

It's Draft Season. Will Detroit make a move?

So I decided to make a small post regarding trade ups and trade downs in the draft. You see, normally this seems fairly easy to comprehend and it's not like trading up and down has randomly changed overnight. However, I think it's time to settle back down and get realistic: I seriously doubt there will be any trading up or trading down in this year's draft by our Detroit Lions.

Why, you may ask? That's what I'm going to explain. These are the three main reasons why the Lions won't be trading from any of their spots, at least in the first round. Obviously, these are just my opinions, as nothing can be completely predicted in the draft. That's why I'm specifically targeting rounds 1-3. Let's get started.

Trading down: Majority of 'Top' prospects are EDGE players

I'm sure the first argument I'll hear is regarding Kayvon and Hutch. They're considered the top prospects of this year's class, and for decent reason. Honestly though, if I'm the Jaguars and an honest fan of them, I'm pushing hard for Evan Neal. Let's go through the two mock scenarios to start.

The Lions won't be trading up to one. That seems obvious enough. Whether or not they go down to 2 is completely up in the air. Firstly, let's say that Neal does go 1 like I predict he will in April. It also seems fair to say that there may not be a winner between the Kayvon voters and the Hutchinson voters. I'd say both have their pros and cons. However, as we're sticking to this mock, again, Jacksonville protects their future in T-law. That leaves two defensive ends for the Lions to pick from or a wild card pick such as Kyle Hamilton.

Why is this against a trade down you may ask?

Because, if many teams see the current situation as it is, that's bad news for any trade down hopes. If Kayvon and Hutch remain at a arguable stalemate, there's less reason for someone to jump the gun and jump up for the Lions pick. Instead, they can make a deal with the Houston Texans, who've already come out and confirmed they're open to trading the number three selection in the draft.

Let's say that the Jags take either Kayvon or Hutch. The argument could be that you can trade up to get the remaining edge player. The issue lies in the rest of the edge players; there's a lot of them in this class. According to tankathon, in the top eleven players alone, four are defensive ends. In the top 64 players, a staggering *twelve* are edge threats. For a team that's desperate for edge help, why trade up when it's not clear-cut anyway when you can receive a player with a possibility for similar upside?

Obviously, things will change as the draft nears closer. But for now, I don't think trading at two is likely whatsoever.

Trading down: The Lions past trading history speaks volumes

Trading up isn't all that common for the Lions in the first round for the Detroit Lions. It's not as rare as trading down though. Over the course of the past twenty-five years, Detroit has traded *up* in (or around) the first round only four times. Can you name them?

I'll give you a second to think.

Reggie Brown in 1996, Kevin Jones in 2004, Brandon Pettigrew in 2009, and Jahvid Best in 2010. You're reading that correct; Since that point over a decade ago, there's been nothing. As for trading up in the draft, there's *one* instance of the Lions trading *down* in the draft. Just *one*. That would be in 2015, from 23 to 28, when they selected Laken Tomlinson. So in a 25-year span, there were five trades. You may argue that it's high-time we made some moves, especially since we got the capital, right?

Wrong.

What's the one thing all those players have in common? They either played well at first and fizzled out, never played well in the first place, or left the team for other reasons. Am I saying everyone who is acquired through a trade-up or trade-down isn't worth it? Of course not. But what I am saying is that in a class that seems far weaker than we're used to seeing, it's best for the Lions to hold true and dig into their picks. The Lions brass nailed most of their picks last season. Three out of their first five seem to be long-term starters (Sewell, McNeil, St. Brown), and one of the others has some real upside if he can unlock it (Melifonwu).

If I'm Detroit, I'm very hesitant to move down and acquire picks in a draft that'll still get weaker as time goes on. If we're talking next season, while it's usually frowned upon, I'm all ears.

Trading up: With so many holes and QB being the most crucial for a trade up, it's highly unlikely.

Coming soon, I'll be uploading a post regarding the Lions biggest needs. Spoiler alert; there's a lot of them. While the foundation for a successful franchise appears to be laid out in the form of a ra-ra head coach, underrated general manager and a culture change, the talent in the locker room must be improved.

The Lions, while controlling four first round picks over the course of the next two years, are in desperate need of a mass variety of positions. They're still eating horrible contracts from both the Rams in Jared Goff and the Quinnticia era. Ergo, many players may find their way out in the coming seasons, and if the Lions opt to use picks to trade back into the first round, it costs them chances to find more players like Amon-Ra St. Brown, who was one of the brightest spots on a team that hasn't had a lot of hope prior to this season.

In addition, the Lions will certainly have almost back-to-back picks over the course of days one and two of this draft. Remember, with the Rams pick ranging anywhere from 26-32 and their own pick at 33, I would be stunned if Holmes and company jump the gun to triple down in the first round when all they need is Jacksonville to make one selection.

In addition, if quarterback is what you're jumping the gun for, it makes no sense. This quarterback class is one of the weakest we've seen in some years, which comes at a horrible time for the Lions faithful. Almost every quarterback prospect has a serious issue that teams must address if they select them.

Going off Tankathon, here's an issue with every quarterback in the class:

Kenny Pickett, Pitt: He'll be twenty four by the time he plays a preseason game. Anyone remember good 'ol Brandon Weeden? Prior to this season, Pickett was a long-shot to even be drafted in the league. In his Junior year, Pickett threw 13 touchdowns and nine interceptions. In his senior season, Pickett threw 13 touchdowns and nine interceptions. Yes, it was three games fewer than his junior year, but therefore he also threw more interceptions in this timeframe. Pickett is projected to be early-mid first round, which likely pushes him out of the Lions grasp regardless.

Matt Corral, Ole Miss: He was likely the first quarterback to be selected prior to a handful of things: One, faltering hard in some seriously important games. Two, realizing he managed to throw nine fewer touchdowns despite playing in three more games. He did show some improvement with his legs between those seasons however. And yes, he'll be 23 when he plays a snap in the league. Corral is projected to be a mid-first round selection.

Malik Willis, Liberty: An odd prospect, one that likely has the highest ceiling and the lowest floor. He's someone who has to take time before he's ready to go, which fits the bill with Goff and the Lions. In addition to this, the Lions also will have a chance to coach him in the Senior Bowl. He's great on the ground and through the air, with a monster arm to boot. The issue? Despite him being raw at 22 years of age, he's supposedly got a problem with going through progressions... Jared Goff 101 right there. Willis' draft projection has him as a fringe-first round pick, but more mocks have the Liberty product going day two than day one.

Sam Howell, UNC: One of the first things I saw when I was reading a comp to Sam Howell was Baker Mayfield. Uh... no thank you? As Howell's talent left him over the course of his freshman and sophomore years, his stats gradually got more and more lackluster. He went from a Heisman favorite to forgotten almost overnight after a putrid showing against the Virginia Tech Hokies. His regression was enough for Tankathon to project him going to Washington at 42nd overall. If I'm Detroit, this is a trap pick that I avoid with everything I've got.

Desmond Ridder, Cincinnati: Another quarterback with ups and downs. For this player, it's a tough call to make, as Ridder showed signs of greatness, but at others looked utterly exposed. According to multiple scouting reports, he's a quarterback that pre-determines where he will throw the ball. For the time being, I consider him on a similar tier as Mayfield. He doesn't have a titanic upside like Willis does, but shows serious football intelligence, and that does count for something. Like Howell, he's a second-round projection.

Carson Strong, Nevada: The biggest concern here? Knee injuries. *Consistent* knee injuries. That alone should sink his draft stock. At least from what the stats tell, Strong isn't a mobile

quarterback, and his knees may speak volumes as to why that is. His passing stats aren't bad, but the injuries loom large. Surprisingly, Tankathon had strong projected mid-second round to the Pittsburgh Steelers.

Obviously, some other quarterbacks possess a ceiling worthy of risk. Bailey Zappe of Western Kentucky may be a name to watch, as the Lions will be coaching him in the Senior Bowl.

With as many holes as the Lions have, I think it's absurdly unlikely we see a trade up based on where the Lions are currently drafting and how the board seems to be set up at the moment. Again, this may change at any point, but as for now, I don't think the trading card will be played at all.

What do you think? Which quarterback would you want the Lions to pick if given the opportunity? Let me know!