

# QUARTERBACKS

Intro by Jason Wood

Last year, Drew Brees became only the second QB in NFL history to throw for more than 5,000 yards en route to the top fantasy ranking. Few were surprised to hear that Brees was one of three QBs to throw for at least 4,000 yards and 30 touchdowns last season, but they may be surprised to know the other two were Philip Rivers and Kurt Warner. This year, Brees, Rivers and Warner are part of a seven-QB tier atop the QB rankings. Peyton Manning is in his usual spot as a Top 3 option, and Tom Brady will join him as long as his knee is 100 percent. Aaron Rodgers, last year's breakout star, and veteran Donovan McNabb, who has his deepest arsenal ever, round out the top slots.

The next tier of QBs could put up numbers rivaling the

Top 7 but have more question marks entering the season. Carson Palmer needs to stay healthy and overcome the loss of T.J. Houshmandzadeh. Tony Romo has to prove he can deliver without Terrell Owens. Jay Cutler has to prove that he can excel in a new city with a more conservative offensive approach.

The next group of QBs is really a case of the eye of the beholder. Some will target Matt Ryan because of his youth and breakout potential. Others may view the steady veteran hand of Eli Manning or Big Ben Roethlisberger as the smart play. You don't want to reach for the QBs beyond the Top 7, focus on building your WR and RB depth and then target one or two mid-level QBs in the seventh to 10th rounds.

Cutler isn't the only projected starter to change teams this offseason. The Chiefs acquired Matt Cassel from the Patriots, the Broncos will start either Kyle Orton or Chris Simms, Byron Leftwich will compete for PT in Tampa Bay, and Brett Favre could quite possibly un-retire to play in Minnesota. If Favre doesn't sign with Minnesota, Sage Rosenfels may start over Tarvaris Jackson. QB battles rage in San Francisco and Cleveland, to the victor goes the spoils. And two rookies, Mark Sanchez (NYJ) and Matt Stafford (DET) will play sooner than later.

The QB position is different than WR or RB in that you can land a Top 5 performer in the middle of your draft if you're smart and lucky. For that reason, many owners ignore the elite at the position and hope to strike gold after building out their rosters. That strategy can work, but don't underestimate the value of a Top 7 passer this year, either. Visit our website – Footballguys.com – where you can view customized rankings that are tailor-made for your league's scoring system.

## 1. Drew Brees - NO

6-1, 220, age: 30

year	team	patt	pcmp	pyds	ptds	int	ryds	rtds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ	595	380	4373	31	18	11	0	326	1
2008	NO	635	413	5069	34	17	-1	0	372	1
2007	NO	655	443	4428	28	18	52	1	328	4
2006	NO	554	356	4418	26	11	32	0	317	2

**The Good** - Drew Brees is coming off one of the finest fantasy seasons ever for a quarterback. More than 5,000 yards and 30 TDs put Brees in statistical territory only occupied previously by Dan Marino. He achieved these figures despite missing his top WR, top RB, and top TE for significant periods of time throughout the season. With the supporting cast in New Orleans largely intact and all key players at 100 percent, there is no logical reason why Brees cannot continue his fantasy success again this season. Having just turned 30, he should be at the top of his game, and the attack minded Saints offense is unlikely to change a successful formula.

**The Bad** - It is often difficult to replicate or even get close to a year of fantasy excellence. Some of the more recent great QB fantasy years have resulted in disappointing follow ups or worse. Tom Brady, Daunte Culpepper, Steve Young and Kurt



Peyton Manning

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Warner were all hit by the injury bug in the following season, while Peyton Manning saw his TDs decline from 48 to 28 and his passing yardage drop by 700 yards. Maybe Brees can buck the trend, but it's hard to repeat dominant stats in back to back years. Additionally with ANY improvement by the Saints defense, maybe Brees won't have to throw the ball over 600 times a year to keep the Saints in touch with opposing offenses.

**The Bottom Line** - In his three years with the Saints, Brees has clearly established himself as one of the finest fantasy quarterbacks available. He makes good decisions considering the Saints' aggressive approach, although last year's 17 interceptions is not a career anomaly. While it would be difficult to match last year, he has been a Top 5 fantasy QB for three straight seasons. Brees is easily one of the safest options in the position, but it will cost you a high draft pick.

## 2. Tom Brady - NE

6-4, 210, age: 32

year	team	pass	pcmp	pyds	ptds	int	ryds	rtds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ	565	369	4040	30	13	70	1	322	2
2008	NE	11	7	76	0	0	0	0	4	60
2007	NE	578	398	4806	50	8	98	2	454	1
2006	NE	516	319	3529	24	12	102	0	271	7

**The Good** - "It was the best of times" - in 2007. We've already seen Tom Brady set the single-season TD passing record with 50 TDs to go along with 4,800 passing yards. That translated into an NFL-record 589 points scored for New England and an undefeated regular season. The key cogs in the offense are still in place, and New England has added some proven veterans to the mix. If collectively the offense stays healthy, opposing defensive coordinators will again be losing sleep and loading up on Maalox. Pick your poison on who to cover - Moss, Welker, Galloway, one of the TEs, or stick guys in the box to thwart the run - there are just too many options to worry about.

**The Bad** - "It was the worst of times" - in 2008. On the second drive of the year, Brady went down for the season with a knee injury. It doesn't get any worse than that. Brady may forever hold a dubious record that may not ever be broken: biggest drop-off in TD passes from one season to the next. Given that Brady is coming back from a serious injury and hasn't played much since the Pats loss to the Giants in the Super Bowl (he barely participated in camp last year), he could be rusty and not completely healed. He may have to permanently wear a knee brace which could hamper his mobility, limit his scrambling, and reduce his rushing attempts.

**The Bottom Line** - It's unlikely the Patriots offense will take a nosedive with Brady coming back. Given the arsenal Brady has to work with, he should be in for another Top 5 fantasy season if healthy. He has already displayed what could happen if all the planets align properly and could lap many other QBs in fantasy scoring. However, the Pats have bulked up their running attack and may try to implement more of a ball-control offense in order to keep their defense off the field more than in recent seasons. That could also lead to a lot of dink and dunk passes - something Matt Cassel made a living on last year and a scheme the Patriots have used at times with Brady.

## 3. Peyton Manning - IND

6-5, 230, age: 33

year	team	pass	pcmp	pyds	ptds	int	ryds	rtds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ	541	340	3976	28	13	28	1	307	3
2008	IND	555	371	4002	27	12	21	1	304	6
2007	IND	515	337	4040	31	14	-5	3	330	3
2006	IND	557	362	4397	31	9	36	4	362	1

**The Good** - Peyton Manning has been a Top 3 fantasy QB seven of the last 11 seasons, so the upside is obvious. He stands a good chance of finishing as the No. 1 QB if the season goes well. An average year for Manning would be 4,150 yards with 30 touchdowns and 15 interceptions. A good year (the average from his five best seasons) would be 4,335 yards, 35 touchdowns, and 12 interceptions. That would have made him the No. 2 QB last season behind Drew Brees. Manning will need some help from his receivers, however, to achieve that potential. Last year was a down year for Reggie Wayne, and 2007 first-round pick Anthony Gonzalez has yet to fulfill expectations.

**The Bad** - Manning is as dependable as they come. He has missed only one snap due to injury in his entire 176-game career. He started 16 games for the 11th consecutive season last year, and made his ninth trip to the Pro Bowl. He is the only QB in NFL history to throw for over 3,000 yards in each of his first 11 seasons - and he's hit the 4,000 yard mark in nine of those seasons. He's finished as a Top 10 fantasy QB in all 11 seasons, and has finished outside the Top 5 only twice: his rookie year, and last year when a knee injury slowed him initially. In other words, Manning's realistic "worst case" scenario is better than most QBs' realistic "best case" scenario. Expect a Top 5 season out of Manning even if it's a down year for him.

**The Bottom Line** - Manning got off to a slow start last season after undergoing knee surgery in July. He skipped the preseason and wasn't quite himself during the first few games. After averaging just 15.8 fantasy points per game during the first three games, he averaged a much more Manning-like 20.9 fantasy points per game over the remaining 13 games. Manning will be drafted as a Top 3 fantasy QB in most leagues and is a decent bet to live up to his draft position.

## 4. Kurt Warner - ARI

6-2, 220, age: 38

year	team	pass	pcmp	pyds	ptds	int	ryds	rtds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ	540	344	3888	28	16	4	0	291	7
2008	ARI	599	402	4582	30	14	-2	0	335	4
2007	ARI	452	282	3409	27	17	15	1	269	10
2006	ARI	168	108	1377	6	5	3	0	88	37

**The Good** - If Kurt Warner fully recovers from his hip injury, receives adequate protection from his offensive line, and receives sufficient run support to force eight men in the box on occasion, he is destined for another Top 5 fantasy season.

**The Bad** - Though we rarely predict injury when making projections, acknowledging an existing injury is reasonable. In a worst-case scenario, Warner would struggle in his recovery, and the Cardinals offensive line and running game would struggle as they did for much of 2008. It is difficult to imagine Warner, who is nearing the end of his career, overcoming those obstacles to repeat as an elite fantasy QB. That said, even if all goes wrong, he is unlikely to lose his starting spot. The team invested too much money in him to bench him. He would still

be a viable fantasy QB2.

**The Bottom Line** - In all likelihood, since it appears almost certain that Anquan Boldin will remain in town for another year, Warner will be a solid starting fantasy QB. He plays in a spread offense against mostly inferior pass defenses this year. He will provide six to nine games of elite fantasy numbers, and he should be a solid performer most of the other weeks.

### 5. Aaron Rodgers - GB

6-2, 220, age: 26

year	team	patt	pcmp	pyds	ptds	int	ryds	rtds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ	530	321	3790	26	15	153	2	306	4
2008	GB	536	341	4038	28	13	207	4	346	2
2007	GB	28	20	218	1	0	29	0	18	61
2006	GB	15	6	46	0	0	11	0	3	62

**The Good** - Aaron Rodgers has helped the Packers organization and fans move on from the legend of Brett Favre. He had a remarkable season in 2008, throwing for 4,038 yards and 28 touchdowns. He found success passing the football despite a rushing attack that struggled compared to the 2007 season. He has legitimized himself as the starting quarterback of the present and future in Green Bay. It's hard to envision a better season for Rodgers, so the best-case scenario would be a repeat of 2008.

**The Bad** - There is really not a worst-case scenario for Rodgers barring injuries. The only possible risk is if the offensive line regresses and doesn't allow him as much time to throw. If the rushing attack does better this season, he may throw 50 fewer passes for 400 fewer passing yards. That would put him around 3,600 yards and 24 touchdowns as his worst-case scenario.

**The Bottom Line** - Rodgers had a wonderful season last year, and he has a great group of receivers. His numbers may take a slight downtick if the rushing attack improves, as expected, this season, but he is still likely to throw for 3,800 yards and 26+ touchdowns this season. He was the third-best fantasy quarterback in 2008 and should finish Top 5 once again in 2009.

### 6. Donovan McNabb - PHI

6-2, 226, age: 33

year	team	patt	pcmp	pyds	ptds	int	ryds	rtds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ	555	338	3774	25	15	176	2	303	5
2008	PHI	571	345	3916	23	11	147	2	304	7
2007	PHI	473	291	3324	19	7	236	0	259	13
2006	PHI	316	180	2647	18	6	212	3	238	13

**The Good** - McNabb is one of a handful of veteran QBs capable of finishing atop the fantasy rankings under ideal circumstances. He's coming off his best fantasy season since 2004, throwing for almost 4,000 yards to go along with 23 TDs and just 11 interceptions. With a strong arm, a rebuilt offensive line and complete mastery of the playbook, McNabb is positioned for a big year. DeSean Jackson should emerge as a 1,000-yard threat in his second season. If rookie Jeremy Maclin can provide an explosive after-the-catch option, McNabb could deliver Top 5 numbers including 4,000 yards passing and 25+ touchdowns.

**The Bad** - If either Stacy Andrews or Jason Peters struggle as the Eagles' new tackles, McNabb could suffer undue pressure - something that affected his play in 2007. If Brian Westbrook suffers further decline, the entire cohesion of the Eagles offense could grind to a halt, particularly given the lack

of a proven veteran backup at RB.

**The Bottom Line** - It's interesting that McNabb enjoyed his best season in five years last year, considering he was benched midway through the Ravens game and could conceivably have been done as the Eagles starter had Kevin Kolb played better. But that's ancient history now and McNabb is healthy, happy, and has the deepest collection of offensive weapons in his career. As long as the rebuilt offensive line gels quickly, there is no reason to expect anything less than a Top 10 fantasy season with the potential for more.

### 7. Philip Rivers - SD

6-5, 228, age: 28

year	team	patt	pcmp	pyds	ptds	int	ryds	rtds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ	490	323	3793	27	13	75	1	298	6
2008	SD	478	312	4009	34	11	84	0	334	5
2007	SD	460	277	3152	21	15	33	1	236	15
2006	SD	460	284	3388	22	9	49	0	253	9

**The Good** - Philip Rivers exceeded everyone's expectations last year when he led the league in passer rating and touchdown passes and was the No. 3 fantasy QB. Rivers broke the 4,000-yard barrier for the first time last season, and threw 34 touchdowns compared to just 11 interceptions. Most impressively, he had an elite season while finishing just No. 11 in pass attempts (without any significant rushing statistics). If the Chargers continue the transition from running team to passing team and Rivers gets over 500 attempts in 2009, he could improve on his 2008 fantasy stats. Vincent Jackson has established himself as a solid NFL WR1, and Antonio Gates should be healthy (after struggling through toe and hip injuries in 2008).

**The Bad** - Rivers had his best year as a pro in 2008, but it could have been an aberration rather than a sign of things to come. He lacks the arm strength of many of the other upper-tier QBs. While Vincent Jackson appears to be coming into his own, Chris Chambers disappeared over the second half of 2008 and the other WRs (Malcom Floyd and Buster Davis) are unproven. Antonio Gates and LaDainian Tomlinson have been nagged by injuries and may never be the players they were earlier in their careers. If the offense around him regresses, Rivers could regress to his 2007 season level.

**The Bottom Line** - Rivers is an underdog to repeat his Top 5 performance of a year ago, but is a favorite to finish in the Top 10. The Chargers still have a high-powered offense that should score a lot of points, and QBs on high-scoring offenses are nearly always good fantasy bets. In particular, the Chargers should continue to enjoy success in the red zone with their bevy of large receivers (Gates, Jackson, and Floyd are like a basketball team's front court), so Rivers should comfortably toss 25+ TDs again. Expect a fantasy finish somewhere in the 4-9 range.

### 8. Tony Romo - DAL

6-2, 219, age: 29

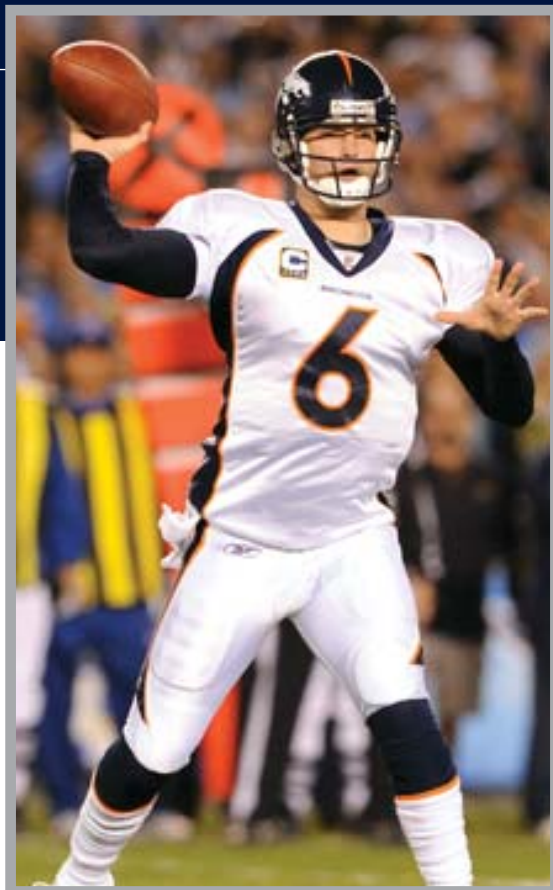
year	team	patt	pcmp	pyds	ptds	int	ryds	rtds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ	525	333	3712	23	18	96	1	275	8
2008	DAL	450	276	3448	26	14	41	0	266	10
2007	DAL	520	335	4211	36	19	129	2	360	2
2006	DAL	337	220	2903	19	13	102	0	218	19

**The Good** - To hear some people tell it, Tony Romo flopped in 2008. Yet, in 13 games he threw for 3,448 yards and 26 touchdowns. He was a Top 10 fantasy passer in spite of miss-

## Player Spotlight:

# QB JAY CUTLER CHICAGO BEARS

by Jason Wood – Senior Writer, Footballguys.com



**J**ay Cutler grew up a Chicago Bears fan, but he never had reason to think his NFL fortunes would ever coincide with his childhood fandom. After all, teams simply don't let franchise passers go. It's so rare to find a true franchise cornerstone that no organization would be foolish enough to let one go in his prime. Cutler will be a Denver Bronco for life. Right?

Yikes, if you're a Broncos fan reading this let me apologize for the flippant recap but let's be honest, this offseason was shocking. Regardless of where you place the blame, the simple truth is Josh McDaniels and Jay Cutler couldn't co-exist. The Bears traded two 1sts, a 3rd, a 5th and Kyle Orton for the 26-year old star. In Chicago expectations are sky high. For years, Bears fans have thought they were only a QB away from Super Bowl contention.

**Jay Cutler is the best quarterback in modern Bears history.** Sid Luckman is a Hall of Famer, and I'm not going to try to compare his achievements in the 1940s to offensive numbers of today's game. But Luckman's career ended in 1950, which means Jay Cutler is the best QB the Windy City has seen in almost 60 years. Don't believe me? Take a look at the Bears Top 5 passers of the modern era:

1. Jim Harbaugh ('87-'93) – 89 games, 58.2% completion, 11,567 yards, 50 TDs, 56 INTs
2. Jim McMahon ('82-'88) – 66 games, 57.8% completion, 11,203 yards, 67 TDs, 56 INTs
3. Erik Kramer ('94-'98) – 49 games, 58.6% completion, 10,582 yards, 63 TDs, 45 INTs
4. Billy Wade ('61-'66) – 59 games, 54.5% completion, 9,958 yards, 68 TDs, 66 INTs
5. Ed Brown ('54-'61) – 98 games, 48.7% completion, 9,698 yards, 63 TDs, 88 INTs

Compare that to Jay Cutler's career numbers:

- Jay Cutler ('06-'08) – 37 games, 62.5% completion, 9,024 yards, 54 TDs, 37 INTs

But just because Jay Cutler is the

best Chicago QB in generations doesn't mean he's a great bet to lead your fantasy team to a championship. In fact, there are a lot of reasons to think that Jay Cutler will be more valuable to the Bears than he will be to fantasy owners.

**The Offensive Line** – The Bears offensive line only allowed 29 sacks last year (13th best) and signed Orlando Pace to improve the left tackle position this offseason, but that can't compare to the Broncos OL, which allowed a league-low 12 sacks.

**Receiving Corps** – It's fair to say the Bears receivers will look better with Jay Cutler throwing to them, and Earl Bennett and the pair of rookies are particularly attractive sleepers. But it's equally fair to say that Brandon Marshall is demonstrably better than any Bears receiver and Eddie Royal may be, too.

**Run/Pass Balance** – The Broncos threw 620 passes last year while the Bears have averaged 500 pass attempts during Lovie Smith's tenure. It's easier to think the Bears will throw more with Cutler under center, but realistically he'll still throw fewer than 550 passes.

**Offensive Coaching** – Mike Shanahan is a two-time Super Bowl champion and offensive guru, while Bears OC Ron Turner is, shall we say, decidedly less

### Positives

- Jay Cutler is a strong-armed, accurate passer in his prime
- The Bears have above average receiving options at TE and RB
- The Bears offensive line is above average, with depth

### Negatives

- Ron Turner is a conservative play-caller
- The Bears wide receivers aren't as good as the Broncos
- Expect the Bears to have a more balanced run/pass ratio

accomplished. Turner is infamous for being an ultra-conservative play-caller which doesn't play into Jay Cutler's strengths.

### Final Thoughts

Jay Cutler is one of the best young quarterbacks in the league. The fact the Bears were able to acquire him, in his prime, was a coup and sets the Bears up as a title contender for years to come. But is what's good for Bears fans necessarily what's good for fantasy owners? Even though Cutler should win more games in Chicago than he did in Denver, it's not clear he's going to be a better fantasy player. The Bears run a more conservative offense, maintain a more balanced run/pass ratio, have a less imposing offensive line, and don't have proven WRs on the roster. Cutler should elevate the Bears offense to new levels, but the aforementioned factors should crimp his upside. Cutler could be a Top 5 fantasy passer on talent alone, but more likely slots as a rock solid QB2 who should finish in the 10-12 range this year.

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ing almost a month with a finger injury. The best case for Romo is a return to the Top 5, where he finished in 2007. But that will only happen if the Cowboys receiving corps takes shape quickly, which means Roy Williams must approximate the 1,000-yard receiver he was in Detroit and not the marginal contributor he was as a Cowboy last year. Romo is an accurate passer (63.6 percent career completion rate) who loves to throw downfield (8.1 career yards per attempt), and it's entirely possible that he'll benefit from addition by subtraction (i.e., Terrell Owens).

**The Bad** - The worst case would be if fantasy owners had to count on Romo in the NFL playoffs, but lucky for us our fantasy playoffs take place during the NFL's regular season. In all seriousness, the questions for Romo are more about his supporting cast than his own ability. Williams has enormous shoes to fill and the rest of the WR corps is far from a sure bet. If they all struggle in their roles, even someone as talented as Romo could struggle to be a consistent fantasy star.

**The Bottom Line** - Last year Romo missed three games and still finished as the 10th-best fantasy QB. With Owens gone, it's reasonable to expect the team's passing numbers to take a hit, but Romo is far too talented to completely fall off the map. Over a full 16-game season, as long as TE Jason Witten and the talented trio of RBs are healthy, Romo is still a solid bet for Top 10 production. Don't pay Top 5 prices for Romo, but if he falls into the QB10-12 range, he's not only worth rostering, he offers tremendous upside.

## 9. Jay Cutler - CHI

6-4, 225, age: 26

year	team	pass	pcmp	pyds	ptds	int	ryds	rtds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ	530	321	3498	23	16	162	1	273	9
2008	DEN	616	384	4526	25	18	200	2	340	3
2007	DEN	467	297	3497	20	14	205	1	267	11
2006	DEN	137	81	1001	9	5	18	0	83	40

See Cutler's full-page Spotlight on Page 99.

## 10. Carson Palmer - CIN

6-5, 230, age: 30

year	team	pass	pcmp	pyds	ptds	int	ryds	rtds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ	505	313	3560	22	15	20	0	253	14
2008	CIN	129	75	731	3	4	38	0	48	41
2007	CIN	575	373	4131	26	20	10	0	292	9
2006	CIN	520	324	4035	28	13	37	0	304	5

**The Good** - Palmer returns with a vengeance this season. All reports from the summer are true and he's healthier than ever. Although T.J. Houshmandzadeh is no longer with the team, the Bengals added veteran Laveranues Coles during the offseason to make up for the receiving gap. Coles is a solid veteran who knows how to break apart opposing defenses. This frees up Chad Ochocinco to do what he does best: make big plays. With the addition of a big OT in No. 6 overall rookie pick Andre Smith, Palmer gets some much needed protection.

**The Bad** - If Palmer is healthy, he'll be on the field. If he's on the field, he'll be throwing. Yet setting the league on fire with attempts and incompletions isn't going to win you any fantasy games. In a 'how bad could it get?' scenario, Palmer could try his best, but fail to make a bad team good by himself. The Bengals running game flames out and defenses stack five and six DBs against Palmer. He finishes the season as a

fringe Top 20 QB, and is a total let down given the price you'll pay for him.

**The Bottom Line** - Palmer has all the potential to be the comeback kid this year. Ochocinco seems to be minding his Ps and Qs, and a crafty veteran like Coles can only add to the mix. The big rookie OT helps protect Palmer, and he shakes off the rust early and hits his stride by Game 1. Look for Palmer to return to his Top 10 form and prove to be a solid addition to any fantasy roster.

## 11. Matt Ryan - ATL

6-4, 228, age: 24

year	team	pass	pcmp	pyds	ptds	int	ryds	rtds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ	446	278	3385	21	15	105	1	255	13
2008	ATL	434	265	3440	16	11	104	1	241	15

**The Good** - Matt Ryan has the potential to be an elite passer, and the addition of TE Tony Gonzalez might put the Falcons' offense on a par with the best units in the NFL. With a year of experience under his belt, Ryan's confidence and comfort level will be high from Day 1.

**The Bad** - As we saw with Jeremy Shockey in New Orleans last season, team chemistry is a funny thing that can backfire even when a Pro Bowl level talent like Gonzalez is involved. Ryan could fail to improve if Gonzalez flounders or even throw less (the Falcons' rushing attack is pretty awesome). If Roddy White were to miss some time due to injury, there isn't another top-tier receiver on the squad that could fill in.

**The Bottom Line** - Ryan exploded onto the scene last year, leading the Falcons to the playoffs. He had one of the most impressive rookie seasons in history, completing 61 percent of his passes for 3,440 yards and 16 TDs. The team has added Gonzalez at the TE position, boasts Roddy White and Michael Jenkins at WR, and has a good pass-catching back in Jerious Norwood. Ryan has a wide array of targets that should allow him to far exceed last year's 16th-place fantasy ranking.

## 12. Matt Schaub - HOU

6-5, 237, age: 28

year	team	pass	pcmp	pyds	ptds	int	ryds	rtds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ	485	311	3676	20	18	92	1	261	12
2008	HOU	380	251	3043	15	10	68	2	221	21
2007	HOU	289	192	2241	9	9	52	0	144	22
2006	ATL	27	18	208	1	2	21	0	14	55

**The Good** - When healthy, Matt Schaub, RB Steve Slaton, and WR Andre Johnson form one of the most dangerous trios in the league. Schaub threw for over 3,000 yards last season in just 10.5 games. He was the No. 5 fantasy QB in terms of points per game. With another year of starting experience under his belt, Schaub could reasonably be a Top 5 fantasy QB this season if he plays 16 games.

**The Bad** - Schaub is not the safest pick. He missed five games with a shoulder injury and concussion in 2007 and another five with an intestinal illness and a knee injury in 2008. Moreover, his production depends not only on his own health but also on that of Andre Johnson and Steve Slaton. The Texans lack depth at the offensive skill positions, so an injury to any of its primary weapons will set the whole offense back quite a bit.

**The Bottom Line** - If Schaub stays healthy, he'll be a fantasy starter. Andre Johnson has developed into a topnotch offensive weapon, and Schaub can make all the throws asked

of him. Of the 10 games he played from start to finish last season, he threw for over 250 yards in eight of them and multiple touchdowns in five of them. Schaub would likely finish in the Top 7 or so range this year if he stays healthy, but concern about his durability will probably drop him just outside the Top 10 QBs in most fantasy drafts.

### 13. Ben Roethlisberger - PIT

6-5, 241, age: 27

year	team	patt	pcmp	pyds	ptds	int	ryds	rtds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ	490	301	3391	23	17	105	2	267	11
2008	PIT	468	280	3308	17	15	101	2	240	16
2007	PIT	404	264	3154	32	11	204	2	307	6
2006	PIT	469	280	3513	18	23	98	2	246	10

**The Good** - Another year and another championship for Ben Roethlisberger in 2008. However, fantasy owners that expected a repeat of his 2007 numbers were sorely disappointed. Two years ago Big Ben was a Top 6 fantasy QB, but a new offensive philosophy coupled with a tougher schedule made for a barely Top 20 performance in. The Steelers plan to protect Roethlisberger better this year and give him more time to make plays through the air. Even though Nate Washington left for Tennessee, the Steelers are expecting Limas Sweed to step in as a deep threat and red zone target.

**The Bad** - Pittsburgh is not known for an awesome air attack. With their stifling defense they only need their offense to move the ball and eat up the clock. Big Ben has only had more than 18 TD passes once (32 in 2007) and usually throws 17 TDs on the season. The Steelers will once again be making a championship run, and with that tremendous defense it should be more of the same for the passing attack in 2009.

**The Bottom Line** - The Steelers want to win games with a tough defense and a clock-chewing ground game which leaves little room for Roethlisberger to put up big numbers unless the team gets in a shootout. Big Ben needs a better offensive line because he took a beating week in and week out in 2008. Sure, he can make big plays when the called play breaks down, but too often he was running for his life behind a porous line. Throwing for 20 TDs would be an improvement for Roethlisberger, and on this Steelers team that could be his ceiling.

### 14. David Garrard - JAX

6-1, 237, age: 31

year	team	patt	pcmp	pyds	ptds	int	ryds	rtds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ	500	312	3375	19	14	264	2	269	10
2008	JAX	535	335	3620	15	13	322	2	272	9
2007	JAX	325	208	2509	18	3	182	1	219	16
2006	JAX	241	145	1735	10	9	250	0	143	28

**The Good** - Since David Garrard took the reins in Jacksonville midway through the 2006 season, his top receivers have been Matt Jones, Reggie Williams, Dennis Northcutt, and Ernest Wilford - not exactly an all-star cast. This season he'll have seven-time Pro Bowler Torry Holt in the mix. Holt had a down year in 2008, but he still outperformed each of Jacksonville's WRs. If Holt can bounce back and give Garrard a legitimate playmaker to throw to on the outside (and if the Jaguars' offensive line can offer him some protection), Garrard possibly could challenge for a spot among the Top 5 fantasy QBs.

**The Bad** - One might think that, barring injury, 2009 could not be any worse for Garrard than was 2008. The Jaguars'

offensive line was in shambles last season, and Garrard lacked a go-to receiver. Yet, he still finished as the No. 11 fantasy QB. Can his downside be any worse than that? Actually, yes. While the Jaguars' season was a huge disappointment, the Jaguars' did face more prevent defenses, trailing in the fourth quarter, than they are likely to see this year. If Holt is washed up and Mike Walker isn't yet ready for prime time, the Jaguars' receiving corps could be worse than it was last year.

**The Bottom Line** - Garrard should have a fantasy season comparable to last year's. Holt will provide some help, but he isn't the superstar he used to be. The offensive line should be better, but that will probably make a bigger difference in the running game than in the passing game. The Jaguars probably won't play from behind as often, but if they can better sustain drives, they'll have more total offensive plays. All in all, we can probably expect comparable yardage numbers and 15 to 20 TDs.

### 15. Eli Manning - NYG

6-4, 218, age: 28

year	team	patt	pcmp	pyds	ptds	int	ryds	rtds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ	500	279	3125	22	15	14	1	237	18
2008	NYG	479	289	3238	21	10	10	1	243	14
2007	NYG	529	297	3336	23	20	69	1	252	14
2006	NYG	522	301	3244	24	18	21	0	242	11

**The Good** - Eli Manning had almost no chance of matching his 2007 achievements last year. After all, how do you follow up a Super Bowl win and marrying your long-time sweetheart? But last year was hardly a disappointment. Manning led his team to a personal-best 12 wins, completed 60 percent of his passes for the first time, and threw at least 21 TDs for the fourth consecutive season. Perhaps most impressive, Manning cut his interception total in half, throwing just 10 picks. Manning's best case is a Top 5 fantasy finish, something he accomplished in 2005. In order for that to happen, the group of young receivers led by Domenik Hixon, Steve Smith, Hakeem Nicks and Ramses Barden will need to replace Plaxico Burress' incomparable productivity.

**The Bad** - Another season, another December swoon. Manning may have had legitimate reasons to struggle in December, but that's little solace for fantasy owners who had to start him in their league's playoffs. Without Plaxico Burress to win jump balls, it's hard to believe Manning won't regress a bit in 2009 and that means sub-60 percent passing and 15-20 interceptions. That also means Manning is, once again, a quality fantasy backup but not a worthwhile fantasy starter.

**The Bottom Line** - Manning has the experience and track record to comfortably expect Top 12 to 15 numbers at the worst. The question fantasy owners must ask themselves is whether the youth movement at WR can overcome the loss of Burress and whether any of that matters in December. Manning should be viewed as an excellent QB2 because he could put up QB1 numbers in any given week, but don't reach for him expecting QB1 production.

### 16. Matt Hasselbeck - SEA

6-4, 220, age: 34

year	team	patt	pcmp	pyds	ptds	int	ryds	rtds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ	510	298	3188	22	14	88	1	248	15
2008	SEA	209	109	1216	5	10	69	0	78	36
2007	SEA	562	352	3966	28	12	79	0	306	7
2006	SEA	371	210	2442	18	15	110	0	190	22

**The Good** - The Seahawks had a chance to select Mark Sanchez in this year's draft but passed on the opportunity, leaving Matt Hasselbeck with a hold on the starting QB position in Seattle. He has been a Top 10 fantasy QB when he has stayed healthy. Over the last seven years, Hasselbeck has been nagged by injuries during the even years but has been able to stay healthy during the odd years. If you're superstitious – this is an odd year. T.J. Houshmandzadeh gives him a true WR1 for the first time since Darrell Jackson left, and the combination of Houshmandzadeh and TE John Carlson will provide a pair of solid red zone targets. A Top 10 season is well within reason if Hasselbeck can stay healthy.

**The Bad** - Hasselbeck is six months older than Peyton Manning – no spring chicken, but the Seahawks are convinced he has at least a few good years left in him. Nonetheless, unlike Manning, Hasselbeck has struggled with injuries in about half of his seasons as a Seahawk. Concern about his durability will likely drop him down to the QB15-QB20 range in most fantasy drafts this season, and if last year's back injury (which plagued him from Week 5 on) continues to give him trouble, he could easily fail to live up to even that discounted draft position.

**The Bottom Line** - Hasselbeck has a high upside and a low downside. If he stays healthy, he should be good for at least 3,300 yards and 22 touchdowns, and perhaps substantially better than that. But his frequent assortment of injuries over the past eight seasons make him difficult to count on as a starter.

## 17. Matt Cassel - KC

6-5, 230, age: 27

year	team	pass	pcmp	pyds	ptds	int	ryds	rtds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ	515	287	3116	20	15	198	1	247	16
2008	NE	516	327	3693	21	11	271	2	297	8
2007	NE	7	4	38	0	1	12	1	8	70
2006	NE	8	5	32	0	0	4	0	2	64

See Cassel's full-page Face-off on Page 103.

## 18. Trent Edwards - BUF

6-4, 220, age: 26

year	team	pass	pcmp	pyds	ptds	int	ryds	rtds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ	450	280	3128	20	15	106	1	238	17
2008	BUF	374	245	2699	11	10	117	3	199	22
2007	BUF	269	151	1630	7	8	49	0	106	30

**The Good** - Entering his third year in the NFL, Trent Edwards has already started 23 games, but he is still a young QB who should continue to improve as he gains more experience. The Bills have not given him a lot to work with in the past as they had Lee Evans at WR and not a whole lot else. This year, however, the Bills made one of the offseason's biggest headlines when they signed Terrell Owens to a one-year contract. Adding one of the league's elite receivers should have a dramatic impact on the Bills offense. With two of the best WRs in the league at his disposal along with a deep group of RBs to keep the chains moving, Edwards could be on the verge of a breakout season.

**The Bad** - Although Edwards has shown some promise as a game manager and has a high completion percentage, he does not take a lot of chances and frequently looks for a checkdown when a bigger play might be available. He's also limited by the conservative nature of the Bills coaching staff. Owens doesn't have a great history of getting along with his QBs and

coaches, so we'll have to see what type of chemistry he and Edwards can develop. If they don't click early and the season gets off to a bad start, things could spiral downward very quickly. The biggest concern is probably the Bills offensive line, which will have three new starters this year after trading away Pro Bowl LT Jason Peters.

**The Bottom Line** - In 24 career games, Edwards has only accounted for 21 total TDs, so he hasn't been a very productive fantasy option up to this point. In his favor, however, most young QBs take time to develop, and the Bills have not had much talent for him to throw to. Neither of those challenges should hold him back anymore as he is at the point in his career where he should be able to lead an offense and the addition of Owens has dramatically upgraded the Bills talent level. If the line can play well and Edwards stays healthy all year, he has a chance to be a reliable QB2 this year.

## 19. Kyle Orton - DEN

6-4, 220, age: 27

year	team	pass	pcmp	pyds	ptds	int	ryds	rtds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ	420	262	2881	20	13	40	0	215	24
2008	CHI	465	272	2972	18	12	49	3	232	18
2007	CHI	79	42	475	3	2	-1	0	34	55

**The Good** - Kyle Orton comes to Denver from Chicago and suddenly finds himself surrounded by superior talent. The Broncos have a better offensive line, better wide receivers, and arguably a better ground game than the Bears which could mean that Orton is primed for a banner year. Add in the fact that he will now be coached by QB guru Josh McDaniels and it only enhances his potential production. In 2008 Jay Cutler had a phenomenal season in Denver, but Orton is no Cutler. While he may not throw for as many yards (Denver could feature Knowshon Moreno more than expected) Orton could be a more efficient QB - especially in the red zone.

**The Bad** - The Broncos brought in Chris Simms to compete for the QB position and it could be a battle that goes back and forth throughout the season. Simms has reportedly looked very good in mini camp and he has a much stronger arm than Orton. Head Coach Josh McDaniels may vacillate back and forth between the two until one emerges. Orton looked good in the first half of the 2008 season, but after an ankle injury (that he, perhaps mistakenly, played through) he looked like a below average QB. Orton should be better protected behind the Denver offensive line, but if the pressure gets to him he usually falters.

**The Bottom Line** - We expect Orton to win the starting job in Denver, although it could take him until the end of training camp to do so. We've seen what Orton can do with average weapons and average protection, so it's not out of the question to expect his numbers to match - or perhaps improve upon - his 2008 performance.

## 20. Jake Delhomme - CAR

6-2, 205, age: 34

year	team	pass	pcmp	pyds	ptds	int	ryds	rtds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ	436	250	3008	19	14	28	0	215	23
2008	CAR	414	246	3288	15	12	21	2	226	20
2007	CAR	86	55	626	8	1	26	0	65	43
2006	CAR	431	263	2805	17	11	12	0	198	21

**The Good** - Jake Delhomme is certainly capable of a big season – he threw for 3,800+ yards and 29 TDs in 2004. In his

# Matt Cassel Face-off

In a Footballguys.com Face-off, two writers provide an in-depth look at a player by examining either his high side or his low side. Whose argument is stronger? That is left up to you. For dozens more Face-offs, visit Footballguys.com.

## The High Side

by Andy Hicks

**M**att Cassel will be one of the more polarizing players in fantasy drafts this year. There will be many people in every draft who do not want to touch him. This is to your advantage. The case against Cassel is relatively easy to make:

- 1) Cassel is a system QB.
- 2) He had Randy Moss & Wes Welker among others to account for his "successful" season.
- 3) He moves from an 11-5 team to a 2-14 team.
- 4) His new team lost their best receiver.
- 5) Tyler Thigpen is ready to start at a moment's notice.

I'm sure that there are more issues that could be dredged up, particularly from a statistical point of view, but his passer rating was Top 10 in the league and all of this was achieved by a player who hadn't started since high school. Despite a slow start last year, Cassel found his groove and ended the season as the eighth ranked fantasy QB. He threw back-to-back 400-yard games and passed for at least three touchdowns in five games. His touchdown to interception ratio was impressive and his ability to run the ball added an additional two touchdowns and almost 300 yards. In short Cassel did more than was expected of him.

**Let's look at the move to Kansas City and remove the fear factor.**

Last year despite a conservative offense, and let's verify that by quoting former coach Herm Edwards "If we score 21 points, I'll say, 'Whoa, we scored a lot of points.' Twenty-one points – that's a lot of points." Kansas City still ranked in the Top 10 in pass attempts and passing TDs, higher than New England. The introduction of new head coach, former Arizona offensive coordinator Todd Haley, should give a boost to the offense, particularly the passing game. The Cardinals ranked third in points scored, with 136 more than Kansas City.

The departure of Tony Gonzalez to the Falcons will hurt, but they have plenty of other options for Cassel. Dwayne Bowe is quickly making a name for himself as one of the best young receivers in the game, and Mark Bradley came from the scrap heap to become an excellent complement to Bowe. The Chiefs have good pass-catching backs in Larry Johnson & Jamaal Charles, and they also have high hopes for the probable replacement of Tony Gonzalez, last year's third-round pick Brad Cottam.

A lot of people when rating Cassel don't seem to account for possible improvement in a guy who hadn't played competitively for seven years. Cassel's first season as a starter is as good if not better than almost any other quarterback ever to play the game. His pass completion percentage was Top 10 all-time for a first season starting quarterback, with mainly established greats such as Joe Montana, Brett Favre and Tom Brady ahead of him. Drafting Matt Cassel to be your starting QB would be risky, but as your backup or part of a committee he'll be very useful.

## The Low Side

by Cecil Lammey

**M**att Cassel has backed up some of the best QBs in the game today – Carson Palmer while at USC and Tom Brady during his time in New England. Many wondered how he would perform if he was forced into the starting lineup, and in 2008 we got to see that after Tom Brady went down in Week 1. This offseason Cassel was given the franchise tag by the Patriots, traded to Kansas City for a second round pick, and is now the main man for the Chiefs as they begin the rebuilding process.

Last season Cassel finished as the No. 8 fantasy QB, and many people are expecting him to do the same – or even more – this year. As Joe Bryant likes to say, things change fast around here so you have to stay on top of the happenings in the NFL. First off, Cassel likely had a career year in 2008, and as history tells us repeatedly, very few players repeat or improve on their numbers after such a performance. So why wouldn't Matt Cassel at least come close to those numbers again? Let's look into this a little further.

Last season Cassel struggled in the pre-season and some thought that he might lose his roster spot to the Patriots 2008 third-round pick Kevin O'Connell. The Patriots didn't feel they could trust a rookie behind Tom Brady and kept Cassel on the roster which proved to be their saving grace when Bernard Pollard rolled up on Brady's knee. He looked rough the first several weeks of the season, but Josh McDaniels started to open things up and by the middle of the year he was running the offense effectively. However, even with elite talent surrounding him, too often Cassel looked painfully average.

He likes to lock on to his receivers and tends to hold on to the ball too long which was evident because he was sacked 47 times in 2008. Now he goes to a team in Kansas City that doesn't have the same type of weapons as New England, let alone the same type of offensive line. He goes from throwing to Randy Moss and Wes Welker to throwing to Dwayne Bowe and Mark Bradley. That is a huge difference that will show up in his final numbers. Todd Haley is his new head coach and he did great things with the Arizona offense – but Cassel is not Kurt Warner. What is the biggest difference between Cassel and Warner (or Tom Brady)? It's quickness when going through reads and decisiveness when throwing the football. Being with a new team, with less dangerous weapons, and more pressure on his shoulders = Matt Cassel struggling to match his numbers from 2008.



second year back from Tommy John surgery, we could expect improvement after an uneven 2008 season. Steve Smith should be available for all 16 games this year, which should help Delhomme get off to a better start. If he can put together a few more outstanding games this season, Delhomme could outperform his draft spot significantly.

**The Bad** - Delhomme's numbers could come in below last year's mark as he plays in a very run-oriented offense these days. It's hard to see him getting back to his mid-decade form, despite the big contract. Muhsin Muhammad is aging and the Panthers didn't upgrade the WR position during the draft leaving a rather thin selection of targets for Delhomme to choose from (neither Dante Rosario nor Jeff King impressed from the TE position last year, either).

**The Bottom Line** - Delhomme signed a \$42.5 million deal with Carolina (\$20 million guaranteed) during the offseason, so he is entrenched as the starter. His numbers last season were solid considering he was coming off major elbow surgery, as he finished at No. 19 among all fantasy QBs (in the middle of fantasy QB2 range). That's a good spot for him as the Panthers love to grind out the game with their running backs, limiting Delhomme's ceiling as a passer (he's had fewer than 450 passing attempts in each of his last four seasons).

## 21. Joe Flacco - BAL

6-6, 236, age: 24

year	team	patt	pcmp	pyds	ptds	int	ryds	rtds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ	452	280	3074	17	13	176	1	232	19
2008	BAL	428	257	2971	14	12	180	2	227	19

**The Good** - The theory goes, the biggest leap forward a quarterback will make is between his first and second seasons as a starter. Considering Joe Flacco took his team to within a game of the Super Bowl, a significant increase in productivity would be music to Baltimore's ears. Flacco will go into the season with three legitimate runners to help the ground game, all of his receivers back in town, and an additional tight end in L.J. Smith. What's more, in an interesting twist, the defensive losses for Baltimore could be Flacco's gain. If the Ravens play fewer close, smash-mouth style games, the potential could be there for the team to air it out a bit more. He has already proven that he throws a very good deep ball - why not use it a bit more?

**The Bad** - Flacco's numbers were solid, but not eye-popping, a year ago. Obviously it's difficult to say anything negative about his performance, but a case can be made that the defense and running game carried the team to the AFC title game. It could be argued that the best thing Flacco did was to not mess it all up. While he did make plays and didn't make a ton of mistakes, he'll also enter his second season with expectations now. Had he turned in a typical rookie season, fans would be looking for improvement. The fact that he had an unprecedented rookie season means that anything short of significant improvement might be seen as regression.

**The Bottom Line** - The training wheels should come off in 2009 as the Ravens look to find out if Flacco can join the ranks of the elite in Year 2. He'll likely be given a bit more freedom within the offense, as he showed signs of that a year ago. His counting numbers (yards, touchdowns) should increase as the team takes to the air a bit more. It wouldn't be surprising in the least to see him enjoy a Ben Roethlisberger-type arc to his career.

## 22. Jason Campbell - WAS

6-5, 228, age: 28

year	team	patt	pcmp	pyds	ptds	int	ryds	rtds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ	465	274	2930	16	9	200	1	228	21
2008	WAS	506	315	3245	13	6	258	1	240	17
2007	WAS	417	250	2700	12	11	185	1	196	18
2006	WAS	207	110	1297	10	6	107	0	110	33

**The Good** - After seven offensive playbooks in nine seasons, Jason Campbell has to be happy to enter the 2009 season with the same coaches, supporting cast and playbook as last year. After completing a career-best 62.3 percent of his passes and throwing the fewest interceptions per pass in the league, Campbell has something to build upon. If he can shake off the team's overtures to replace him and show a willingness to take more chances downfield, this year, Campbell could surprise and be a fringe Top 12 passer. His athleticism and mobility (258 yards rushing in 2008) add upside beyond what should be solid but not spectacular passing stats.

**The Bad** - Campbell must have felt like persona non grata at times this offseason, as the Redskins were linked to Jay Cutler rumors and then were allegedly interested in drafting Mark Sanchez. It's hard to believe the Redskins view Campbell as the long-term answer anymore. If Campbell lets that fact affect his confidence all bets are off. If the team's young receivers fail to improve in their second year, or Campbell continues to play ultra-conservatively, he could be among the least compelling fantasy options.

**The Bottom Line** - Campbell is a difficult player to project this year. Realistically, neither Todd Collins nor Colt Brennan should threaten his playing time. But then again, coaches can make surprising decisions particularly if management doesn't feel Campbell has a long-term future in Washington. The real key for Campbell will be whether his supporting cast develops.

## 23. Chad Pennington - MIA

6-3, 225, age: 33

year	team	patt	pcmp	pyds	ptds	int	ryds	rtds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ	470	299	3173	18	11	48	0	224	22
2008	MIA	476	321	3653	19	7	62	1	264	11
2007	NYJ	260	179	1765	10	9	32	1	128	27
2006	NYJ	485	313	3352	17	16	109	0	231	16

**The Good** - The best-case scenario for Chad Pennington in 2009 is the same production as he enjoyed in 2008. He had an unbelievable season, but with a killer schedule in front of the Dolphins this year, it will be difficult to expect more than what he accomplished in 2008.

**The Bad** - Pennington struggles to live up to the spectacular 2008 campaign and slides back down to earth. He doesn't complete 67 percent of his passes and throws for fewer yards. In addition the Dolphins fall out of playoff contention thanks to a murderous schedule and second-year pivot Chad Henne as well as rookie Pat White earn some second half playing time as the Dolphins prepare for the future.

**The Bottom Line** - Pennington may struggle to match 3,600+ passing yards this season, but he'll still have a high completion percentage and may get a few more touchdown passes. All things considered, he'll have marginal value as a fantasy starter but possibly good value as a backup.

## 24. Shaun Hill - SF

6-3, 226, age: 29

year	team	patt	pcmp	pyds	ptds	int	ryds	rtds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ	445	264	3026	18	16	144	1	228	20
2008	SF	288	181	2046	13	8	115	2	170	27
2007	SF	79	54	501	5	1	14	1	51	48

**The Good** - To illustrate Hill's fantasy potential, if his 2008 stats were pro-rated over 16 games, he would have been a Top 6 fantasy QB. Adding hot shot rookie WR Michael Crabtree and FA Brandon Jones to an otherwise intact passing game, and Hill could be real value in fantasy drafts.

**The Bad** - Shaun Hill will need to adapt to another new offense in 2009 as he'll have his sixth different offensive coordinator in the last six years. Another concern is that Hill has finished the last two years as a starter on 49ers teams that were out of contention. How will he play in early season games that really matter? With the departure of Mike Martz, the passing game is also likely to be scaled down under the more conservative Jimmy Raye.

**The Bottom Line** - At the conclusion of 2007, Shaun Hill demonstrated the ability to post solid fantasy stats. He was rewarded with an extended contract and the chance to win the starting job outright in 2008. He struggled however to adapt to the Martz playbook and it wasn't until Mike Singletary took over the head coaching role that Hill was given an extended run to close out 2008. As for Hill's fantasy prospects this year, with the arrival of Jimmy Raye expect the primary focus to be the running game. The drafting of Michael Crabtree gives him a big play weapon, but is Crabtree going to be a big contributor in his rookie season? There are a lot of questions marks surrounding Hill, but the promise of his upside is tantalizing.

## 25. JaMarcus Russell - OAK

6-6, 255, age: 24

year	team	patt	pcmp	pyds	ptds	int	ryds	rtds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ	420	241	2667	14	10	94	1	195	26
2008	OAK	368	198	2423	13	8	127	1	184	24
2007	OAK	66	36	373	2	4	4	0	23	60

**The Bottom Line** - This is the year that JaMarcus Russell starts to earn that No. 1 overall draft pick. He started to "get it" at the end of the 2008 season, and now with better WRs he should have the best season of his career. Over 3,000 yards passing with around 15 passing TDs certainly isn't out of the question for the big signal caller.

## 26. Marc Bulger - STL

6-3, 210, age: 32

year	team	patt	pcmp	pyds	ptds	int	ryds	rtds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ	445	246	2715	14	14	34	0	181	29
2008	STL	440	251	2720	11	13	41	0	173	26
2007	STL	378	221	2392	11	15	13	0	150	21
2006	STL	588	370	4301	24	8	44	0	307	3

**The Bottom Line** - Based on Marc Bulger's previous accomplishments, he is worth considering as a low-end QB2 in 12-team fantasy leagues. But with so many unproven players he'll have to rely on, playing in a new system that may take a while to jell; he is no better than a late-round flyer.

## 27. Sage Rosenfels - MIN

6-4, 216, age: 31

year	team	patt	pcmp	pyds	ptds	int	ryds	rtds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ	365	219	2427	15	12	70	0	176	30
2008	HOU	174	116	1431	6	10	37	0	89	35
2007	HOU	240	154	1684	15	12	51	1	143	24
2006	HOU	39	27	265	3	1	5	0	25	53

**The Bottom Line** - Without question, the Vikings were in desperate need of an upgrade at QB. That said, only time will tell if Sage Rosenfels is the answer. He does have a swagger about him and has had some success in the past (15 touch-down passes in 2007). However, he throws too many interceptions and makes some questionable decisions on the field. Obviously, he'll also need Brett Favre to stay retired.

## 28. Kerry Collins - TEN

6-5, 240, age: 37

year	team	patt	pcmp	pyds	ptds	int	ryds	rtds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ	410	234	2558	15	10	37	0	182	29
2008	TEN	415	242	2676	12	7	49	0	180	25
2007	TEN	82	50	531	0	0	-3	0	26	57
2006	TEN	90	42	549	1	6	0	0	25	52

**The Bottom Line** - Kerry Collins enters this season as the unquestioned starter in Tennessee. He proved last year that he could run this offense effectively and may be asked to do more in 2009. However, the Titans are a run-first team so Collins' production will be very limited by the system.

## 29. Brady Quinn - CLE

6-4, 225, age: 25

year	team	patt	pcmp	pyds	ptds	int	ryds	rtds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ	295	157	1859	11	9	80	1	142	31
2008	CLE	89	45	518	2	2	21	0	34	42
2007	CLE	8	3	45	0	0	0	0	2	74

**The Bottom Line** - Brady Quinn and Derek Anderson will battle in training camp for the starting job. Even if Quinn wins the job, he'll spend part of the season looking over his shoulder. This offense may be one of the NFL's worst and lacks playmakers.

## 30. Mark Sanchez - NYJ

6-2, 227, age: 23

year	team	patt	pcmp	pyds	ptds	int	ryds	rtds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ	438	267	2738	15	14	68	1	196	25

**The Bottom Line** - Mark Sanchez will more than likely win the job in training camp. And just as likely, he will probably fail to wow many people in Year 1. There are precious few rookie quarterbacks who stepped into starting roles and produced. Barring injury, Sanchez will likely start the majority of the season and if all goes according to plan he will start showing signs of progress towards the latter stages of December.

## 31. Byron Leftwich - TB

6-5, 240, age: 29

year	team	patt	pcmp	pyds	ptds	int	ryds	rtds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ	305	173	1983	9	8	51	0	132	32
2008	PIT	36	21	303	2	0	7	1	30	44
2007	ATL	58	32	279	1	2	7	0	17	64
2006	JAX	183	108	1159	7	5	41	2	97	34

**The Bottom Line** - Despite a very impressive performance by rookie Josh Freeman in the preseason, the Bucs should

decide to hold off on the future and name Byron Leftwich the starting QB. The team's best chance to compete in a very competitive NFC South is to go with a QB who has experience and the ability to captain the team - and that's Leftwich. However, don't be surprised to see Freeman get time during the year, especially if Tampa Bay struggles to win games.

### 32. Daunte Culpepper - DET

6-4, 240, age: 32

year	team	patt	pcmp	pyds	ptds	int	ryds	rtds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ	95	49	580	4	4	20	1	49	35
2008	DET	115	60	786	4	6	25	1	58	38
2007	OAK	186	108	1331	5	5	50	3	105	31
2006	MIA	134	81	929	2	3	20	1	59	42

**The Bottom Line** - The Lions were a dreadful team last year and while you cannot pin the blame on Daunte Culpepper, he didn't really provide a spark when called upon. In 2004, Culpepper threw for 4,717 yards and 39 touchdowns and was considered one of the greatest fantasy players in his era. The past four years have been embarrassingly bad, but he is just 32. There is a chance the light bulb flickers on and he regains his past moxie that made him so special. It isn't likely in Detroit however as the Lions have nothing to lose by giving their rookie quarterback all the snaps in 2009.

### 33. Matthew Stafford - DET

6-2, 225, age: 21

year	team	patt	pcmp	pyds	ptds	int	ryds	rtds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ	435	240	2667	16	19	50	1	189	30

**The Bottom Line** - With the immediate success enjoyed by last year's rookies Matt Ryan and Joe Flacco, Detroit will likely be eager to see Matthew Stafford on the field. He doesn't have the benefit of a quality offensive line (like Ryan and Flacco did last season), so the instant gratification will probably not be there. He will likely get hit early and often until he adjusts to the speed of the game.

### 34. Derek Anderson - CLE

6-6, 240, age: 26

year	team	patt	pcmp	pyds	ptds	int	ryds	rtds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ	155	79	946	6	5	22	0	68	33
2008	CLE	283	142	1615	9	8	55	0	114	32
2007	CLE	527	298	3787	29	19	70	3	311	5
2006	CLE	117	66	793	5	8	47	0	56	43

**The Bottom Line** - Derek Anderson and Brady Quinn will go into training camp battling each other for the starting job. Whoever wins will spend time looking over their shoulder, and each could see the field for several games this season.

### 35. Tarvaris Jackson - MIN

6-2, 225, age: 26

year	team	patt	pcmp	pyds	ptds	int	ryds	rtds	FP	FP Rank
2009	PROJ	100	57	625	3	2	78	1	55	34
2008	MIN	149	88	1056	9	2	139	0	101	34
2007	MIN	294	171	1911	9	12	260	3	164	20
2006	MIN	81	47	475	2	4	77	1	41	47

**The Bottom Line** - The 2009 season doesn't look promising for Tarvaris Jackson. The club signed Sage Rosenfels and is flirting with Brett Favre. Either player would likely start over Jackson. However, if Favre stays retired and Rosenfels turns in a couple of stinkers, the Vikings would not hesitate to turn to Jackson.

## Other QBs

### Charlie Batch, PIT

Charlie Batch was lost for the season in 2008 but regains his job as the No. 2 QB in Pittsburgh because Byron Leftwich is now in Tampa Bay. Whenever he's gotten into a game Batch has been an effective game manager but will likely never be a QB to put up more than average fantasy stats in the Pittsburgh system. If the Steelers don't protect Ben Roethlisberger better in 2009, we could see Batch fill in for a game or two while the starter is ailing.

### Kyle Boller, STL

After five years of jumping between starting and riding the pine in Baltimore, Kyle Boller has found a pretty good spot in St. Louis. He is behind Marc Bulger, who has played only one 16-game season in his seven-year career. If Boller does get on the field, he will have a couple of nice targets in Donny Avery and Randy McMichael.

### Kellen Clemens, NYJ

Kellen Clemens had very little success as a starter two seasons ago, but if the Jets had been unable to move up and acquire Sanchez, they were at least willing to go into the season with Clemens as their guy. That's not exactly the most ringing endorsement of all time, but it at least suggests they were comfortable enough with him to give it a shot. Should Sanchez hold out for an extended period or falter in the early portion of the season, recent history suggests the Jets would at least give Clemens a legitimate shot to play. He could also win the job out of training camp as the Jets attempt to ease Sanchez in.

### Brett Favre, FA

At press time, Brett Favre's agent says the QB has no interest in playing this season. Of course, Favre has met with Vikings officials and world-renowned surgeons regarding his injured shoulder. There are conflicting reports on whether Favre is willing to undergo surgery, but most agree that he is trying to get healthy so he can sign with the Vikings in an effort to gain revenge on the Packers for releasing him last year.

### Josh Freeman, TB

Rookie HC Raheem Morris has shown in press conferences and interviews to be very forthcoming when it comes to media relations and team information. He mentioned that he'll make his decision on who will start at QB after the third preseason game, so obviously, the preseason action will be the determining factor on when Josh Freeman's playing time will begin. Will he be the rookie everyone is talking about in Week 5 or will he succumb to the overwhelming understanding that the QB position in the NFL is miles apart from the previous level?

### Jeff Garcia, OAK

JaMarcus Russell finished the 2008 season on a hot streak, and the Raiders expect him to continue his progress this season. Because of his draft status Russell may have a longer leash than other starting QBs, but if he were to go out with injury Jeff Garcia would step in and run the team effectively as a game manager.

## Jon Kitna, DAL

Jon Kitna is one of the better NFL backups and someone all fantasy owners should keep an eye on. If Tony Romo got hurt, Kitna would be able to step in and put up decent numbers. Would he be a Top 10 fantasy QB? Not likely. But would he be someone worth starting particularly against bad defenses? Absolutely.

## Kevin Kolb - PHI

Kevin Kolb had his chance last year, as Andy Reid shocked the world by handing the ball over to him in the second half of the Ravens game. But he floundered and was promptly sent to the bench, reopening the door for McNabb, who put up heroic numbers and cemented his place as the unquestioned starter in 2009. Kolb remains in the team's good graces, but he has a lot to prove to fans and analysts. Kolb isn't a backup worthy of a roster spot in 12-team redraft leagues but rather someone to remember as an injury replacement if the time comes.

## Matt Leinart, ARI

Heading into his fifth year in the league, this is a make or break season for Matt Leinart. He needs to show enough in practice to warrant the team keeping him after Warner retires. This year, however, he is not likely to provide much fantasy value except in dynasty leagues or as Warner's handcuff in leagues with exceptionally large rosters.

## Josh McCown, CAR

It is most likely that Josh McCown will not see the field for any significant action in 2009. Of course, there is always the standard chance of injury, but Jake Delhomme generally stays on the field (three 16-game seasons in the last five years). However, if Delhomme starts throwing five INTs with regularity, the Panthers will certainly be forced to turn to McCown. If McCown were to move under center, look for Carolina to lean even more heavily on their potent ground attack.

## Luke McCown, TB

Luke McCown is in a four-way battle for the starting job in Tampa Bay. At the moment, it looks like he is on the second rung behind Byron Leftwich. However, McCown's window of opportunity could be slammed shut soon. If he can not win the starting job this season, McCown will have little role with the Buccaneers with first round rookie Josh Freeman in town.

## Kevin O'Connell - NE

Yeah...well...a year ago, there wasn't any real reason to write about Matt Cassel either. Also, a year ago, there was a little bit of talk that some thought Kevin O'Connell was better than Cassel. Of course, the Patriots stuck with Cassel, and now he's a rich man while O'Connell is the guy all Tom Brady owners will consider with their last pick.

## Chris Simms, DEN

The starting QB battle in Denver may last all the way through training camp, and as of right now Kyle Orton appears to have the edge. Chris Simms looked good in practice for the Titans in 2008, and so far the reports have been very positive out of Broncos mini camp. If he can win the job, Simms could be a nice fantasy surprise.

## Troy Smith, BAL

Troy Smith will be a solid backup to Joe Flacco, although his size and playing style couldn't really be more different. He was very serviceable when pressed into action late in the 2007 season, but that was nearly two years and one coaching staff ago. His value for this season is tied directly to Flacco's effectiveness and health – nothing more.

## Tyler Thigpen, KC

While the official team line says there is open competition for the starting QB spot, this is Matt Cassel's job. Tyler Thigpen will be the backup to Cassel in 2009 and should only see the field if there is an injury to the Chiefs' new franchise QB.

## Michael Vick, ATL

About two years ago, Michael Vick's home was raided by federal agents and his life changed. He will soon be released to serve 60 days of home confinement and eventually wants to resume his football career. First he'll have to be reinstated by the NFL. At that time, he will almost certainly be released by the Falcons as they have no desire to take a \$9 million cap hit and have found zero trading partners for his services. Once a free agent, Vick will be able to sign with any team.

## Seneca Wallace, SEA

Seneca Wallace is certainly not your prototypical NFL quarterback. He's only 5'11 and weighs in around 200 pounds. However, he has shown excellent ability to be a solid backup. He is perfectly capable of filling in for a few starts if needed, and he will continue in that role this season. In the last few years, Matt Hasselbeck's body has allowed Wallace to see the field for 28 games (including 12 starts), so it's reasonable to expect him to see action again in 2009.

## Pat White, MIA

The Wildcat formation is here to stay in Miami and may be even better than ever this season with the addition of Pat White who has the perfect skill-set to master the formation. There is more to White than a 'slash' role as he has a live enough arm to make plays even within a conventional offense, but in 2009 his role will be to step into the 'Wildcat' role but under center and perhaps from the backfield to provide additional options to guard against.

## Vince Young, TEN

Vince Young was injured in Week 1 of last year and never got his starting job back after Kerry Collins took over. In addition to dealing with his injury, Young also had to deal with some depression and emotional issues. He is currently saying all the right things as he hopes to show the team that he's finally matured off the field. He first has to beat out Patrick Ramsey for the backup job in Tennessee and then will have to wait for his opportunity behind Collins. He wants to regain his starting job, but that will be hard to do unless Collins gets injured during the season.