DraftIQ

v4 Model · GradientBoosting Ensemble + RandomForest + Kalshi/Polymarket + 10,000 Monte Carlo Sims

9/100	43/100	21/32
Exact pick hits	Correct round	R1 round acc.

The 2026 NFL Draft provided the model's first live test. Exact pick accuracy was 9% — but round-level accuracy reached 43%, and R1 talent identification hit *66%.* The primary failure mode was not talent misidentification. It was eight first-round trades the model had no mechanism to predict.

9%	43%	66%	66%	8
Exact pick accuracy	Round-level accuracy	R1 round accuracy (21/32)	Pool coverage (64 of 97)	R1 trades (failure driver)

WHAT THE MODEL GOT RIGHT

Talent identification was strong. Round prediction, less so.

✓ **R1 talent pool — 66% accuracy.** 21 of 32 first-round picks correctly predicted to go in R1. The model knew who the players were; trades moved them, not talent misgrades.

✓ **Prospect pool coverage — 64 of 97 (66%).** Nearly two-thirds of modeled players were drafted in the top 100. Talent identification is the model's strongest component.

✓ **9 exact pick hits:** Mendoza #1, Ioane #14, Bisontis #34, R Mason Thomas #40, Terrell #48, Golday #51, CJ Allen #53, Beck #65, Trost #93.

✓ **OL-heavy draft correctly anticipated.** Nine OTs went in Round 1 — the model had seven of them in its R1 pool.

✓ **R2 talent ID at 41% round accuracy.** 13 of 32 R2 picks matched. 9 more went R1 (undervalued), confirming correct identification with conservative calibration.

Key finding:

Near-miss rate tells the better story. 21 additional players correctly identified as top talent but placed in the wrong round — a calibration failure, not a scouting failure.

WHAT THE MODEL GOT WRONG

Eight trades broke the board. Blind spots in the prospect pool did the rest.

✗ **8 Round 1 trades — completely unmodeled.** Every trade cascades through subsequent slots. Chiefs to #6, Eagles to #20, Browns down — each reshuffle invalidated downstream predictions even when the player call was correct.

✗ **Eagles went WR-first, not OL-first.** Kalshi had Eagles OL-first at 47%. Roseman traded up to #20 for Makai Lemon — driven by AJ Brown trade dynamics the model could not price. All four Eagles picks missed.

✗ **~34 players outside the prospect pool.** Jordyn Tyson (#8), Ty Simpson (#13 Rams QB), Malachi Lawrence (#23), Markel Bell (#68 Eagles) — significant picks not in the 97-player database at all.

✗ **TE surge in Round 2 unpredicted.** Five TEs went in picks 54–61. No positional momentum mechanism — probability for remaining TEs should have increased once the run started.

✗ **R3 accuracy at 25% (9 of 36).** 26 of 36 R3 prospects were outside the model entirely. Drew Allar (#76), Austin Barber (#86) had zero model representation.

Data quality note:

"Emm. McNeil-Warren" vs "Emmanuel McNeil-Warren" caused a false miss (#58, Browns). All names must be validated against NFL.com / Pro Football Reference at ingestion.

V5 ENGINEERING PRIORITIES

Five targeted improvements before the 2027 Combine.

1 **Trade probability modeling.** Build Jimmy Johnson chart + team draft capital model. Simulate trade probability at each slot. 8 R1 trades — the single highest-impact fix. Biggest MAE gain.

2 **Expand prospect pool to 250+.** Use Scouts Inc. grades ≥60 as inclusion threshold. No graded player should be missing. Current 97-player pool is too small for R2/R3 accuracy.

3 **Real-time beat reporter layer.** Schefter, Rapoport, Pelissero report picks minutes early. Build a pre-pick signal monitor to override the model when credible intel arrives.

4 **Positional surge detector.** When 3+ players at the same position go in 10 picks, increase probability for remaining players there. The TE surge (5 in picks 54–61) was entirely missed.

5 **Standardize player name ingestion.** Normalize all names against NFL.com on import. The McNeil-Warren mismatch caused a verifiable error caught only through human review.

Bottom line:

The talent identification layer works. The failure modes are engineering problems — trade modeling, database depth, real-time signals. All five are solvable before the 2027 Combine.

CONTEXT ON 9% EXACT ACCURACY

A model predicting the exact player at the exact slot in a 32-team draft with 8 first-round trades is an extremely hard target. The more meaningful benchmarks are round-level accuracy (43%) and R1 pool identification (66%). This is DraftIQ's baseline to beat.

EAGLES PICKS — 0 OF 4 HITS

Model had Eagles OL-first (47% Kalshi). They went WR-first: Makai Lemon #20 (traded up from #23), Eli Stowers TE #54, Markel Bell OT #68. Key insight: post-AJ Brown WR intent must outweigh positional need scores in the model.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR 2027

The 2026 draft is now training data. Every miss is categorized: trade-driven, pool gap, or calibration error. v5 retrains on 16 years including 2026, with trade probability as the top-weighted feature. Target: >60% round accuracy at the 2027 Combine.