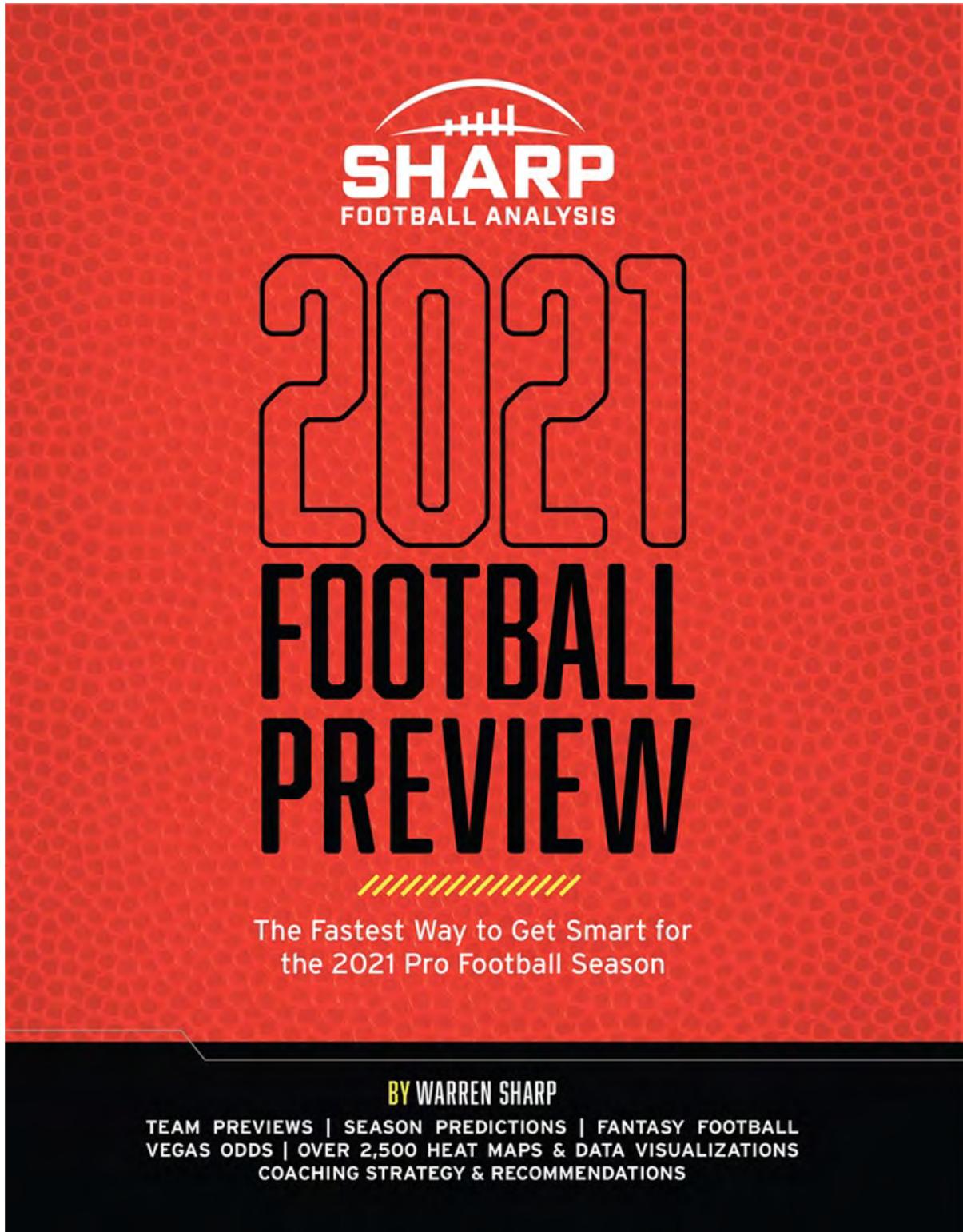


[CLICK TO BUY WARREN'S 400+ PAGE, 2021 FOOTBALL PREVIEW](#)

"Simply the *best* analytical 2021 football preview you can buy"

A FIVE-TIME AMAZON BESTSELLER - NOW AVAILABLE AT EARLY BIRD DISCOUNT

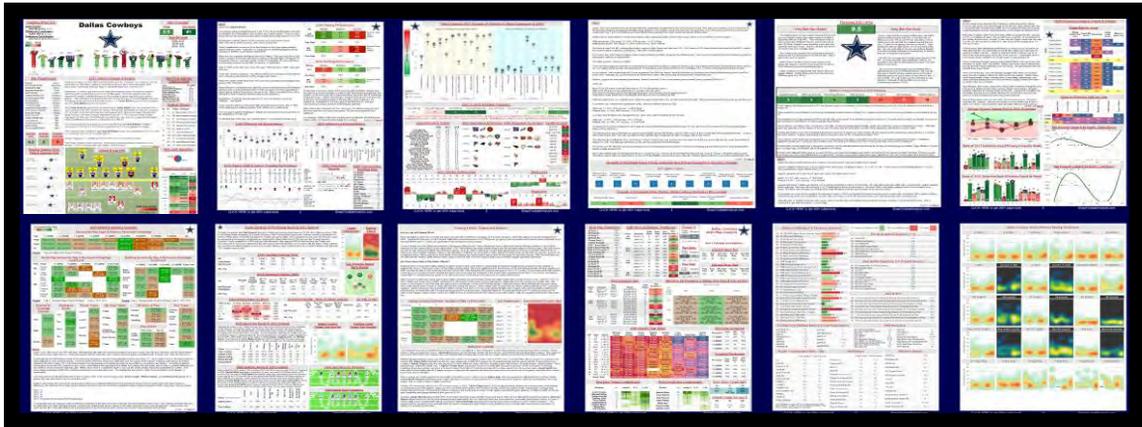


Written by Warren Sharp

Edited by Dan Pizzuta

Featuring contributions from Rich Hribar, Dan Pizzuta, TA Cleveland and Ryan McCrystal

TEAM CHAPTER LAYOUT AND DEFINITIONS



PAGE 1: Schedule strength based on opponent Vegas win totals // asterisk next to draft indicates comp pick // Lineup & Cap Hits lists projected starting roster shaded based on cap to analyze where cap \$ is being spent // Key players lost if null shows unsigned players to date

PAGE 2: Advanced stats including EPA (Expected Points Added), which is a metric that looks at the Expected Points (EP) of the down, distance, and field position situation at the start of a play and contrasting it with the situation at the end of the play. Thus, the difference, or "added" points are considered EPA, and could be positive or negative), and Success Rate are calculated on a per-play basis. Success rate is defined as frequency a play gains required yardage to stay ahead of sticks, and is a rate stat // EDSR is a custom metric Warren created to measure early down success and measures efficiency on early downs and ability to bypass third down offensively or force opponents into third downs defensively // INT = interceptions, FUM = fumbles // Weekly EDSR chart bottom left looks at whether team won the EDSR battle (comparing both sides of the ball vs opponent) each week, green bar = EDSR win, red bar = EDSR loss

PAGE 3: logo in Strength of Schedule graphic is the 2020 forecast, the shaded target is 2019 actual based on 2019 season through week 17 // Schedule Variance analyzes ease in schedule as compared to the rest of teams. Red and 1 indicates hardest jumps in difficulty, Green and 32 indicates easiest shift in schedule // Health by unit based on Adjusted Games Lost from Football Outsiders // Weekly betting lines are accurate as of date of publication

PAGE 4: Rest and preparation edges based on schedule timing // ranking of schedule edges 1-32 compared to rest of NFL teams

PAGE 5: Positional unit rankings 1-32

PAGE 6: Usage Rate by Score examines percentage of a team's total plays in that given score margin which are given (via rush attempt or target) to that player // Share of Offensive Plays by Type looks at total rushes or passes each player received // Completion Percentage by Depth shows completion depth (aDOT aka average depth of target) along x-axis and completion rate along y-axis. Grey dashed line and dots are league averages based on select downs (early = first and second, or third pulled out separately) // Rank of Defensive Pass or Rush efficiency by week looks at prior-yr final rankings of current-yr opponents to get a sense of pockets of easy or tough schedules – prior yr ranks typically show mild but not strong correlation to current yr expectations, and rushing is more closely correlated yr over yr.

PAGE 7: Success by Play Type and Personnel Grouping: the first number in the grouping is the number of RBs, the second is the number of TEs. WRs are listed in parenthesis. Thus, 12 = 1 RB, 2 TEs and 2 WRs. Success rate and EPA/play are listed, along with # of plays from that grouping // Receiving Success: each cell shows success rate and targets on the first line, with yards per attempt (YPA) and EPA/target (described above) // Rushing Success: first line is success rate and attempts, second line is YPC and EPA/rush // Other passing metrics below look at QB performance

PAGE 8: team narrative continues // analysis of the immediate impact of the team's 2021 draft class on the upcoming season only (not focused on future years)

PAGE 9: Passing yardage consists of air yardage (distance ball travels measured per play from line of scrimmage to target) and yards after catch (YAC, distance receiver travels before he is tackled). YIA (Yards In Air of pass, aka another abbreviation for Air Yardage) // Missed YPA yardage on unsuccessful plays which fell short of required cutoff for the play to have been graded "successful" // YAS yardage above successful, yardage gained in excess of cutoff, and measures explosiveness of player

PAGE 10: Number of DBs vs Personnel: rates of DBs used by the team's defense when they face various offensive personnel groupings, and the efficiency of those opponent passes based on success rate and EPA/att // Defensive Tendencies show rate and rank of base, nickel and dime vs NFL average, and this table also shows defensive rush and blitz tendencies

PAGE 11: Most metrics are self-explanatory, early down target rate shows NFL averages below frequency

PAGE 12: Top 63 metrics are numbered to allow for easier call-out in chapter narrative. Metrics 4-13 look only at first half. Metrics 14-21 look at pre-snap motion (PSM) usage and improvement in quarters 1-3 only. Metrics 22-26 look at play action (PA) on early downs in quarters 1-3. Metrics 27-34 study offensive performance and tendency based on number of defenders in the box pre-snap // Fumble Luck: FROE (Fumble Recovery Over Expectation), on offense or defense, and rankings 1-32 // Field Goal luck analyzes own and opposing FG conversion rate vs average // Player Tracking Data: stats are defined below section. 2018 ranks are listed for QBs with enough 2018 attempts to qualify, to use for comparing year to year performance

PAGE 13: Offensive Passing Tendencies: these heat maps show where QBs target their receivers in each situation outlined. Red = heavily targeted, light green = light targeted, white = no targets. This is a vertical view of the football field, with the line of scrimmage at the "0" line of the y-axis, and the QB faces north on the page while looking to pass. Graphics depicting success (in black) show light yellow for most successful targets, green for moderate and dark blue for least successful.

Coaches (Prior Yrs)

Head Coach:

Mike McCarthy (1 yr)

Offensive Coordinator:

Kellen Moore (2 yrs)

Defensive Coordinator:

Dan Quinn (ATL HC) (new)

Easy Hard



Dallas Cowboys



2021 Forecast

Wins

9.5

Div Rank

#1

Past Records

2020: 6-10

2019: 8-8

2018: 10-6



Key Players Lost

Player	New
Aldon Smith (EDGE)	Seahawks
Andy Dalton (QB)	Bears
Antwaun Woods (IDL)	Colts
Blake Bell (TE)	Chiefs
Cameron Erving (LG)	Panthers
Chidobe Awuzie (CB)	Bengals
Eli Ankou (IDL)	Falcons
Greg Senat (LT)	Browns
Joe Thomas (LB)	Texans
Justin March-Lillard (LB)	Titans
Ron'Dell Carter (EDGE)	Retired
Xavier Woods (S)	Vikings
Chris Jones (P)	TBD
Jamize Olawale (FB)	TBD
Joe Looney (C)	TBD
LP Ladouceur (LS)	TBD
Sean Lee (LB)	TBD
Tyrone Crawford (IDL)	TBD

2021 Dallas Cowboys Overview

What do we take from the 2020 trainwreck that was the Cowboys? I'm going to buck the trend and say that there's actually some things we can learn about this team, their philosophy, and things that may help us anticipate what is to come in 2021.

Offensively, it doesn't get much more brutal than what we saw in Dallas last season. Their franchise quarterback was lost in the fifth game. Their top tight end who was expected to make a significant impact in the receiving game was lost in the season opener. Their offensive line dropped like flies all season long. RT **La'El Collins** was hurt in training camp and missed the entire season, LT **Tyron Smith** played in just two games and RG **Zack Martin** missed six games.

When **Dak Prescott** went down, Dallas turned to **Andy Dalton**. He was believed to be a top-3 backup in the NFL before the season. But he was absolutely horrible. He averaged 5.0 YPA and -0.02 EPA/att in his first start against the Cardinals in Week 5 on Monday Night Football, and the Cowboys were blown out 38-10. The very next week, Dalton averaged 3.9 YPA and -0.51 EPA/att in another loss, this time 25-3 against Washington. Dalton sustained a concussion in the game on a late hit.

His replacement the next week was the great JMU product **Ben DiNucci**. DiNucci averaged 4.5 YPA and -0.45 EPA/att in a primetime 23-9 loss against the Eagles.

The Cowboys then decided to give **Garrett Gilbert** a spin. He averaged just 6.4 YPA with -0.17 EPA/att and lost 24-19 to the Steelers.

Dallas, sitting at 2-7, crawled into their Week 10 bye to lick their wounds.

Two things beyond others stood out: how was this passing offense allowed to be so terrible – even considering the QB rotation, and secondly, (cont'd - see **DAL2**)

Key Free Agents/ Trades Added

Player	AAV (MM)
Keanu Neal (S)	\$4
Tarell Basham (EDGE)	\$2.79
Brent Urban (IDL)	\$1.8
Carlos Watkins (IDL)	\$1.8
Ty Nsekhe (RT)	\$1.8
Bryan Anger (P)	\$1.2
Jake McQuaide (LS)	\$1.2
Damontae Kazee (S)	\$1.10
Jeremy Sprinkle (TE)	\$1.10

Drafted Players

Rd	Pk	Player (College)
1	12	LB - Micah Parsons (Penn St..)
2	44	CB - Kelvin Joseph (Kentucky)
	75	DT - Osa Odighizuwa (UCLA)
3	84	DE - Chauncey Golston (Iowa)
	99	CB - Nahshon Wright (Orego..)
4	115	LB - Jabril Cox (LSU)
	138	OT - Josh Ball (Marshall)
5	179	WR - Simi Fehoko (Stanford)
6	192	DT - Quinton Bohanna (Kent..)
	227	CB - Israel Mukuamu (South ...)
7	238	OG - Matt Farniok (Nebraska)

Average Line	# Games Favored	# Games Underdog
-0.3	8	9

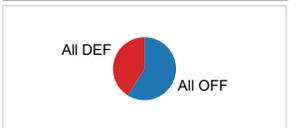
Regular Season Wins: Past & Current Proj



Lineup & Cap Hits



2021 Unit Spending



Positional Spending

Position	Rank	Total	2020 Rk
All OFF	2	\$126.72M	8
QB	8	\$24.84M	2
OL	13	\$36.76M	23
RB	3	\$16.82M	4
WR	6	\$37.70M	18
TE	12	\$10.60M	22
All DEF	19	\$88.64M	31
DL	17	\$42.16M	27
LB	7	\$20.48M	6
CB	16	\$17.37M	23
S	26	\$8.62M	31

DAL-2

where was Ezekiel Elliott?

The passing game averaged below 4.5 net YPA in three straight games (Arizona, Washington and Philadelphia), two of which were Dalton games . Only two other teams the last two years have gone three straight games with below 4.5 net YPA:

Washington Football Team in 2019 (coaching staff subsequently fired)
New York Jets in 2020 (coaching staff subsequently fired)

There's legitimately no excuse to be that terrible for that many weeks without addressing the issues. It typically is a microcosm of something larger involving coaching in addition to just players themselves.

What was this coaching staff doing with Andy Dalton? They had more than a full week to prepare for his first start due to it being on Monday night. Of Dalton's 57 dropbacks, only four used play-action. Of the 57 dropbacks, 56 came with three or more wide receivers on the field. 52 were in 11 personnel.

With 3+ WRs on the field, they were 75% pass. With less than 3 WRs, they were 90% run.

There was simply no disguise. The offense moved from a shotgun-based offense 80% of the time with Prescott to 85% shotgun with Dalton.

Plays from under center were runs 76% of the time and plays from shotgun were passes 75% of the time.

Some offensive coordinators may take the approach when passing with a weaker offensive line to spread the field with 3+ WRs and get it out of the quarterback's hands quickly before the pressure can get to him. Other coordinators may add a tight end or back to help the offensive line in pass protection.

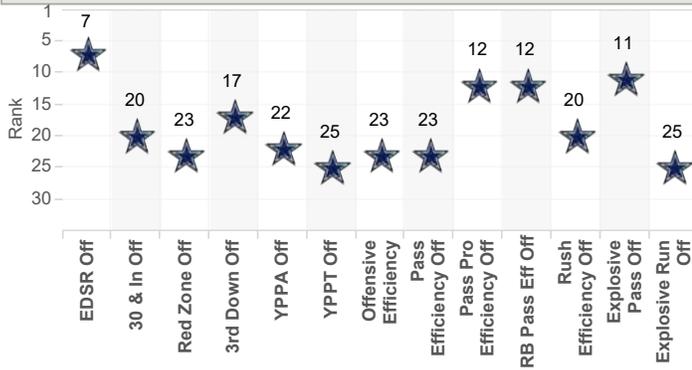
Regardless of what the desired approach is, if it's not working, it must be changed... and quickly.

It was clear the offensive line wasn't able to handle the protection with 3+ WRs on the field and yet nothing changed. Andy Dalton was a sitting duck.

The next game against Washington, Dalton was pressured on an insane 44% of his dropbacks in 3+ WR sets.

On his final play of the day, the Cowboys were in 11 personnel, backed up at

2020 Offensive Advanced Metrics



2020 Passing Performance

QB	1st Dwn	2nd Dwn	3rd Dwn	Success Rate
Dak Prescott	64% 8.3 99.3	54% 9.1 113.6	41% 7.3 69.2	YPA Rating
Pass Rate	55%	62%	74%	
NFL AVG	54% 7.6 96.0	49% 7.0 95.4	38% 7.0 85.6	Success Rate YPA Rating
Pass Rate	50%	60%	75%	



2020 Rushing Performance

Offense	1st Dwn	2nd Dwn	3rd Dwn	Success Rate
DAL	43% 3.7	53% 4.8	58% 4.4	YPC
Run Rate	45%	38%	26%	
NFL AVG	49% 4.4	51% 4.5	54% 4.6	Success Rate YPC
Run Rate	50%	40%	25%	

at their own 3-yard line. Dallas didn't have the tight end inline, instead, had him split out in a trips formation to Dalton's left. Washington brought only four rushers, so the lone back didn't chip and instead, ran to the line of scrimmage looking for a pass. Dalton, from the gun, dropped back into his end zone and by the time he reached the back of his drop, the pocket collapsed. He stepped up, scrambled for a 6-yard gain on the third-and-10, and was concussed by a cheap shot from a Washington defender.

After Andy Dalton returned from his concussion, the offense improved and the team won four of its last seven games. But the offense was far from optimized.

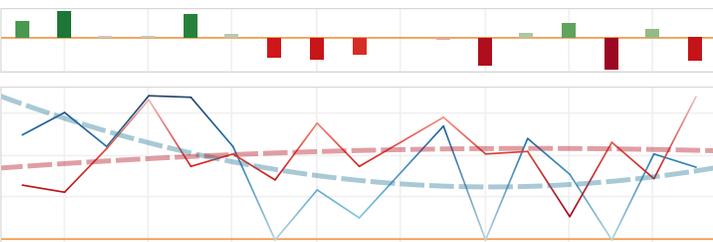
For example, Dalton's splits from shotgun were significantly worse than from under center, yet they still used roughly 80% shotgun (cont'd - see DAL-3)

2020 Defensive Advanced Metrics



2020 Weekly EDSR & Season Trending Performance

WEEK	RESULT	OPP	SITE	MARGIN	PTS	OPP PTS
1	L	ATL	A	-3	17	20
2	W	SEA	H	-7	40	39
3	L	CLE	A	-11	31	38
4	L	NYG	H	-11	38	49
5	W	ARI	H	3	37	34
6	L	WAS	A	-28	10	38
7	L	PHI	A	-22	3	25
8	L	PIT	A	-14	9	23
9	L		A	-5	19	24
11	W	MIN	A	3	31	28
12	L	WAS	H	-25	16	41
13	L	BAL	A	-17	17	34
14	W	CIN	A	23	30	7
15	W	SF	H	8	41	33
16	W	PHI	H	20	37	17
17	L	NYG	A	-4	19	23



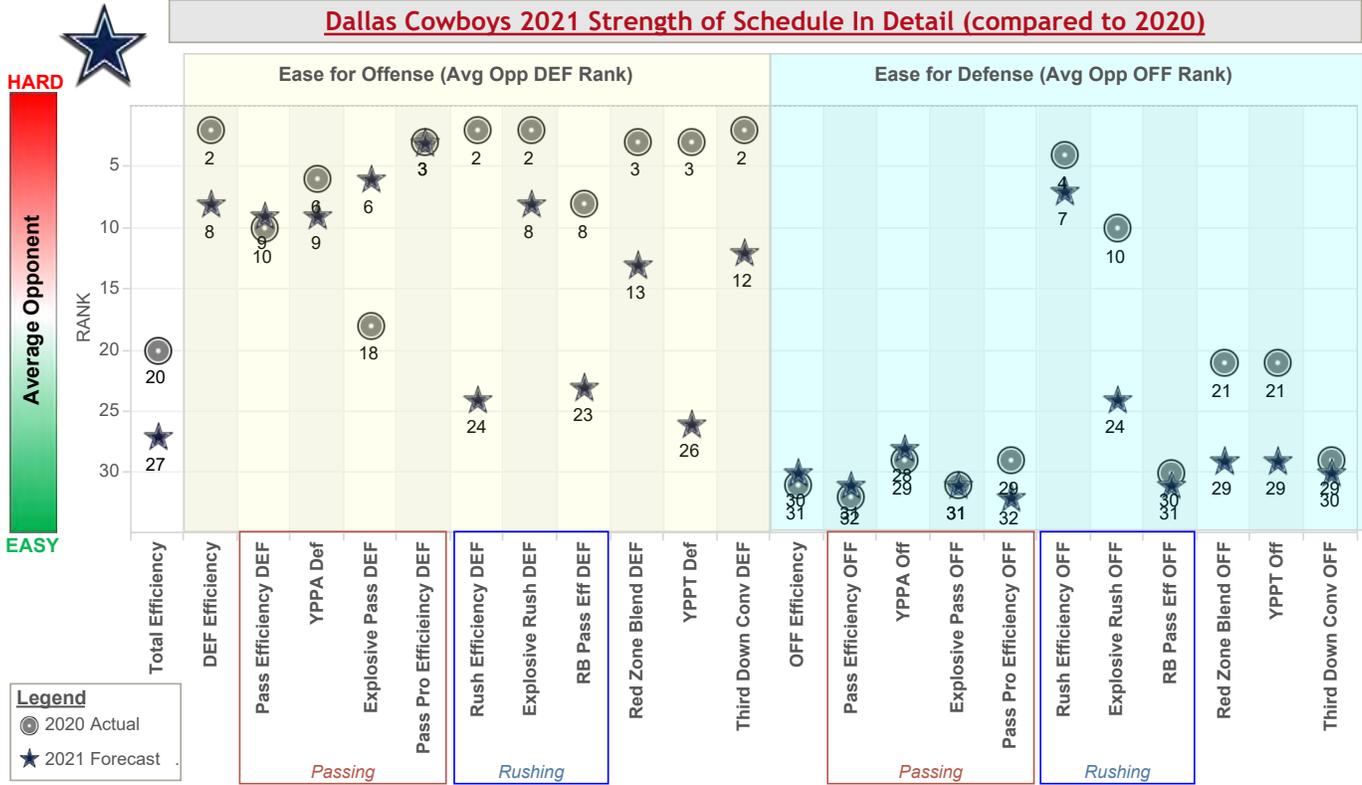
2020 Close Game Records

All 2019 Wins: **6**
FG Games (<=3 pts) W-L: **3-1**
FG Games Win %: **75% (#5)**
FG Games Wins (% of Total Wins): **50% (#3)**
1 Score Games (<=8 pts) W-L: **4-4**
1 Score Games Win %: **50% (#13)**
1 Score Games Wins (% of Total Wins): **67% (#10)**

2020 Critical/Game-Deciding Stats

TO Margin	-3
TO Given	26
INT Given	13
FUM Given	13
TO Taken	23
INT Taken	10
FUM Taken	13
Sack Margin	-13
Sacks	31
Sacks Allow	44
Return TD Margin	+0
Ret TDs	3
Ret TDs Allow	3
Penalty Margin	-5
Penalties	96
Opponent Penalties	91

Dallas Cowboys 2021 Strength of Schedule In Detail (compared to 2020)



2021 vs 2020 Schedule Variances*

Pass DEF Rk	Pass DEF Blend Rk	Rush DEF Rk	Rush DEF Blend Rk	Pass OFF Rank	Pass OFF Blend Rk	Rush OFF Rk	Rush OFF Blend Rk
16	14	32	32	17	17	19	27

* 1=Hardest Jump in 2020 schedule from 2019 (aka a much harder schedule in 2019), 32=Easiest Jump in 2020 schedule from 2019 (aka a much easier schedule in 2020);
 Pass Blend metric blends 4 metrics: Pass Efficiency, YPPA, Explosive Pass & Pass Rush; Rush Blend metric blends 3 metrics: Rush Efficiency, Explosive Rush & RB Targets

Team Records & Trends

	2020	2019	2018
Average line	1.8	-5.4	0.7
Average O/U line	48.4	46.6	43.7
Straight Up Record	6-10	8-8	10-6
Against the Spread Record	5-11	9-7	9-6
Over/Under Record	10-6	10-6	7-8
ATS as Favorite	1-6	7-7	3-2
ATS as Underdog	4-5	1-0	6-4
Straight Up Home	4-4	5-3	7-1
ATS Home	3-5	5-3	5-2
Over/Under Home	7-1	5-3	5-2
ATS as Home Favorite	0-4	4-3	3-2
ATS as a Home Dog	3-1	0-0	2-0
Straight Up Away	2-6	3-5	3-5
ATS Away	2-6	4-4	4-4
Over/Under Away	3-5	5-3	2-6
ATS Away Favorite	1-2	3-4	0-0
ATS Away Dog	1-4	1-0	4-4
Six Point Teaser Record	11-5	10-6	13-3
Seven Point Teaser Record	11-5	11-5	13-3
Ten Point Teaser Record	12-4	13-2	14-2

2021 Opponents by Division

NFCCE	
AFCW	
NFCNS	
AFCCE	
NFCN	
NFCW	

2020 Opponents by Division

NFCCE	
AFCN	
NFCW	
NFCN	
NFCS	

Health by Unit*

2020 Rk	28
2019 Rk	4
2020 v 2019 Rk	7
Off Rk	29
Def Rk	18
QB Rk	32
RB Rk	3
WR Rk	1
TE Rk	31
Oline Rk	31
Dline Rk	20
LB Rk	20
DB Rk	16

*Based on the work of Football Outsiders

2021 Weekly Betting Lines

1	2	3	4	5	6	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
TB	LAC	PHI	CAR	NYG	NE	MIN	DEN	ATL	KC	LVR	NO	WAS	NYG	WAS	ARI	PHI
+6.5	+1.5	-6.5	-5.5	-5.5	+1.5	+2.0	-4.5	+5.5	+7.5	-5.5	+3.5	+1.5	-1.0	-5.5	-1.5	+1.5
Avg = -0.3																Avg = -0.3
52	52	49.5	49.5	48.5	48	49.5	47	51.5	55	53	50	47.5	47	48	52	43.5

Home Lines

3	4	5	9	10	12	16	17
-6.5	-5.5	-5.5	-4.5	5.5	-5.5	-5.5	-1.5
Avg = -3.6							

Road Lines

1	2	6	8	11	13	14	15	18
6.5	1.5	1.5	2	7.5	3.5	1.5	-1	1.5
Avg = 2.7								



snaps. The team was still far too predictable with play calls based on alignment (70% run from under center, 80% pass from shotgun). Even early downs in the first three quarters (removing predictable pass situations), the Cowboys were 79% pass from shotgun (NFL avg = 66% pass) and 68% run from under center (NFL avg = 63% run). Dalton was more efficient when passing from under center and sacked far less often.

Dalton was far more efficient on early down passes when using play-action, but the team rarely used it. From his Week 10 return onward:

With play-action: 22% usage, 9.0 YPA, 64% success, +0.22 EPA/att
 Without play-action: 78% usage, 7.0 YPA, 52% success, +0.04 EPA/att

And keep in mind, the NFL average play-action usage on early downs last year was 33%. The Cowboys' 22% usage ranked third-lowest in the NFL, despite the massive spike in efficiency it delivered. This falls on Kellen Moore.

The bottom line: after Prescott's injury it was a tough situation for Dalton as well as the offensive line... but it was not a situation that was made any easier by preparation, planning or adjustments.

The other question: where was Zeke?

There are many arguments that the pro-running back crowd likes to make in support of having a blue chip, highly-drafted back: His production will be special. He can support below average quarterback play. He'll generate yards beyond what his line is blocking. He's so much better than the next guy on deck.

In one season, Zeke undermined all of those arguments. Not that they weren't already debunked by countless other highly-drafted running backs over the years. But I challenge any pro-RB individual to defend their stance after witnessing what happened in Dallas last year.

But first, a quick trip down memory lane where I looked at the last 20 first round running backs drafted, which spanned 2009-2020.

Of the 20:

Most (15 of 20) haven't even led their team in YPC as the primary starter.
 Half (10 of 20) haven't even gained above average yards per carry.
 Their teams won fewer games the following three years than the year prior to drafting the RB.
 Their teams made fewer trips to the playoffs than they did prior to drafting the RB.

With that understood, let's examine Zeke. When the team needed him most, he didn't perform. But why? What made Zeke great in the past but not this year?

For starters, let's examine the quarterback splits: with and without Prescott in 2020.

With Dak: 4.1 YPC, 56% success, +0.00 EPA/att
 Without Dak: 3.9 YPA, 48% success, -0.12 EPA/att

Let's also look at where runs typically have the most value, which are those in the red zone:

With Dak: 3.0 YPC, 71% success, +0.27 EPA/att
 Without Dak: 1.8 YPC, 37% success, -0.10 EPA/att

It's almost as if a great running back can't magically support below-average quarterback play. It's also almost as if the presence of a good passing game helps rushing efficiency.

The offensive line was problematic for several games while Dak was still healthy, and yet Zeke's drop off didn't come with Dak and without the line... it came after Prescott was hurt. That said, the offensive line certainly was a large part of Zeke's struggles later in the season.

The offensive line ranked top-10 in run blocking in three of Zeke's prior four seasons and has been one of the very best in the NFL for years. But in 2020, it dropped to 29th. And although still healthy, Zeke saw his production fall off immensely.

It's almost as if the offensive line is responsible for most of a running back's production. It's almost as if having a great offensive line is more important than having a great running back.

We've discredited every pro-RB argument there is, except for one: "He'll be so much better than the next guy on deck." Surely, with all the other excuses RB-truthers would make for Zeke, there's no chance **Tony Pollard** could upstage Zeke. After all, Pollard is playing with the same terrible quarterbacks and

(cont'd - see [DAL-4](#))

Strength of Scheduled Game Timing: Analyzing Rest & Prep Inequality in the 2021 Schedule

2021 games where...

Opponent has over a week to prep	Opponent has less than a week to prep	Difference	Team has a rest disadvantage	Team has a rest advantage	Difference	Team plays a short week road game	Team plays off road SNF or MNF	Team's bye week is negated
4	1	3	2	2	-	0	1	1

Strength of Scheduled Game Timing: Dallas Cowboys Ranking vs NFL Average

Net Rest Edge Rank	Prep Rank	Rest Rank	Short Week Road Games Rank	Games off Road SNF/MNF Rank	Negated Bye Rank
13	23	15	1	11	24

Forecast 2021 Wins

Why Bet the Under

- The defense was poor last season, ranking 25th in EPA per play allowed, against the single easiest schedule of opposing offenses in the NFL. They will need to rely on first round rookie LB Micah Parsons and second round pick CB Kelvin Joseph to play important snaps and help solve the defensive issues. That is a tall task and there is no reason they won't struggle again.

- The Cowboys are slated to face six quarterbacks that ranked in the top 10 last season in EPA per play. That is tied for the most in the NFL.

- While Dallas is thrilled to have Prescott back in the lineup this season, it remains to be seen that he will be 100% following such a devastating leg injury.

- Dallas is always overhyped and their futures lines are always inflated - betting them under their win total since 2000 has gone 14-7 (67%).

9.5



Why Bet the Over

- Prior to Dak Prescott's season-ending injury, the Dallas offense ranked second in the NFL in success rate on offense but only 17th on an EPA per play basis. This is mainly due to the fact that the Cowboys turned the ball over 11 times in five games, the most in the NFL. They fumbled on offense eight teams, the second most in the NFL, but only were able to recover one of those fumbles. The offense should continue its excellent play as long as they can avoid those lost fumbles.

- The NFC East is expected to be the worst division in the NFL, as it was last year, and overall the Cowboys are expected to face the seventh-easiest schedule in the NFL based on win totals.

- The Cowboys had bad injury luck and ranked fifth in adjusted games lost by Football Outsiders. Not only did they lose Prescott but they ranked second in the most adjusted games lost due to injury on the offensive line. LT Tyron Smith, RT La'el Collins and RG Zack Martin only played a combined 12 games after only missing a combined four games in 2019.

Dallas Cowboys Positional Unit Rankings

Quarterbacks	Offensive Line	Running Backs	Receivers	Front 7	Secondary	Head Coach
5	3	9	2	23	25	19

If the Cowboys turn things around in 2021, they'll need to win some shootouts. Every offensive unit ranks in our top 10, but both defensive units rank in the bottom 10.

If the supporting cast is healthy, Dak Prescott should lead an elite offense in Dallas. The Cowboys are the only team with every offensive unit ranked in the top 10.

The backfield took a step backward in 2020, but still ranks ninth overall. Ezekiel Elliott averaged a career-low 1.4 yards before contact per attempt, but much of that can likely be attributed to the injury-plagued offensive line.

The receiving corps returns 97% of its targets from 2020, as well as starting tight end Blake Jarwin who suffered a season-ending injury in Week 1. With elite depth and experience in the offense, it was an easy choice to rank this among the top units—they appeared in the top five on every ballot.

Ranking the offensive line was somewhat difficult due to last year's injuries but, when healthy, there's little doubt this unit belongs among the best. Even with last year's injuries, Cowboys quarterbacks were pressured on just 32.6% of dropbacks (ranked 13th).

The Cowboys' front seven was among the worst in every aspect of the game, especially versus the run. Even when stacking the box with 7+ defenders, opponents picked up 4.7 yards per carry (ranked 30th). Five draft picks spent on the front seven should help, but it won't be a quick fix.

Rookie Kelvin Joseph might help a struggling secondary, but the unit will remain in the bottom tier as long as Trevon Diggs is a liability. Diggs allowed 1.6 yards per coverage snap, ranked 80th out of 82 qualified cornerbacks.

If head coach Mike McCarthy grew as a coach from his year away from football it was hard to tell during his first season in Dallas. Although, it's fair to wonder how things may have been different with a healthy roster. Among coaches with at least three years experience, only Jon Gruden ranks lower than McCarthy.

DAL-4

behind the same terrible offensive line. Pollard is a fourth-rounder, Zeke was drafted fourth overall.

And yet, Pollard's EPA/att was -0.02 (on 80 att) after Dak's injury compared to Zeke's -0.12 (on 137 att). On the season overall, Pollard gained 0.13 yards above expectation, nearly double Zeke's 0.07.

Against standard seven-man boxes after Dak's injury, the splits weren't close:

Elliott: 3.3 YPC, 46% success, -0.18 EPA/att
 Pollard: 4.9 YPC, 52% success, +0.04 EPA/att

Against light boxes, Pollard was gaining +0.14 EPA/att compared to Zeke's -0.09 EPA/att. The only place Zeke was better was, unsurprisingly, against stacked boxes (although Zeke was still averaging -0.07 EPA/att against those stacked boxes). We know Elliott is the better pedigree back with more talent in his prime. But these stats do make you wonder what Zeke will deliver over the next six years of his current contract.

At this point, we could ask the question of how great is Zeke? In 2019, his highest touchdown season since his rookie year, he finished 18th in player tracking metric Rushing Yards Over Expectation, per NFL Next Gen Stats. In 2018, his best season as a pro since that rookie year, he ranked 15th.

Zeke also has 21 fumbles in his five year career, seven more than the next highest running back in that time, including 15 in his last three years. And is coming off a year with six fumbles, a career high.

(cont'd - see [DAL-5](#))

DAL-5

No one would have expected the Cowboys to make the playoffs without Prescott. But seven wins were enough to win the NFC East. What better way to show that elite running backs matter than by putting the team on his back, supporting below average quarterback play and a banged up offensive line?

But in his 10 games after Prescott's injury, Elliott exceeded the NFL average in YPC (4.4 yards) just twice. One of which was vs the No. 27 run defense of the Vikings and the other, a Week 16 win over the Eagles, which saw him gain 4.1 YPC on 18 runs and 31 yards on a 19th run to up his average from 4.1 YPC to 5.5 YPC.

If Elliott needs elite quarterback performance to have success as well as an elite offensive line, he's absolutely not worth \$90 million and especially not worth \$14 million cap hits — which is what he'll hit the Cowboys cap for in each of the next three years and in five of the next six — particularly when a second-year player drafted in the fourth-round is outproducing him.

Here's a sobering thought: running back Ezekiel Elliott's total cap hit the next two years is higher than Tom Brady's. Elliott's cap hit this year is higher than the hits for both Patrick Mahomes and Tom Brady...the quarterbacks that won the last three Super Bowls.

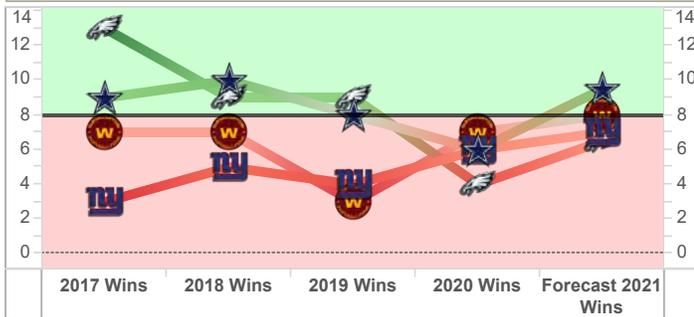
At the end of the day, I was left with two thoughts that I think can be taken away from the Cowboys offense in 2020 despite the injuries: I walked away more disappointed in their coaching (from a playcalling, adjustments, and game planning perspective) and more convinced paying Ezekiel Elliott won't be worth it and was a mistake.

My colleague, Rich Hribar, advocates buying Elliott in fantasy football this year if his price is depressed off of last season's failure, envisioning a stronger, healthier offensive line and the return of Prescott. I agree that a healthier line and better passing game certainly will help his performance, because the absence of both hindered his performance tremendously.

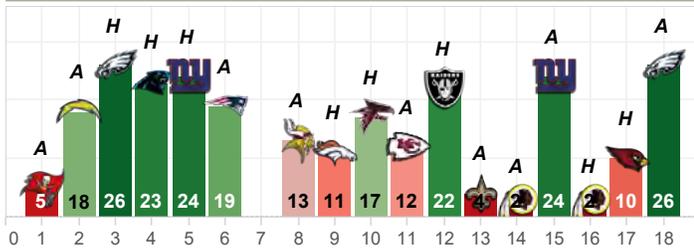
Both of these things spill over into 2021. But the good news is, Prescott is back and the Cowboys' offensive line should be much better than it was in 2020. Let's keep in mind, however, that the Dallas offensive line continuity

(cont'd - see [DAL-6](#))

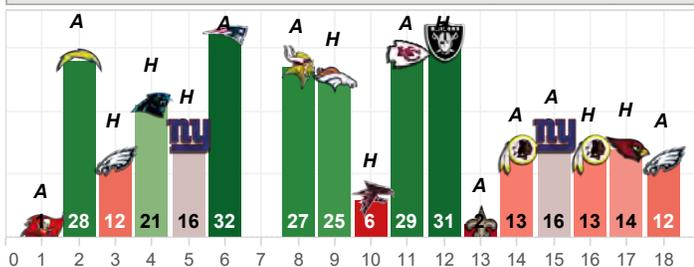
Division History: Season Wins & 2021 Projection



Rank of 2021 Defensive Pass Efficiency Faced by Week



Rank of 2021 Defensive Rush Efficiency Faced by Week



2020 Situational Usage by Player & Position

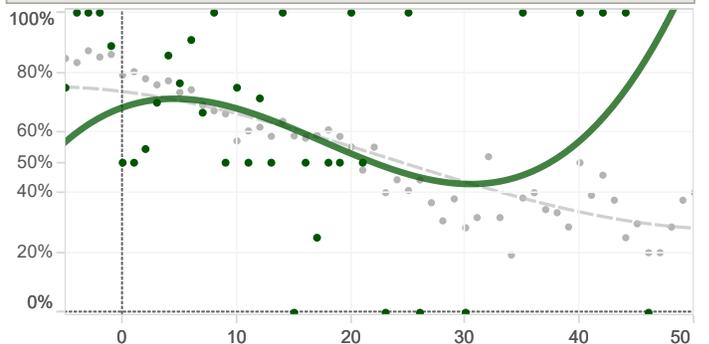
Usage Rate by Score

Player	Being Blown Out (14+)	Down Big (9-13)	One Score	Large Lead (9-13)	Blowout Lead (14+)
RUSH					
Ezekiel Elliott	18%	7%	66%	9%	
Tony Pollard	18%	7%	62%	11%	3%
Amari Cooper		13%	88%		
CeeDee Lamb	10%	10%	60%	20%	
Cedrick Wilson			100%		
Total	17%	7%	65%	10%	1%
PASS					
Ezekiel Elliott	37%	11%	48%	4%	
Tony Pollard	28%	8%	60%	3%	3%
Amari Cooper	25%	12%	56%	8%	
CeeDee Lamb	25%	7%	64%	4%	
Michael Gallup	22%	9%	64%	5%	
Dalton Schultz	28%	7%	62%	3%	
Cedrick Wilson	43%	11%	46%		
Total	27%	9%	59%	5%	0%

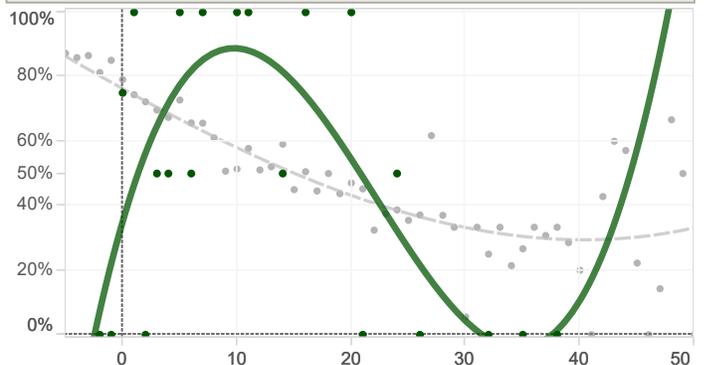
Share of Offensive Plays by Type

Type	Ezekiel Elliott	Tony Pollard	Amari Cooper	CeeDee Lamb	Michael Gallup	Dalton Schultz	Cedrick Wilson
RUSH	65%	30%	2%	3%			1%
PASS	13%	7%	23%	19%	18%	15%	5%
ALL	33%	16%	14%	12%	11%	9%	3%

Dak Prescott Comp % by Depth - Early Downs



Dak Prescott Comp % by Depth - 3rd Down





2020 Detailed Analytics Summary



Success by Play Type & Primary Personnel Groupings

Type	1-1 [3WR]	1-2 [2WR]	1-0 [4WR]	1-3 [1WR]	2-1 [2WR]	2-2 [1WR]	0-0 [5WR]	0-1 [4WR]	2-0 [3WR]	ALL
PASS	51%, -0.01 (513)	48%, 0.00 (77)	35%, -0.05 (20)	50%, -0.53 (4)	29%, -0.52 (7)	100%, 0.37 (1)	0%, -1.76 (2)	25%, -0.18 (4)	0%, -3.07 (2)	49%, -0.03 (630)
RUSH	51%, 0.09 (216)	51%, -0.18 (144)	33%, 0.36 (3)	39%, -0.17 (18)	50%, -0.01 (2)	83%, 0.58 (6)	0%, -1.20 (4)	0%, -0.61 (1)	67%, 0.47 (3)	50%, -0.02 (397)
All	51%, 0.02 (729)	50%, -0.11 (221)	35%, 0.00 (23)	41%, -0.23 (22)	33%, -0.40 (9)	86%, 0.55 (7)	0%, -1.39 (6)	20%, -0.26 (5)	40%, -0.95 (5)	50%, -0.03 (1,027)

Format Success Rate, EPA (Total # of Plays)

Receiving Success by Top-4 Personnel Groupings (Leaderboard)

POS	Player	1-1 [3WR]	1-2 [2WR]	1-0 [4WR]	2-1 [2WR]	4 Grp Total
RB	Ezekiel Elliott	54% (56) 5.2, -0.17	43% (7) 3.1, -0.99	0% (1) 0.0, -0.78		52% (64) 4.9, -0.27
	Dalton Schultz	62% (78) 6.8, 0.16	60% (5) 4.2, 0.02		0% (1) 0.0, -0.60	61% (84) 6.6, 0.14
TE	Blake Jarwin	100% (1) 12.0, 0.49				100% (1) 12.0, 0.49
	Amari Cooper	65% (92) 8.7, 0.39	70% (20) 12.3, 0.53	50% (4) 4.0, -1.00		66% (116) 9.2, 0.37
WR	CeeDee Lamb	54% (95) 9.0, 0.22	0% (4) 0.0, -0.32	20% (5) 7.2, 0.20		50% (104) 8.5, 0.20
	Michael Gallup	52% (66) 8.6, 0.31	42% (19) 6.4, 0.14	40% (5) 10.6, 0.11	0% (1) 1.0, -0.39	48% (91) 8.2, 0.25

Rushing Success by Top-4 Personnel Groupings (Leaderboard)

	1-1 [3WR]	1-2 [2WR]	2-2 [1WR]	2-1 [2WR]	4 Grp Total
Ezekiel Elliott	47% (116) 3.9, -0.07	56% (91) 4.5, -0.10	100% (4) 3.0, 0.86	50% (2) 4.5, -0.01	52% (213) 4.1, -0.07
Pollard Tony	52% (52) 5.5, 0.17	42% (36) 2.8, -0.26	100% (1) 7.0, 0.47		48% (89) 4.4, 0.00
Dalton Andy	63% (16) 5.7, 0.71	33% (3) 2.3, -1.74			58% (19) 5.2, 0.32
Prescott Dak	50% (12) 5.8, 0.24	0% (1) 1.0, -0.55			46% (13) 5.4, 0.18

Format Line 1: Success Rate (Total # of Plays) Line 2: YPA, EPA

Format Line 1: Success Rate (Total # of Plays) Line 2: YPC, EPA

Passing by Coverage Scheme		Passing by Route		Throw Types		QB Drop Types		QB State at Pass		Run Types						
Zone	57% (303) 7.8, 0.14	Curl	63% (103) 6.7, 0.22	Level 1	58% (436) 6.4, 0.12	3 Step	53% (279) 7.4, 0.06	Planted	55% (433) 7.6, 0.20	Outside Zone	48% (116) 4.0, -0.12					
	M2M		53% (159) 7.3, 0.23		Out		70% (74) 7.3, 0.22		Level 2		47% (97) 10.2, 0.30	0/1 Step	60% (120) 7.0, 0.24	Moving	49% (79) 6.9, 0.08	Inside Zone
		Screen	47% (58) 5.2, -0.07				Slant				63% (56) 9.3, 0.35		Level 3		36% (25) 15.7, 0.57	
Dig	55% (31) 7.0, 0.17		Shovel	17% (6) 1.7, -1.16	Designed Rollout Right	58% (36) 7.1, 0.16		Play Action		Power	55% (20) 3.5, 0.02					
	Drag			50% (24) 5.5, -0.05		Sidearm		0% (4) 3.3, -0.56	Basic Screen		50% (20) 7.4, 0.16	Under Center		54% (76) 8.3, 0.09	44% (32) 6.5, 0.01	Pitch
					7 Step		56% (18) 12.7, 0.71	Shotgun		52% (61) 8.0, -0.12	48% (462) 6.9, -0.05	Lead	80% (5) 2.4, 0.48			
ALL	53% (137) 8.2, 0.00							ALL	53% (137) 8.2, 0.00	48% (494) 6.9, -0.04						

DAL-6

wasn't even 10th-worst in the NFL last year. Although they did suffer the second-most games lost due to injury, they did have stretches with the same starters. While some teams went only two consecutive games with the same line, the Cowboys went five games (something that 16 teams can't claim to have done).

But though this line will still have many of the names we recognize, they aren't as productive as they once were. LT Tyron Smith is in his 11th season and has been plagued by neck and back injuries. From November 2018 thru December 2020 (just over two years) Smith missed 19 games, with almost all of them related to his neck or back. RT La'el Collins returns from hip surgery and needed his agent to tweet that "no, my client is not retiring." According to reports having discussions with NFL executives and scouts, some believe the importance of a center has eclipsed the left tackle, due to today's complex defenses and the center's need to make the right line calls. While I don't know if I completely agree, I can say the center position has been underrated for a while. And we've taken advantage of that from a betting perspective for several years now. The downgrade from former center Travis Fredrick to Tyler Biadasz is measurable.

One thing that never fell off in 2020 and is here to stay in 2021 is the stud receiving corps. **Amari Cooper, Michael Gallup, and CeeDee Lamb** played all 16 games last year and return to do the same this year.

Dallas is also hoping the removal of one-and-done defensive coordinator Mike Nolan in exchange for former Falcons head coach Dan Quinn makes a difference. We shall see if that helps, but it certainly can't hurt. Here are Dan Quinn's defensive ranks in Atlanta based on EDSR (Early Down Success Rate):

- 2015: 31
- 2016: 27
- 2017: 30
- 2018: 29
- 2019: 32 (before firing himself from calling plays)

A completely new set of players, with substantial investment on the defensive side of the ball, has the potential to help Quinn. The Cowboys invested their first six draft picks from 2021 into their defense, and their four highest paid players signed in this year's free agent class were all defenders. Dallas knows they won't win the NFC East with offense and a terrible defense, and they've set out to improve on it in 2021 via personnel and coaching.

(cont'd - see DAL-7)



Your outlook for the 2021 Cowboys depends on what area you want to focus on most. This offense should be just as impressive as they were to start the season last year with Dak, but they're unlikely to be a fully optimized unit. I haven't loved most of what I've seen from Kellen Moore but I certainly don't see him as an extreme liability or a bottom-third offensive coordinator.

That said, there were countless times I scratched my head at either individual play calls, strategies or lack of adjustments and wondered if Moore is going to eventually get better at this. While this is just a mere drop in the bucket, it's an interesting anecdote. As bad as the Cowboys were the first 16 weeks of the season, despite sitting at 6-9, they were alive to win the NFC East if they beat the Giants in Week 17 and got some help. But in that must-win game, through 24 minutes, Dallas had just two passing yards. Two! There's simply no way, even with Andy Dalton, that a reasonable offensive coordinator could allow that to happen.

Remembering the good times, with the supercharged offense at the beginning of the season, the question is: where did that supercharged offense get them with a healthy Prescott? They went 2-3 with him as the starter. One win came against the 4-12 Falcons by one point, which required Dallas to outscore Atlanta 30-10 in the second half including an insane onside kick blunder by Atlanta. The second was a 3-point win over the 6-10 Giants. At the end of the day, they must find a way to consistently win against decent NFL teams.

In Prescott's starts, 93% of the Cowboys' drives began when the game was tied or they were trailing, fourth-most in the NFL behind only the Jets, Jaguars and Washington. That's not in the games he missed, that's when Dak played!

This defense cannot be worse prepared or coached than they were for most of last season, but there's no assurance the players and new coaches they're adding will help boost the defense meaningfully.

The schedule bodes well for the Cowboys. I forecast them to play the sixth-easiest schedule, predominantly due to the fact that they face a considerable number of bad offenses outside their own subpar division. This could help their defense significantly (although they played bad offenses in 2019 as well). The largest shift for them comes from run defenses. Last year, Elliott and company faced the NFL's second-toughest schedule of run defenses. I predict they will face the ninth-easiest schedule of run defenses in 2020. The 2021 Cowboys need to improve in a lot of different areas but there is a reasonable path forward for this team to finally meet expectations.

The Cowboys 2021 win total is 9.5. In 21 seasons since 2000, Dallas has exceeded its win total the second least often of any team. "America's Team" has exceeded pre-season expectations only seven times in those 21 years (33%). Only the Jacksonville Jaguars have done worse.

Dallas has been favored to win in 18 games the last two years with Dak Prescott in the lineup. "America's Team" is just 9-9 straight up and 7-11 ATS (38.9%). Only the Jets, Falcons and Panthers have done worse winning games they were favored in, but those teams were favored by two points fewer per game on average, meaning they shouldn't win as many of the games.

They say everything is bigger in Texas, and that applies to the perception of the Cowboys. We'll see if a return to health, a new defensive coordinator and a very easy schedule will be enough to take Dallas to the playoffs in 2021.

Immediate Impact of Dallas Cowboys 2021 Draft Class

It's widely believed the Cowboys hoped to land a cornerback in the first round (either **Patrick Surtain II** or **Jaycee Horn**) but were forced to adjust when neither were on the board. As a result, they may not get as much production from this draft class as originally planned.

LB **Micah Parsons** (first round) could see immediate playing time, but the extent of his role may depend on the health of **Leighton Vander Esch**, who has missed 13 games over the last two seasons.

Parsons played defensive end in high school and only played two years at Penn State (he opted out in 2020), and is understandably still raw in his coverage ability. During his final college season, Parsons blitzed on 20.5% of snaps and he's clearly more comfortable in that role.

If Vander Esch is healthy, we may see Parsons used more frequently in sub-packages as a pass-rusher, while he develops the rest of his game.

Parsons may also have competition for playing time from LB **Jabril Cox** (fourth round) who excels in coverage. Cox allowed 0.2 yards per coverage snap last season at LSU after transferring from North Dakota State, and had almost as many passes defended and interceptions (eight) as completions allowed (12).

Due to the Cowboys' depleted secondary CB **Kelvin Joseph** (second round) may take on a starting role, but immediate expectations for the developmental prospect should be held in check.

On throws at least seven yards downfield, Joseph allowed a deserved catch rate (the rate at which DBs allow catches on catchable targets, accounting for drops) of 81.8%, among the worst rates in the SEC.

Surprisingly, the rookie with the most obvious path to playing time might be DT **Quinton Bohanna** (sixth round) at nose tackle.

Last year Dallas primarily used **Dontari Poe** (released in October) and **Antwuan Woods** (released after the draft) when lining up with a true nose tackle on the defensive line.

New defensive coordinator **Dan Quinn** relied on **Tyler Davison** for that role with the Atlanta Falcons last season, with Davison playing 402 snaps in either a zero or one-tech position (nose tackle). So it's safe to assume someone will need to step up to fill that spot in Dallas.

DT **Osa Odighizuwa** (third round) weighed in at just 282 pounds at his pro day, so he's ill-suited for nose tackle. However, The 6'4", 327-pound Bohanna is the nose tackle prototype and played 429 snaps as the zero or one-tech in Kentucky's defense in 2020.

DE **Chauncey Golston** (third round) could factor into the pass-rush mix, potentially helping to replace **Aldon Smith** and **Tyrone Crawford**. Golston generated a 16% pressure rate versus three and five-step dropbacks, ranking seventh in the Big Ten.

CB **Nahshon Wright** (third round) was a surprising name to hear called on Day 2, but has the ideal profile of a cornerback in Quinn's defense. With his size (6'4"), Quinn will hope to develop him into a physical outside corner.

While Dallas was probably disappointed to miss out on Surtain and Horn, they were smart to trade down from their original spot and acquire some extra picks. There are some decisions to quibble with—primarily whether any off-ball linebacker has value worthy of a top-12 pick—but the sheer quantity of potential starters helps balance out the risks in this draft class.



Dallas Cowboys 2020 Passing Recap & 2021 Outlook

Through five games with **Dak Prescott** last year, Dallas had scored a touchdown on 32.8% of its offensive drives (10th in the league) while averaging 32.6 points per game. After Prescott was injured, the Cowboys scored a touchdown on 16.9% of their drives (31st) and averaged 21.1 points per game (24th). From a passing stance, prior to Prescott's injury, he was leading the league in dropbacks per game (48.0) while Dallas had a 55% success rate through the air in Prescott's starts compared to a 45% success rate afterward. After playing 2020 on the franchise tag, Dallas and Prescott came to a four-year agreement this offseason to end the questions on his future with the team. Dallas suffered the second-most adjusted games missed across their offensive line in 2020 at 46.4 per Football Outsiders and will enter 2021 healthy there as well.



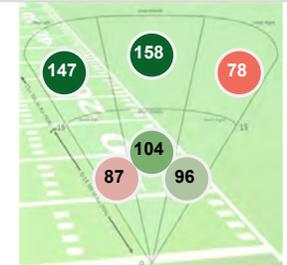
2020 Standard Passing Table

QB	Comp	Att	Comp %	Yds	YPA	TDs	INT	Sacks	Rating	Rk
Andy Dalton	235	366	64%	2,378	6.5	16	8	26	88	30
Dak Prescott	151	222	68%	1,855	8.4	9	4	10	100	12
NFL Avg			64%		7.1				90.1	

2020 Advanced Passing Table

QB	Success %	EDSR Passing Success %	20+ Yd Pass Gains	20+ Yd Pass %	30+ Yd Pass Gains	30+ Yd Pass %	Avg. Air Yds per Comp	Avg. YAC per Comp	20+ Air Yd Comp	20+ Air Yd %
Dak Prescott	56%	60%	25	11.0%	9	4.0%	6.7	5.6	11	5%
Andy Dalton	47%	52%	23	6.0%	12	3.0%	5.0	5.2	8	2%
NFL Avg	47%	50%	33.3	8.6%	12.0	3.0%	5.9	5.2	14.9	4%

Dak Prescott Rating Early Downs



Interception Rates by Down

Yards to Go	1st Dwn	2nd Dwn	3rd Dwn	4th Dwn	Total
1 & 2	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
3, 4, 5	0.0%	5.9%	0.0%	0.0%	2.9%
6 - 9	33.3%	3.2%	0.0%		3.9%
10 - 14	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%		0.8%
15+	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total	1.0%	2.5%	2.3%	0.0%	1.7%

3rd Down Passing - Short of Sticks Analysis

QB	Avg. Yds to Go	Avg. YIA (of Comp)	Avg Yds Short	Short of Sticks Rate	Short Rk
Dak Prescott	8.5	6.6	-2.0	72%	5
NFL Avg	8.8	5.6	-3.1	72%	

Air Yds vs YAC

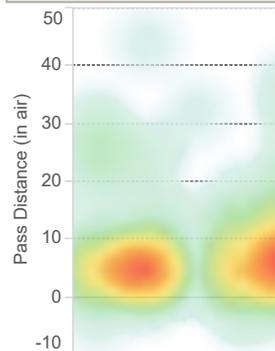
	Air Yds %	YAC %	Rk
Dak Prescott	54%	46%	20
NFL Avg	52%	48%	

2020 Receiving Recap & 2021 Outlook

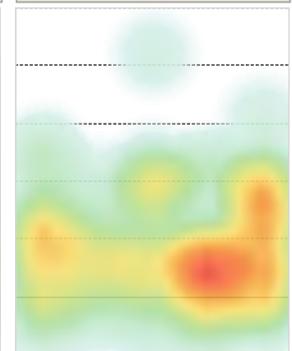
Following the theme so far, Dallas receivers had a tale of two seasons based on the availability of Dak Prescott. Through five weeks, the Cowboys were fifth in success rate targeting wide receivers (64%) and 14th targeting tight ends (56%) while sixth in yards per target to wideouts (9.9 yards) and 11th to tight ends (7.9 yards). For the remainder of the season, Dallas was 27th in yards per target (7.1 yards) to wideouts and 23rd to tight ends (6.6 yards). Dallas arguably has the best WR1-WR3 depth charts in the league in **Amari Cooper**, **CeeDee Lamb**, and **Michael Gallup**. They will also be getting **Blake Jarwin** back off of missing all but 25 snaps a year ago. Jarwin has turned in 8.8 yards per target and 11.6 yards per grab over his early-career sample.

Player *Min 50 Targets	Targ	Comp %	YPA	Rating	Success %	Success Rk	Missed YPA Rk	YAS % Rk	YTS % Rk	TDs
Amari Cooper	130	71%	8.6	96.8	63%	14	9	43	67	5
CeeDee Lamb	109	68%	8.6	102.0	51%	81	70	32	114	5
Michael Gallup	106	56%	8.0	97.3	47%	110	120	36	94	5
Dalton Schultz	89	71%	6.9	95.5	61%	21	11	97	27	4
Ezekiel Elliott	73	71%	4.6	72.7	51%	90	99	113	4	2

Amari Cooper Target Distribution



CeeDee Lamb Target Distribution



2020 Rushing Recap & 2021 Outlook

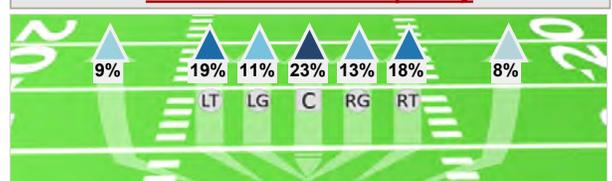
Dallas ended the 2020 season 12th in rushing EPA, but 20th in success rate (49%) on the ground in 2020. **Ezekiel Elliott** averaged a career-low 4.4 yards per touch in 2020 and carried a 47% success rate, but backup **Tony Pollard** also felt the sting of the deteriorating offensive elements a year ago as his 41% success rate on the ground was the fifth-lowest in the league among all backs with 50-plus attempts. Dallas played last season basically down both starting offensive tackles as **Tyron Smith** played in just two games due to a neck injury while **La'El Collins** missed the entire season dealing with hip and groin injuries in training camp. With both tackles out, All-Pro right guard **Zach Martin** also missed six games himself in 2020. With the offensive line healthy entering the season and Prescott back under center, the run game should rebound.

Player *Min 50 Rushes	Rushes	YPC	Success %	Success Rk	Missed YPA Rk	YTS % Rk	YAS % Rk	Early Down Success %	Early Down Success Rk	TDs
Ezekiel Elliott	244	4.0	49%	59	16	66	70	47%	65	6
Tony Pollard	113	4.5	48%	65	66	56	37	44%	78	6

Yards per Carry by Direction



Directional Run Frequency





Buy any dip with Ezekiel Elliott

Elliott averaged a career-low 4.4 yards per touch, but was still a workhorse, averaging 19.7 touches per game, which was eighth among all running backs in 2020. Impacted by the injury of Dak Prescott, Elliott had six touchdowns and 22.3 PPR points per game in the five games with Prescott active compared to just two touchdowns and 11.2 points per game after Prescott was lost for the season.

On top of losing Prescott, Elliott played behind a bludgeoned offensive line. Dallas played last season down both starting offensive tackles as Tyron Smith played in just two games due to a neck injury while La'El Collins missed the entire season dealing with hip and groin injuries in training camp. With both tackles out, All-Pro right guard Zach Martin also missed six games. All in all, Dallas suffered the second-most adjusted games missed across their offensive line in 2020 at 46.4 per Football Outsiders. Dallas is still committed to Elliott as he carries \$36.9 million and \$23.2 million dead cap hits over the next two seasons. As a workhorse back, Elliott is one of just three backs (Alvin Kamara and Austin Ekeler) with at least 50 receptions the past two seasons. With Prescott back and the offensive line healthy, Elliott should remain a pick in the front half of the first round of drafts and a potential bargain anywhere afterwards.

Are There Value Plays In The Dallas Offense?

Everyone loves the top of the Dallas offense as Elliott, Amari Cooper, and CeeDee Lamb will all be selected among the top-50 players in the majority of leagues this season. If you want a piece of the Dallas passing game, that is the capital required. But because of the quarterback position carrying variance per draft, you may be able to catch a discount on Dak Prescott still. After being the QB3 in points per game in 2019 (21.1 points), Prescott was pacing the position a year ago at 26.9 points per game through five games prior to missing the remainder of the season with a gruesome ankle injury. Prescott was averaging a career-high 5.5 rushing points per game, so we will have to wait on the impact of the injury for his rushing performance.

After Prescott you will have a large gap to other Dallas selections, but both Michael Gallup and Blake Jarwin offer potential for their costs. After 66-1,107-6 in 2019, Gallup took a step back in 2020, catching 59-of-105 targets for 843 yards and five touchdowns. Gallup did close the season on a positive note, with seven or more targets in six of his final nine games and a touchdown in three of his final five games. Gallup has bounce back potential with an unaccounted value spike should either Cooper or Lamb miss any time during the season. Jarwin made it just 25 snaps into the season before suffering an ACL injury after signing a contract extension. His replacement, Dalton Schultz, then went on to rank ninth among all tight ends in targets (89), but was largely a replacement level producer on those looks with 6.9 yards per target and 9.8 yards per catch. Jarwin has turned in 8.8 yards per target and 11.6 yards per grab over his early-career sample. Jarwin needs to prove his health, but that is factored into his ADP which is lower than where it was as a popular target at this time a year ago.

Dallas Cowboys Defense: Number of DBs vs Personnel						Def Tendencies			Surrendered +Success Map	
Personnel	4	5	6	7	Grand Total		%	Rk		
1-1 [3WR]	7 plays (2%) Success: 57% EPA: -0.79	284 plays (83%) Success: 45% EPA: 0.01	48 plays (14%) Success: 38% EPA: -0.27	3 plays (1%) Success: 33% EPA: -0.73	342 plays (100%) Success: 44% EPA: -0.05	Base	18%	26		
1-2 [2WR]	34 plays (38%) Success: 59% EPA: 0.30	52 plays (58%) Success: 54% EPA: 0.29	2 plays (2%) Success: 0% EPA: -0.76	1 plays (1%) Success: 100% EPA: 2.17	89 plays (100%) Success: 55% EPA: 0.29	Nickel	70%	5		
2-1 [2WR]	16 plays (43%) Success: 56% EPA: 0.44	21 plays (57%) Success: 43% EPA: -0.12			37 plays (100%) Success: 49% EPA: 0.12	Dime+	9%	18		
2-2 [1WR]	3 plays (50%) Success: 33% EPA: 0.00	3 plays (50%) Success: 67% EPA: -1.05			6 plays (100%) Success: 50% EPA: -0.53	Rush 3	11%	8		
Grand Total	60 plays (13%) Success: 57% EPA: 0.19	360 plays (76%) Success: 46% EPA: 0.04	50 plays (11%) Success: 36% EPA: -0.29	4 plays (1%) Success: 50% EPA: -0.01	474 plays (100%) Success: 47% EPA: 0.02	Rush 4	67%	10		
						Rush 5	17%	22		
						Rush 6+	2%	28		
						Blitz%	19%	26		

Defensive Outlook

The Dallas defense was so troublesome in 2020, the team used eight of 11 2021 draft picks on that side of the ball. Injuries decimated the Cowboys' interior before it really got going last season. **Gerald McCoy** never got on the field, **Trysten Hill** tore his ACL, and **Donrari Poe** only lasted half a season. With a lack of pass rush in the interior, the Cowboys also matched that with not being able to stop the run. Dallas ranked 31st in Run Stop Win Rate, according to ESPN.

Demarcus Lawrence was again one of the better pass rushers in the league, ranked 10th in ESPN's Pass Rush Win Rate. But as a team, the Cowboys only ranked 28th. **Aldon Smith** returned from his four-year suspension to start all 16 games for 14 quarterback hits and five sacks, but the 31-year-old was not re-signed. **Randy Gregory** was after only playing 25% of the defensive snaps. Among 124 edge rushers with at least 150 pass rushes, Gregory ranked 11th in pressure rate. Lawrence ranked 13th. **Leighton Vander Esch** only played 10 games in 2020 after nine games played in 2019. Even when on the field, lingering injury issues slowed him down a bit and he hasn't been able to match the promise of his rookie season over the past two years. **Jaylon Smith** has been able to stay healthy with all 16 games played over the past two seasons but there have been some inconsistencies in his game, especially when Vander Esch is not also on the field.

With coverage and health questions in the middle of the defense, the Cowboys signed **Keanu Neal**, who was expected to play linebacker. But then, Dallas drafted **Micah Parsons** in the first round. Under Dan Quinn, Last year's Falcons played 75% of their defensive snaps in nickel, the fourth-highest rate in the league, with no snaps in dime or lighter personnel.

Among 148 cornerbacks with at least 100 coverage snaps in 2020, **Trevon Diggs** ranked 127th in adjusted yards allowed per coverage snap, which adjusts for touchdowns and interceptions. Diggs was also one of the most targeted corners when he was on the field, ranked 138th in targets per coverage snap among that same group. There were a number of rookies in the same area as Diggs in both targets and adjusted yards allowed. To Diggs's credit, he had the best completion percentage allowed of that group at 55.4%.

At safety, **Xavier Woods** played nearly 90% of the Dallas defensive snaps but after some poor play in 2020, he was allowed to leave in free agency. **Donovan Wilson** played well as he split his time between playing deep and in the box. After him, there are some questions, especially given Quinn's history in Cover 3. Wilson might not be a great single-high fit consistently. **Damonte Kazee** has played that role for Quinn, but is coming off a torn Achilles in Week 4. The league could be moving to more two-high looks but Quinn's background leans toward a more traditional use of a single-high deep safety and that type of player isn't currently on the roster.

2020 Play Tendencies

All Pass %	59%
All Pass Rk	14
All Rush %	41%
All Rush Rk	19
1 Score Pass %	58%
1 Score Pass Rk	15
2019 1 Score Pass %	60%
2019 1 Score Pass Rk	14
2020 Pass Increase %	-2%
Pass Increase Rk	18
1 Score Rush %	42%
1 Score Rush Rk	18
Up Pass %	52%
Up Pass Rk	24
Up Rush %	48%
Up Rush Rk	9
Down Pass %	62%
Down Pass Rk	14
Down Rush %	38%
Down Rush Rk	19

2020 Down & Distance Tendencies

Down	Distance	Total Plays	Pass Rate	Run Rate	Play Success %
1st Dwn	Short (1-3)	9	44%	56%	44%
	Med (4-7)	13	46%	54%	69%
	Long (8-10)	343	51%	49%	50%
2nd Dwn	Short (1-3)	50	34%	66%	68%
	Med (4-7)	86	65%	35%	49%
	Long (8-10)	105	68%	32%	44%
3rd Dwn	Short (1-3)	48	50%	50%	69%
	Med (4-7)	52	85%	15%	48%
	Long (8-10)	34	85%	15%	18%
4th Dwn	Short (1-3)	9	56%	44%	56%
	Med (4-7)	2	100%	0%	0%

Shotgun %:

Under Center	Shotgun
36%	64%
37% AVG 63%	

Run Rate:

Under Center	Shotgun
72%	19%
68% AVG 23%	

Pass Rate:

Under Center	Shotgun
28%	81%
32% AVG 77%	

Dallas Cowboys 2020 Play Analysis



Short Yardage Intelligence:

2nd and Short Run				
Run Freq	Run Rk	NFL Run Freq Avg	Run 1D Rate	Run NFL 1D Avg
64%	22	67%	83%	75%

2nd and Short Pass				
Pass Freq	Pass Rk	NFL Pass Freq Avg	Pass 1D Rate	Pass NFL 1D Avg
36%	11	33%	50%	59%

Most Frequent Play

Down	Distance	Play Type	Player	Total Plays	Play Success %
1st Dwn	Short (1-3)	RUSH	Ezekiel Elliott	5	40%
	Med (4-7)	RUSH	Ezekiel Elliott	7	43%
	Long (8-10)	RUSH	Ezekiel Elliott	105	42%
	XL (11+)	PASS	CeeDee Lamb	2	50%
2nd Dwn	Short (1-3)	RUSH	Ezekiel Elliott	23	74%
		RUSH	Ezekiel Elliott	16	50%
	Long (8-10)	RUSH	Ezekiel Elliott	4	25%
		PASS	Ezekiel Elliott	4	25%
	XL (11+)	PASS	CeeDee Lamb	4	50%
		PASS	Michael Gallup	4	50%
3rd Dwn	Short (1-3)	RUSH	Tony Pollard	4	0%
		RUSH	Ezekiel Elliott	11	82%
	Med (4-7)	PASS	CeeDee Lamb	16	63%
		PASS	Michael Gallup	7	43%
	XL (11+)	PASS	Michael Gallup	5	0%

Offensive Performance w Motion (Pre Snap & Play Action)

Pre-Snap Motion (Y/N)	Play Action (Y/N)		Total
	No	Yes	
No	Success: 49% YPA: 7.0, EPA: 0.03 Rtg: 90.8 [Att: 270 - Rate: 42.8%]	Success: 51% YPA: 6.4, EPA: -0.11 Rtg: 76.0 [Att: 75 - Rate: 11.9%]	Success: 49% YPA: 6.9, EPA: 0.00 Rtg: 87.6 [Att: 345 - Rate: 54.7%]
Yes	Success: 48% YPA: 6.7, EPA: -0.13 Rtg: 91.5 [Att: 224 - Rate: 35.5%]	Success: 56% YPA: 10.6, EPA: 0.13 Rtg: 127.1 [Att: 62 - Rate: 9.8%]	Success: 50% YPA: 7.5, EPA: -0.08 Rtg: 99.6 [Att: 286 - Rate: 45.3%]
Total	Success: 48% YPA: 6.9, EPA: -0.04 Rtg: 91.1 [Att: 494 - Rate: 78.3%]	Success: 53% YPA: 8.2, EPA: 0.00 Rtg: 99.4 [Att: 137 - Rate: 21.7%]	Success: 49% YPA: 7.2, EPA: -0.03 Rtg: 92.9 [Att: 631 - Rate: 100.0%]

2020 Weekly Snap Rates

Wk	Opp	Score	Michael Gallup	Dalton Schultz	Amari Cooper	Ezekiel Elliott	CeeDee Lamb	Tony Pollard	Blake Bell	Cedrick Wilson
1	LA	L 20-17	69 (96%)	50 (69%)	63 (94%)	63 (88%)	59 (82%)	10 (14%)	8 (11%)	3 (4%)
2	ATL	W 40-39	75 (91%)	57 (70%)	75 (91%)	76 (93%)	68 (83%)	8 (10%)	33 (40%)	4 (5%)
3	SEA	L 38-31	70 (85%)	55 (67%)	65 (79%)	80 (98%)	49 (60%)	6 (7%)	27 (33%)	24 (29%)
4	CLE	L 49-38	67 (82%)	63 (77%)	63 (77%)	63 (77%)	62 (76%)	22 (27%)	28 (34%)	18 (22%)
5	NYG	W 37-34	64 (97%)	58 (88%)	42 (64%)	54 (82%)	36 (55%)	15 (23%)	18 (27%)	15 (23%)
6	ARI	L 38-10	72 (81%)	72 (81%)	79 (89%)	54 (61%)	60 (67%)	32 (36%)	19 (21%)	25 (28%)
7	WAS	L 25-3	51 (91%)	45 (80%)	42 (75%)	37 (66%)	31 (55%)	19 (34%)	20 (36%)	20 (36%)
8	PHI	L 23-9	69 (87%)	75 (95%)	59 (75%)	62 (78%)	37 (47%)	17 (22%)	41 (52%)	19 (24%)
9	PIT	L 24-19	68 (94%)	69 (96%)	59 (82%)	47 (65%)	38 (53%)	23 (32%)	31 (43%)	11 (15%)
11	MIN	W 31-28	57 (86%)	60 (91%)	54 (82%)	46 (70%)	44 (67%)	21 (32%)	14 (21%)	14 (21%)
12	WAS	L 41-16	45 (76%)	51 (86%)	50 (85%)	39 (66%)	42 (71%)	21 (36%)	18 (31%)	12 (20%)
13	BAL	L 34-17	74 (94%)	71 (90%)	69 (87%)	50 (63%)	48 (61%)	31 (39%)	18 (23%)	20 (25%)
14	CIN	W 30-7	48 (94%)	49 (96%)	42 (82%)	32 (63%)	26 (51%)	19 (37%)	15 (29%)	7 (14%)
15	SF	W 41-33	38 (66%)	51 (88%)	45 (78%)		33 (57%)	52 (90%)	22 (38%)	16 (28%)
16	PHI	W 37-17	58 (83%)	65 (93%)	51 (73%)	37 (53%)	36 (51%)	33 (47%)	30 (43%)	13 (19%)
17	NYG	L 23-19	78 (95%)	80 (98%)	80 (98%)	47 (57%)	61 (74%)	34 (41%)	16 (20%)	7 (9%)
Grand Total			1,003 (87%)	971 (85%)	943 (82%)	787 (72%)	730 (63%)	363 (33%)	358 (31%)	228 (20%)

Personnel Groupings

Personnel	Team %	NFL Avg	Succ. %
1-1 [3WR]	71%	60%	51%
1-2 [2WR]	21%	20%	50%
1-0 [4WR]	2%	2%	35%
1-3 [1WR]	2%	4%	41%

Grouping Tendencies

Personnel	Pass Rate	Pass Succ. %	Run Succ. %
1-1 [3WR]	70%	51%	51%
1-2 [2WR]	35%	48%	51%
1-0 [4WR]	87%	35%	33%
1-3 [1WR]	18%	50%	39%

Red Zone Targets Leaderboard

Receiver	All	Inside 5	6-10	11-20
Amari Cooper	16	8	2	6
Michael Gallup	14	4	1	9
Dalton Schultz	13	2	2	9
CeeDee Lamb	11	4	2	5
Tony Pollard	8		2	6
Ezekiel Elliott	7		1	6
Cedrick Wilson	6	1	2	3
Blake Bell	3	1		2
Dak Prescott	1			1

Red Zone Rushes Leaderboard

Rusher	All	Inside 5	6-10	11-20
Ezekiel Elliott	45	26	6	13
Tony Pollard	17	5	1	11
Dak Prescott	6	4		2
Andy Dalton	2	1		1
Blake Bell	2	2		
Rico Dowdle	2			2
CeeDee Lamb	1			1

Early Down Target Rate

RB	TE	WR
22%	17%	60%
23%	21% NFL AVG	56%

Overall Target Success %

RB	TE	WR
47%	61%	54%
#15	#6	#16

Offensive Efficiency & Tendency Research

04. 1H Off EDSR (Early Down Success Rate)	22
05. 1H Offensive Efficiency	21
06. 1H 3rd Down Yds to Go	15
07. 1H 3rd Down Conversions	9
08. 1H Explosive Play Rate	11
09. 1H Early Down Pass Rate	8
10. 1H Early Down Pass Efficiency	22
11. 1H Early Down Run Efficiency	32
12. 1H Red Zone Pass Efficiency	21
13. 1H Red Zone Rush Efficiency	16
14. PSM Usage Q1-3	10
15. PSM Passing Usage Q1-3	8
16. PSM Improvement Pass Success Q1-3	14
17. PSM Improvement YPA Q1-3	13
18. PSM Improvement Rating Q1-3	28
19. PSM Rushing Usage Q1-3 Q1-3	18
20. PSM Improvement Run Success Q1-3	17
21. PSM Improvement YPC Q1-3	22
22. PA Usage Q1-3 Early Downs	24
23. PA Improvement Success	18
24. PA Improvement YPA	16
25. PA Improvement Rating	28
26. % Of Runs Into 8-Man+ Boxes (1=high)	18
27. Success on runs into 8-man+ boxes	26
28. % Of Runs Into 7-Man Boxes	14
29. Success on runs into 7-man boxes	5
30. % Of Runs Into 6-Man- Boxes	17
31. Success on runs into 6-man- boxes	31
32. Run Rate into 8+ Man Box (1=high)	9
33. Run Rate into 7 Man Box	14
34. Run Rate into 6- Man Box	22
35. Total Defensive Efficiency	23

01. Games w Halftime Lead **8**

02. Avg Halftime Lead **-4.0**

03. Wins **6**

Pre-Snap Motion (Quarters 1-3)

36. PSM YPA	7.8
37. PSM Target Depth	6.0
38. Non-PSM YPA	7.7
39. Non-PSM Target Depth	8.1
40. PSM Pass Success Rate	55%
41. Non-PSM Pass Success Rate	53%
42. PSM EPA/att	-0.06
43. Non-PSM EPA/att	0.08

Play Action (Quarters 1-3 on Early Downs)

44. PA Usage Rate Q1-3 Early Downs	33%
45. PA Success Rate	59%
46. PA YPA	9.0
47. PA Sack Rate	7.7%
48. PA EPA/att	0.0
49. PA Target Depth	6.4
50. Non-PA Success Rate	59%
51. Non-PA YPA	7.5
52. Non-PA Sack Rate	4.8%
53. Non-PA EPA/att	0.07
54. Non-PA Target Depth	6.2

Men In Box

55. % of runs into 8-man+ boxes Early Downs Q1-3 Outside 5-yd line	19%
56. Success on runs into 8-man+ boxes Early Downs Q1-3 Outside 5-yd line	37%
57. YPC on runs into 8-man+ boxes Early Downs Q1-3 Outside 5-yd line	2.1
58. % of runs into 7-man boxes Early Downs Q1-3 Outside 5-yd line	41%
59. Success on runs into 7-man boxes Early Downs Q1-3 Outside 5-yd line	54%
60. YPC on runs into 7-man boxes Early Downs Q1-3 Outside 5-yd line	4.3
61. % of runs into 6-man- boxes Early Downs Q1-3 Outside 5-yd line	36%
62. Success on runs into 6-man- boxes Early Downs Q1-3 Outside 5-yd line	43%
63. YPC on runs into 6-man- boxes Early Downs Q1-3 Outside 5-yd line	4.5

Fumble Luck (Fumble Recovery Over Expectation)

Net FROE Rk	32	defFUM	21
Net FROE	-8.0	defFUM Rcvrd	8
offFUM	19	defFR Rk	2
offFUM Rcvrd	6	defFR%	61.9%
offFR%	31.6%	defFROE	-3.6
offFR Rk	30	defFROE Rk	31
offFROE	-4.4		
offFROE Rk	29		

Field Goal Luck

Net Over Expectation	-0.18	Opp Att	27
Net Over Expectation Rank	15	Opp Makes	24
Own Att	41	Opp FG %	89%
Own Makes	34	Opp Expected Makes	22.69
Own FG %	83%	Opp Make Over Expectation	1.31
Own Expected Makes	32.88	Opp Make over Expectation Rk	12
Own Make over Expectation	1.12	2019 Opp Make Over Exp.	-1.78
Own Make over Expectation Rk	14	2019 Opp Rk	25
2019 Own Make Over Exp.	-2.53		
2019 Own Rk	24		

Player Tracking Data Stats - QBs

	Andy Dalton	Dak Prescott
CAY	5.2	6.8
CAY Rk	30	9
2019 CAY Rk	17	3
AYTS Rk	31	21
2019 AYTS Rk	21	4
AGG Rk	22	21
2019 AGG Rk	5	13
COMP%	64.9	68
xCOMP%	64.9	65.3
xCOMP% Rk	21	17
2019 xCOMP% Rk	31	28
CPOE%	0	2.7
CPOE Rk	23	10
2019 CPOE Rk	30	6

QB Pressure

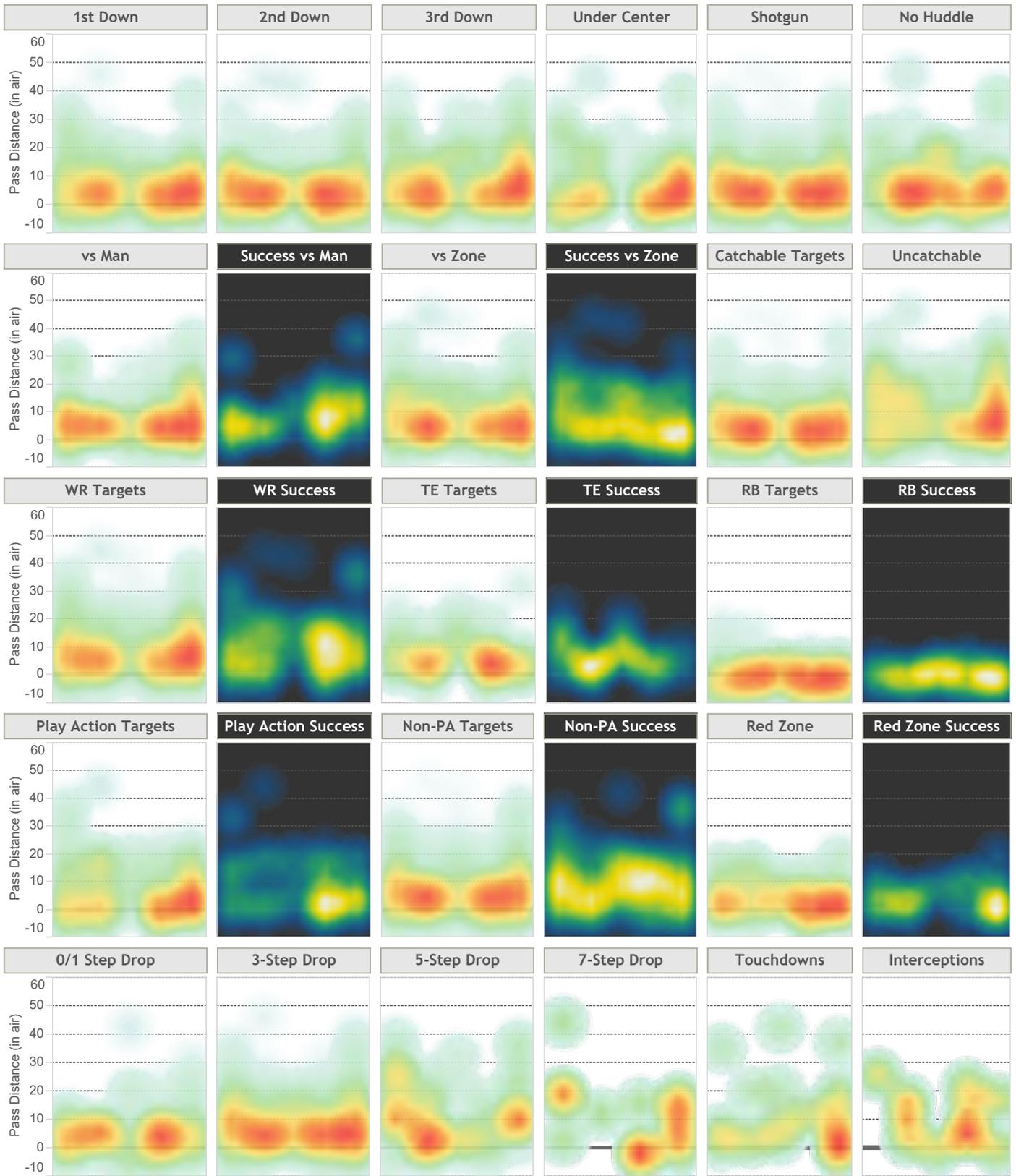
	Andy Dalton	Dak Prescott
Pressure %	29.5	27.9
Pressure Rk	25	29
Sack %	6.4	4.2
Sack Rk	15	31
Pressure Accuracy %	76.7	65.2
Pressure Accuracy Rk	2	19
Rating when Pressured	74.4	44.8
Pressured Rating Rk	15	37
Clean Accuracy %	76.1	81.6
Clean Accuracy Rk	32	9
Rating when Clean	91	117.2
Clean Rating Rk	34	7
Time to Throw	2.5	2.77
Time to Throw Rk	39	16

Offensive Metrics

EPA/Pass	-0.03
EPA/Pass Rk	23
EPA/Rush	-0.03
EPA/Rush Rk	13
On-Target Catch %	89.7%
On-Target Catch Rk	20
Drop%	7.8%
Drop Rk	25
YAC/Att	2.4
YAC/Att Rk	10
Rush Broken Tackle %	12.1%
Rush Broken Tackle Rk	22
Rush 1st Down %	26.8%
Rush 1st Down Rk	15

CAY: Completed Air Yards AYTS: Air Yards to the Sticks AGG: Aggressiveness xCOMP: Expected completion percentage CPOE: Actual completion percentage over expectation

Dallas Cowboys 2020 Offensive Passing Tendencies



Did you enjoy this free chapter? Want this detailed analysis for **EVERY** NFL team?

[CLICK TO BUY WARREN'S 400+ PAGE, 2021 FOOTBALL PREVIEW](#)

A FIVE-TIME AMAZON BESTSELLER - NOW AVAILABLE AT EARLY BIRD DISCOUNT



SHARP

FOOTBALL ANALYSIS

Warren Sharp and Sharp Football Analysis have opened
EARLY BIRD access to all 2021 season-long packages for a limited time.

The **very BEST** price we will offer all season

Home of Warren's 61% NFL Totals over 15 years

Last 6 years: 2020: 76% | 2019: 68% | 2018: 56% | 2017: 62% | 2016: 65% | 2015: 68%

2021 Betting NFL + NCAAF

NFL Totals, Sides and College Football

Bundle to Save 36%

[CLICK TO
LEARN MORE](#)

Most Popular

2021 All-Access Package

Everything we offer to get the
Best in Betting, Props, Fantasy and DFS

Season Long Saves 44%

[CLICK TO
LEARN MORE](#)

2021 Fantasy

Rich Hribar's Worksheet + DFS, Rankings and
Hundreds of Articles

Season Long Saves 60%

[CLICK TO
LEARN MORE](#)