

## Underclassmen and the Draft by Tony Villiotti

The NFL recently released the names of 65 players who were granted “special eligibility” (e.g., they still have college eligibility remaining) for the 2012 NFL draft. This is the largest number of players granted special eligibility since the process began.

The breakdown of the 65 players by playing position is as follows:

Quarterbacks	5	Offensive Linemen	8
Running Backs	13	Defensive Linemen	12
Wide Receivers	11	Linebackers	4
Tight Ends	3	Defensive Backs	9

History tells us that a significant number of the players who have declared for the draft will indeed get drafted. Players are able to get advice on their draft prospects from the NFL Draft Advisory Committee which hopefully allows them to make an informed decision.

Since 2003 about three-quarters of the players opting to forgo college eligibility ended up being drafted. Details by year are as follows:

Year	Players Declaring	Number of Players Drafted by Round							Total
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
2011	56	15	13	5	3	4	2	0	42
2010	53	17	8	7	6	3	5	0	46
2009	46	15	8	5	8	2	0	0	41
2008	53	11	12	8	3	2	1	2	39
2007	40	14	7	1	2	1	1	2	28
2006	52	12	9	3	5	1	1	2	33
2005	51	10	8	9	3	4	3	0	37
2004	43	14	5	6	3	3	1	1	33
2003	47	10	4	4	8	0	2	1	29
<b>Total</b>	441	118	74	48	41	20	16	11	328

**DRAFTMETRICS** also looked at the drafted underclassmen by playing position. As the following data for 2003-2011 indicates, and which is borne out by the composition of the players declaring this year, offensive linemen and linebackers tend to be less likely to be drafted as underclassmen. The following table shows the information for all playing positions. The “% of All Draftees” column represents the % of all players drafted at that playing position. For example, the 18 underclassmen quarterbacks that were drafted represent 15.5% of all QBs drafted from 2003-2011.

Position	Number of Players Drafted by Round							Total	% of All Draftees
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
<b>QB</b>	12	1	1	0	3	0	1	18	15.5%
<b>RB</b>	17	10	11	10	3	2	1	54	26.2%
<b>WR</b>	22	14	7	7	1	4	2	57	19.9%
<b>TE</b>	6	6	4	2	1	0	1	20	15.0%
<b>OL</b>	11	5	2	3	0	2	1	24	6.3%
<b>DL</b>	23	14	8	8	2	5	2	62	16.5%
<b>LB</b>	7	7	5	5	1	1	1	27	8.9%
<b>DB</b>	20	17	10	6	9	2	2	66	14.6%
<b>Total</b>	118	74	48	41	20	16	11	328	14.3%