

AN EARLY LOOK AT 2016 ROOKIES

While we are only four games into the season (and three games for some teams) an early look at this year's rookies is always interesting for the sports geek. This analysis, of course, will change significantly over the course of the season and I will update the review every four weeks.

First, how are this year's first round choices performing. Since I do not see every game this analysis tends to be quantitative rather than qualitative. If a player starts every game, I will tend to think that is a good thing without knowing how Pro Football Focus grades the players. Here's a look at the first round picks and their level of activity:

#	Team	Player	College	Starts	Scrim. Plays	Comment
1	Rams	Goff	California	0	0	B-U Keenum
2	Eagles	Wentz	No Dakota St	3	214	Doing great
3	Chargers	Bosa	Ohio State	0	0	Injured + contract issues
4	Cowboys	Elliott	Ohio State	4	190	
5	Jaguars	Ramsey	Florida St	4	274	
6	Ravens	Stanley	Notre Dame	3	210	
7	49ers	Buckner	Oregon	4	243	
8	Titans	Conklin	Michigan St	4	265	
9	Bears	Floyd	Georgia	4	170	
10	Giants	Apple	Ohio State	1	124	Injury issues
11	Bucs	Hargreaves	Florida	4	260	
12	Saints	Rankins	Louisville	0	0	Preseason injury
13	Dolphins	Tunsil	Ole Miss	4	230	
14	Raiders	Joseph	West VA	2	149	Slow start
15	Browns	Coleman	Baylor	2	100	Practice injury
16	Lions	Decker	Ohio State	4	275	
17	Falcons	Neal	Florida	2	123	Preseason injury
18	Colts	Kelly	Alabama	4	292	
19	Bills	Lawson	Clemson	0	0	Preseason injury
20	Jets	Lee	Ohio State	2	174	
21	Texans	Fuller	Notre Dame	4	246	
22	Redskins	Doctson	TCU	0	31	Ongoing injuries
23	Vikings	Treadwell	Ole Miss	0	4	Early, but leads bust parade
24	Bengals	Jackson	Houston	0	0	Injuries
25	Steelers	Burns	Miami	0	144	
26	Broncos	Lynch	Memphis	0	51	Backup to Simien
27	Packers	Clark	UCLA	1	89	Injury issue
28	49ers	Garnett	Stanford	0	0	Not playing for 49ers?
29	Patriots	Forfeited				
30	Cardinals	Nkemdiche	Ole Miss	0	15	Injuries?
31	Panthers	Butler	LA Tech	0	63	
32	Seahawks	Ifedi	Texas A & M	1	60	

Looking at the data for the group as a whole shows some interesting results. 11 players have "day one" starters (started every game this season) and all of those

were selected in the first 21 selections. Taking that a step further, a total of 57 games were started by first round selections. It is astonishing, at least to me, that 55 of the 57 starts were by players selected within the first 21 selections.

It is not just first round selections that can have an immediate impact. Data for all teams were reviewed and rookies selected after the first round were divided into three groups. The first group consists of players who participated in at least 200 scrimmage plays. There is no scientific reasons for the cutoff at that point and only 14 players fall into the group. The second group included players who participated in less than 200 scrimmage plays but did participate in at least 100 plays. Again, there is no analytic basis for the cut-off, it just feels right. This group includes 32 players. Players with less than 100 plays were excluded from further analysis.

The next table shows the group of players that participated in at least 200 scrimmage plays and who were not drafted in the first round.

Rd	Team	Player	College	Starts	Scrim. Plays
2	Dolphins	Howard, DB	Baylor	4	304
4	Cowboys	Prescott, QB	Mississippi St	4	289
3	Patriots	Thune, OL	North Carolina St	4	271
2	Giants	Shepard, WR	Oklahoma	4	256
FA	Saints	Crawley, DB	Colorado	2	252
2	Falcons	Jones, LB	LSU	4	250
2	Bears	Whitehair, OL	Kansas State	4	242
5	Titans	Sharpe, WR	Massachusetts	4	240
2	Saints	Thomas, WR	Ohio State	3	219
FA	Falcons	Poole, DB	Florida	2	214
3	Jaguars	Ngakoue, DE	Maryland	3	212
2	Browns	Ogbah, LB	Oklahoma State	4	211
4	Browns	Kindred, DB	TCU	2	209
4	Ravens	Lewis, OL	Nebraska	3	200

This group of 14 players started 47 games, almost as many as the first round selections. Two undrafted free agents, both defensive backs, made the list. Interestingly, there were no 6th or 7th round selections in this group. Six of the 14 were 2nd round selections.

The final table is a list of those players with at least 100 scrimmage plays. Seven undrafted free agents made that list along with eight 2nd round selections.

Rd	Team	Player	College	Starts	Scrim. Plays
2	Chargers	Hunter, TE	Arkansas	3	197
2	Raiders	Ward, DE	Illinois	4	195
2	Panthers	Bradberry, DB	Samford	4	170
2	Steelers	Davis, DB	Maryland	1	169
6	Raiders	James, LB	Colorado State	2	164
FA	Dolphins	Steen, OL	Alabama	3	163
3	Patriots	Bissett, QB	North Carolina State	2	158
2	Bengals	Boyd, WR	Pitt	0	156
FA	Lions	Hyder, DT	Texas Tech	1	155
FA	Cowboys	Green, OL	Florida	2	150
5	Chargers	Brown, LB	Akron	1	149
5	Colts	Haag, OL	North Dakota State	2	149
3	Browns	Kessler, QB	USC	2	139
3	Cowboys	Collins, DT	Nebraska	2	137
2	Saints	Bell, DB	Ohio State	1	135
FA	Bucs	Lambert, DT	Auburn	1	129
5	Bears	Howard, RB	Indiana	1	123
6	Cowboys	Brown, DB	Purdue	2	119
3	Titans	Byard, DB	Middle Tennessee State	0	119
4	Packers	Martinez, LB	Stanford	3	118
6	Broncos	Janovich, FB	Nebraska	1	117
FA	Chargers	McCull, DB	Tulsa	2	117
4	49ers	Robinson, DB	LSU	1	112
FA	Chargers	Pulley, OT	Vanderbilt	0	108
7	Eagles	Mills, DB	LSU	3	108
4	Saints	Onyemata, DL	Manitoba	0	108
4	Patriots	Mitchell, WR	Georgia	1	107
2	Titans	Dodd, LB	Clemson	1	106
4	Browns	Louis, WR	Auburn	2	105
FA	Colts	Rogers, WR	Grambling	0	105
7	Raiders	Alexander, OL	LSU	1	105
2	Seahawks	Reed, DL	Alabama	2	102