

Yinzers Guide to Round 1 of the NFL Draft

Steelers Primary First Round Draft Needs: OT, OG, Edge, WR (in that order in my opinion)

What to watch for

- Few "blue chip" elite prospects, most high end prospects have some kind of blemish
- Elite players are at positions less traditionally taken with high draft picks (RB, LB, OG)
- Arizona looking to trade down from pick 3
- KC, Philly, could trade up into top 10
- Lots of round 1 tackles, but very few day 2 tackles. Teams needing a tackle (lots of teams) are likely to take them round 1 or trade into first to get them. Run of tackles could start anywhere and could create value later in round 1 near where Steelers pick (a team reaching for a tackle means another highly rated prospect drops)

Players in **blue** are consensus top 15 players in 2026 draft

Players in **green** are in the next tier, all likely first round players

Players in **orange** could go round 1 or fall to day 2

Tier 1: Immediate impact players at positions of need, players worth trading up for if they start to fall (unlikely to be on the board at 21)

- **Spencer Fano**, OT, Utah: Versatile Olineman who can play all five positions on the line
- **Makai Lemon**, WR, USC: Widely compared to Amon Ra St Brown
- **Vega Ione**, G, Penn State: Mountain of a man and absolute bully in the trenches. Gave up a single pressure last season
- **Reuben Bain**, EDGE, Miami: Elite run stuffing player
- **Monroe Freeling**, OT, Georgia: High upside OT
- **Dillon Thienamen**, Safety, Oregon: Great at everything
- **Carnell Tate**, WR, Ohio State
- **Francis Mauigoa**, OT, Miami

Tier 2: Starers at position of need, impact players at other positions

- **Kenyon Sadiq**, TE, Oregon: Freak athlete. JMU could not cover him in the playoff game
- **Omar Cooper Jr**, WR, Indiana
- **Blake Miller**, OT, Clemson
- **Caleb Lomu**, OT, Utah
- **Denzel Boston**, WR, Washington. Steelers already have big receivers in Pittman and Metcalf, but Boston could still be an option
- **KC Concepcion**, WR, Texas A&M, Best returner in College Football last year, explosive runner
- **Emmanuel Mcneil Warren**, Safety, Toledo. Teams simply didn't throw the ball anywhere near him
- **Emmanuel Pregnon**, G, Oregon
- **TJ Parker**, Edge, Clemson
- **CJ Allen**, LB, Georgia

Tier 3a: Developmental players with high upside

- **Kadyn Proctor**, OT, Alabama: Very raw, likely better at guard with his size

- **Max Iheanachor**, OT, Arizona State: Started football in college, still improving, likely not a starter right away, could potentially turn into best OT from this draft
- **Monroe Freeling**, OT, Utah
- **Keldric Faulk**, Edge, Auburn: Freak athlete, didn't have much pass rush production last season but should contribute on the line. Could go anywhere from top 20 to late round 2

Tier 3b: Likely Day 2 picks, good options for the Steelers for trade up or pick round 2

- **TJ Parker**, Edge, Clemson
- **Jacob Rodriguez**, LB, Texas Tech. Not the athlete some of the other LBs are, but likely a very good player
- Kyle Louis, Safety/LB, Pitt: Patrick Graham wants to use a nickel (hybrid DB/LB). Kyle Louis could be his guy
- Keylan Rutledge, G, Georgia Tech
- Caleb Banks, DT, Florida
- D'angelo Ponds, CB, Indiana: 5'8 but absolute dog and freak athlete

Tier 3c: High Upside players likely to fall due to injury

- **Jermod Mccoy**: In conversation as best CB in draft, didn't play last year due to ACL tear and needs surgery again, putting 2026 season in question

Tier 4: Ty Simpson

- **Ty Simpson**: Showed elite flashes during 2025 season, but he was injured in back half. Size and injury potential are a concern. Consensus Round 2-3 QB but could go round 1