

TIGHT ENDS

Intro by Jason Wood

The days of tight end being a fantasy afterthought are long gone. Waiting until the late rounds to draft your starter is no longer smart; it's a recipe for failure. The tight end position has become an integral component of many team's passing attacks. In 2008, 15 tight ends had 500 receiving yards and nine caught 5 or more touchdowns. If you're not drafting someone with that as their baseline, you'll be behind the curve.

Jason Witten is the clear class of this group due to his health, stability and potential to lead his team in targets. Some others face question marks, as Tony Gonzalez and Kellen Winslow moved to the NFC this offseason, and Antonio Gates continues to rehab from injuries. Despite these questions, all three should be off the board within the first five or six rounds if they're healthy. Dallas Clark rounds out the Top 5 as he's Peyton Manning's most reliable red zone option.

If you miss out on this quintet, don't despair. Proven veterans like Chris Cooley and Owen Daniels and a number of young TEs, including Zach Miller, John Carlson, Dustin Keller and Greg Olsen could put up monster numbers. Target having

a starter rostered by the ninth or tenth rounds, but take your time in drafting a backup. The second tier is littered with guys who should catch 40+ balls, 400+ yards and some scores. One last word of advice, remember that rookie tight ends rarely help fantasy teams. Even Tony Gonzalez (33 catches, two TD) and Jason Witten (347 yards, one TD) struggled as rookies, so let someone else target Brandon Pettigrew on draft day. Visit our website: Footballguys.com where you can view customized rankings that are tailored to your league's scoring system.

1 Jason Witten - DAL

6-5, 257, age: 27

year	team	targets	rec	cyds	ctds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ		80	936	6	130	2
2008	DAL	121	81	952	4	121	2
2007	DAL	141	96	1145	7	156	1
2006	DAL	93	64	754	1	81	12

The Good - How many tight ends are guaranteed to lead their team in targets? How many are devastating blockers? Jason Witten fits the bill and he's expected to be an elite fantasy tight end again in 2009. His best case is that Roy Williams stretches the defense so Witten can work the middle of the field. If that happens, Witten could match his monstrous 2007 numbers (96 catches, 1,145 yards and seven TDs) which would make him the top fantasy TE again.

The Bad - The 2006 season marked a nadir in Witten's career. His catches and yardage totals were top notch, but scoring one touchdown ruined his shot at a Top 10 fantasy season. The only way Witten would struggle like that again is if the Cowboys are inept offensively and rarely get into the red zone.

The Bottom Line - Witten should be the first or second TE drafted in any league format. He's Tony Romo's favorite target and is guaranteed to be among the top pass catchers at his position. Witten is light years better than any other receiver on the roster. He should be off the board by the third or fourth rounds in all leagues.

2 Antonio Gates - SD

6-4, 260, age: 29

year	team	targets	rec	cyds	ctds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ		68	836	8	132	1
2008	SD	92	60	704	8	118	4
2007	SD	117	75	984	9	152	2
2006	SD	119	71	924	9	146	1

The Good - Before playing his way through multiple injuries in 2008, Antonio Gates had been the No. 1 or No. 2 fantasy TE the previous four seasons. Even hobbled some games, he finished fourth at his position last year. If Gates is healthy, he's the most talented pass-catching TE in the league. He has the quickness to beat double-teams, makes tough catches in traffic and can come down with jump balls. Gates has been a force around the goal line and led the Chargers in receiving touchdowns the past five seasons. If healthy, Gates has as good a chance as anyone to finish as the top fantasy TE this season.



Jason Witten

The Bad - Gates played through toe, hip, and ankle injuries last year. The wear and tear may have taken its toll and the toe remains a concern. Originally injured in 2007, it's limited his ability to cut and may be a chronic injury. While Gates can be expected to play through dings, if he's not 100 percent the Chargers may turn to other weapons on offense. Worst case, Gates could drop out of the Top 5 at his position for the first time since his rookie season.

The Bottom Line - Gates is coming off a season marred by injury from beginning to end, but still managed to finish as the #4 fantasy tight end. It's impossible not to consider him a Top 3 TE if he's healthy. His toe is worth keeping tabs on throughout training camp, but he's expected to be at full speed by the start of camp.

3. Tony Gonzalez - ATL

6-4, 244, age: 33

year	team	targets	rec	cyds	ctds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ		73	810	7	123	3
2008	KC	154	96	1058	10	166	1
2007	KC	154	99	1172	5	147	3
2006	KC	103	73	900	5	120	3

The Good - If Tony Gonzalez brings his 'A' game, he could have 90+ receptions and another Pro Bowl selection. Matt Ryan will benefit from the reps he got last season. Assuming Gonzalez and Ryan are simpatico from the start, the Falcons offense could explode early on and keep rolling throughout the season.

The Bad - Gonzalez could see fewer targets transitioning to his new surroundings. If so, his fantasy production could drop below the Top 3 TE. As we saw last year with Jeremy Shockey, moving to a new team isn't always an easy thing to do. Gonzalez is 33 and at the point where performance could suddenly drop off with nagging injuries.

The Bottom Line - Gonzalez snagged 90+ catches the last two years with Tyler Thigpen, Damon Huard, and Brodie Croyle. He's been a Top 3 TE in nine of the past 10 seasons. Now he is playing with Matt Ryan on a stacked offense. Gonzalez could be poised for another double-digit TD season in Atlanta this year.

4. Dallas Clark - IND

6-3, 257, age: 30

year	team	targets	rec	cyds	ctds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ		72	785	6	114	4
2008	IND	107	77	848	6	121	3
2007	IND	101	58	616	11	130	5
2006	IND	58	30	367	4	61	15

The Good - Dallas Clark has been a top TE the last two seasons, and last year was his best fantasy season. The Colts struggled some offensively last year and did not run the ball well, so Peyton Manning had to rely on Clark more than ever before. His upside this year is to repeat 2008's production with a few more TDs, solidly establishing him as an upper echelon fantasy TE.

The Bad - Manning spreads the ball to whoever is open, and he may not target Clark 100+ times like he did past two seasons. The common denominator in those two seasons is that the Colts did not have a second serious threat at WR to line up opposite Reggie Wayne. If Anthony Gonzalez fills that role this season, Clark's targets could fall by 30%, and he could

find himself back in the 10-15 range among fantasy tight ends.

The Bottom Line - Clark may not improve on the career year he had in 2008, but he should remain a key part of the offense. He should remain a Top 5 fantasy TE if he can remain healthy for 16 games.

5. Kellen Winslow - TB

6-4, 250, age: 26

year	team	targets	rec	cyds	ctds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ		66	792	5	109	5
2008	CLE	82	43	428	3	61	21
2007	CLE	148	82	1106	5	141	4
2006	CLE	119	89	875	3	106	6

The Good - The Buccaneers acquired Kellen Winslow, Jr. from Cleveland, their biggest move in a busy offseason. Winslow is a home run threat and will see many passes thrown his way. The Buccaneers don't have many other receiving options beyond Winslow and Antonio Bryant, so expect each to have several targets every week.

The Bad - Winslow is coming off a down year with Cleveland that caused him to miss five games due to injuries. Perhaps Cleveland saw the writing on the wall with Winslow and decided that his injury history impacted his play. If he doesn't have an immediate impact in Tampa, it's not a stretch to think that maybe his best games are behind him.

The Bottom Line - The Bucs are counting on Winslow to be 100 percent healthy and there is no reason to think otherwise. The Bucs offense will feature plenty of Winslow and Bryant, a tandem similar to Dwayne Bowe and Tony Gonzalez last year for the Chiefs. If Winslow can stay healthy he should reach 65-70 catches or even 80+. Winslow automatically upgrades a poor red zone offense and should often have TD-scoring opportunities.

6. Owen Daniels - HOU

6-3, 250, age: 27

year	team	targets	rec	cyds	ctds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ		66	759	4	100	6
2008	HOU	100	70	862	2	98	6
2007	HOU	94	63	768	3	95	8
2006	HOU	51	34	352	5	65	14

The Good - Owens Daniels has improved his targets, receptions, and yards each season in the NFL, but his TD total has dropped each year. He finished as the No. 6 fantasy TE while scoring only two touchdowns last year. If he can maintain his yardage total while getting back to five scores, Daniels could finish as a Top 3 fantasy TE.

The Bad - Daniels is overshadowed by Andre Johnson and Steve Slaton, and has generally been targeted during Johnson's off games. Johnson had fewer than five receptions six times last season and Daniels averaged 6 receptions for 80 yards. In 10 games when Johnson caught 5+ passes, Daniels averaged 3.4 receptions for 38 yards. If Johnson remains the go to guy, Daniels' production could be capped.

The Bottom Line - Daniels will likely finish in the Top 5-10 TEs and has the potential to finish higher with more goal line looks. He shouldn't be ranked ahead of Witten, Gates, Gonzalez, Winslow, or Clark. Daniels makes a nice handcuff for Andre Johnson owners, since Daniels tends to have better games when Johnson is less of a factor.

7. Chris Cooley - WAS

6-3, 265, age: 27

year	team	targets	rec	cyds	ctds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ		65	663	5	96	8
2008	WAS	111	83	849	1	91	8
2007	WAS	110	66	786	8	127	6
2006	WAS	95	57	734	6	109	5

The Good - Chris Cooley has been a Top 8 fantasy TE for four consecutive seasons, and could be the No. 1 TE under ideal circumstances. He's an offensive dynamo and a reliable, sure handed weapon. He's coming off career highs of 83 receptions and 849 yards but only scored one TD. If Jason Campbell can put it all together, Cooley could match last year's reception totals but with 6-8 TDs as he had done in the prior three seasons. That would make him an elite fantasy option to say the least.

The Bad - A redux of last year's low TD total would be the worst case scenario for someone who should see 100+ targets. If someone other than Jason Campbell were to start, the Redskins passing attack could turn anemic and turn Cooley into a quality fantasy TE2.

The Bottom Line - Even if WRs Devin Thomas or Malcolm Kelly emerge, no one will replace Cooley as the over-the-middle weapon. He's the player Campbell counts on for tough first downs and is in his prime. Expect Top 10 production; hope for Top 5.

8. Greg Olsen - CHI

6-5, 255, age: 24

year	team	targets	rec	cyds	ctds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ		60	666	5	97	7
2008	CHI	82	54	574	5	87	10
2007	CHI	66	39	391	2	51	23

The Good - Greg Olsen became a legitimate top-ten fantasy tight end in 2008 and is still getting better. He has the ability to outrun linebackers and run over defensive backs. Someday he'll be a Top 5 TE. His best-case scenario is if he develops a rapport with Jay Cutler, becoming a favorite target like Jason Witten is for Tony Romo. With the questionable receiving corps in Chicago, Olsen could finish with 80+ receptions for 900+ yards if everything falls into place.

The Bad - Cutler spreads the ball to 5-6 different targets and Olsen's numbers stay similar to last year's. Unless injuries strike, he is unlikely to finish with fewer than 50 receptions, 600 yards and 4-5 touchdowns.

The Bottom Line - Olsen will elevate from "good" to "great" in 2009. He has the tools to be an elite player. With a capable QB, Olsen should set career highs in receptions, yardage and touchdowns. He'll share some time with Desmond Clark but expect Olsen to see most of the targets as he begins to reach his potential.

9. Zach Miller - OAK

6-5, 255, age: 24

year	team	targets	rec	cyds	ctds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ		55	644	4	88	9
2008	OAK	86	56	778	1	84	11
2007	OAK	69	44	444	3	62	16

The Good - Some people expected Zach Miller to finish as a Top 10 fantasy TE in 2008 and despite a slow start he nearly made it. After a Week 3 game against Buffalo where he fin-

ished with 0 catches the light finally came on for Miller and QB JaMarcus Russell. His numbers would have been much better if he had more than one TD grab - a number he should easily surpass in 2009. The Raiders added more weapons to the WR corps, but Miller should remain the No. 1 or No. 2 target in the passing game. With Darrius Heyward-Bey running deep routes it should open up coverage over the middle for Miller to exploit.

The Bad - Miller only caught one TD pass in 2008, and with all the new additions to the passing game, the opportunities will be spread thin. If Heyward-Bey is an impact rookie, it could end up impacting the number of targets Miller gets this season.

The Bottom Line - Miller is Russell's go to guy and things should be no different in 2009. After scoring 62, and 84 fantasy points in his first two seasons, Miller's could reach 100 points this season. He should finally break into the Top 10 where he belongs.

10. John Carlson - SEA

6-4, 255, age: 25

year	team	targets	rec	cyds	ctds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ		52	572	5	87	10
2008	SEA	80	55	627	5	93	7

The Good - John Carlson led Seattle in receptions, receiving yards, and receiving touchdowns as a rookie last year. He's a lock to start this season and will play a large role in the passing game. Carlson has the speed to run seam routes and is a threat to make a big play down the field. With T.J. Houshmandzadeh occupying the secondary's attention, Carlson may have more space in the middle of the field and could surpass last year's No. 2 fantasy ranking.

The Bad - With healthier WRs in town this year, Carlson may see many fewer targets. Ten different WRs had catches last season, none of whom played a full 16 games. With Houshmandzadeh, Carlson may be a decoy more often and a primary target less frequently. If his targets drop from 80 to 60, he would be just a fantasy backup.

The Bottom Line - A second-year player carries more risk than a veteran, but Carlson's skills make him a near lock to finish in the top half of starting NFL tight ends. He may have a smaller role this season and is unlikely to repeat his #7 fantasy finish, but he should be a worthwhile fantasy starter again.

11. Dustin Keller - NYJ

6-2, 242, age: 25

year	team	targets	rec	cyds	ctds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ		54	621	4	86	11
2008	NYJ	78	48	535	3	72	14

The Good - The Jets should have a lot of receiving targets available with the departure of Laveranues Coles and Chris Baker, and Dustin Keller could be a prime beneficiary. That's without factoring in any improvement from the second year tight end, who was already a fantasy factor as a rookie. Keller has excellent ball skills and is more of a Dallas Clark-type than a Bubba Franks-type. In other words, he's a receiver first and a blocker second.

The Bad - With only Jerricho Cotchery having significant experience, defenses may focus more coverage on Keller. He won't sneak up on anyone like he did last year. The Jets passing game could take a step backwards. Brett Favre has retired,

and if Mark Sanchez or Kellen Clemens struggles, Keller's numbers could decrease across the board.

The Bottom Line - Keller should improve on his rookie numbers and could be a Top 10 fantasy TE this year. While he'll likely see more coverage with Coles gone, he'll also see more targets. His athleticism should create mismatches with many defenders, so a significant uptick in productivity isn't out of the question.

12. Jeremy Shockey - NO

6-5, 252, age: 29

year	team	targets	rec	cyds	ctds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ		46	529	4	77	12
2008	NO	72	50	483	0	48	27
2007	NYG	93	57	619	3	80	11
2006	NYG	115	66	623	7	104	7

The Good - A four-time Pro-Bowler, Jeremy Shockey racked up 50 receptions in an injury-filled first season with the Saints. He could again be an elite fantasy TE, as he has the size, speed, and hands to outmatch opponents and could be undervalued in fantasy drafts this year, but he'll have to stay on the field.

The Bad - Injuries have had a big impact on Shockey's last few seasons. It would be a surprise for him to return to the upper echelons of fantasy TEs. Many have declined at age 30, and Shockey will be 29. The Saints offense thrived with Billy Miller. It is possible New Orleans may utilize both this season, negating the value of both.

The Bottom Line - Can Shockey still be a top fantasy TE? He should be a major part of a productive offense, but beware of taking him based on his reputation. He averaged less than 10 yards per catch and didn't score a touchdown last year. Add in his injury history, and you must exercise caution before taking him too early. If he freefalls on draft day, be ready to pounce.

13. Visanthe Shiancoe - MIN

6-4, 251, age: 29

year	team	targets	rec	cyds	ctds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ		45	513	4	75	13
2008	MIN	59	42	596	7	102	5
2007	MIN	43	27	323	1	38	32
2006	NYG	14	12	81	0	8	67

The Good - Shiancoe could easily match his numbers from a year ago. If defenses key on Adrian Peterson, Bernard Berrian and newcomer Percy Harvin, that would allow Shiancoe plenty of room to get open in the secondary.

The Bad - The Vikings have increased options on offense this season, and Shiancoe's production could take a hit as a result. With such a powerful running attack, there are only so many passes available to catch.

The Bottom Line - Shiancoe set career bests in receptions, yards and touchdowns, but some of that success stemmed from mediocre play at the receiver position. The WR corps should improve this season, and that should keep Shiancoe from matching last year's Top 10 finish.

14. Heath Miller - PIT

6-5, 255, age: 27

year	team	targets	rec	cyds	ctds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ		45	482	4	72	15
2008	PIT	65	48	514	3	69	15
2007	PIT	61	47	566	7	99	7
2006	PIT	55	34	393	5	69	13

The Good - Heath Miller set career bests in targets and receptions in 2008 but still finished as the No. 15 fantasy TE thanks to only three TD receptions. His production could improve with the loss of WR Nate Washington, particularly if WR Limas Sweed struggles. A stronger start to the season could push Miller back into the Top 10 this year.

The Bad - The Steelers run/pass ratio limits the upside receiving opportunities for anyone on the roster, including Miller. Further, he may be asked protect his QB more this season as the offensive line can be downright dreadful at times. Miller could lose red zone targets to Matt Spaeth and Limas Sweed, making his ceiling three or four TDs.

The Bottom Line - Miller is one of the best TEs in the NFL today. So why doesn't he produce more like a premier fantasy TE? Simply put - the Steelers don't throw enough. He could end the season near the Top 10, but will be hard pressed to crack it.

15. Bo Scaife - TEN

6-3, 250, age: 28

year	team	targets	rec	cyds	ctds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ		50	505	4	74	14
2008	TEN	84	58	561	2	68	16
2007	TEN	78	46	421	1	48	25
2006	TEN	56	29	370	2	56	16

The Good - Kerry Collins looked to Bo Scaife often last year. Scaife used his athletic ability to pile up positive yards after the catch and should again be a reliable target. Tennessee may pass more this year because the defense might be weaker with the loss of Albert Haynesworth.

The Bad - The Titans have three quality TEs on the roster with Scaife, Alge Crumpler, and rookie Jared Cook. Crumpler's best days are behind him but he could be used in certain situations. Cook is a playmaker that's more of a super sized WR than TE. Scaife will also lose targets to new WRs Nate Washington and Kenny Britt.

The Bottom Line - Scaife may not match his numbers from last season if the passing game focuses on wide receivers. He should again finish as a Top 20 TE, but he's a fantasy backup with limited upside.

16. Tony Scheffler - DEN

6-6, 260, age: 26

year	team	targets	rec	cyds	ctds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ		38	464	4	70	16
2008	DEN	60	40	645	3	82	12
2007	DEN	65	49	549	5	85	10
2006	DEN	37	18	286	4	53	20

The Good - Tony Scheffler remains in Denver, but his quarterback Jay Cutler has moved on to Chicago. So what do the Broncos and Scheffler do now? They'll apparently find a way to utilize Scheffler to his fullest capability. He creates matchup problems and can do damage in the middle of the field.

The Bad - The Patriots' system didn't feature a pass-catch-

ing TE while Josh McDaniels was the OC. New England's tight ends only received 64 targets last year. Also, the Broncos want to feature Knowshon Moreno, meaning more time for blocking TEs like Daniel Graham and Richard Quinn. Scheffler could really miss Cutler.

The Bottom Line - Scheffler needs to stay healthy to endear himself to the new regime in Denver. The system may limit his production, and if so, Scheffler owners could be in for a long season. All things considered, it is difficult to imagine him matching last year's numbers.

17. Anthony Fasano - MIA

6-5, 255, age: 25

year	team	targets	rec	cyds	ctds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ		38	460	4	70	17
2008	MIA	53	34	454	7	87	9
2007	DAL	21	14	143	1	20	49
2006	DAL	24	14	126	0	13	59

The Good - It's conceivable that Anthony Fasano elevates his play to such a level that he becomes the favorite target of Chad Pennington. Then, much like Tony Romo and Jason Witten in Dallas, Fasano becomes the first player in the quarterback's progression and sets career highs, finishing as a Top 5 tight end.

The Bad - Last season was a surprising success for Fasano and the Dolphins. However, Fasano's high finish among TEs was based mostly upon his seven TDs. If he regresses to three or four, he becomes just another mediocre backup.

The Bottom Line - Fasano is likely to post similar numbers but could become a go-to guy in the passing attack. With questions surrounding the receiving corps, the Dolphins best option may be Fasano, who displayed last season he can run crisp routes and get open.

18. Kevin Boss - NYG

6-7, 250, age: 25

year	team	targets	rec	cyds	ctds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ		36	364	4	60	19
2008	NYG	55	33	384	6	74	13
2007	NYG	14	9	118	2	24	43

The Good - Kevin Boss caught six touchdowns last year despite only catching 33 passes. That should be considered his upside. He's a reliable red zone target and should remain in the mix near the goal line.

The Bad - Boss may have replaced Jeremy Shockey, but he didn't replace his productivity. Boss isn't a special athlete, but he found ways to get first downs and touchdowns. If the cadre of receivers develops as planned, Boss could see his TDs cut in half, while still catching 30 receptions.

The Bottom Line - Boss is entrenched as the starter, and he'll catch at least 30 passes and 3 TDs. Coming off a TE13 fantasy ranking, Boss is worth having on a roster as a backup.

19. Vernon Davis - SF

6-3, 253, age: 25

year	team	targets	rec	cyds	ctds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ		34	408	4	65	18
2008	SF	49	31	358	2	49	26
2007	SF	85	52	509	4	75	14
2006	SF	42	20	265	3	45	22

The Good - Vernon Davis has the size and speed to be a

very good fantasy TE. The departure of Mike Martz should result in Davis being used in more passing situations. The new offensive scheme emulates Kansas City's, and if Davis can be half as good as Tony Gonzalez, then fantasy owners may get a pleasant surprise. Davis is adequate as both a receiver and blocker and should play the majority of snaps.

The Bad - Mike Singletary means business and will not tolerate any of Davis' antics. He may have the body of an elite TE, but he doesn't appear to have the head for it. He had either zero or one catch in 10 games last season and was often a fantasy liability.

The Bottom Line - Davis' stats declined from his 50-catch performance in 2007. He'll need to rebound to justify his hefty price the 49ers paid in drafting him. Fantasy scoring doesn't reward great blocking, so he'll need to be more active in the passing attack to be fantasy relevant again. He is capable of more, so it could be worth a late round flyer.

20. Brent Celek - PHI

6-4, 250, age: 24

year	team	targets	rec	cyds	ctds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ		35	382	3	56	24
2008	PHI	38	27	318	1	38	32
2007	PHI	22	16	178	1	24	44

The Good - Brent Celek should start in Week 1 and will have plenty of chances to work the middle of the field and move the chains. If he can maintain the intensity he showed in last year's playoffs (19 catches for 151 yards in three games), he will be worth rostering as a fantasy backup.

The Bad - Celek is really a starter by default. He's limited physically and wouldn't start for many NFL teams. If Cornelius Ingram is everything the team hopes he is, Celek could find himself as a backup by midseason.

The Bottom Line - It would be shocking to see Brent Celek put up Top 10 fantasy numbers and should be thought of as nothing more than a TE2 in 12-team leagues.

21. Todd Heap - BAL

6-4, 250, age: 29

year	team	targets	rec	cyds	ctds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ		38	418	3	60	20
2008	BAL	64	35	403	3	58	23
2007	BAL	34	23	239	1	30	38
2006	BAL	116	73	765	6	112	4

The Bottom Line - It's tough to envision Heap as an elite tight end again. He seems to have a role within the offense similar to other run-first teams. Last season, he had five games with either zero or one catch. In the previous five seasons, he never had fewer than two catches in a game. That speaks volumes as to what his current role is.

22. Randy McMichael - STL

6-3, 247, age: 30

year	team	targets	rec	cyds	ctds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ		35	389	3	57	23
2008	STL	21	11	139	0	14	53
2007	STL	67	39	429	3	61	17
2006	MIA	96	62	640	3	82	11

The Bottom Line - McMichael may be overlooked this season, but he does have potential in the Rams' new west coast offense. As a late-round flyer, McMichael has more upside

potential than other tight ends drafted around the same time.

23. Brandon Pettigrew - DET

6-6, 263, age: 24

year	team	targets	rec	cyds	ctds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ	30	327	3	51	25	

The Bottom Line - Pettigrew will be an acceptable bye week/injury TE in deep leagues at best, but expecting more in his rookie season would be foolish.

24. Donald Lee - GB

6-3, 249, age: 29

year	team	targets	rec	cyds	ctds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ		35	396	3	58	22
2008	GB	50	39	303	5	60	22
2007	GB	63	48	575	6	94	9
2006	GB	21	10	150	0	15	55

The Bottom Line - There's little reason to believe Lee's numbers will look different than the past two seasons. His yards-per-reception will likely increase, but that would be natural flow back to his career average.

25. Mercedes Lewis - JAX

6-6, 255, age: 25

year	team	targets	rec	cyds	ctds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ		35	403	3	58	21
2008	JAX	72	41	489	2	61	20
2007	JAX	57	37	391	2	51	22
2006	JAX	21	13	126	1	19	46

The Bottom Line - Lewis likely won't see enough targets to be considered as a fantasy starter. He's a marginal fantasy backup in 12-team leagues.

26. Ben Watson - NE

6-3, 253, age: 29

year	team	targets	rec	cyds	ctds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ		26	265	2	38	32
2008	NE	47	22	209	2	33	33
2007	NE	49	36	389	6	76	13
2006	NE	92	49	643	3	82	10

The Bottom Line - Watson has been a recent disappointment, and it's possible that this will be his final year with the Patriots. He's become somewhat of an afterthought and is frequently benched in favor of a third wide receiver.

27. L.J. Smith - BAL

6-3, 258, age: 29

year	team	targets	rec	cyds	ctds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ		28	288	2	41	29
2008	PHI	64	37	298	3	48	28
2007	PHI	44	22	236	1	30	39
2006	PHI	80	50	611	5	91	9

The Bottom Line - Smith will probably grab a handful of scores, but relying on him for consistent production would not be advised. Starter Todd Heap has struggled to produce the last two seasons, so why would his backup become a relevant fantasy performer?

28. Desmond Clark - CHI

6-3, 255, age: 32

year	team	targets	rec	cyds	ctds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ		35	340	2	46	27
2008	CHI	73	41	367	1	43	30
2007	CHI	66	44	545	4	78	12
2006	CHI	80	45	626	6	99	8

The Bottom Line - Clark is a serviceable veteran, but Olsen could see the bulk of the tight end targets this season. Clark may have more real life value than fantasy value.

29. Brad Cottam - KC

6-7, 270, age: 25

year	team	targets	rec	cyds	ctds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ		24	262	2	38	33
2008	KC	11	7	63	0	6	73

The Bottom Line - There are times when a team trades or releases a Pro Bowl player because they have a young stud ready to take over. There are other times when a team sheds that player because they aren't going to use that position. This is the latter.

30. Martellus Bennett - DAL

6-6, 259, age: 22

year	team	targets	rec	cyds	ctds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ		22	240	2	36	34
2008	DAL	27	20	283	4	52	24

The Bottom Line - Bennett is one of the few backup tight ends that could project as an impact fantasy player. He would be a legitimate Top 10 fantasy prospect with an injury to Witten. It's hard to justify drafting a backup TE, but he's someone to consider if he ends up as an NFL starter.

Others:

Chris Baker, NE

The Patriots signed Chris Baker to a five-year deal in the first 12 hours of free agency after the Jets let him go to avoid paying a hefty roster bonus. Baker is a good two-way TE who might be able to usurp targets from the inconsistent fantasy tease Ben Watson. He'll probably catch a handful of short TDs and he could get back in the Top 20.

Chase Coffman, CIN

Chase Coffman was taken in the third round and is likely the best receiving tight end on the roster. While Carson Palmer and the Bengals have made little use of the position in the past, T.J. Houshmandzadeh's targets will be dispersed somewhere. Rookie tight ends can sometimes be overwhelmed, but there's opportunity here. If Coffman can handle the NFL game, he should pass Reggie Kelly and Ben Utecht on the depth chart.

Alge Crumpler, TEN

In his first season with the Titans, Alge Crumpler post marginal numbers. He's no longer the fantasy force he once was in Atlanta. However, he's valuable to the Titans as a reserve TE and mentor to young players like Jared Cook. Unfortunately he can't earn fantasy points as a mentor and should only be rostered in deep leagues.

Derek Fine, BUF

Tight ends often take time to adjust to the NFL, and Derek Fine has a year of experience over rookie Shawn Nelson. His familiarity with the offense and blocking ability should give him an edge, but at some point Nelson should overtake him.

Jermichael Finley, GB

When he left Texas, Jermichael Finley was considered a fantastic pass catcher for such a big target, but somewhat immature. He got on the field late in the season and saw action split out wide, making a few big plays in Weeks 16 and 17. He'll likely pass Tory Humphrey this year to play opposite Donald Lee when the Packers go with two TEs, but his upside is still limited to a bye week/injury play.

Daniel Graham, DEN

Daniel Graham won't match his output from 2008 because he will be asked to block more. It's doubtful the Broncos will run as many bubble screens as last season. He may get a few red zone targets, but he'll be a non-factor in fantasy leagues.

Steve Heiden, CLE

Old man Heiden keeps blocking and receiving with terrific effort, and he has ended up outlasting Kellen Winslow in Cleveland. He was a Top 20 TE when Winslow missed significant time in his first two seasons. Now, Heiden will be competing for targets with a similarly solid, but unspectacular player in Robert Royal and second-year receiving specialist Martin Rucker, which will likely keep him from getting back in the Top 20 this season.

Jeff King, CAR

Jeff King regressed to a disappointing 21/195/1 receiving (after 46/406/2 in 2007). He has likely lost the starter's role to Dante Rosario, so King isn't a lock to post fantasy-worthy numbers in 2009. He'll need to earn the top job back.

David Martin, MIA

David Martin's role within the Dolphins offense should not change this season. Even if Anthony Fasano earns a bigger role, Martin will still get targets and produce in dual tight end sets. His numbers may decline slightly, but he'll still be a valuable player in Miami and have some fantasy value as a marginal TE2.

Billy Miller, NO

Billy Miller had his best season since he ranked as TE7 with Houston in 2002. Given Jeremy Shockey's injury history and the potent Saints offense, there may be room for Miller to have another good season. He'll be waiver wire material but could be worth a look if an opportunity arises.

Shawn Nelson, BUF

With Robert Royal's release, the Bills starting TE job will be up for grabs during the preseason. Shawn Nelson may be the most talented TE on the roster, but he's the least experienced. If Nelson is slow to adjust, a player like Derek Fine may hold him off until next year. Even if Nelson starts, he probably won't be an effective fantasy option with Terrell Owens and Lee Evans around.

Ben Patrick, ARI

Ben Patrick wasn't highly heralded coming out of Delaware in 2007, but he has to be gaining Kurt Warner's trust after he caught a crucial fourth quarter TD on fourth down in 2007 and outfought a defensive player for a one-yard TD in the Super Bowl. He has the talent to be at least a marginal fantasy TE, but he's stuck in an offense with the best starting WR tandem in the league.

Leonard Pope, ARI

Leonard Pope has never turned into the size/speed mismatch the Cards envisioned when they took him in the third round of the 2006 draft. The 2007 campaign was a decent year for Pope with five touchdowns, but he failed to score last year. He's a stiff athlete, and he'll face stiff competition for a roster spot now that the Cards signed Anthony Becht in free agency.

Gijon Robinson, IND

The Colts unearthed yet another undrafted free agent gem when they signed Gijon Robinson in 2007. He's a hybrid H-back/FB/TE, custom-made for the Colts offense. Robinson had a few outbursts late in the season, with four- and six-catch games in December. He should be the first name fantasy GMs think of if Dallas Clark misses time this year, as long as he's not passed on the depth chart by Jacob Tamme.

Dante Rosario, CAR

Dante Rosario tripled his reception total in 2008 yet still ended up with paltry totals. With those numbers, he is not a viable fantasy TE. He may top the depth chart in Carolina, but Rosario is a marginal fantasy option.

Robert Royal, CLE

Robert Royal has a chance to turn it on in Cleveland as HC Eric Mangini utilized the TE position a fair amount in New York. Royal will be an important part of the Cleveland offense, and while he won't be a solid fantasy starter, he could be drafted. Royal could finish the season with his best stats yet, perhaps even as high as the TE15 range.

Alex Smith, NE

The Bucs deemed the former third round pick expendable after they traded for Kellen Winslow, and they were able to recoup a 2010 fifth round selection from the Pats for his services. Smith has a big frame and good hands, but he doesn't have the speed to be a downfield receiving threat. He'll probably split targets with Chris Baker and Ben Watson in a passing offense that doesn't focus on the tight end.

Ben Utecht, CIN

The Bengals finally made a move to turn the tight end into a quality target for Carson Palmer by signing Ben Utecht last offseason, but he couldn't beat the injury bug and once again missed multiple games. He should benefit from the return of Carson Palmer, but he wasn't very productive even when Palmer was in. Now third round pick Chase Coffman will be breathing down his neck for playing time.