0
% Variance	+0.5%	-2.5%	+1.0%	
Contributors Variance	-4	-3	+7	0
% Variance	-0.7%	-1.3%	+2.5%	
Defense				
Draftees	591	255	300	1146
Major Contributors Variance	-19	+12	+7	0
% Variance	-3.2%	+4.7%	+2.3%	
Contributors Variance	-10	-1	+11	0
% Variance	-1.7%	0%	+3.7%	

This table shows that on offense, each category produces players roughly as expected. There are more significant differences on defense. An earlier table reflects that the biggest differences are defensive line (where the Group produced about 4% fewer Major Contributors than expected) and defensive back (where the Group produced about 3 % fewer Major Contributors than expected). Combined the two positions account for the entire amount of the Group's negative variance.

COMING UP: An analysis of the individual schools with the Group.