

Guide to the Fantasy Football Markets

Draft markets, historical outcomes, player opportunity, risk and model intelligence.

MARKET DASHBOARD

PLAYERS WITH MARKET DATA

552

2026 consensus board

RANKING SOURCES

6

ESPN, Sleeper, CBS, NFL, RTSports, Fantrax

HISTORICAL ADP COVERAGE

2016-2025

FantasyPros PPR consensus

DRAFTED PLAYER-SEASONS

5,638

ADP joined to outcome

MAJOR MODEL VALUES

7

24+ spots above market, top 150

MAJOR MODEL FADES

24

24+ spots below market, top 150

TOP-12 HIT RATE, PICKS 1-12

62%

highest-priced tier

TIGHTEST MARKET

RB

median source SD 9.6, top 150

WIDEST MARKET

QB

median source SD 18.4, top 150

WHAT THE 2026 MARKET IS PRICING

Early-round safety is overstated.

Only 61.7% of players drafted inside the first 12 picks finished top 12 at their position, and 18.3% became severe busts.

Draft position remains informative, but its precision deteriorates steadily.

Median positional error rises from 5 places inside the first 12 picks to 16 by picks 151-180, and the deterioration survives normalising for how deep each position is drafted.

Availability separates the tiers more sharply than price does.

Top-20 picks who played 14+ games finished top 12 at their position 76% of the time and busted 5%; those missing four or more games hit 17% and busted 65%.

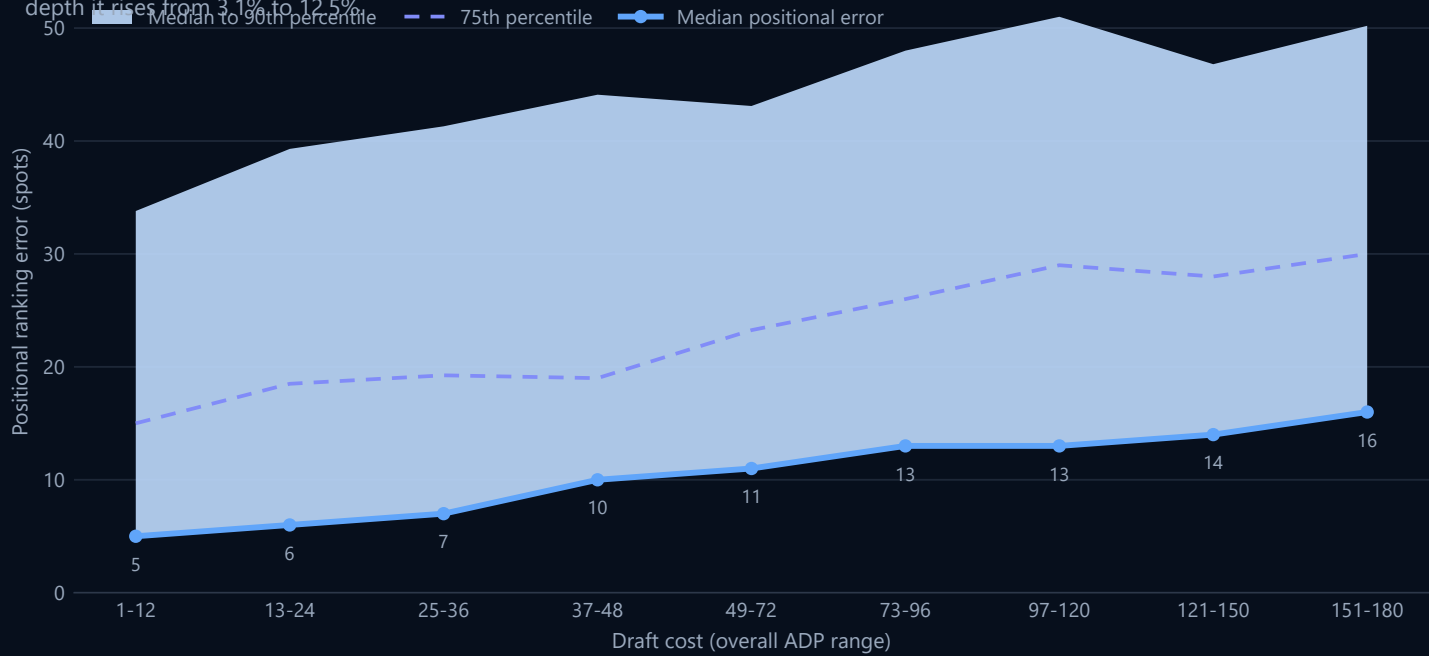
The model sees considerably more overpricing than underpricing.

Inside the market's top 150 the pure model identifies 24 major fades against 7 major values; the published board deliberately moderates those disagreements toward the market.

Source: Auto Draft Years. FantasyPros PPR consensus ADP 2016-2025; end-of-season PPR scoring. Historical sample: 5,638 drafted player-seasons, 2016-2025.

Draft precision deteriorates even after adjusting for positional depth

Median absolute positional error rises from five spots at picks 1-12 to 16 at picks 151-180; normalised for positional depth it rises from 3.1% to 12.5%



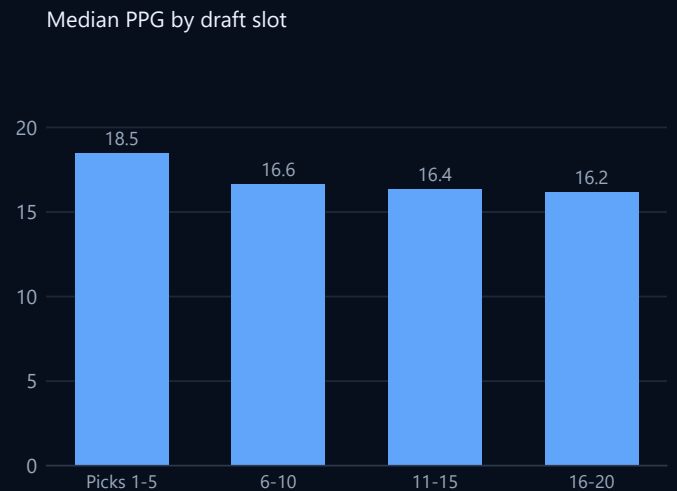
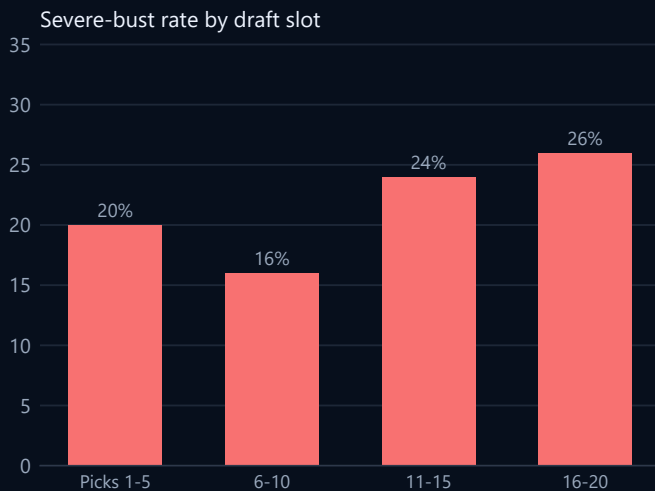
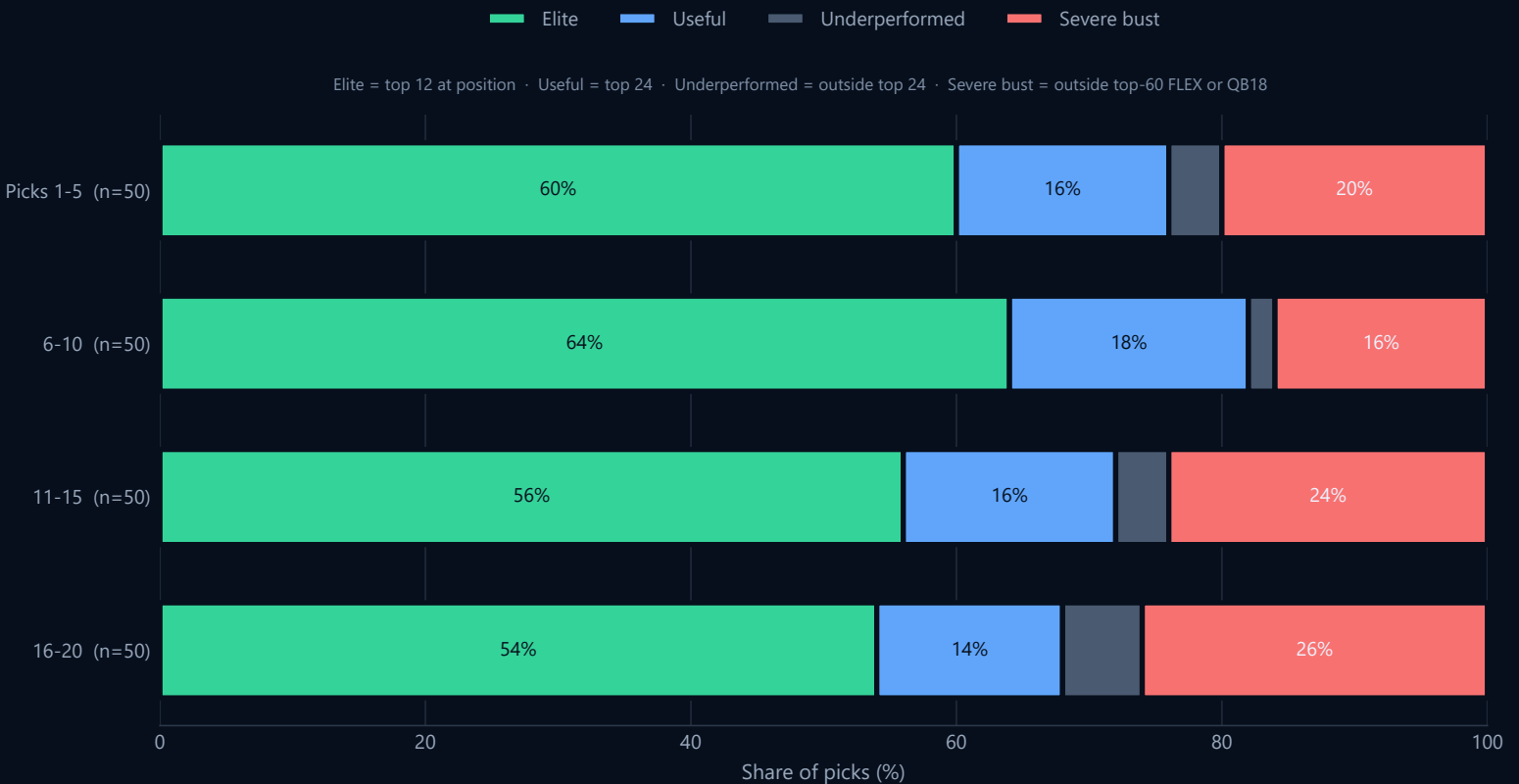
Outcome Rates and Error by Draft Cost							
Picks	n	Positional error	Normalised error	Overall error	Top-12 at pos	Outside top-60 FLEX / QB18	Median PPG
1-12	120	5	3.1%	28	61.7%	18.3%	17.8
13-24	120	6	4.5%	22	55.0%	25.8%	16.1
25-36	120	7	4.7%	28	39.2%	33.3%	14.6
37-48	120	10	6.0%	29	29.2%	39.2%	13.8
49-72	240	11	7.8%	45	27.5%	52.9%	12.2
73-96	235	13	9.2%	50	18.7%	68.1%	11.0
97-120	203	13	9.3%	58	21.2%	69.5%	10.2
121-150	224	14	11.1%	59	12.9%	75.9%	9.5
151-180	220	16	12.5%	67	11.4%	79.5%	8.3

A first-round pick misses its positional finish by a median of 5 places; a twelfth-round pick misses by 16. Normalising for how deep each position is drafted gives the same picture (3.1% to 12.5% of the positional field), so this is genuine loss of precision rather than deeper positions being harder to rank. ADP stays directionally useful late, but increasingly describes a range of outcomes rather than a precise ordering.

Source: Auto Draft Years. FantasyPros PPR consensus ADP 2016-2025; end-of-season PPR scoring. n = 1,602 drafted player-seasons inside the top 180. Positional error is the primary metric; overall-rank error is shown for comparison.

One in five top-20 picks still produces a severe miss

Every pick inside the top 20 from 2016-2025, classified into four mutually exclusive season outcomes and split by draft slot.

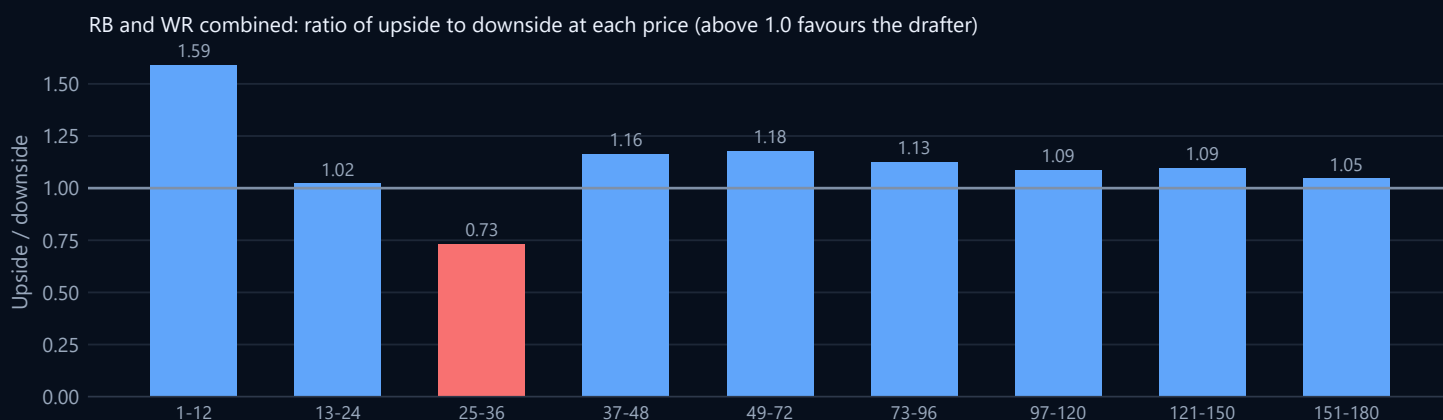
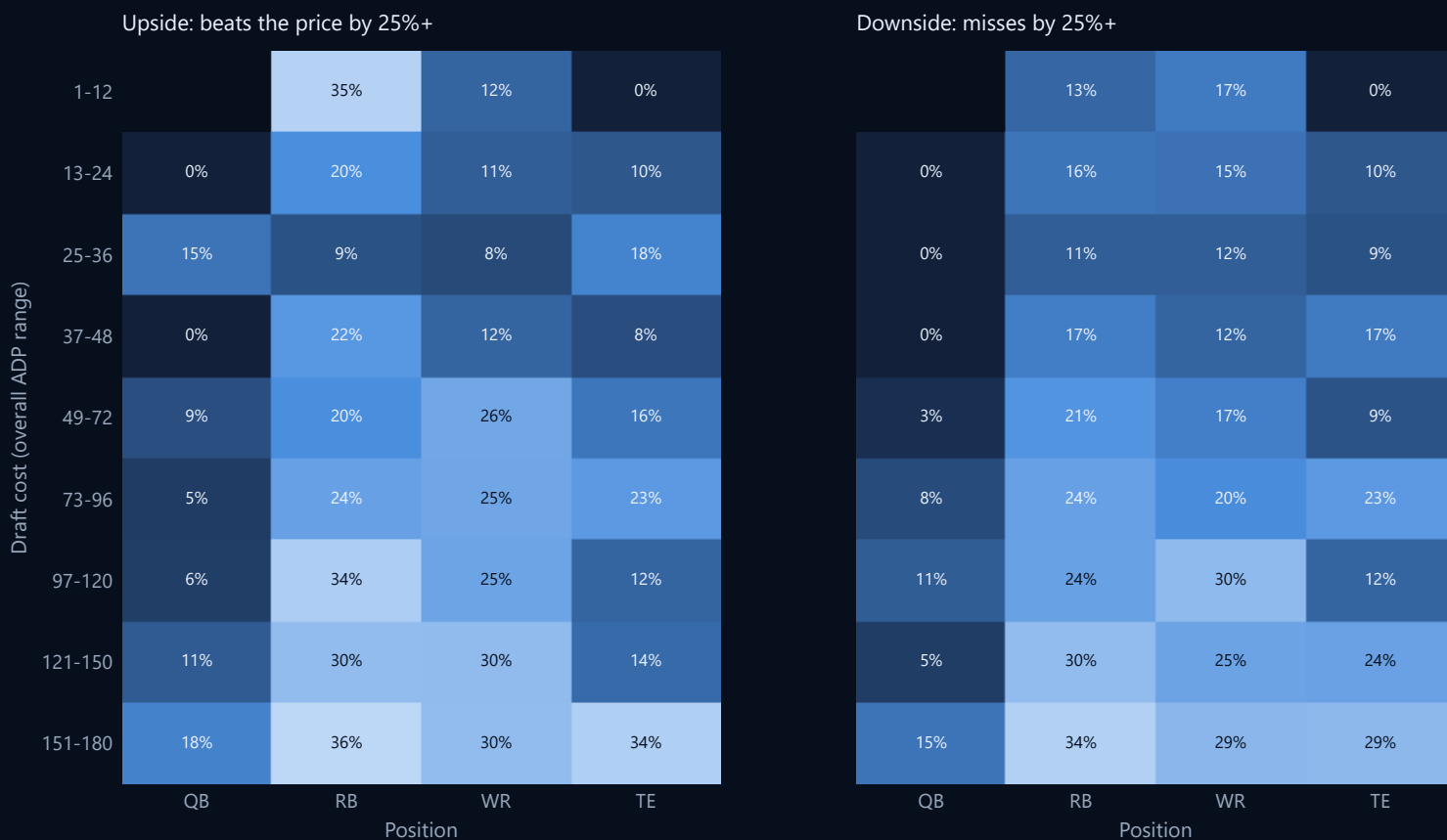


22% of top-20 selections finished as severe busts, and the rate rises rather than falls moving from the first five picks toward the back of the round. The elite price buys a better median and a higher ceiling; it does not buy safety.

Source: Auto Draft Years. FantasyPros PPR consensus ADP 2016-2025; end-of-season PPR scoring. Severe bust: RB/WR/TE outside the top 60 FLEX scorers, or QB outside the top 18 at the position.

Cheap picks widen both tails, not just the upside

Share of picks delivering at least 25% more, and at least 25% less, points per game than history delivers at that price and position.

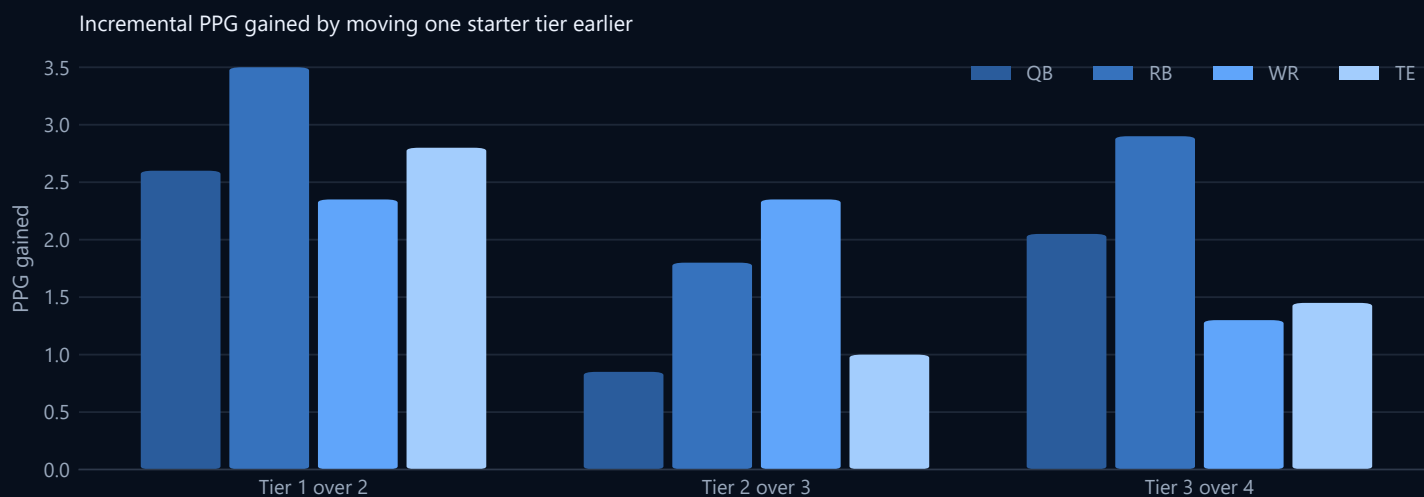
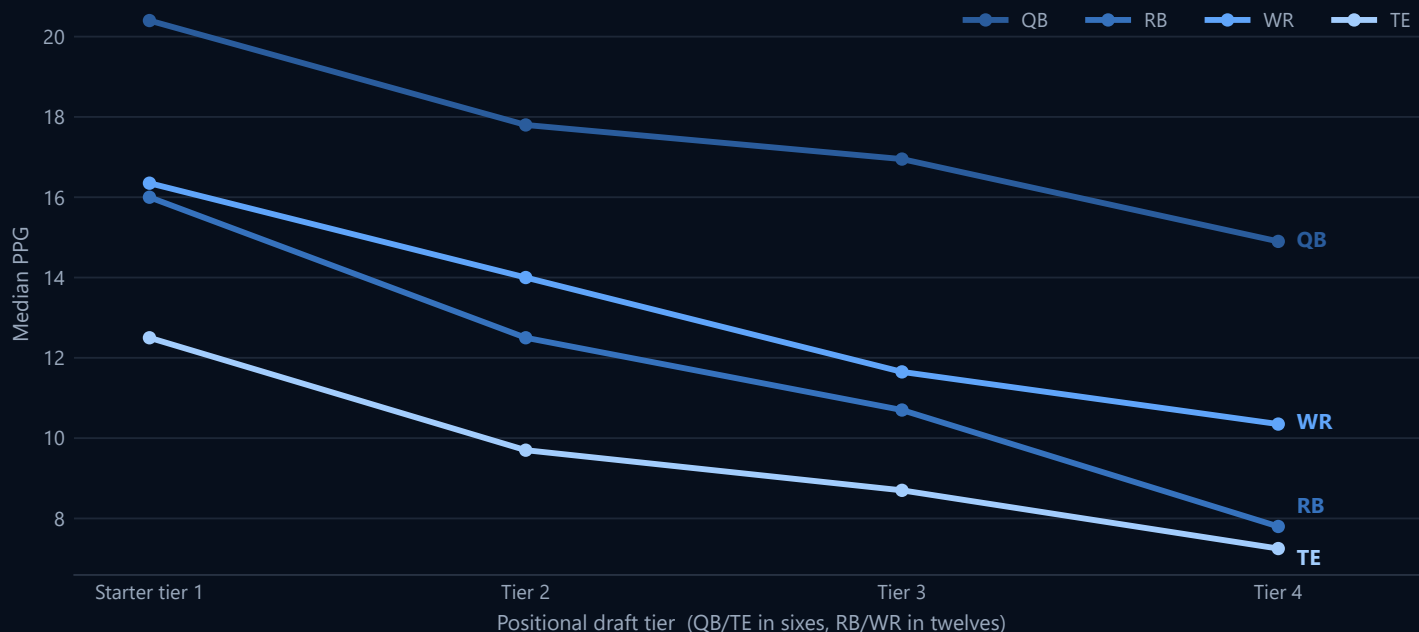


Measured against what each price normally returns, the cheapest picks are not simply upside: late running backs beat their price 36% of the time and miss it 34%, an almost even split. The best ratio on the board sits at the very top, where early backs beat their price 35% of the time against 13% misses. Draft cost buys a narrower distribution, not a higher one.

Source: Auto Draft Years. FantasyPros PPR consensus ADP 2016-2025; end-of-season PPR scoring. Outperformance is measured in PPG against the median outcome for that position and price bucket, because rank-based measures are bounded at the top and make expensive picks look incapable of upside. Players with no recorded season count as downside.

Across the startable range, running back prices fall the fastest

Median points per game by positional draft tier, sized to what a 12-team lineup actually starts: one QB, two RB, three WR and one TE.

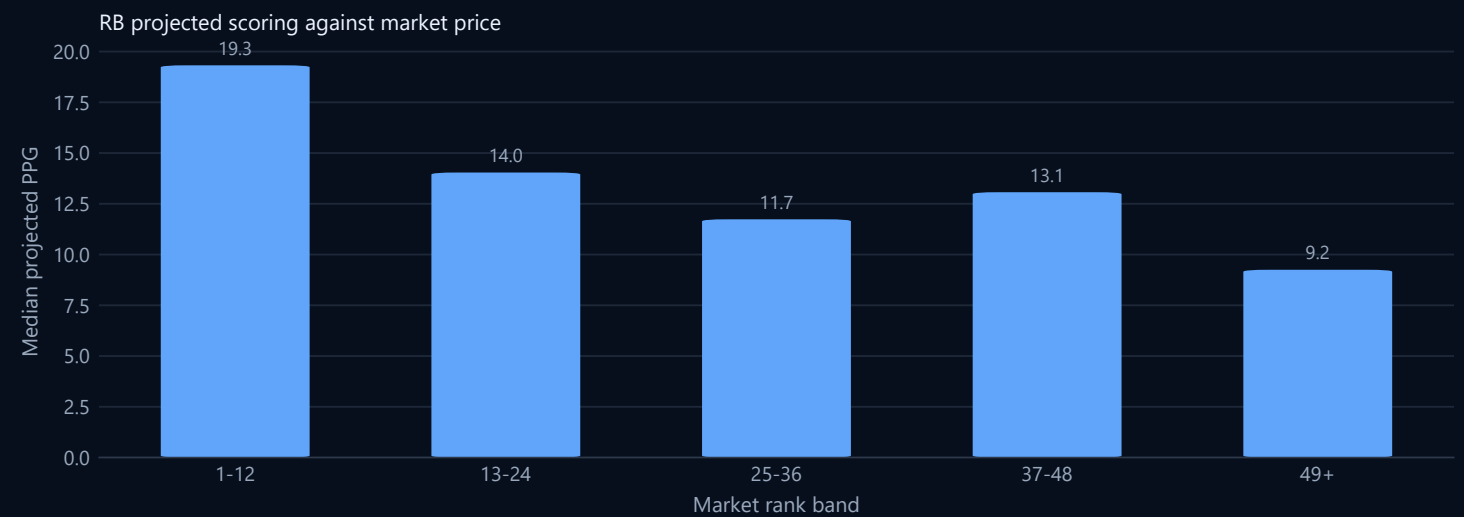
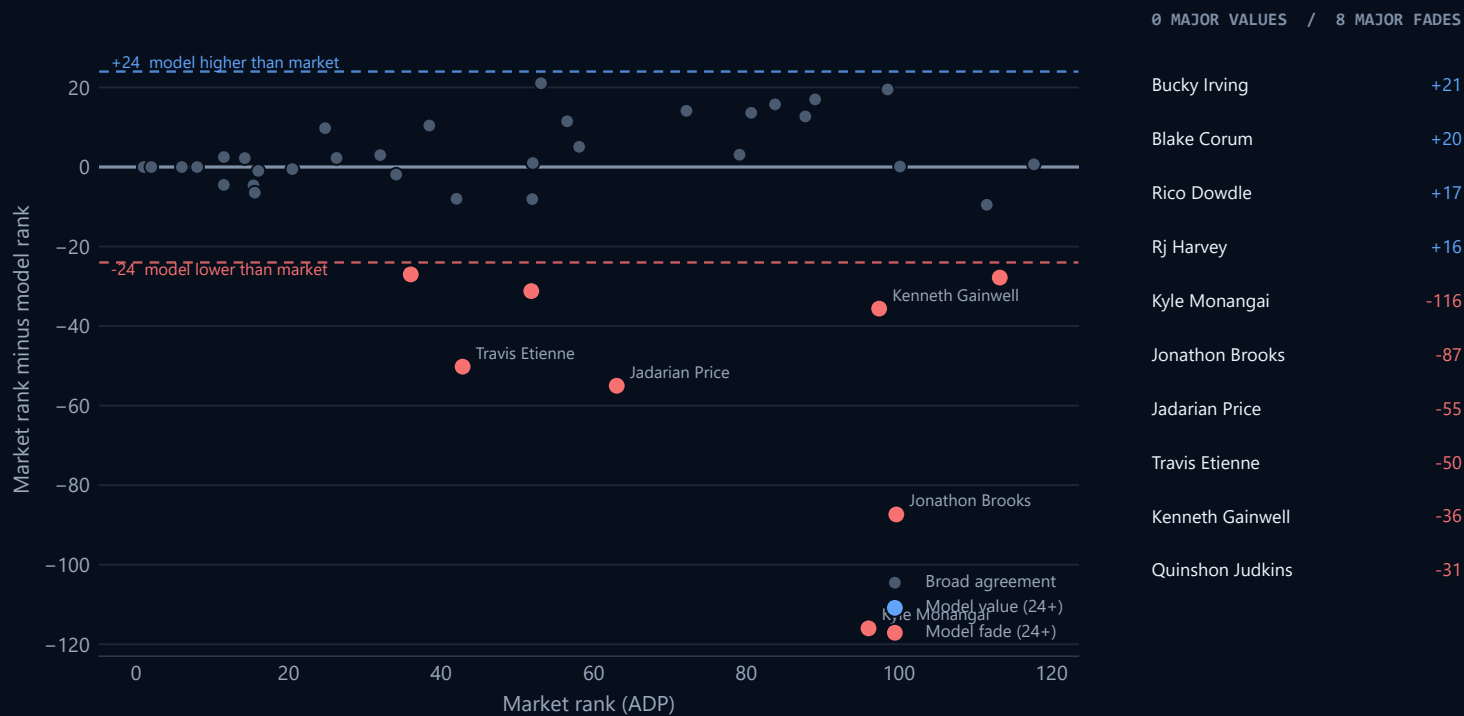


Sized to what a lineup actually starts, RB loses 51% of its scoring across four tiers, against 42% at tight end and 27% at quarterback. The raw tight-end cliff on a fixed six-player grid was an artefact of comparing TE25-36, who nobody starts, with RB25-36, who many do. This page measures how fast scoring falls; the replacement-value page measures how much of that fall actually matters.

Source: Auto Draft Years, FantasyPros PPR consensus ADP 2016-2025; end-of-season PPR scoring. Tiers are league-relevant rather than uniform: QB and TE in sixes, RB and WR in twelves, reflecting a 12-team 1QB/2RB/3WR/1TE lineup. Positions are separated by spaced steps of one blue ramp plus direct labels.

The model's strongest running back view is overpricing, not hidden value

Signed disagreement between the pure model and the market for the 40 most expensive running backs, with projected scoring across the same price range.

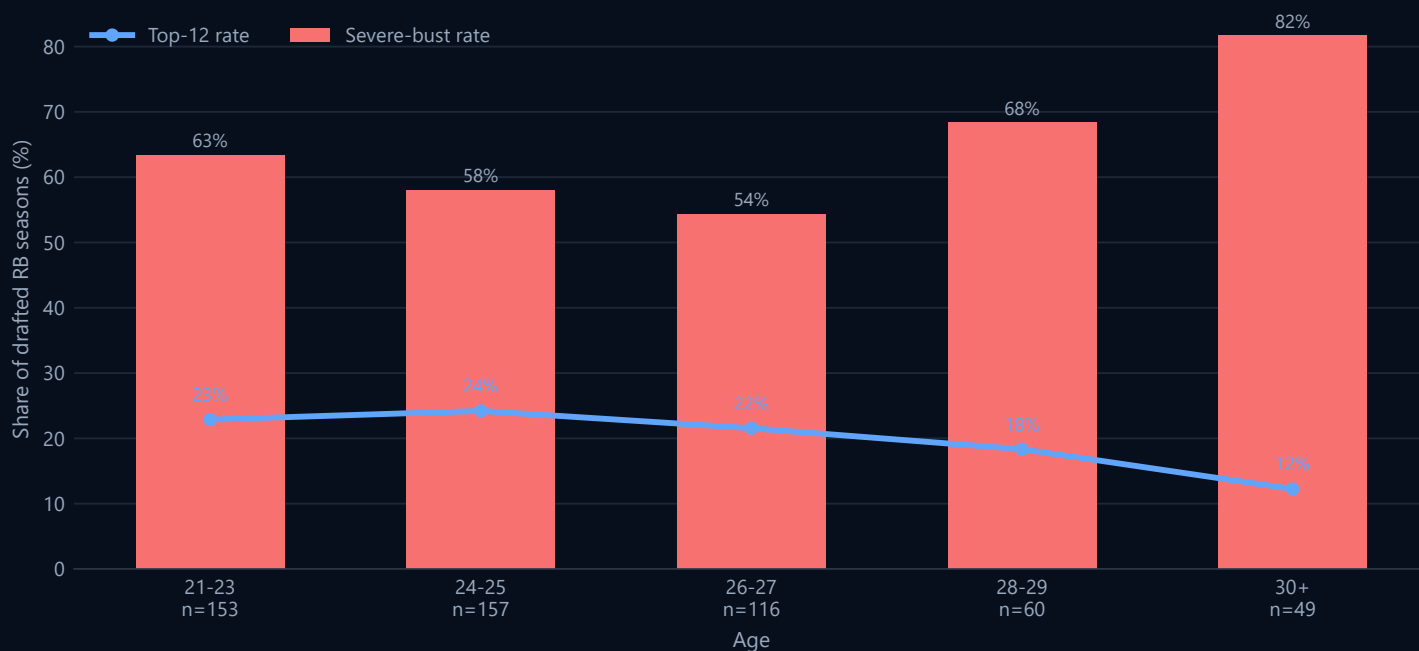


The model takes 8 major fade positions among the 40 most expensive running backs against 0 major values, and every large disagreement sits below the line. Projected scoring falls only 2.3 PPG between the second and third price bands, so the market keeps charging for backs after the projections have stopped separating them.

Source: Auto Draft Years 2026 consensus board. Pure model = workbook Pure Model Board rank. Major disagreement: 24+ overall ranking places. Players projected under 1.5 PPG are unprojected rookies rather than low projections, and are excluded from the price bands.

Running back risk falls through age 27, then jumps sharply

Severe-bust and top-12 rates for drafted running backs by age, restricted to players debuting 2016 or later so career workload is complete.



Median PPG by age and prior workload

Age	<300	300-599	600-899	900+
21-23	10.7 n=136	-	-	-
24-25	10.9 n=86	11.3 n=45	13.3 n=18	-
26-27	9.3 n=40	9.6 n=24	13.3 n=23	15.7 n=29
28-29	8.9 n=24	-	-	12.2 n=24
30+	7.9 n=27	-	-	-

Career touches entering the season

EFFECT ON BUST PROBABILITY

controlled, n=535

Each year of age

+1.7pp 95% CI [+0.2, +3.2]

Per 100 career touches

-1.4pp 95% CI [-2.3, -0.5]

Doubling draft price

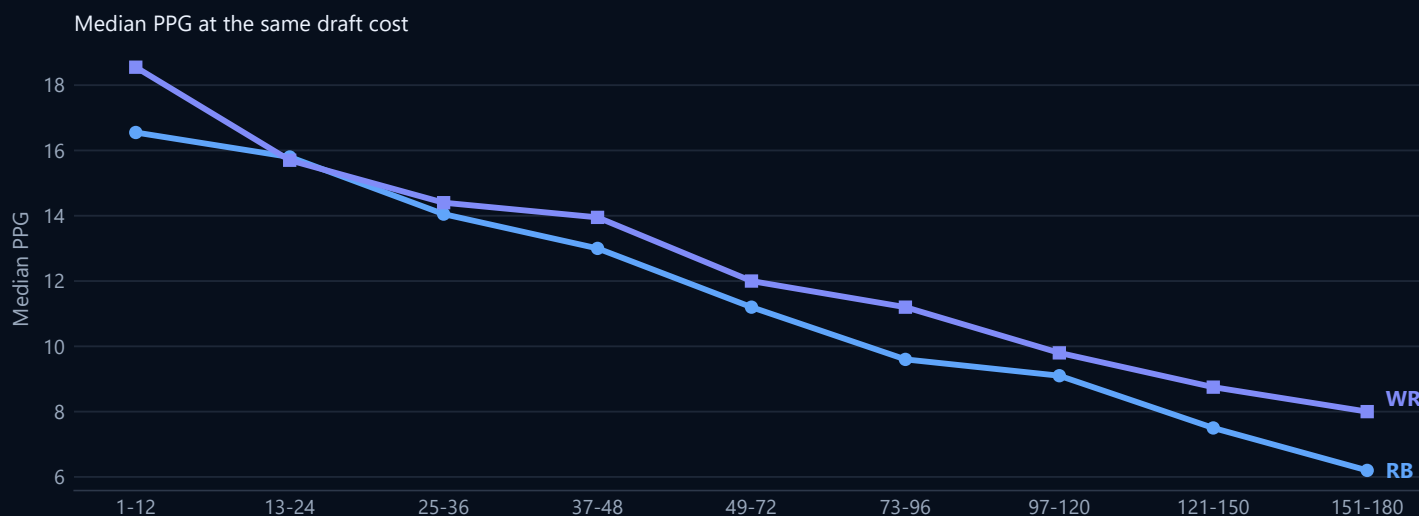
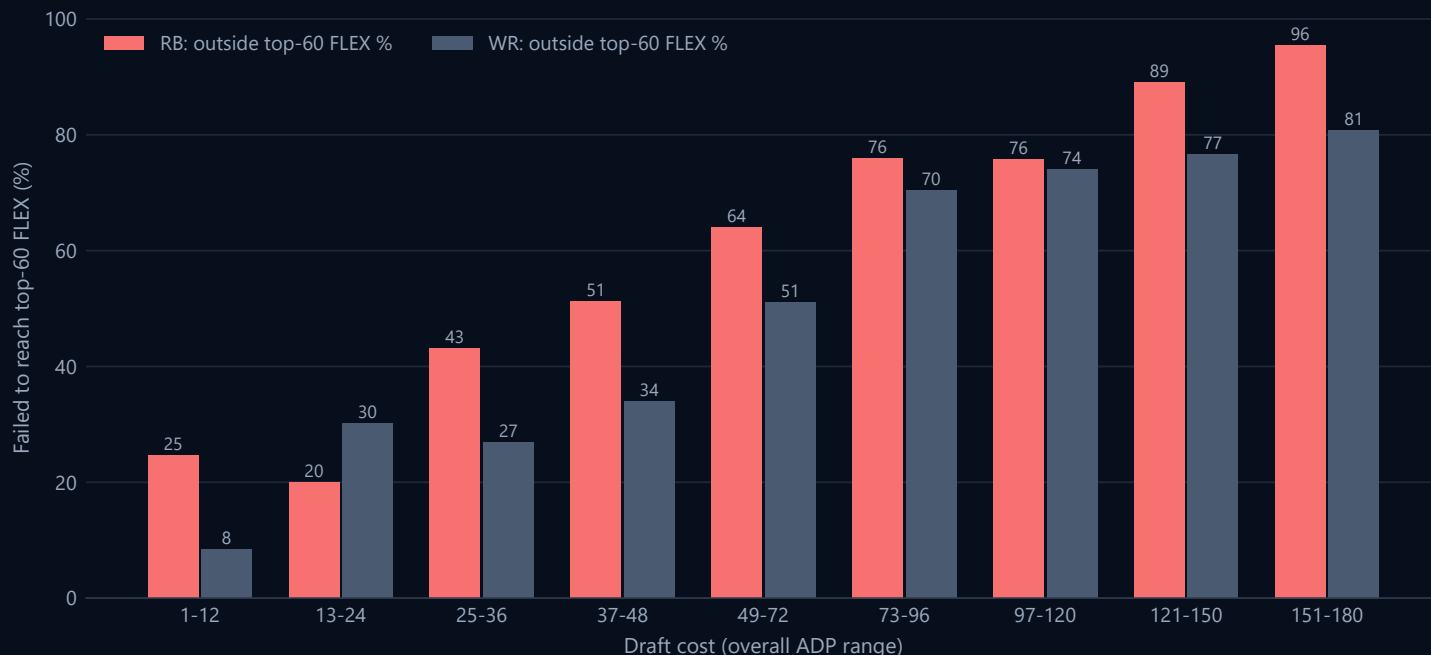
+12.3pp 95% CI [+9.9, +14.7]

Bust risk falls from 63% at 21-23 to 54% at 26-27 before jumping to 82% at 30 and over; controlled for price and workload each additional year adds +1.7pp. Career workload looks protective, but that is selection rather than durability - backs only reach 900 touches by being good enough to keep earning them.

Source: Auto Draft Years, FantasyPros PPR consensus ADP 2016-2025; end-of-season PPR scoring. Restricted to backs debuting 2016 or later. Heatmap cells with fewer than 15 observations are suppressed. Effects are from a linear probability model of severe bust on age, career touches and log draft price; intervals are 95%.

From pick 25 onward, similarly priced receivers deliver the better outcome

Severe-bust rate and median PPG for running backs and receivers drafted at the same overall cost - the comparison a manager actually faces on the clock.

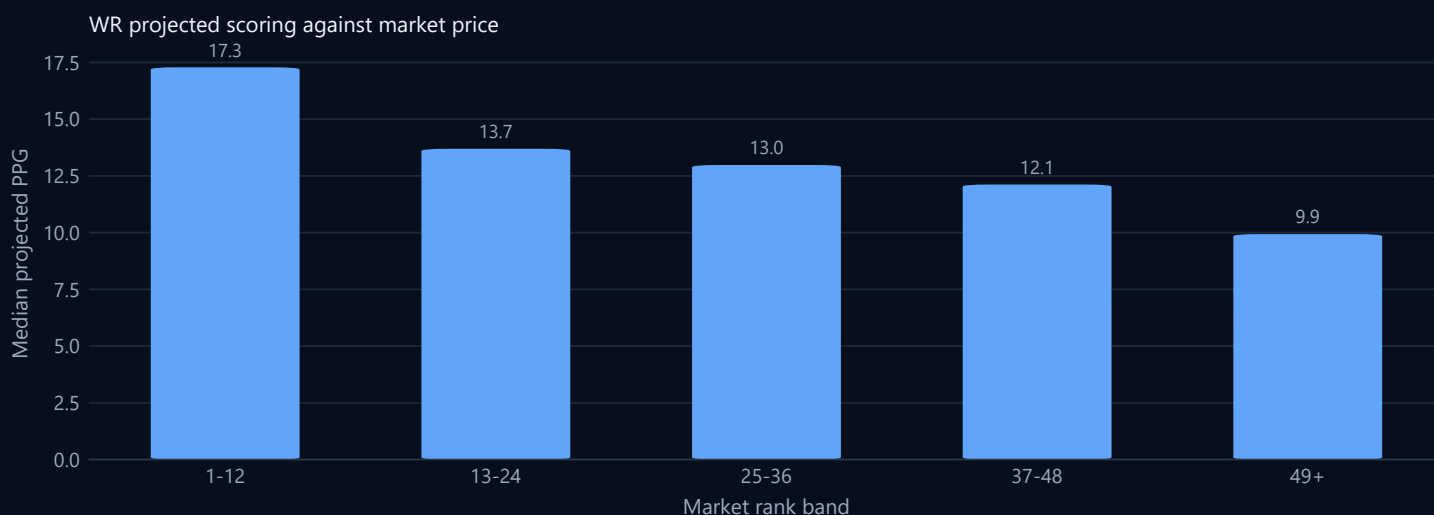


Running backs hold the downside advantage only at picks 13-24 (20% failing to reach top-60 FLEX against 30% for receivers) - at picks 1-12 receivers are already safer. From pick 25 forward receivers are better on both measures and never give the lead back. The dead zone is a comparison against receivers, not a property of running backs alone.

Source: Auto Draft Years. FantasyPros PPR consensus ADP 2016-2025; end-of-season PPR scoring. Severe bust: RB/WR outside the top 60 FLEX scorers.

Receiver prices fall more gently than running back prices, and the model mostly agrees

Signed disagreement between the pure model and the market for the 60 most expensive receivers, with projected scoring across the same price range.

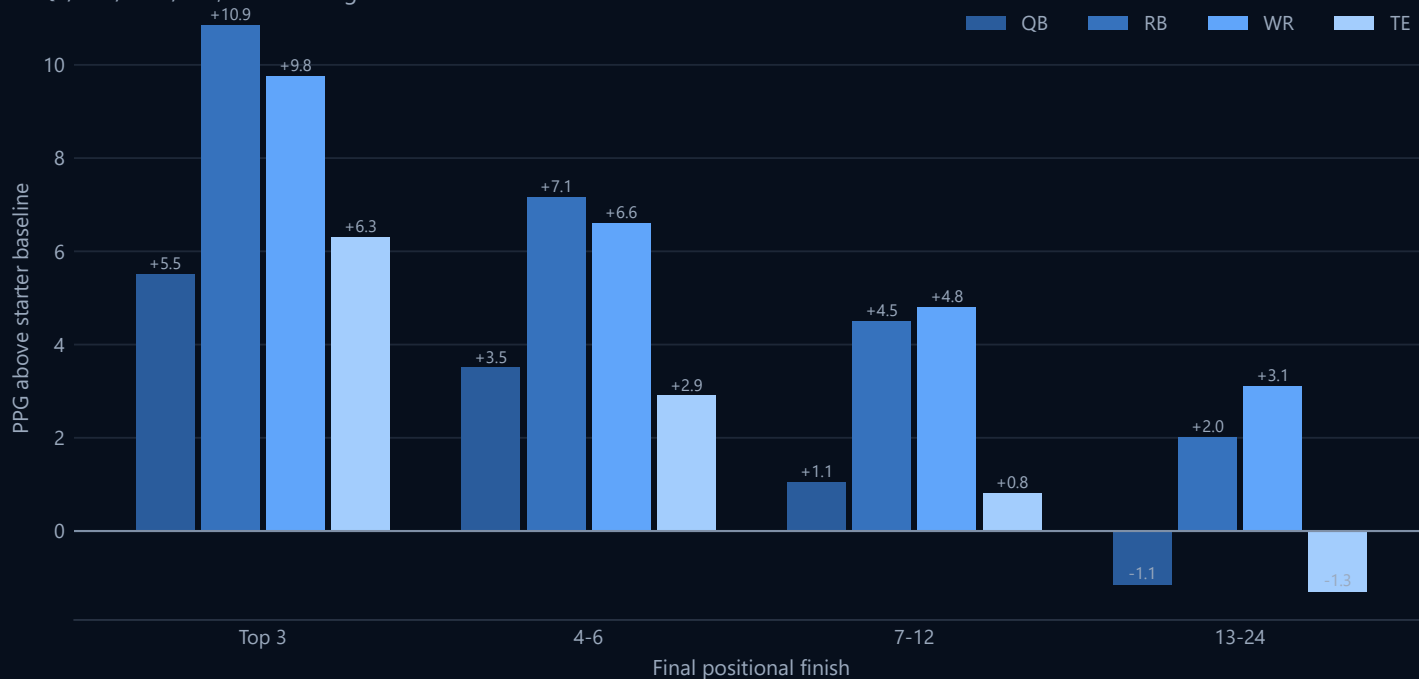


50 of the top 60 receivers - 83% - sit inside the model's 24-place agreement band, against 4 major values and 6 major fades. Projected scoring falls 43% from the first price band to the last, a gentler slope than the running back curve on the previous page.

Source: Auto Draft Years 2026 consensus board. Pure model = workbook Pure Model Board rank. Major disagreement: 24+ overall ranking places. Pure model rank is computed across the full canonical population; re-ranking within market-covered players only gives 5 values and 24 fades against 7 and 24, so the conclusion is not an artefact of the wider population.

A top-three back or receiver carries twice the starter advantage of a top-three quarterback

Points per game above the last startable finish at each position - QB12, RB24, WR36, TE12 - in a 12-team, 1QB/2RB/3WR/1TE, full-PPR league.



WHAT DRAFTING EACH TIER ACTUALLY BUYS

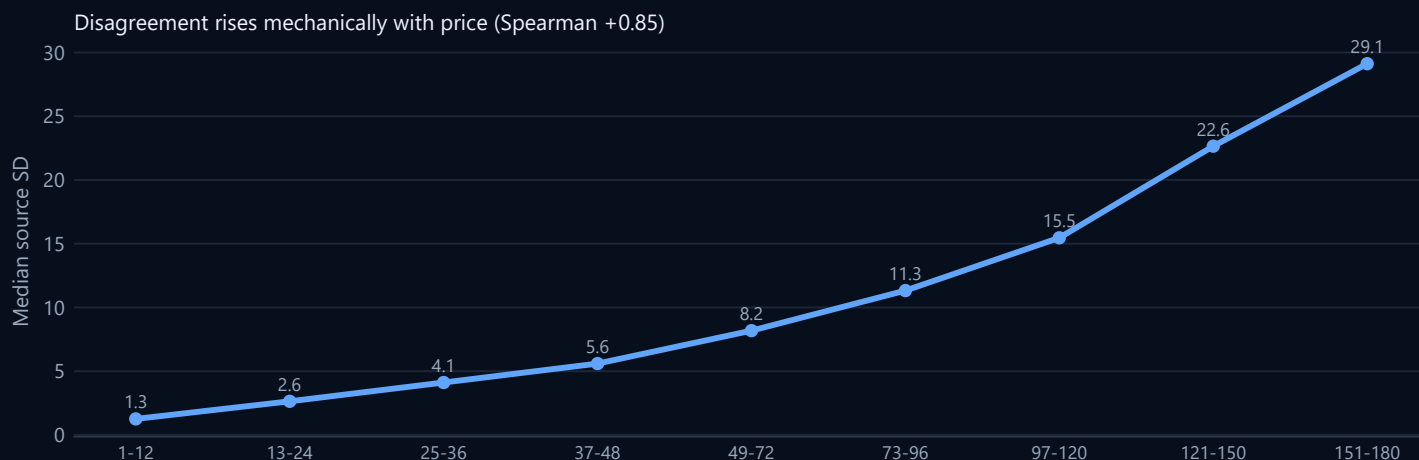
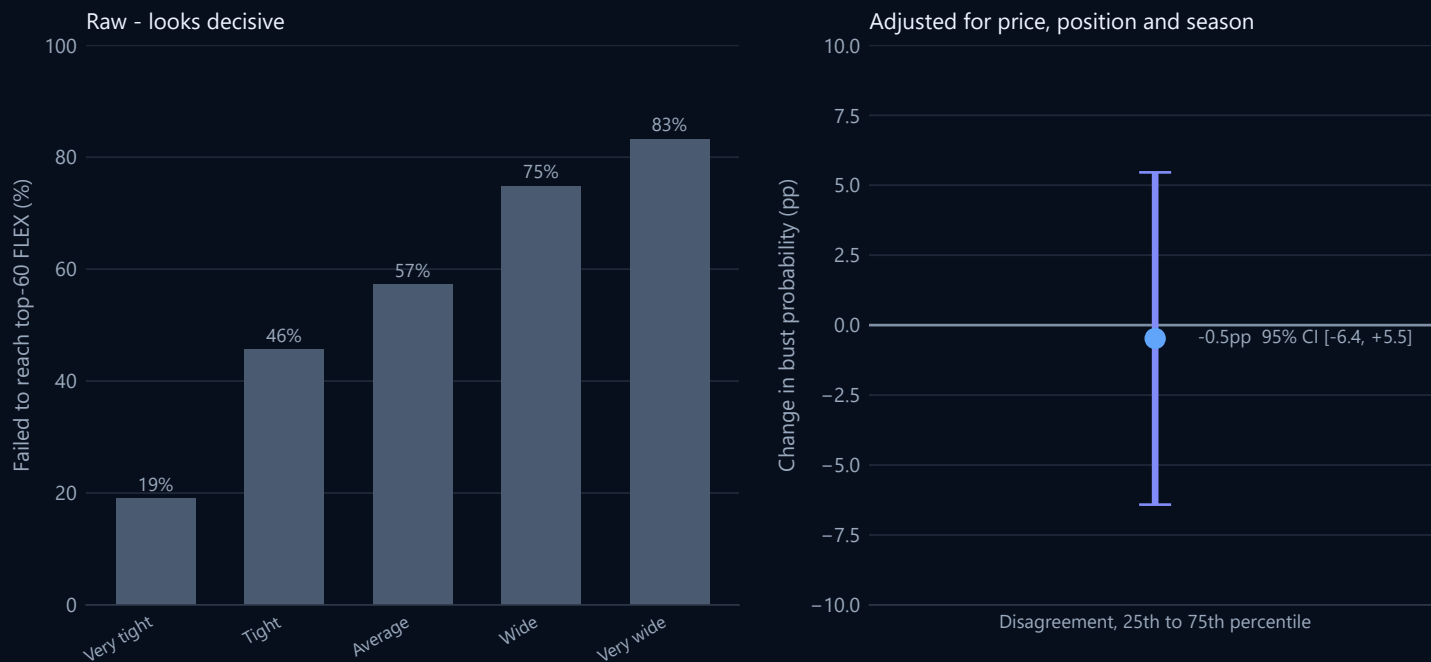
Position	Starter baseline	Drafted top 3:	P(finish top 3)	Expected PPG over baseline
QB	17.0 PPG	QB1-3	30%	+3.8
RB	11.0 PPG	RB1-3	38%	+7.6
WR	11.0 PPG	WR1-3	33%	+7.7
TE	9.2 PPG	TE1-3	40%	+4.8

A top-three running back outcome is worth +10.9 PPG over the last startable finish and a top-three receiver +9.8, against +5.5 at quarterback and +6.3 at tight end. Scarcity at quarterback and tight end is real, but it buys roughly half the edge - and the table below shows that holds in expectation, not just conditional on hitting.

Source: Auto Draft Years, FantasyPros PPR consensus ADP 2016-2025; end-of-season PPR scoring. Starter baseline: median PPG of finishes QB12-15, RB24-27, WR36-39, TE12-15 - the last startable option in a 12-team, 1QB/2RB/3WR/1TE, full-PPR league. Deeper lineups or superflex move these baselines materially.

Source disagreement is a restatement of price, not extra information

Bust rates by preseason disagreement among ranking sources, raw and then adjusted for draft price, position and season.

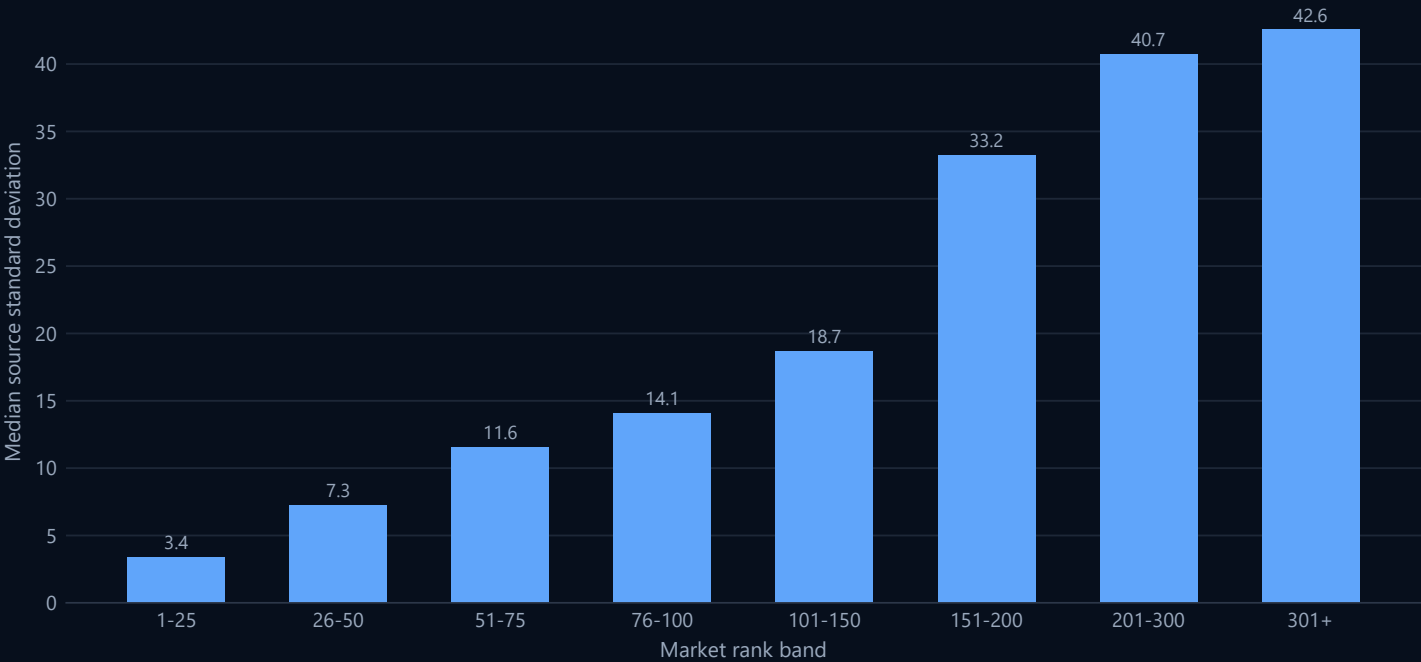


Raw bust rates run from 19% to 83% across the disagreement quintiles, which looks decisive until you notice disagreement correlates +0.85 with price. Adjusted for price, position and season the effect is -0.5 points with a 95% interval of [-6.4, +5.5] - it contains zero. Disagreement tells you where the market is, not what will happen.

Source: Auto Draft Years. FantasyPros PPR consensus ADP 2016-2025; end-of-season PPR scoring. Seasons 2019-2025, running backs and receivers only, at least four ranking sources; n = 683. Positions are restricted because a top-24 or top-60 threshold does not mean the same thing at quarterback. Effect from a linear probability model; interval is 95%.

Absolute source disagreement widens sharply after roughly pick 100

Median standard deviation across ranking sources, by market rank band, for the 2026 consensus board.



MOST AGREED-UPON SKILL PLAYERS, TOP 150

Bijan Robinson	RB	0.2
Ja'Marr Chase	WR	0.5
Jahmyr Gibbs	RB	0.6
Jaxon Smith-Njigba	WR	0.7
Puka Nacua	WR	0.7
Amon-Ra St. Brown	WR	1.0
Ceedee Lamb	WR	2.1
Justin Jefferson	WR	2.2

MOST CONTESTED SKILL PLAYERS, TOP 150

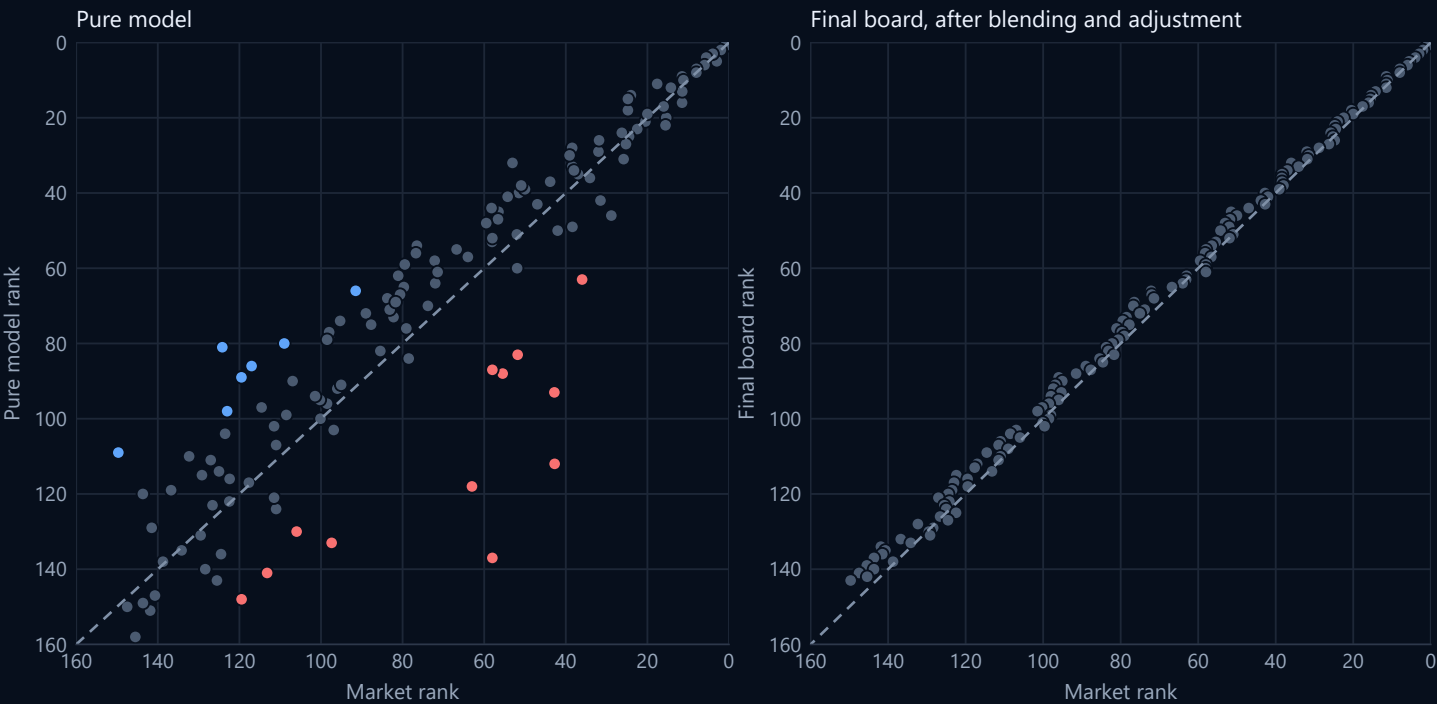
Sam Darnold	QB	45.8
Ricky Pearsall	WR	45.5
Cam Ward	QB	41.1
C.J. Stroud	QB	34.0
Deebo Samuel	WR	32.7
Stefon Diggs	WR	27.9
Tyler Allgeier	RB	25.7
Jordan Love	QB	25.2

Inside the first 25 picks the sources sit within 3.4 ranking places of each other; by picks 101-150 that has widened to 18.7. Most of a draft is conducted in a range where the market has no settled opinion, and the guide's historical work shows that is exactly where outcomes are least predictable.

Source: Auto Draft Years 2026 consensus board. Pure model = workbook Pure Model Board rank. Dispersion is the standard deviation of the underlying source ranks for each player. Player tables cover QB/RB/WR/TE only - kickers and defences dominate raw dispersion without informing a draft decision. Absolute rank disagreement widens with depth; this is not normalised for the larger rank numbers deeper in the board.

The pure model expresses conviction; the published board is intentionally market-anchored

Pure model and final board ranks against market rank inside the draftable top 150, with the resulting disagreement counts.



DISAGREEMENT INSIDE THE MARKET'S TOP 150

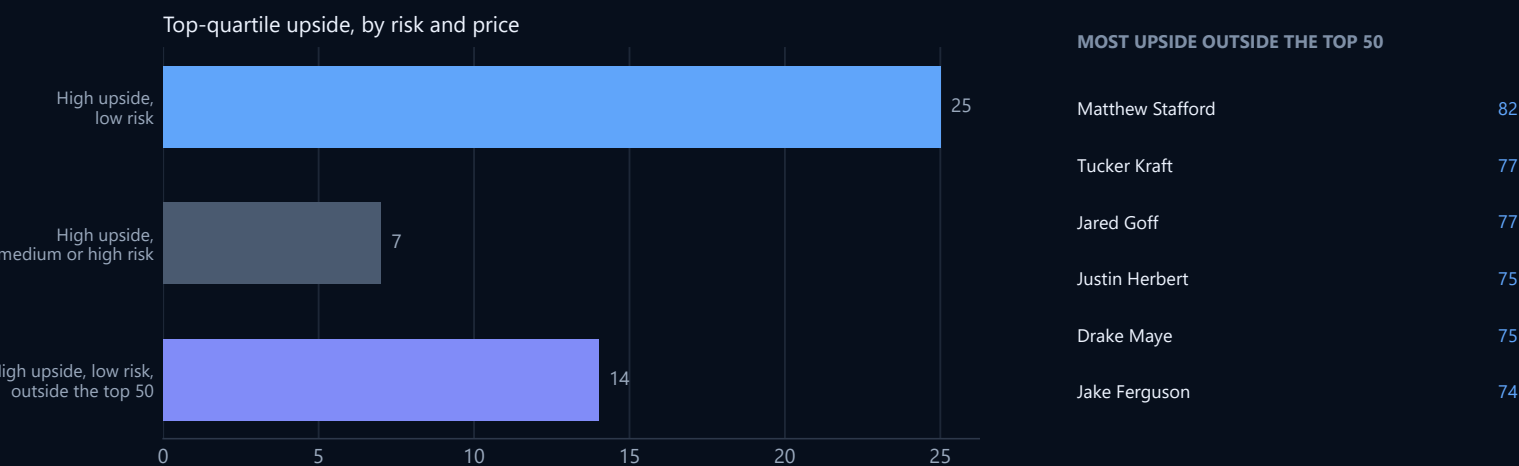
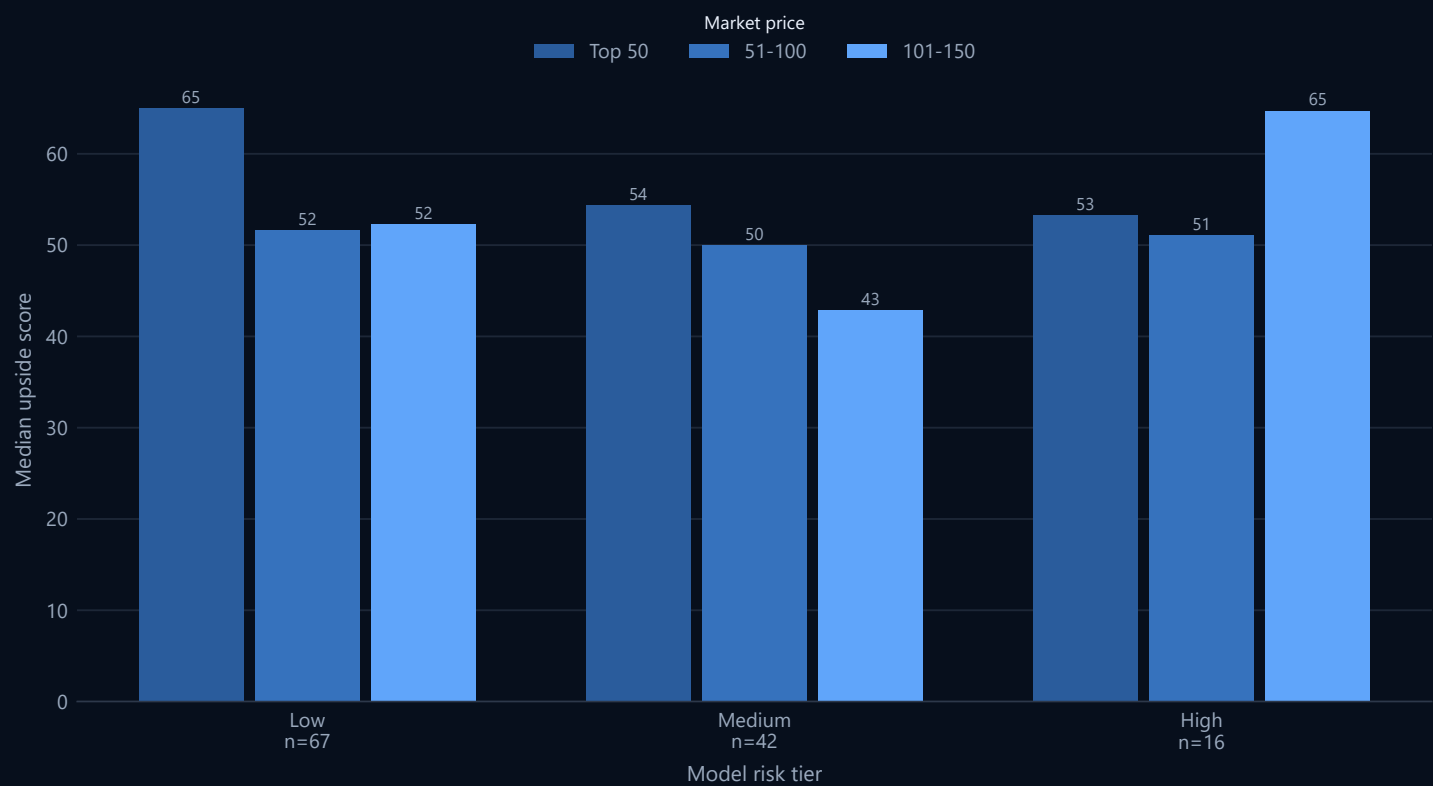
Basis	Major values (24+)	Major fades (24+)	Median gap	Spearman vs market
Pure model vs market	7	24	10.5	+0.877
Final board vs market	0	4	2.5	+0.996

The pure model is the independent opinion layer, correlating +0.877 with market rank. The final board deliberately moderates that opinion with market information, lifting the correlation to +0.996 and cutting the median top-150 gap from 10.5 ranks to 2.5. Use pure model gaps to find the questions worth investigating; use the final board for draft ordering.

Source: Auto Draft Years 2026 consensus board. Pure model = workbook Pure Model Board rank. Major disagreement: 24+ overall ranking places against market ADP rank.

Taking on more risk does not reliably buy more upside

Model upside score against model risk tier for the draftable top 150, separated by what the market charges for each player.



Upside and risk correlate -0.15 across the draftable board - essentially independent, and if anything the riskier players carry slightly less upside. 25 of the 32 highest-upside players sit in the low-risk tier, and 14 of those are priced outside the top 50. Accepting risk is not how upside is bought.

Source: Auto Draft Years 2026 consensus board. Pure model = workbook Pure Model Board rank. Risk tiers are the model's own Low/Medium/High bands rather than a median split: a score of exactly 50 is a structural neutral carried by 38 players, and splitting at the median would file all of them as high risk. 18 of the top 150 carry no upside score and are excluded.

The 2026 fantasy market in ten numbers

Everything the preceding pages establish, reduced to the figures that should change how a 2026 draft is approached.

22%

of top-20 selections finished as severe busts, 2016-2025.

5 → 16

median positional ranking error, picks 1-12 against picks 151-180.

Pick 25

the point from which running backs bust more than the receivers drafted beside them.

64% vs 51%

RB against WR severe-bust rate at picks 49-72, the heart of the dead zone.

+10.9 / +5.5

PPG above replacement for a top-three RB against a top-three QB - scarcity pays roughly half.

+6.3 → +0.8

tight-end PPG above replacement, top three against a TE7-12 finish.

3.4 → 18.7

median source disagreement, first 25 picks against picks 101-150.

-0.5pp

effect of source disagreement on bust risk once price is controlled; 95% CI [-6.4, +5.5] contains zero.

7 / 24

major model values against major fades inside the 2026 draftable top 150.

82%

of drafted running backs aged 30 or over failed to reach top-60 FLEX.

FIVE IMPLICATIONS FOR A 2026 DRAFT

1. Pay for early-round upside, not early-round safety.

The elite price reliably buys a better median and a higher ceiling. It does not reduce the chance of a severe miss, which stays near one in five across the whole first round.

2. After pick 25, require a stronger reason to take a running back over a receiver.

At every price from pick 25 down, similarly costed receivers reached a useful FLEX finish more often and scored more per game. The advantage never returns to running backs.

3. Make positional decisions on replacement value, not raw points.

Quarterback and tight end scarcity is real but worth roughly half what the same draft capital buys at running back or receiver.

4. Read market disagreement as a description of price, not a forecast.

Once draft cost, position and season are controlled, disagreement carries no measurable effect on bust risk. It tells you where the market is unsettled, not what will happen.

5. Use model disagreement to direct research, not to override the market.

The pure model's fades cluster where the market keeps paying after projected scoring has flattened. Those are the positions worth investigating first - not automatic fades.