



NFL Draft 2019 (2) Scouting Reports: RB Josh Jacobs and Damien Harris, Alabama

**Our RB grades can and will change as more information comes in from Pro Day workouts, leaked Wonderlic test results, etc. We will update ratings as new info becomes available.*

**We use the term "Power RB" to separate physically bigger, more between-the-tackles-capable RBs from our "speed RBs" group. "Speed RBs" are physically smaller, but much faster/quicker, and less likely to flourish between the tackles.*

In my humble (yet almost always correct) opinion, the scouting/reporting I'm about to do is the most breathtaking/eye-opening study I've ever conducted...over 600-700+ deeper scouting reports studied/written and 5,000+ prospects statistically graded within our computer models over the last decade – and this study has left me a bit speechless and angry (you'll see why in a moment). I only pray I can capture what's so stunning here (and it's probably not what you think, if you're a newer reader) via my keyboard. *God give me the words here...*

I'm combining these two prospect scouting reports for a couple of reasons...

- 1) When you're scouting one of them, you're really scouting them together...it's just logical. Same team, same games, easy to compare and contrast. Often rated the #1-2 RB prospects in the 2019 RB draft class.
- 2) They are similar-ish RBs. Both bigger backs who are about the same height-weight-speed. There are differences within that...and we'll get to those. But we're not talking about RB prospects with radically different styles and builds.
- 3) Because they are so similar, right down to same team/same games/same play calls it's great to consider the media and analyst (the football 'ruling class') reactions to both. These experts seem to act as if they have almost no similarities...and we'll get to that.

Why is this such a flabbergasting report for me, after a decade of research in this field? It's all on **Josh Jacobs**. Not Jacobs the player, but the media and analyst reaction to his prospects/talents – this reaction highlights everything wrong with the NFL, its scouting, and its reporting (and not just an NFL issue, you find this in every business – but I'm just pointing out that the NFL, and its analysts and scouts, are not 'holy' by any means). The Jacobs' reporting is creating a myth for the masses.



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Jacobs did not work out at the NFL Combine, which was smart (and he was supposedly injured). He had no need to. He was universally listed as the top prospect in the RB group, based on eyeball tests (and the fact he went to Alabama), so why mess that up...when THEY are giving you free, unquestioned money into the first-round of the draft?

Pre-Combine, based on eyeball tests by people (analysts, scouts, media, fans) who constantly get such things wrong early in the process (because there is so much 'emotion' and 'feeling' involved versus hard data), the football ruling class pushed Jacobs as the CLEAR #1 RB prospect in the draft class. A choice not without some merit – it's a terrible RB draft class, overall, and someone had to be #1...and Jacobs is a solid enough RB prospect. As per usual, the early push is for anyone at the position who went to Alabama. Jacobs was the universal #1 ranked RB prospect, almost without question and **Damien Harris** is usually #2-3-4, lingering around Jacobs in the rankings – but **Josh Jacobs** as the 'experts' top choice.

Somehow the running back (Harris) who started over Jacobs their entire career, and was the more relied upon back 80%+ of the time by the coaches when they split the backfield three ways in 2018...and the RB (Harris) who was statistically better in most games, and comparing best seasons...the guy (Harris) who the most worshipped coach (Saban) in college football chose/leaned on over Jacobs – analysts determined all that evidence was a CLEAR sign that **Josh Jacobs** was the better NFL prospect without any real debate or consternation.

You could not get 100 people to agree 100% on anything...except for NFL analysts/scouts/media, who all agree 100% when it comes to **Josh Jacobs**. They all agree on something most of them have studied for about 5-10 minutes at-best, watching a 2-3-4 minute highlight tape, and because they all watch the CFB Championship games, they SEE the player and KNOW him from that...they think. They assign 'top status' to a player in Jan-Feb. and dare anyone to knock their top guy off their anointed throne. And it doesn't matter what you say or facts you give...they stick by their guy 99% of the time.

We see this every draft year, so I am not shocked by any of it. I've made a business from these nonsensical scouting errors/emotions in advising high-stakes gamblers (fantasy, handicappers, sports cards investors) and some NFL and CFL personnel. I've all but dropped the NFL/CFL side because I've not seen any of them really change/consider alternative views on prospects. If they all say 'Jacobs is #1', 100% in lock-step...and I come along and say *I think it's wrong and here's why* – I get blasted/ignored by them for several things on why I'm so terrible...like I didn't play pro or college football, or I'm a numbers nerd, or something is wrong with me mentally or even sexually (I've heard some pretty crass things crossing the establishment's belief systems) but the biggest reason 'pros' don't listen, they tell me, is that: *"Well, no one else is saying/believing/scouting that."* To the establishment, I'm a Jacobs-denier and I should be punished for my beliefs because *EVERYONE else already agrees* on Jacobs.

With that set up, if you ever thought I was joking or using the NFL establishment as a made-up punching bag/foil in my writings – then I present to you my best State's evidence for my case against the establishment in the form of their reaction to **Josh Jacobs'** Pro Day.



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Alabama held their Pro Day a few days ago, an event so important that **Bill Belichick** wore an Alabama pullover at the event. All things Alabama are worshipped by football analysts...with some merit. **Josh Jacobs** is one of their current deities from said holy ground. Surprisingly, Jacobs ran his 40-time at this Pro Day. Soon after, the news broke that Jacobs ran a 4.6+ 40-time at the event.

Now, anyone who has been in the NFL scouting game as an NFL Draft aficionado or gambler or are real-live NFL team employees knows that a 4.6+ 40-time from a 220-pound running back prospect is not great news. It should instantly create some doubt about the top status of the golden prospect. If the prospect were a projected 4th+ round prospect, it wouldn't matter. The #1 RB prospect, per the analysts and NFL people, a 1st-round label running back running a 4.6+ 40-time at 219 pounds should send everyone back to the drawing board. It's only logical. It's only human. The NFL has a history of being wrong so often on what prospects are better than others, you'd think that its charred hand from touching the hot stove all the time should make them cautious on the next turn.

When news of the Jacobs 40-time hit, I figured he would start to fall, but instead, I saw the most amazing spin this side of political parties and their aligned media go to work to not only not question the validity of the need for measuring the 40-time, but to make it seem like you're an idiot if you think the 40-time matters. It's pretty impressive...and pretty wicked all at the same time.

If **Kyler Murray** ran at his Pro Day and had posted a 40-time of 4.5+ (and not the 4.3s or 4.4s whispered/expected), his prospect status would be crashed and questioned...but that's because they don't like Murray, they didn't endorse Murray early on...Murray is making them look bad. All Murray stories are mostly skeptical on everything, which should be the way it is, skepticism is good. Bad 40-times matter to them on players they are not hyping/pushing/echo-chambering on.

No one looked at **Saquon Barkley's** 40-time last year (for his size) and went on a rant on how 40-time doesn't matter. Instead, he was labeled 'generational'. When the 40-time fits the pre-narrative, then it's a great thing to coo over. When the 40-time ruins the pre-narrative, instead of saying they might have made a mistake and they need to take a closer look, football people just go into spin mode to keep their pre-narrative protected from attack...AKA facts.

As soon as Jacobs posted the 4.6+, and it was instantly tweeted about, I saw some football associated person tweet back at how irrelevant the 40-time is and then compared Jacobs' 4.6+ 40-time to **Kareem Hunt's** 4.6+ -- and he thought that was a 'drop the mic' moment. The fawning Alabama acolytes followed their marching orders and re-tweeted this **Kareem Hunt** tweet with various emojis. They mocked the 40-time and how useless it is. They went over the top describing how Jacobs' workout was supreme/awesome otherwise, another veiled shot at the 'dumb' 40-time issue.

There is so much to unpack in all this hyperreaction. And I will unpack it, but first let me say – I think **Josh Jacobs** is a good prospect, just how good, we'll get to, but he's not as good as this political machine, this mind-numbed media robot approach to his scouting is promoting.

Things wrong with the Jacobs' Pro Day reaction...



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-- Using **Kareem Hunt** as a comp and then using that to dismiss the 40-time as stupid/irrelevant is itself stupid and irrelevant. First off, Hunt ran his at the NFL Combine...machine timed. Jacobs ran at a Pro Day with the always 'generous' hand time 40-yard dash. Reports of Jacobs' 4.63 and 4.66 at a Pro Day should make everyone think more like a 4.65-4.70 40-time, potentially...and if that's close to the case, in reality, Jacobs cannot be the clear-cut top RB prospect/a 1st-round projection at that speed.

-- If the 40-time is irrelevant...why do we still measure it? Why would the same people dismissing Jacobs' 40-time, crush **D.K. Metcalf** had he run a 4.5+ or if **Kyler Murray** ran a 4.5+...or if **Nick Bosa** ran a 5.0+? If some prospects run with 'bad' 40-times, it would be discussed nonstop. When Jacobs does it...not only does it not matter, the whole institution is attacked.

There are multiple decades of 40-times to look at. You can find a player/time to encourage or denigrate any prospect you want. Grabbing one solo example of a good NFL player who ran a 4.6+ 40-time pre-Draft is not a 'mic drop' proof of the case. 4.6+ 40-times, for RBs in the 215-220 pound range are typically harbingers of trouble and underperformance at the next level – not automatic top 20 overall draft pick clinchers. I'd expect a fan to produce a tweet like the Hunt-Jacobs one and be super-proud of it, but not someone in the industry.

Would it surprise you that the football person who quickly tweeted the defense of Jacobs' slow 40-time was the head of the Senior Bowl event these days? You know, that major football event based in Alabama? The event that gives a nudge to Alabama-based, D1 players (my opinion) over all others? If I were head of the Mobile, AL Senior Bowl, I would do nothing but praise and defend all the prospects as well, it's smart business, especially all Alabama-based players. I'd be bought and paid for because my event exists in part because of the Alabama relationships. It's logical. I have no qualms with them doing what they have to do – but then the rest of the world just running with it without question? It's like football people and fans are in a cult where you cannot be deterred by independent thought. They will accept any information that supports their conclusion, whether it is questionably sourced or even reasonable.

-- Yes, looking JUST at the 40-time alone is lacking. I agree. There's the just as important, to me as an evaluator, agility drills/times. Funny, we didn't get those nor was there pressure for these top Alabama prospects to do those drills. If they did do them, the numbers weren't reported as of this writing (which could be another 'spin' issue). As an evaluator, if I could only get one measurement, I'd rather have the three-cone than the 40-time. In this case, all I have is the 40-time on Jacobs...and it is not great. It's OK, not NFL-damning...but not 'wow, he's the greatest; no questions asked'.

-- The spin for Jacobs was "It was ____ (the greatest, a phenomenal, an outstanding) workout regardless of the 40-time." (so, thus, forget the 40-time issue please...you nerds).

Again, I've been doing this for a decade. I don't even watch Pro Days anymore because it is the most useless endeavor/waste of my time in all of football study. Every prospect looks great at their Pro Day. Everyone pre-ordained is always reported as having a 'phenomenal Pro Day'. If you think the 40-time is



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an irrelevant factoid in evaluating a running back prospect, then watching them take handoffs against air and catch passes with no defense, doing all of it in shorts and a t-shirt – this is even less relevant.

When have you ever heard the following: “*Well, this prospect looked good at their Pro Day, but Pro Day’s don’t really matter!*” Most professional scouts think the Pro Day workouts are silly and useless (except they want the speed, etc., times and a chance to speak with players/coaches if they can). Despite every football personnel department knowing the Pro Day is nonsensical, from an on-field evaluation standpoint, the media ran off a cliff with how great Jacobs looked at his. Why? To deflect away from the info they know is bad...the 4.6+ 40-time.

And if all that wasn’t comical and conflicting enough, there exists a running back (**Damien Harris**) who is about the same size, better speed-wise, was more cherished by his college coaches, was more productive, and is really talented too...and his name is barely mentioned in all this. Why? I have no idea. I think to prop Jacobs up you have to push Harris down. Just a guess at their warped mindset.

That’s the scary part of this – there should be as much love for Harris as Jacobs, there should be vibrant debates about which Alabama guy is better...solid cases for both, but more case for Harris. However, there is NONE of that happening. You wouldn’t even know that Harris was at the NFL Combine, or at the Alabama Pro Day. You know Jacobs was...*‘the greatest Pro Day ever’*. I would like to know how Jacobs had the greatest Pro Day and **Damien Harris** was barely worth mentioning. Like what was the difference in what scouts saw between them?

When I ask people the simple question – to tell me the difference between Jacobs and Harris, the difference that makes Jacobs clearly better...they can’t really answer it with anything useful. I used to get, *Jacobs is a faster runner* (but that went out the window at the Pro Day). Now, we’re down to *Jacobs has better hands* (not true, in my opinion) and the #1 reason...*‘Jacobs is an angry runner’*.

Yes...one running back, out of the entire class, had been elevated to the universal/unquestioned/100% agreeance #1 RB prospect because some people say, “He runs angry,” and everyone else just agrees with this silly statement (and they will find evidence of it on a 2-3-4 play highlight clip to show you). I’m supposed to base spending millions of dollars on a player at a position which no longer warrants millions spent – all because some people think he runs angry? What does that even mean? How do I know I can trust that...besides you showing me 3-4-5 plays you love of his where he blasted some people? I could pull 3-4-5 plays to show you 10+ other RB prospects are big and run angry/tough...so, why aren’t they the top RB prospect?

Josh Jacobs has become a religious faith event for football people, and you cannot talk them out of it, and you will be crushed if you try to. At the same time, a just as good/better, similar RB prospect played right alongside Jacobs and he gets ignored – and it will cost him millions of dollars of initial contract, potentially, right off the get go – plus, all the endorsements, all the better playing time opportunities will be shoved to Jacobs over Harris (and others) – all because football people made up their minds on a guy for flimsy, unprovable reasons, early on, and they are not open to change with new info. You think



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it's just a silly difference of football opinion, but it's really a crime perpetrated on all the worthy non-Jacobs RB prospects. It's also the most glaring example of bias, laziness, and group-think that I've seen in my decade of doing this. You'd think football management would get better with time, and this type of narrow thinking would be leaving the game...it's only getting worse every year I do this.

So, with all that being said...let's examine the question of whether Jacobs and/or Harris are legit top NFL prospects, and which one is the better of the two according to my eyes and to our computer scouting models.

I've watched several 2018 games involving both backs. I see the data/output/performance metrics in our system. I see the limited measurables data we have. I've seen it all. And my conclusion would be that both Jacobs and Harris are legit NFL RB prospects. Not the best I've seen, but actually they are mainstream headliners in this RB class...the worst draft class of running back prospects I think I've ever seen in a decade of doing this.

If I could only choose one, with all the cost/pay, etc., being equal – I'd take **Damien Harris**.

What I see in **Josh Jacobs** is some **Ezekiel Elliott**. Jacobs is a tough runner...a downhill runner. But I know Elliott was a 4.4+ runner and Jacobs is a 4.6+...potentially too close to 4.7. That's a huge difference to consider. Our eyes see one thing with a bias because we like a certain style. I like 'tough' too, but I want tough + a 4.5s or faster runner at 220-pounds. I don't desire 'tough' and a 4.6s runner. I can find 'tough' 4.6+ runners all over a draft or as UDFAs or off practice squads. I wouldn't spend a top 20 pick on it.

Jacobs runs tough, has a nice bounce/jump cut, has decent hands. He's fine/good, but I also know he had an advantage working behind the Alabama O-Line, and not having to take as many carries, and that his coaches valued Harris over him...and regarding this last point, I don't know why that's not a massive ancillary argument for Harris over Jacobs.

With Jacobs I get a solid runner with weak 4.6+ speed, so I'm not getting a breakaway speed future star runner, per se. He'll be fine, depending upon the offense. He won't hurt an NFL team, but he's not likely to be a star of stars. I have as many questions with Jacobs as I do things I like. I think he's good/fine/OK...I don't know where all this 'great' talk is coming from...universal/unquestioned 'great'. It makes no sense.

And there sits **Damien Harris**... Not as violent a runner, but a pretty strong style, and he comes with the extra advantage of more speed/better burst. Jacobs is good/great bouncing off tackles. Harris is good/great stopping and starting and shifting at a high level, which allows him to get into space and outrun defenders. I know NFL coaches live for smashmouth and crave 3-4 yards per rush, but I kinda like my 3-4 yards combined with better odds that it might pop for 10+ or 50+. Harris has 'pull away' speed...and Jacobs does not.



I'd also note Jacobs has OK/solid hands for the passing game, but I think Harris shows a more advanced ability there too...much better taking screens, flares, or running a regular route and adjusting his body properly to catch passes and get going.

The argument between Jacobs and Harris should not result in pushing one of them way over the other...it's debating two really nice RB talents who are similar in some ways and have some unique things about them to make them different – but both effective, NFL-worthy. One is not 100 miles ahead of the other or a slam dunk obviously 'more talented'.

Both guys are great humans too. Quality guys. You want to root for both of them. Jacobs is quiet, humble, and had a very hard knock path to this moment. Harris is very smart, engaging, and humble. There are no off-field issues here.

Josh Jacobs and Damien Harris, Through the Lens of Our RB Scouting Algorithm:

100+ yard games at Alabama:

9 times = Damien Harris

1 time (100 yards exactly, as a freshman) = Josh Jacobs

Best yards per carry season, and career yards per carry:

7.4 ypc = Harris (2017 on 135 carries)

6.7 ypc = Jacobs (2016 on 85 carries)

6.4 ypc = Harris (477 career carries)

5.9 ypc = Jacobs (251 career carries)

Games with 10 or more carries in a game at Alabama:

21 times = Harris



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7 times = Jacobs

*This low amount of carries, of course, is 'spun' as a golden positive -- 'less tread worn on those tires'...but any other prospect without a lot of reps as 'the man' would be seen as a problem, a concern.

**Why do I have the feeling if Jacobs had the Harris numbers and vice-versa, it would be seen as a no brainer for the proven Jacobs...but NOT true the other way around.

Average output per game in all games with 10 or more carries:

13.5 carries, 86.6 rushing yards, 6.4 ypc, 0.86 TDs = Harris (a 100+ yard game every 2.6 games)

13.6 carries, 77.6 rushing yards, 5.7 ypc, 0.86 TDs = Jacobs (a 100+ yard game, once in 7 games)

I ask again...how is it everyone is so definitively sure Jacobs is WAYYY better than Harris as an NFL prospect? I know this – for whatever reason, Harris was the better college RB than Jacobs...by the numbers, by the touches, by the coach's decision. Somehow, that's grounds for Jacobs unquestionably better than Harris for the pros?

Receiving numbers in 2018:

22 catches, 204 yards, 0 TDs = Harris

20 catches, 247 yards, 3 TDs = Jacobs

2019 NFL Combine and Pro Day Measurables...

5'10.1"/216 = Harris

5'10.0"/219-220 = Jacobs

4.57 40-time at Combine = Harris

4.6+ 40-time at Pro Day = Jacobs

18 reps bench = Jacobs (Pro Day)

16 reps bench = Harris



37" vertical = Harris

35" vertical = Jacobs (Pro Day)

10'1" broad jump = Harris

9'4" = Jacobs (Pro Day)

I ask, again...why is Jacobs seen as so obviously superior to Harris as an NFL prospect?

The Historical RB Prospects to Whom Josh Jacobs and Damien Harris Most Compares Within Our System:

Our comparison list kinda speaks for itself...just looking at the names. Jacobs is better than **Alfred Morris** ...that's great, but it's not 1st-round material...not in today's NFL. If Jacobs is a better **Jay Ajayi** or **Matt Jones**, then that's good too...I guess. They were one-time 'going to be greats' as well, but in the end were not.

Harris comps with more of the mid-sized, quicker, productive RBs. Had **Mike Davis** been with the Saints in the Kamara role since day one would have been a totally different player perception. Davis is just now getting his due.

Neither list blows you away totally, but Harris' catches your attention a little more.

RB Score	RB-Re	RB-ru	Last	First	College	Yr	H	H	W	Speed Metric	Agility Metric	Power Metric
6.975	5.56	7.19	Jacobs	Josh	Alabama	2019	5	11.0	220	1.10	6.98	7.13
5.375	3.99	4.00	Ballard	Vick	Miss State	2012	5	10.1	219	0.03	7.74	6.97
3.267	2.95	2.13	Morris	Alfred	Fla Atlantic	2012	5	10.1	219	-2.47	6.76	5.74
5.063	5.75	3.99	Jones	Matt	Florida	2015	6	2.3	231	2.95	7.72	7.73
4.858	2.77	4.70	Williams	Jonathn	Arkansas	2016	5	10.6	220	-2.11	5.31	5.42
7.040	7.81	5.73	Ajayi	Jay	Boise State	2015	5	11.6	221	5.08	6.30	8.41



RB Score	RB-Re	RB-ru	Last	First	College	Yr	H	H	W	Speed Metric	Agility Metric	Power Metric
7.230	6.83	7.38	Harris	Damien	Alabama	2019	5	10.1	216	6.47	10.64	4.07
7.708	9.70	7.43	Davis	Mike	S Carolina	2015	5	9.1	217	4.70	8.55	5.39
7.023	6.21	7.17	Michel	Sony	Georgia	2018	5	10.5	214	8.80	7.27	8.18
6.080	7.88	4.57	Kamara	Alvin	Tennessee	2017	5	10.2	214	4.39	6.35	4.26
5.801	6.70	5.04	Booker	Devontae	Utah	2016	5	11.0	217	5.78	7.97	6.36

**A score of 8.50+ is where we see a stronger correlation of RBs going on to become NFL good/great/elite. A score of 10.00+ is more rarefied air in our system, and indicates a greater probability of becoming an elite NFL RB.*

All of the RB ratings are based on a 0-10 scale, but a player can score negative, or above a 10.0 in certain instances.

Overall rating/score = A combination of several on-field performance measures, including refinement for strength of opponents faced, mixed with all the physical measurement metrics—then compared/rated historically within our database and formulas. More of a traditional three-down search—runner, blocker, and receiver.

**RB-Re score = New/testing starting in 2015. Our new formula/rating that attempts to identify and quantify a prospect’s receiving skills even deeper than in our original formulas. RB prospects can now make it/thrive in the NFL strictly based on their receiving skills—it is an individual attribute sought out for the NFL, and no longer dismissed or overlooked. Our rating combines a study of their receiving numbers in college in relation to their offense and opponents, as well as profiling size-speed-agility along with hand-size measurables, etc.*

**RB-Ru score = New/testing starting in 2015. Our new formula/rating that attempts to classify and quantify a RB prospect’s ability strictly as a runner of the ball. Our rating combines a study of their rushing numbers in college in relation to their offense and strength of opponents, as well as profiling size-speed-agility along with various size measurables, etc.*

Raw Speed Metric = A combination of several speed and size measurements from the NFL Combine, judged along with physical size profile, and then compared/rated historically within our database and scouting formulas. This is a rating strictly for RBs of a similar/bigger size profile.

Agility Metric = A combination of several speed and agility measurements from the NFL Combine, judged along with physical size profile, and then compared/rated historically within our database and scouting formulas. This is a rating strictly for RBs of a similar/bigger size profile.



2019 NFL Draft Outlook:

I'm not sure there is a national website that doesn't have Jacobs as a 1st-round projection and Harris as a 2nd-round projection, usually separated by about 25-30 draft spots (because diversity of thought in judging this 'art' is so alive and well!!). You'd bet money that's the way it ends up, but I could see Jacobs falling to the early 2nd-round since some of this push is driven by smarter NFL teams trying to bait the dumber into taking him higher by using the media to fawn over Jacobs. Also, Harris could fall into the early 3rd-round just because no one has mentioned his name in weeks/months since Jacobs has stolen all the oxygen out of the Alabama RB prospect room.

If I were an NFL GM, you can have both of them at that price. Any NFL team that would draft a 'B-C' grade or less RB talent in the first four rounds is silly...not with the depth of talent already in the NFL and all the moderate talents available later in the draft. It's a waste of money. I'd rather have former UDFA **Josh Adams** (Notre Dame/PHI) than either Jacobs or Harris, and that's not a slam at Jacobs and Harris, per se.

NFL Outlook:

Jacobs gets drafted 1st-round and gets a push right away and does fine and 'justifies' his draft status by being OK/good...because he's set up/pushed to produce some kind of numbers. Over time, he'll be seen as an unnecessary 'reach' but it will be 5+ years later - far enough away to keep you from contemplating how wrong the experts all had it AGAIN.

Harris gets drafted with some fanfare, but not expected to start and then it all depends upon what situation he winds up in. He'll be fine...and as good as his situation allows. It's likely he's drafted to be a backup because there are not many places RBs can go today and start right away.

I would not be surprised if either of these guys lead the league un rushing in 2-3 years or if they land bad and sit/split with an RBBC type group and have moderate/forgettable/OK careers.



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Date _____

3/21/2019