

Episode 239:

What Matters in DFS - Developing A Winning Process

This is a subscriber-only summary of Establish The Run content.

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Topics Covered:

- (02:38) Explaining R^2 in fantasy
- (04:27) The importance of the median projection
- (06:11) How ETR builds projections
- (09:20) Balancing quantitative numbers with qualitative context
- (11:45) Floor and ceiling projections
- (14:22) Using ceiling only projections for tournaments
- (15:41) How to win at ownership projections
- (18:28) Are ownership projections underrated?
- (20:49) GPP Game Scores

Explaining R^2

Adam: Projections are the backbone of DFS process,
ETR's R^2 is industry-leading

Leone: R^2 = % of variance - Goal is to have ranks in order/small error bars on projections

Projections - Median vs Ceiling

Adam: We all fall prey to "I know better" (IKB). Fragility? Medians? Adam knows better.

Dink: In tournaments: Median projection = backbone, *but D wants ceilings.*

Consider: Which players have wider ranges of outcome?
Which positions? WR wider than QB, etc.

Goal: to leverage the understanding of the range of outcomes for players AND positions to find the players that can hit the top end of the range

Projections - ETR's Process

Leone: ETR's R^2 is better than DK salaries VS fantasy points (base line for any good system)

To keep improving: Evaluate true talent, weight recent performance heavier than past, "a lot of nerdy shit" (tweak baselines based on game environment, pace, pass/run rates) using machine learning.

There's a manual process too: Sanity-checking target shares, carry shares, etc.

Defense / match-ups are incorporated on a stat-by-stat and position-by-position level. (DVP, fDDP, fPOE, etc.)

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Projections - Quantitative vs qualitative

Adam: Sometimes we need to balance the model-based projections with IKB.

Certain situations call for altering a player's projection that might get missed in the model.

Applying feel and soft skills allows us to still have that backbone projection, while adjusting based on weekly situation/matchup.

Dink: Being able to combine the data-centric analysis with weekly context is the true value-add and what separates our projections.

Projections - Floor vs Ceiling

Adam: ETR adding floor and ceiling projections this season.

Leone: Looking at players' historic volatility in games as well as archetype and game situation to determine their floor, median, and ceiling.

Using machine learning to understand how air yards, target share, yards per target, etc., affect a player's standard deviation and potential outcomes.

Should always be playing guys that have a high ceiling, even in cash.

Will be able to *identify* what metrics correlate with high value outcomes (high total games, player archetype)

Projections - Tournaments & Ceiling

Dink: We gain differentiation over the field by using ceiling projections when opponents are generally using median projections.

Aiming to consistently be directionally correct allows us to put more high-upside players into our lineups, while gaining leverage over the field.

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Projections - Ownership

This can be thought of as what the field is doing or what our opponents are doing

Adam: When playing in large or small field tournaments it is extremely important to use a reliable set of ownership projections.

ETR process always improving

ETR projections constantly updated and loaded into the FantasyLabs Optimizer

Leone: Looking at market sentiment and algorithmically

Have *automatic checks and balances* to be sure everything is in line systemically

Important to combine quantitative and qualitative methods

Dink and Leone hammer spreadsheets // *Adam and Evan* nail down game theory, roster changes, PSM, shower narrative etc.

Are Ownership Projections Overrated?

Dink: Player utilization is important to understand now as more people are using optimizers and projection models.

GPP Game Scores (NEW) - Nerd Takeover

Leone: Trying to come down to one number to express how good of a target is a specific game for game stacks.

Combining actual game expectation + our fantasy point expectation + fantasy point expectation relative to salary

BETA testing a "break even point" for specific player ownership.

Goal is to try to find a specific ownership percentage on players where anything above a certain number we may consider fading this player; below this number we consider taking on more ownership.