



Receivers on the Brink
By Patrick Kopf and Joe Bryant
6/14/00

Place: Your fantasy football draft.

Time: 10th round.

Situation: So far, so good. You stocked up on stud RBs early, grabbed a top ten WR, stole Tony Gonzalez the pick before someone else was going to take him, and grabbed a few serviceable QBs to swap in and out of your lineup as needed. Now what? Certainly it's not yet time to go after a kicker or defense. Wait a minute here...after that top ten WR on your roster there's a guy who only had a so-so season last year. What if he goes downhill this year instead of up? Or worse yet, what if WR #1 gets hurt? Then who are you left with? Hmm...maybe you should grab another WR or two just in case. But who? All the top players are gone and you're now sifting through the scraps. How are these guys going to salvage your championship should the unthinkable come to pass? If only there was a way to know who was going to breakout of nowhere and put up career numbers this year...

Aloha! That's where I come in. I know the above scenario may seem all too familiar, and I'm here to help you out. There are two important variables in determining which WRs will put up better stats than they may have the last few years. One is experience - the longer that a player is in the league the more time that he has to develop his skills and learn the ropes. The other is, you guessed it, cold hard cash. It's amazing what some people will do when there's a truckload of money on the line. NFL players are no different, when it's time for them to earn their paycheck they'll go all out to put up the numbers to tack a few more million on to next year's income. Well, how do you know when one of these two variables are right to prod a WR on to higher levels of performance? One might seem obvious (and is), the other may not.

As for the money variable - when a WR, or any other player for that matter, is in the final year of his contract he will be more apt to step it up a notch and do what is necessary to make himself a valuable commodity on the free agent market. After all, what team is going to pay top dollar for a mediocre WR?

Now we come to the tougher question. When is the time right to grab a relatively young WR that hasn't yet played up to his potential? For some reason a WR's 3rd year in the NFL seems to be the magic year that they catch on and put up better numbers. Last year this group included Albert Connell. In 1998 Eric Moulds and Keyshawn Johnson were

members of the 3rd year club. In 1997 Joey Galloway and Antonio Freeman lit it up, both 3rd year WRs. Don't ask me why this happens (because I don't know). Why it happens is not important. What is important is the fact that we can use this knowledge to our advantage. Ahhhh, now there's a pleasant thought. Having the pick that everyone else laughed at turn into a top performer before their very eyes...what could be more satisfying?

Special thanks to Ryan Early at NFL Talk www.nfltalk.com for pointing me in the right direction on the contract numbers. NFL.com provided the player experience data.

With the above criteria in mind, here are some players to take notice of for 2000.

WRs in the final year of their contract:

Isaac Bruce, StL
Eric Moulds, Buf
Albert Connell, Was
Johnnie Morton, Det
Dedric Ward, NYJ
Eddie Kennison, Chi
James Jett, Oak
Bert Emmanuel, Mia
Kevin Lockett, KC
Will Blackwell, Pit

3rd year WRs:

Brian Alford, NYG
Corey Bradford, GB
Germane Crowell, Det
Tim Dwight, Atl
Kevin Dyson, Ten
Jammi German, Atl
Jacquez Green, TB
Donald Hayes, Car
Ike Hilliard, NYG (actually his 4th year but he was injured as a rookie)
Pat Johnson, Bal
Joe Jurevicius, NYG
Kamil Loud, Atl
Randy Moss, Min (I guess someone forgot to tell him about this 3rd year thing)
Marcus Nash, Bal
Jeff Ogden, Dal
Jerome Pathon, Ind
Mikhael Ricks, SD
Marcus Robinson, Chi (see Ike Hilliard)
Bobby Shaw, Pit
Tony Simmons, NE
Alvis Whitted, Jax

Rodney Williams, Oak
Robert Wilson, NO

And combining the two, here are the 3rd year WRs who are in the final year of their contract:

Oronde Gadsden, Mia
Az-Zahir Hakim, StL
EG Green, Ind
Hines Ward, Pit

Good luck in your draft and here's hoping you find several WRs "On the Brink" this year.

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Joe Bryant is the owner of www.cheatsheets.net. More of his work can be found there along with all the information and tools you'll need to Dominate Your Draft. For comments or questions, he can be reached at bryant@cheatsheets.net

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Football, Lies, and Videotape
By Joe Bryant
5/16/00

Mark Twain once uttered the immortal words, "There are lies, damn lies, and statistics". Mr. Twain must've been a sports fan. Statistics don't always tell the entire story, but they usually get us started in the right direction. One of the interesting things about Fantasy Football is that we play and score the game based entirely on statistics, yet we often overlook the things that happen right before our very eyes.

The old salesman's adage goes, "Perception is Reality" That may sell a lot of widgets but it doesn't cut it in Fantasy Football where statistics are what counts. When Perception doesn't match Reality, someone's going to take the fall. Just ask anyone who drafted Mark Brunell the last 3 years.....

So for your perusal, I offer up some interesting facts from the 1999 season that caught my eye. Some of these numbers are impressive, some are embarrassing, but all shed some light on what might happen this season.

Knock yourself out,

Joe Bryant

Player Stats (listed alphabetically by last name):

- RB **Tiki Barber** (NYG) caught 66 passes.
- RB **Michael Basnight** (Cin) averaged 5.0 yards per carry.
- Detroit QBs **Charlie Batch** and **Gus Frerotte** finished in the top 10 in QB rating.
- RB **Mario Bates** (Ari) scored 9 touchdowns.
- RB **Donnell Bennett** (KC) scored 8 touchdowns.
- RB **Tim Biakabutuka** (Car) averaged 5.2 yards per carry.
- QB **Drew Bledsoe** (NE) was sacked 55 times, 1 shy of Tim Couch's league lead.
- WR **Marty Booker** (Chi) scored 3 touchdowns on just 19 receptions.
- TE **Luther Broughton** (Phi) scored 4 touchdowns.
- WR **Tim Brown** (Oak) has not missed a start in the last 7 seasons.
- WR Chris Calloway (Atl) caught only 22 passes for 314 yards and a TD.
- WR **Cris Carter** (Min) has not missed a start in the last 7 seasons. Cris has averaged 13 touchdowns over the last 5 seasons. He tied **Wesley Walls** with 4th quarter TDs with 4 this season.
- TE **Byron Chamberlain** (Den) managed 488 yards despite never starting.
- TE **Cameron Cleeland** (NO) managed only 325 yards and 1 touchdown.
- TE **Ben Coates** (FA) managed only 370 yards and 2 touchdowns.
- QB **Tim Couch** (Cle) may need one after getting sacked 56 times.
- RB **Corey Dillon** (Cin) was stuffed 40 times.
- TE **Rickey Dudley** (Oak) converted 39 receptions into 9 touchdowns.
- RB **Warrick Dunn** (TB) averaged just 3.2 yards per carry and was stuffed 40 times.
- WR **Tim Dwight** (Atl) made the most of his 32 catches with 669 yards and 7 TDs.
- WR **Quinn Early** (NYJ) caught just 6 passes despite playing in all 16 games.
- RB **Curtis Enis** (Chi) was stuffed 40 times.
- WR **Bert Emanuel** (TB) caught just 22 passes for 238 yards and 1 TD.
- WR **Bobby Engram** (Chi) lost 6 receptions due to penalty. He still finished 7th with 88 receptions.
- RB **Marshall Faulk** (Ind) averaged 5.5 yards per carry and had 40 runs of 10 yards or more. He also led all players with 930 yards after the catch.
- QB **Brett Favre** (GB) has not missed a start in the last 7 seasons. He led the league

with 595 pass attempts.

- QB **Jeff Garcia** (SF) averaged 5.1 yards per carry.
- RB **Charlie Garner** (SF), weighing just 187 pounds, averaged 5.1 yards per carry.
- RB **Olandis Gary** (Den) makes a pretty good backup (1159 yards and 7 TDs)
- RB **Eddie George** (Ten) has averaged 1,341 yards rushing per year since joining the league.
- QB **Elvis Grbac** (KC) managed 3,389 yards and 22 TDs.
- WR **Az-Zahir Hakim** (StL) made the most of his 36 catches with 677 yards and 8 TDs.
- PK **Jason Hanson** (Det) was perfect on field goals inside the 40 (12 for 12).
- WR **Marvin Harrison** (Ind) was the target on 193 passes (catching 115). He also led the league with 20 catches 25 yards or more.
- RB **Leroy Hoard** (FA) has scored 20 touchdowns (19 rushing) in the last two seasons.
- WR **Qadry Ismail** (Bal) finished with 1,105 yards receiving and 6 touchdowns. This following seasons in NO and Mia where he failed to catch a pass.
- RB **Edgerrin James** (Ind) led all backs with 368 carries, 41 runs over 10 yards and 48 stuffs.
- WR **Shawn Jefferson** (Atl) made the most of his 40 catches with 698 yards and 6 TDs.
- WR **James Jett** (Oak) has seen his TD total fall from 12 in 1997 to 2 last year.
- QB **Brad Johnson** (Was) led the league with 43 pass plays over 25 yards.
- WR **Kevin Johnson** (Cle) finished with 986 yards and 8 TDs.
- WR **Keyshawn Johnson** (TB) has increased his receptions and yardage in each of his 4 seasons.
- QB **Rob Johnson** (Buf) has finished the last 3 years with QB ratings over 100.
- PK **John Kasay** (Car) was perfect on field goals inside the 40 (15 for 15).
- RB **Napoleon Kaufman** (Oak) averaged 5.2 yards per carry.
- RB **Terry Kirby** (Cle) scored 9 touchdowns.
- RB **Dorsey Levens** (GB) set career highs in rushing touchdowns (9), receptions (71) and receiving yardage (573) despite playing in just 14 games. He also was a perfect 6 for 6 in TDs inside the 3.
- PK **Olindo Mare** (Mia) was perfect on field goals inside the 40 (27 for 27). He led all kickers with 39 FGs.
- RB **Curtis Martin** (NYJ) gained 1,464 yards rushing, but managed only 5 TDs. He also carried the ball 367 times (2nd behind Edgerrin James) and was stuffed 41 times.
- WR **Derrick Mayes** (Sea) set career highs in receptions (62), yards (829) and touchdowns (10).
- WR **Ed McCaffrey** (Den) has averaged 8 TDs over the last 4 seasons.
- QB **Steve McNair** (Ten) rushed for 8 TDs despite playing in just 11 games. He was a perfect 5 for 5 in TD rushes inside the three.
- QB **Cade McNown** (Chi) averaged 5.0 yards per carry rushing.
- WR **Herman Moore** (Det) managed only 16 receptions and 197 yards (and 2 TDs) last season.
- WR **Rob Moore** (Ari) has seen his receptions dwindle from 97 (in 1997) to 37 last season.

- WR **Johnnie Morton** (Det) quietly pulled down 80 catches for 1,129 yards and 5 TDs.
- WR **Randy Moss** (Min) had 19 catches 25 yards or more.
- RB **Adrian Murrell** (Ari) averaged only 2.9 yards per carry and failed to score a TD.
- WR **Terrell Owens** (SF) managed only 754 yards receiving and 4 TDs.
- PK **Doug Pelfrey** (Cin) has seen his FG accuracy slide the last four seasons. He finished 1999 by hitting only 66.7% of his attempts.
- RB **Michael Pittman** (Ari) averaged 4.5 yards per carry.
- QB **Jake Plummer** (Ari) finished with 9 TDs against 24 interceptions for a QB rating of 50.8.
- WR **Jerry Rice** (SF) still led his team in receptions (67), receiving yards (830) and receiving TDs (5).
- PK **Wade Richey** (SF) led the league in accuracy by connecting on 21 of 23 attempts.
- WR **Andre Rison** (KC) managed only 218 yards and did not score.
- TE **Michael Roan** (Ten) caught 3 TDs on just 9 receptions.
- WR **Marcus Robinson** (Chi) had 18 catches of 25 yards or more.
- TE **OJ Santiago** (Atl) managed only 174 yards and did not score.
- WR **Bill Schroeder** (GB) quietly ended the year with 1,051 yards and 5 TDs.
- WR **Darnay Scott** (Cin) set career highs in receptions and yardage while scoring 7 TDs.
- TE **Shannon Sharpe** (Bal) managed just 222 yards and did not score.
- TE **David Sloan** (Det) set career highs in receptions (47), yards (591) and TDs (4)
- RB **Antowain Smith** (Buf) managed only 3.7 yards per carry and finished with 614 yards.
- RB **Emmitt Smith** (Dal) has missed just 5 games in his 10 year career. He has averaged over 1,500 combined yards and 14 TDs the last two seasons.
- WR **Jimmy Smith** (Jac) managed to score only 6 TDs despite catching 116 passes for 1,636 yards. He led all receivers with 86 catches for 1st downs.
- RB **Robert Smith** (Min) rushed for 1,015 yards in 13 games, but only scored 2 TDs.
- WR **Rod Smith** (Den) has seen his TDs slide from 12 (in 1997) to 4 last season.
- RB **Duce Staley** (Phi) still managed 1,273 yards rushing on a team that was always behind.
- RB **James Stewart** (Det) scored 13 rushing TDs despite starting just 7 games.
- QB **Kordell Stewart** (Pit) has seen his passing TDs slide from 21 (in 1997) to just 6 last season.
- RB **Fred Taylor** (Jac) has 23 career touchdowns in 25 games played (21 starts).
- WR **Yancey Thigpen's** (Ten) 1998 and 1999 seasons combined are still worse than his 79 reception, 1398 yards and 7 TD effort with Pittsburgh in 1997.
- RB **Thurman Thomas** (Mia) managed only 152 yards rushing and did not score.
- WR **Amani Toomer** (NYG) quietly finished the year with 1,183 yards and 6 TDs.
- TE **Wesley Walls** (Car) finished the year with 822 yards and 12 TDs at age 33.
- RB **Ricky Watters** (Sea) still combined for nearly 1600 yards (1,210 rush; 387 receiving).
- RB **Tyrone Wheatley** (Oak) scored 11 TDs which is 1 more than his 4 seasons in New York.

- RB **Ricky Williams** (NO) got stuffed 43 times (2nd to Edgerrin James)
- TE **Roland Williams** (StL) made the most of his 25 receptions by scoring 6 TDs.

Offensive Team Stats:

- San Francisco led the league with 2,095 rushing yards and a 5.0 yard per carry average.
- Four teams managed less than 1,250 yards rushing: Cle (1,150), Atl (1,196), Ari (1,207) and Det (1,245)
- Cincinnati led all teams with 2,020 kickoff return yards
- Baltimore Ravens only fumbled 4 times rushing the ball.
- Washington led all teams with 23 rushing TDs.
- 11 teams ended the season with single digit rushing TDs: Atl (9), Bal (9), Chi (4), Cle (9), Det (8), Mia (8), NE (9), NO (9), NYJ (7), Phi (5), Sea (5), TB (7).
- St. Louis led the league with a 25.1 KO return average.
- St. Louis' 66 touchdowns were twice as many as the following 14 teams: Ari (27), Chi (31), Cin (33), Cle (28), Den (32), Mia (30), NE (32), NO (27), NYG (32), NYJ (33), Phi (29), SD (25), SF (33), TB (27).
- Chicago Bears led the league with 684 pass attempts and 404 completion.
- St. Louis led the league in most passing categories including: pct (64.7), yards (4,580), yds/att (8.64), TDs (42), rating (106.6).
- Indianapolis allowed a league low 14 sacks.
- Five teams allowed over 50 sacks: Det (64), Cle (60), Bal (56), NE (56), Car (51)
- Kansas City led the league with 706 punt return yards.
- Philadelphia managed only 2,405 yards passing (5.07 per attempt), both league lows.
- 3 Teams attempted 8 or more long FGs (50+ yards): Den (5 of 8), Det (4 of 8), Was (3 of 9).

Defensive Team Stats:

- St. Louis was stingy against the run allowing only 1189 yards and 4 rushing TDs. Other defenses that allowed a rushing TD every two games or less were: Bal (6), Dal (6), Jac (6), Mia (6), NE (6), SD (8), TB (8) and Ten (8).
- Cleveland and Cincinnati were running backs dream come true as they allowed 29 and 22 rushing TDs respectively.
- Philadelphia caused runners to fumble 18 times. KC (17) and Ten (17) were not far behind.
- Buffalo was the only team to allow less than 3,000 yards passing (2,889 yards allowed).
- 6 Teams allowed 4,000 or more passing yards: SF (4,295), Min (4,252), Det (4,100), Chi (4,079), Cin (4,027), Ten (4,000).
- Tampa Bay allowed only 11 passing TDs. Buffalo was nearly as good allowing just 12. San Francisco wasn't close as they allowed 36 scores through the air.
- 5 teams managed to snatch 25 or more interceptions led by: Sea (30), StL (29), Phi (28), GB (26) and KC.
- Cleveland was the only team to end the season with single digit interceptions (8).

Players that improved their stats in the last 8 games:

- QB **Steve Beuerlein** (Car): 2,339 passing yards, 23 TD, 5 INT, 106.3 rating
- QB **Jeff Blake** (Cin): 1,848 passing yards, 11 TDs, 193 rushing yards, 2 TDs
- PK **John Carney** (SD): 20 field goals, 10 extra points, 70 points
- WR **Cris Carter** (Min): 44 receptions, 640 yards, 8 TDs
- WR **Darrin Chiaverini** (Cle): 36 receptions, 409 yards, 4 TDs
- WR **Wayne Chrebet** (NYJ): 39 receptions, 512 yards, 3 TDs
- WR **Tim Dwight** (Atl): 23 receptions, 463 yards and 4 TDs
- TE **Rickey Dudley** (Oak): 26 receptions, 370 yards, 7 TDs
- WR **Bobby Engram** (Chi): 52 receptions, 581 yards and 4 TDs
- RB **Marshall Faulk** (StL): 774 rushing yards (5.6 ypc), 5 TDs, 583 receiving yards, 3 TDs.
- QB **Rich Gannon** (Oak): 1,965 passing yards, 16TDs, 1 rush TD
- QB **Jeff Garcia** (SF): 1,530 passing yards, 8 TDs, 115 rushing yards, 1 TD in 6 games
- RB **Olandis Gary** (Den): 802 rushing yards (4.4 ypc), 6 TDs
- RB **Eddie George** (Ten): 739 rushing yards (4.5 ypc), 7 TDs, 187 receiving yards
- QB **Jeff George** (Min): 2,134 passing yards, 16 TDs
- TE **Tony Gonzalez** (KC): 49 receptions, 547 yards and 7 TDs
- WR **Jeff Graham** (SD): 38 receptions, 707 yards and 1 TD
- WR **Torry Holt** (StL): 30 receptions, 470 yards, 4 TDs
- RB **Richard Huntley** (Pit): 7.0 ypc and 3 TDs on just 46 carries
- WR **Qadry Ismail** (Bal): 39 receptions, 723 yards, 4 TDs
- RB **Edgerrin James** (Ind): 807 rushing yards (4.7 ypc), 8 TDs, 291 receiving yards, 3 TDs
- WR **Patrick Jeffers** (Car): 44 receptions, 825 yards, 9 TDs
- WR **Pat Johnson** (Bal): 23 receptions, 407 yards and 2 TDs
- RB **Dorsey Levens** (GB): 7 TDs in 6 games
- QB **Ray Lucas** (NYJ): 1,561 passing yards, 13 TDs, 5 INT, 87.8 rating
- QB **Jim Miller** (Chi): 4 games, 1,125 passing yards, 7 TDs, 5 INT, 89.4 rating
- WR **Randy Moss** (Min): 45 receptions, 860 yards, 7 TDs
- WR **Carl Pickens** (Cin): 29 receptions, 449 yards, 4 TDs
- WR **Jerry Rice** (SF): 35 receptions, 534 yards, 3 TDs
- WR **Marcus Robinson** (Chi): 48 receptions, 810 yards, 5 TDs
- WR **Darnay Scott** (Cin): 26 receptions, 534 yards, 6 TDs
- WR **Torrance Small** (Phi): 32 receptions, 401 yards, 3 TDs
- WR **Jimmy Smith** (Jac): 67 receptions, 986 yards, 3 TDs
- PK **Matt Stover** (Bal): 16/16 field goals, 20/20 extra points, 68 points
- WR **Amani Toomer** (NYG): 41 receptions, 688 yards, 5 TDs
- PK **Mike Vanderjagt** (Ind): 18/18 field goals, 20/20 extra points, 74 points

Players that tanked their stats in the last 8 games:

- RB **Tim Biakabutuka** (Car): 259 rushing yards (3.5 ypc), 1 TD
- QB **Drew Bledsoe** (NE): 6 passing TDs, 17 INT, 52.9 rating
- QB **Elvis Grbac** (KC): 11 TDs, 12 INT, 68.7 rating

- QB **Billy Joe Hobert** (NO): 358 passing yards, 0 TD, 3 INT, 48.8 rating
- QB **Brad Johnson** (Was): 9 TDs, 10 INT, 78.9 rating
- RB **Errict Rhett** (Bal): 194 rushing yards (2.3 ypc), 1 TD
- RB **Emmitt Smith** (Dal): 1 rushing TD

Joe Bryant is the owner of www.cheatsheets.net. More of his work can be found there along with all the information and tools you'll need to Dominate Your Draft. For comments or questions, he can be reached at bryant@fanexfootball.com.

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