ASSESSING THE INJURY HISTORY AND MEDICAL CONCERNS OF SCOUTD NFL'S TOP 50 PROSPECTS.

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ABSTRACT.

Annually Scoutd NFL releases its big board, which contains their rankings of the top 50 players entering the NFL draft. Factoring into a player's ranking includes their athletic capabilities, performance on the field, translation of their skill capabilities from a collegiate level to a professional level, and other considerations. Also factoring into a player's ranking is their medical history, and potential for future injury risk at the next level. Using a mixed-method research design through social media posting, fan-oriented websites, and scientific research papers, the injury history and future medical risk assessment of the athletes were conducted. After evaluating the injury history of Scoutd's big board, the top 50 prospects have been placed into three categories. Green = minimal to no injury history, little to no medical concern at the next level. Yellow = prevalent injury history, transient effects, injury should not affect athlete at the next level. Red = significant injury history, raises medical concerns at the next level. The research evidence concluded that 24 players on the big board were given a the Green categorization and awarded a clean bill of health; B. Young, C. Stroud, W. Anderson, P Johnson Jr., Z. Flowers, P. Skoronski, C. Gonzalez, M. Murphy, M. Mayer, B. Jones, D. Wright, B. Branch, D. Jones, D. Hall, E. Forbes, L. Van Ness, J. Hyatt, O. Torrence, I. Foskey, C. Mauch, T. Scott, J. Schmitz, J. Tippman, T. Palmer. 18 players were given a yellow categorization, concluding that a significant injury did force them to miss time in college, however, the injury should not be a concern at the next level, signifying a clean bill of health; B. Robinson, T. Wilson, D. Witherspoon, Q. Johnston, C. Kancey, D. Kincaid, J. Gibbs, J. Addison, T. Simpson, C. Smith, J. Downs, D. Banks, F. Anudike-Uzomah, J. Campbell, D. Turner, S, Laporta, D. Sanders, X. Hutchinson. 8 players were given a red injury designation, signifying potential medical concerns regarding their injury history, and further assessment is required: J. Carter, J. Smith-Njigba, N. Smith, D. Washington, L. Musgrave, H. Hooker, B. Bresee, K. Ringo. With truly accurate medical records of athletes remaining mostly classified, this article should give insight to the fans on the injury history and medical concerns of the 2023 NFL Draft's top prospects from all the evidence that an amateur football scout and avid fan can acquire.

INTRODUCTION.

The National Football League (NFL) is an intensely competitive and physically taxing sports league that demands its athletes be in elite physical condition and shape. Injuries are an inherent element of the game despite immense efforts of intense training and preparation to avoid them. This can have a great influence on the outlook of a player's career. The subject of an NFL prospect's medical history and injury concern raises increased attention from fans of teams, fantasy football enthusiasts, and other football goers. However, come time for the NFL draft, the medical history and injury concern becomes an even greater interest for this group of people. NFL teams want to ensure that they are

selecting the right players and making the right choices come draft time, as a poor draft often leads to the loss of many jobs. Accounting for a prospect's medical history entails a major emphasis on a team's draft preparation, assessment in a team's draft class, and an integral part of any pre-draft process. In this research paper, we will explore the impact that past injuries, medically speaking, have on the outlook of the prospect's future. Overall, this paper will clarify an important aspect of the NFL draft process and educate fans and readers on how this may implicate the trajectory of a draftees' future in the NFL.

METHODS.

To conduct this study, a mixed-method research design was employed, utilizing various sources of data. The first step was data collection, where data was recorded from across the internet for all Scoutd's top 50 prospects. Sources of data include school websites; the official website of schools provides information on the team's roster and player's injury status. Fan-oriented websites; websites such as ESPN, Bleacher Report, and Yahoo Sports provide news and updates on the injury status of players. Twitter: a source of injury updates where beat reports and school journalists frequently report players' injuries and their impact. After collecting data, the next step was to do an injury assessment to determine the severity of the player's past and current injuries, and their potential impact on the player's health at the next level. Based on the injury assessment, the final step was to categorize the players into groups based on their injuries. Cumulatively, the data was analyzed, and the injury history of Scoutd's top 50 NFL prospects was presented. The results of the injury assessment and categorization were used to provide insight into the injury history and medical concerns of the prospects.

RESULTS.

Bryce Young	2022 - Right Acromioclavicular (AC) Joint sprain vs Arkansas. Returned following week.
C.J. Stroud	2021 - Right Rotator cuff tendonitis, Right Acromioclavicular (AC) joint separation. Missed one game.
Will Anderson Jr.	N/A
Paris Johnson Jr.	N/A
Zay Flowers	2021 - Undisclosed lower body injury. Able to return to game.
Peter Skonronski	N/A
Christain Gonzalez	N/A
Myles Murphy	2023 - Mild (first-degree) hamstring strain. Did not play in Clemson's Bowl Game, Missed NFL Scouting Combine.
Michael Mayer	2021 - Hip Adductor strain. Sidelined one game, limited for following month, reinjured in Cincinnati game.
Broderick Jones	2020

	- Non-football related lower leg injury (motor bike accident). Out multiple weeks, delayed start to freshman season, only able to play in 2 games.
Darnell Wright	2022 - Undisclosed ankle injury sidetracked expectation for season performance, still had great success.
Brian Branch	2022 - Undisclosed injury sustained in Arkansas game. Returned next week.
Dawand Jones	2023 - Undisclosed injury sustained at Senior Bowl. Missed game.
Derick Hall	2019 - Undisclosed knee injury. Surgery not required. Missed 2 games. 2022 - Sustained Left Elbow Injury, likely strain. Returned to game.
Emmanuel Forbes	2021 - Carted off field during the Egg Bowl game following collision with teammate. Returned next game.
Luke Van Ness	N/A
Jalin Hyatt	2023 - Undisclosed Hamstring Injury at NFL Scouting Combine. Pulled out of drills.
O'Cyrus Torrence	2021 - Non-football related concussion. 2022 - Minor strain of Medial Collateral Ligament (MCL). Missed one game.
Isaiah Foskey	2021 - Undisclosed shoulder injury vs. UNC. Returned to game. 2022 - Previous shoulder injury prolonged throughout season. Snap count significantly dropped. Still maintained normal production.
Cody Mauch	N/A
Tyler Scott	2022 - Undisclosed minor ankle injury, likely ankle sprain. Missed 2 games.
John Michael Schmitz	2021 - Undisclosed foot injury. Unable to return to bowl game.
Joe Tippman	2021 - Undisclosed shoulder injury. Able to play through it entire season.
Trey Palmer	N/A

Figure 1. List of players designated by the **green** *injury concern categorization. Prospect missed minimal to no time in injury recovery. Only notable injuries were recorded, minor injuries not affecting the immediate future of a player were not recorded, questionable designations were not recorded, injuries that were prevalent but did not impact player performance tended to not be recorded, illnesses were not recorded. Only information that was found during the data collection period was recorded.*

Bijan Robinson	2020 - Lumbar spine strain. Returned to practice next week.

	2021 - Cervical spine strain. Returned next game. - Elbow dislocation in Kansas game. Missed remainder of the season.
Tyree Wilson	2022 - Season ending foot injury (suspected Jones Fracture) vs. Kansas. Required surgery 9 days after. Follow-up surgery 4 months after to remove hardware. Couldn't compete in pro-day + combine due to the incision related healing process. Responded extremely well to rehabilitation program. Medically cleared for full participation following draft.
Devon Witherspoon	2020 - Undisclosed injury missed 2 games. 2023 - Undisclosed Hamstring Injury. Missed NFL Scouting Combine. Missed Pro Day. Held private workout pre-draft.
Quentin Johnson	2021 - Undisclosed injury. Missed 3 games. 2022 - Undisclosed Ankle Injury vs. West Virginia. Reinjured it multiple times throughout season. Missed multiple games. Played through lingering ankle injury all season.
Calijah Kancey	2022 - Undisclosed shoulder injury. Missed remainder of season. Required minor surgery. Did not perform bench press testing at NFL Scouting Combine.
Dalton Kincaid	2022 - Mild plate compression fracture to T7 and T8 vertebrae. No surgery required. Played in Pac12 championship game, missed bowl game, missed NFL scouting combine.
Jahmyr Gibbs	2020 - Hamstring strain. Questionable designation, missed NC State game, ended up missing rest of season. 2022 - Ankle inversion sprain. Missed one game.
Jordan Addison	2022 - Undisclosed let ankle injury vs. Utah. Missed 2 games. Lingered remainder of season, production decreased. - Reaggravation/setback of ankle injury. Missed cotton bowl. 2023 - Back strain at NFL Scouting Combine. Pulled out of remainder of combine.
Trenton Simpson	2022 - Ankle injury suffered vs ND. Reaggravated in ACC Championship game. Missed Orange Bowl. Participated in NFL Scouting Combine.
Cam Smith	2021 - Fractured bone in left foot, required surgery. Able to play in season opener.

	- Non-concussion related head injury. Missed 1 game. 2022 - Left hamstring strain. Played through injury for duration of season. - Concussion suffered vs. Arkansas. Missed one game (vs. Georgia).
Josh Downs	2022 - Undisclosed minor left knee injury. Missed two games. - Undisclosed back injury. Returned to game.
Deonte Banks	2021 - Undisclosed Shoulder Injury. Required season ending surgery. Only played in first two games of the season.
Felix Anudike-Uzomah	2021 - Undisclosed minor knee injury. Missed multiple summer practices. Played entire season banged up. 2022 - Required surgery to clean up 2021 knee injury.
Jack Campbell	2021 - Required offseason knee surgery to clean up pre-existing knee injuries. 2022-2023 - Suspected shoulder injury. Sported shoulder brace entirety of 2022 season. Did not complete bench press testing drill at NFL Scouting Combine.
DJ Turner II	2019 - Undisclosed injury held him out of participating in freshman season.
Sam Laporta	2022 - Torn Meniscus vs. Minnesota. Required Knee Arthroscopy surgery. Missed four weeks. Returned for bowl game
Drew Sanders	2021 - Undisclosed Hand Injury. Required surgery. Given week to week designation.
Xavier Hutchinson	2020 (at Junior College) - Undisclosed Injury. Missed 5 games. 2021 - Fractured bone in thumb. Returned to play at bowl game wearing a cast.

*Figure 2. List of players designated by the **yellow** injury concern categorization. The prospect missed significant time in injury recovery, however, this should not impact the future of the prospect's health in the NFL and would enable the prospect to have a "clean bill of health". Only notable injuries were recorded, minor injuries not affecting the immediate future of a player were not recorded, questionable designations were not recorded, injuries that were prevalent but did not impact player performance tended to not be recorded, illnesses were not recorded. Only information that was found during the data collection period was recorded.*

Jalen Carter	2022 - High Ankle Sprain vs. Oregon. Limited first half of season. Lingered up until the combine. - Left MCL Sprain vs. Missouri. Missed two games.

Jaxon Smith-Njigba	2019 (High School) - Acromioclavicular (AC) Joint Sprain. Missed 1 game. 2020 (Following High School Season) - Undisclosed ankle injury while practicing for All-American Bowl. Missed the game. 2022 - Low-grade left hamstring strain vs. ND. Missed 1 game. - Reaggravated hamstring strain vs. Toledo. Missed following 3 games. - Reaggravated hamstring strain vs. Iowa. Missed following 6 games.
Nolan Smith	2022 - Right Pectoral Muscle Tear vs. Florida. Required season ending surgery.
Darnell Washington	2021 - Minor bone fracture in foot. Required surgery. Missed 4 games. 2022 - Undisclosed foot injury. Undisclosed if it required surgery or not. Missed all of spring practice. 2023 - Right lower leg injury – soft tissue contusion and strain vs Ohio State. No surgery required. Played in National Championship.
Luke Musgrave	2022 - Medial Collateral Ligament (MCL) tear. Required season ending surgery. Missed 11 games. Only participated in 40-yard dash at NFL Scouting Combine.
Bryan Bresee	2021 - Undisclosed Shoulder Injury. Missed all of spring practice. Surgery conducted while rehabbing from ACL surgery. - Unpaired Anterior Collateral Ligament (ACL) Tear. Required season ending surgery. 2022 - Non-football related Kidney infection. Missed 2 games.
Hendon Hooker	2021 - Undisclosed leg injury vs. Ole Miss. Given day-to-day designation. Returned vs. Alabama. - Laceration on hand vs. Vanderbilt. Required stitching. Missed no games. 2022 - Undisclosed upper body injury vs. Florida. Remained in game. - Anterior Collateral Ligament (ACL) Tear vs. South Carolina. Required season ending surgery. Did not participate at NFL Scouting Combine.
Kelee Ringo	2020 - Torn Labrum. Required season ending labrum surgery.

*Figure 3. List of players designated by the **red** injury concern categorization. The prospect missed significant time in injury recovery. Injuries may have a significant chance to impact the future of the prospect's health in the NFL. A "clean bill of health" cannot be confidently given to the prospect. Only notable injuries were recorded, minor injuries not affecting the immediate future of a player were not recorded, questionable designations were not recorded, injuries that were prevalent*

but did not impact player performance tended to not be recorded, illnesses were not recorded. Only information that was found during the data collection period was recorded.

DISCUSSION.

In this injury report, only the injury histories that raise potential medical concerns about a prospect's future in the National Football League will be discussed. As a result of data collection and categorization, all these players fall under the **red** designation. Not only does this/did this impact the draft stock of each prospect, but the concerns carry over once the prospect transitions from college to the NFL. Every recorded injury in this report was taken into strong consideration. However reoccurring injuries and traumatic injuries were considered to the greatest extent upon assessing each prospect. The epidemiology of injuries most identified in the National Football League was also taken into strong consideration with ankle injuries (52.7%), shoulder injuries (51.9%), knee injuries (51.2%), spine injuries (35.6%) and hand injuries (33.5%) most strongly considered [1].

JALEN CARTER. At 6 foot 3 inches and 314 pounds Carter is already at greater risk of injury due to his frame. His computational body mass index (BMI) indicates that his height and weight are associated with an increased rate of lower extremity injuries whilst playing football [2]. Preliminary analysis' have shown that after controlling for position, heavier players tend to have higher injury rates than lighter players [3]. More importantly, a study in risk factors for noncontact ankle sprains in high school football players has concluded that an overweight player who had a previous ankle sprain is 19 times more likely to sustain a noncontact ankle sprain than a normal-weight player with no previous history of an ankle sprain [4]. Carter's ankle injury seemed to linger throughout his 2022 season, and although he claimed it to be 100% healed at the combine, Carter's ankle still raises major red flags at the next level. Considering his ankle injury history, and BMI, re-injury concerns for Carter's ankle

are raised. Amongst his ankle issues, Carter has also sustained injuries in his left knee in a sprain to his MCL. As it seems, Carter's MCL sprain was an isolated injury, likely caused by a valgus force on the knee. Due to Carter's two-week recovery time, it can likely be identified as a low-grade MCL sprain. Due to the nature of this injury and Carter's recovery, it can be concluded that any damage to Carter's MCL in the NFL would be unrelated to his 2022 MCL sprain. As a top-10 pick in this year's draft, Carter needs to stay healthy and be on the field for Philadelphia. His knee does not raise any concerns for reinjury occurrence; however, his ankle should be on the radar of front offices, teams' medical personnel, and fans. Shall reinjury continue to re occur, look for Carter to potentially undergo a similar syndesmotic fixation or suture fixation surgical procedure to stabilize the ankle mortise, like one that Miami Dolphins quarterback Tua Tagovailoa underwent in college [5]. Staying healthy will be key for Carter to obtain a productive career and reach his full potential in the NFL.

JAXON SMITH-NJIGBA. For Smith-Njibga, the collegiate injury of his hamstring is the only injury this paper will be focusing on. Hamstring strains, although not on the side of the life-threatening or career-ending spectrum of injuries, can be among the most common and debilitating injuries an NFL player can sustain. Speed positions such as wide receivers and defensive secondary players account for approximately half of all hamstring injuries sustained on the football field [6]. Injury recurrence concerns are raised amongst athletes with hamstring strains in the same season [7], when players with hamstring strains try to return to play too quickly, more specifically in two weeks [8], and the point in the season the player occurs the hamstring strain in with highest recurrence rates being in the earlier parts of seasons [9]. Looking

through Smith-Njigba's injury profile, focusing on the case of his 2022 recurring hamstring strain, his injury fit's the exact timeline of every elevated injury recurrence risk mentioned. Fellow top wide receiver prospects in previous years such as Jamaar Chase have taken the route of forgoing their final year of eligibility at college to prepare themselves for their upcoming NFL draft. This is certainly a route that Smith-Njigba may have taken. However, his eagerness to return to Ohio State multiple times throughout the season, and the competitive nature of the 2022 Buckeye football team indicate this might not be the case. Smith-Njigba opted to not participate in the 40-yard dash at the NFL combine, an indicator that his hamstring strain was still at potential risk of reinjury from an exercise that tests an individual's maximal muscle output and top sprint speed. Smith-Njigba did however run his 40-yard dash at his pro day where he clocked in at an underwhelming 4.53 seconds. Management, scouts, and fans alike all know that Smith-Njigba is a much faster player than this, and injury analysts ponder if his hamstring is still an issue. Avoiding re-injury recurrence early on in his career will be key to avoiding future hamstring strains later in his career as risk factors should suggest. However, indications lead toward an increased risk of reinjury for Smith-Njigba and due to his history, position, and playstyle, one that is much greater than other prospects.

NOLAN SMITH. In late October, Nolan Smith suffered a season-ending injury that caused him to not only miss the remainder of his final collegiate season but also miss the remainder of the Georgia Bulldogs championship-winning run. In that late October afternoon in a neutral site showdown vs. the Florida Gators, Nolan Smith's season-ending injury was later announced to be a torn pectoral muscle. Torn pectoral muscles are certainly not native to players of Nolan Smith's caliber and position. The Watt brothers, J.J. and T.J. have both sustained pectoral tears, one who underwent a surgical procedure en route

to recovery and one who didn't. The Thursday following the Florida game, Georgia medical personnel and Smith himself decided to undergo surgery to heal his torn pectoral muscle. A significant injury like this is often the result of a collision to a magnitude that enables the pectoralis major muscle to disconnect from its clavicular and sternal head origin, or its lateral lip of the bicipital groove's insertion [10]. The surgical method reverses the damage caused by this injury, reattaching the pectoralis muscle, and suturing and anchoring it back into place. A typical 4–6-month rehabilitation period is needed to fully recover (90% occurrence rate), and success in this timeline factors into whether the athlete can return to their pre-injury form (74% occurrence rate) [11]. In the NFL, where an organization that possesses top surgeons, doctors, and rehab specialists, this rate increases from 74% to 85.7% [12]. However, Smith elected not to bench press at the NFL Scouting Combine and this likely has to do with his injury. Excessive eccentric overload can often lead to pectoralis major stress and rupture, exactly what Smith is trying to avoid. Whether this is indicative of the state of his newly surgically repaired muscle condition, or purely precautionary, the extent of the injury alone should provide some concern for risk of reoccurrence at the next level. With Nolan Smith's draft stock at a first-round selection any risk to a prospect's health raises immediate red flags especially while investing premier draft capital. Smith falling to the 30th pick in the draft surely indicates that teams discovered major concerns regarding Smith's injuries and medical concerns for his professional career. However, his talent alone kept him in the first round. If Smith can stay healthy, he will most likely turn into one of the biggest draft steals in the 2023 NFL draft.

DARNELL WASHINGTON. Darnell Washington's prized possession is his rare physical stature mixed with elite athleticism. Standing at 6'7 and weighing in at over 260 pounds AND running a 4.64 40-yard dash at the NFL scouting combine is unheard of.

Whether this is because Washington is a truly rare and elite physical specimen that's never been seen before, or someone at Washington's size, speed, and position simply isn't durable in the National Football League, the reason for this rarity needs to be investigated. Unfortunately for Washington, he has already been on the wrong end of the injury bug throughout his collegiate career, sustaining two major injuries that have shaken multiple teams' confidence level in his medical history, and caused his suspected fall in the 2023 NFL draft. Firstly, early in Washington's collegiate career, a bone fracture classified as minor, required surgery and over a month-long absence. The foot is a very complicated anatomical location made up of many small bones. A position that requires sprinting, jumping, and a change of direction that the tight end position requires, tied in with high body mass, leads to an increased prevalence of fractures in a player's lower extremities [13]. Likely not being a major injury such as a Lisfranc fracture or Jones fracture which requires multiple months to an entire year for recovery time, this injury can likely be suspected as a stress fracture which is further indicated by a reinjury in 2022 that resulted in Washington missing the entirety of spring practice. Along with this, Washington has suffered multiple other lower body injuries including a soft tissue contusion and strain that was highly reported in the weeks before the College Football Playoff semi-finals and finals. A knee injury that was likely discovered by teams at the NFL scouting combine has also caused major concern among teams looking for a tight end. With Washington's rare height, weight and speed combination, his injury history, specifically regarding his foot fractures raises red flags among the risk factors for lower body injuries from his physical stature alone. This further provides a significant reason to worry about Washington's medical concern moving forward in the NFL.

LUKE MUSGRAVE. If it wasn't for a season-ending injury, Luke Musgrave could have very well been the first tight end off the board. Musgrave's raw talent alone would have made him one of the top if not the top tight end in this loaded 2023 positional class. However, an injury not only took away an entire season to show off his abilities but also raised concerns for NFL teams when spending high draft capital on him. Musgrave slipped down the draft board because of this. However, his slide was only to the second round where he found himself in an ideal landing spot. However, he is certainly not in the clear. Musgrave tore his MCL which required surgery causing him to miss the entire season. However, the MCL was isolated in the injury which in the case of suspected injuries from a lateral blow to the knee, Musgrave is considered to have gotten lucky. MCL tears have a much higher and accelerated rate of return to play than an MCL tear with associated structure damage to surrounding ligaments [14]. With MCL injuries being so commonly discovered at the NFL scouting combine, at rates of 13% of all players, Musgrave is thankful that his injury resulted in surgical repair that will likely lead to 100% recovery, which will have no significant negative impact on his medical future in the NFL [15]. However, there are still associated risks of retearing an MCL after reconstructive surgery, which decrease over time [16]. Luckily for Musgrave, week 1 will come just over a full 365 days after his injury, giving Musgrave plenty of time to continue to recover from his injury, likely ending up as one of the major drafts steals in the 2023 NFL draft.

BRYAN BRESEE. Bresee's 2023 season was a disaster for him based on reasons beyond his control, and unrelated to football. For this report, only football-related injuries will be discussed (omitting a 2022 kidney infection, causing him to gain then subsequently lose 45 pounds of water weight, leading to a two-game absence). The concern for Bresee is regarding a 2021 torn ACL paired with a prolonged shoulder injury that required surgery during Bresee's ACL rehab period. Bresee's ACL tear was unpaired meaning the only structural

damage to his knee was to his ACL. In a negative situation as such, this can be a positive sign. However, any surgically repaired ACL significantly raises reinjury risks which can immediately turn a team away from drafting a player, especially drafting one in the first round [17]. Along with Bresee's injury history, his interior defensive line position further raises risks of reinjury [18]. Bresee who would have likely been a top-15 pick if it weren't for injury, fell to 28th overall, drafted by the New Orleans Saints. This landing spot raises additional concerns, as they play in a turfed dome. This concern is substantial due to the injury rate and reinjury risks of retearing your ACL, following post constructive surgery, being higher on turf than they would be on natural grass [18]. With Bresee's injury riddled collegiate career, his ACL injury, his position on the field, and the fact that he will be playing at least half his games on turf every single season raise significant red flags and concerns regarding the state of his health over the early course of his NFL career.

HENDON HOOKER. On November 19th, 2022, Hendon Hooker's Heisman contending season took a turn for the worse when he tore his anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee. Before this, Hooker was tearing up the SEC leading to victories against Florida, Louisiana State, and most famously upsetting Alabama in an all-time classic shootout. In a stacked 2023 quarterback class, Hooker seemed to be the odd one out. This certainly doesn't have anything to do with Hooker's skillset as Scoutd and many others had Hooker highly ranked. Although some attributed this discrepancy up to his age, the true reason for Hooker's slide into the third round is most likely due to his late November injury. The non-contact injury happened while Hooker was rolling to his left on an option play and seemed to have his leg stuck in the turf. Hooker immediately lost the ball and fell to the ground, went to the locker room, never to be seen again on a collegiate field. Looking into the future of Hooker's career and potential concerns regarding his

ACL, three things need to be factored in: his position, his age, and his landing spot. Landing in Detroit means like Bresee, Hooker will be playing more than majority of his games on a turf field (at least 8 games at Ford Field, and 1 game at U.S. Bank Stadium), raising the risk of reinjury to a surgically repaired ACL [18]. For the quarterback position specifically, it's been proven to have the highest rates of return to sport, and among the lowest risk of reduced performance upon return to sport for all the positions on the field [19] after reconstructive ACL surgery. We have also witnessed many quarterbacks suffer from a torn ACL and return to play in sufficient time and performance. Some of these include Teddy Bridgewater, Deshaun Watson, Carson Palmer, and Tom Brady who had an illustrious Hall of Fame caliber career *after* his ACL tear. Landing in Detroit, a team with an already decorated quarterback who led them to an over .500 year for the first time since 2017, most likely will enable Hooker to start the season as a backup quarterback which would limit his action early on in his career. More importantly, this will give him more time to recover from his injury. This is a great deal if it wasn't for one thing; Hooker's age. Hooker (25) is much older than his fellow quarterbacks in the draft which has caused some to have concerns over the longevity of his career starting at an already "old" age. At 25, Hooker is about 2 years older than the average rookie in the NFL [20]. Considering his age is not about the longevity of his career. Instead, it had to do with the role that age may have on a successful vs. unsuccessful ACL repair surgery. Hooker, 24 at the time of his ACL tear, would still be categorized in the younger population compared to a median age of 35 years in a study assessing the role of age on the success of ACL repair surgery. With this age group, surgical repair can be viewed as an excellent treatment for an ACL tear, with extremely low failure (3.5%) and complication rates (1.2%). Although the outcome of the injury may have been different, statistically there would be no

difference in the role of age on Hooker's ACL rehabilitation [21] if he were to tear his ACL any time earlier in his collegiate career or were he to be any younger. For Hooker, the main concern with age creating a negative rehabilitation is mostly related to self-motivation and social support rather than physiologically [22]. With Hooker now being a professional quarterback and a proven winner, we don't think age will factor into his rehabilitation process at all. If Hooker's fall into the third round was due to injury concerns, we think that, medically speaking, there should be minimal worry concerning Hooker's future. As a result, this pick will likely turn out as a steal in the 2023 NFL draft that completely changes the trajectory of the Lions' franchise.

KEELE RINGO. As Scoutd's 48th rank would suggest among many other strongly recognized professionals' high rankings, Kelee Ringo should not have fallen to the fourth round. Yet, he did. So why? Kelee Ringo was a two-year starter and a key contributor to possibly the greatest college defense of all time, winning two national championships for the Georgia Bulldogs. Many scouts had him as a late first, to early second-round pick. The only notable concern and knock to his draft stock is a torn labrum in the 2020 season, which happened before ever taking a collegiate snap. In a study with athletes at past NFL scouting combines, those with a prior labral tear regardless of the type, or surgery it required, was found to cause no significant differences in games played/started or effect the chance of being drafted [23]. Surgery to repair a torn labrum can take anywhere from 6 months to a year at most [24], which is well beyond the timeline of Ringo's August 2020 surgical repair procedure. With no indications of raised concerns in the pre-draft process, Ringo's league-wide stock was notably higher than a day 3 selection. The only thing that could explain the reasoning for Ringo's fall in the draft would be an undisclosed injury found during the NFL scouting combine or disclosed during a meeting with teams either regarding

his shoulder or another aspect of his body that steered teams away from selecting him. Nonetheless, a fourth-round pick is of much less value than a day 1 or 2 selection, and for an already dominant roster that Philadelphia has constructed, not many fourth-round picks could make any immediate impact. Taking a seeming risk on a player like Ringo is a reason why successful franchises remain successful, and this could be labelled as another amazing selection under Howie Roseman's masterclass. Look for injuries to implicate the outcome of Ringo's future in the NFL, and one can only hope he stays healthy to live up to his former draft stock.

CONCLUSION.

This research paper assesses the injury history and medical concerns of Scoutd NFL's top 50 prospects analyzing the injury risks and potential impacts inherent to these cases, while briefly assessing the prospects with the greatest injury concerns. Using this assessment, the paper determined the implications that the injury concerns had on the player's draft stock, along with the potential influence on the trajectory of their professional careers. This analyzation is crucial for an accurate evaluation of the player's draft stock and prediction for their career success. By assessing injury history and evaluation, it becomes evident that injuries play a significant role in determining a player's draft stock, which can ultimately diminish due to concerns over their medical history. Factoring in variables such as the type of injury, severity, recurrence, timing of injuries, impact on performance, and longevity allowed for such decisions and predictions. The significance of this research lies in its potential to aid the fans, researchers, media, scouts, and other personnel related to the National Football League in gaining further insight about prospects through a collected platform that is not available anywhere else. This analysis highlights the importance of thorough medical evaluations and integration of injury risk assessment that all NFL teams conduct at the

NFL Draft Scouting Combine and during the draft process. By considering these factors, teams and fans can identify potential draft day steals and busts, mitigate risks, and shape their opinion on the trajectory of the players and their respective franchises. These findings contribute to an ongoing conversation surrounding injury analysis in the NFL and will serve as a unique and valuable resource for the upcoming seasons.

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