

Division 3 Prologue:

This Division is fascinating to me as it features 3 teams that can be defined on a yearly basis as the haves and the have-nots. Nick, Fern and Ray have all swung wildly on the winning and losing side in recent years, while the Gemmas have remained relatively steady. A strong showing for Ray or Fern would move either in the discussion of perennial powerhouse while a good year for Nick, would turn back the clock for the league's most unsuccessful team over the last 3-years. As for the Gemmas, It sort of feels like this year will be a make or break spot as they've landed in the middle far too long.

Team Fern:

2024 Record: 10-4

Last 2 years: 15-13

Where we last left off: The learning curve wasn't all that steep for Fern as he busted out in his second year in the league. He finished with a 10-4 record and if not for an ill-timed concussion to Jalen Hurts, He may have won the entire league. After a little bad luck, the question is which Fern will see in 2025? Will it be the 2023 version, or the 2024 version?

QB: Hurts, Lawrence, Dart

Apparently, there are no hard feelings between Fern and Jalen Hurts as he's gone back to the well once, again and why not? Despite a year where he threw for less than 3,000 yards, he still finished as QB8. Trevor Lawrence makes for an intriguing upside play as the team has given him yet another 1st round WR, or did they? His success likely will hinge on how the team uses Hunter, but as a QB2, he should return value. Even if Dart overperforms, he'll likely only start for this team on bye weeks and with Lawrence and Hurts off back to back weeks (8,9), he'll have to get on the field early to justify his spot on the roster. Solid group, overall, but I have to penalize a half letter grade as Dart doesn't have a defined role as of now.

Overall Grade: B

RB: Jeanty, Henderson, B. Allen, B. Robinson, Tyler Allgeier, Tyjae Spears

Intriguing group as Ferna may have his hands on the two best rookie RBs in the league. Despite my love for both players I have to be fair. Jeanty plays for a terrible team (game script), and in a division with 3 solid run defenses he'll face 6 times. Still, he's a better receiver than people realize so he's got a solid base with RB1 (overall) upside. I like Henderson, but I am not sure I like him with this team. I would have like to have seen better depth behind him as I think he'll start slow before growing into a more prominent role as the season progresses. I think Bralon Allen has independent value that could make him a serviceable RB3, but I may be stretching that do to my love of the Jets run game. Ferna completes the cycle of drafting other people's handcuffs with Robinson, Allgeier, and Tyjae Spears. I understand what he's trying to accomplish here, but quite frankly I hate it. All 3 and (maybe even Allen) require an injury to become relevant which means Ferna went to the Daft Punk school of drafting RBs as he's clearly trying to get lucky.

Overall Grade: B

WR: Smith-Njigba, Egbuka, Pearsall, Shakir, Bateman

Once again, I get what Ferna was trying to do here, but I kind of look at it like I do The Office after Steve Carrell left: There's a bunch of people I'm looking at that I know and kind of like, but are all getting a lot more screen time than they deserve. For those that read a stat sheet, I get the love for JSN, but he's no longer playing in the slot and there are a lot of questions about whether or not he can win on the outside. Egbuka, and Pearsall have stepped into prominent roles with high volume passers, but there is no evidence that either will be to shoulder the load they're going to be asked to. I actually like Shakir as a stabilizing peace when something inevitably goes wrong at the top, but Bateman excites me about as much as Topless photos of Ariana Grande 5 minutes after she wrapped filming for the movie Wicked. Again, I have no idea why one thing made me think of the other, but I'd be lying if I didn't say that I am now officially concerned.

Overall Grade: C+

TE: Brock Bowers, Tucker Kraft

Honestly, I'd probably platoon Bowers and Kraft based on their matchups. Does that sound stupid? Please stop drafting two TEs.

Overall Grade: A

Kicker/Defense

Overall Grade: B

How he'll fare: I love you buddy, but you didn't do it this time. The division is too tough and I don't think you have enough at RB/WR to compete. Despite my bearish take, if you're looking for light at the end of the tunnel, there is plenty that could go right and debunk everything I am saying. Obviously that starts with Brock Bowers. If he winds up in a tier of his own it will mask a lot of warts. Your young WRs could live up to the hype turning the group from sus, to solid. The real key to your team will be at QB. Lawrence has a chance to return a greater value at the position than just about everyone and as long as the Eagle continues to do the "Tush Push" Hurts could be a Top 3 QB: For me it's far too many ifs.

Overall Grade: B-

(P.S. Congratulations. This will be the first and last time you ever hear me say or write "Tush Push." I hate the name almost as much as I hate the play. It's boring and will eventually get someone hurt and as for the name... It sounds like it should be used as a passcode to get by a bouncer at a gay speakeasy).

Division 3 Epilogue:

I usually have a solid read on what division is the strongest, but this year it's an easy call. I see two Top 3 teams, here and a third that could compete if things break right. I could flip a coin between Gemma and Nick, but I'll lean Nick, as I think his team is a plus in 3 of the 4 position groups which is almost unheard of. I see it as a dog fight between Gemmas and him with Ferna landing somewhere just below the middle of the league due to a tough schedule. Unfortunately for Ray, I think it will be a tough task to stay out of the basement, but as I have been so eloquently reminded over the years.... What do I know?

1. Nick (Division Winner, 1-seed)
2. Gemma (Wildcard)
3. Ferna (Miss Playoffs)

4. Ray (Miss Playoffs)