Using with Google Sheets instead of Excel

Most computers have Excel pre-installed, so you should be able to use Excel to run the model (though it'll keep trying to convince you to pay for it). If you for some reason you don't have Excel, and aren't willing to just do a one week free trial then cancel, you can run the model in Google Sheets instead. Here's a basic guide for uploading Excel files and using them with Google Sheets.

Add the necessary data

Add projections

The free model doesn't include projections already, but there are a few different places you can download them around the web. To set up the model, download the projections of your choice and copy them into the "Projections tab"

There are a few important notes for doing this though:

- **THE PROJECTIONS MUST BE SORTED LARGEST TO SMALLEST ON PROJECTED POINTS!** The model will not work properly if the projections are placed in any old order.
- The projections must have the same columns, in the same order, as what's in the model. See the screenshot below to check this order
- Position names must match what I use exactly (Eg., "D/ST" not "DST")

Also, when you do this, please make sure not to edit or overwrite any of the areas not colored green, as this will also mess up the model.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	**Points Sorted**						
2							
3		**playername**	**positio**	**team**	**Bye**	**Projected Points**	
4		Patrick Mahomes	QB	KC	10	399.6	
5		Josh Allen	QB	Buf	13	384.67	
6		Jalen Hurts	QB	Phi	10	362.27	
7		Joe Burrow	QB	Cin	7	351.64	
8		Justin Fields	QB	Chi	13	309.69	
9		Kirk Cousins	QB	Min	13	297.04	
10		Trevor Lawrence	QB	Jax	9	292.56	
11		Geno Smith	QB	Sea	5	292.54	
12		Justin Herbert	QB	LAC	5	292.48	
13		Lamar Jackson	QB	Bal	13	284.54	
14		Daniel Jones	QB	NYG	13	281.55	
15		Jared Goff	QB	Det	9	266.91	
16		Aaron Rodgers	QB	NYJ	7	259.95	
17		Russell Wilson	QB	Den	9	256.18	
18		Tua Tagovailoa	QB	Mia	10	247.86	

I also have a ready-to-go version of the model with my own projections (an average of various sources around the web) for $3.00. If you'd rather spend a bit of cash than spend 45 minutes copying projections from the internet, check out the paid version of the model here. Or, I can make a customized version of the model that includes my projections and also customization based on your league's draft history. If you're interested in this, contact me at hello@draftblaze.com and share the details on your league. I'll make a fully set up and customized model for your draft within 24 hours and send you a link to purchase it.

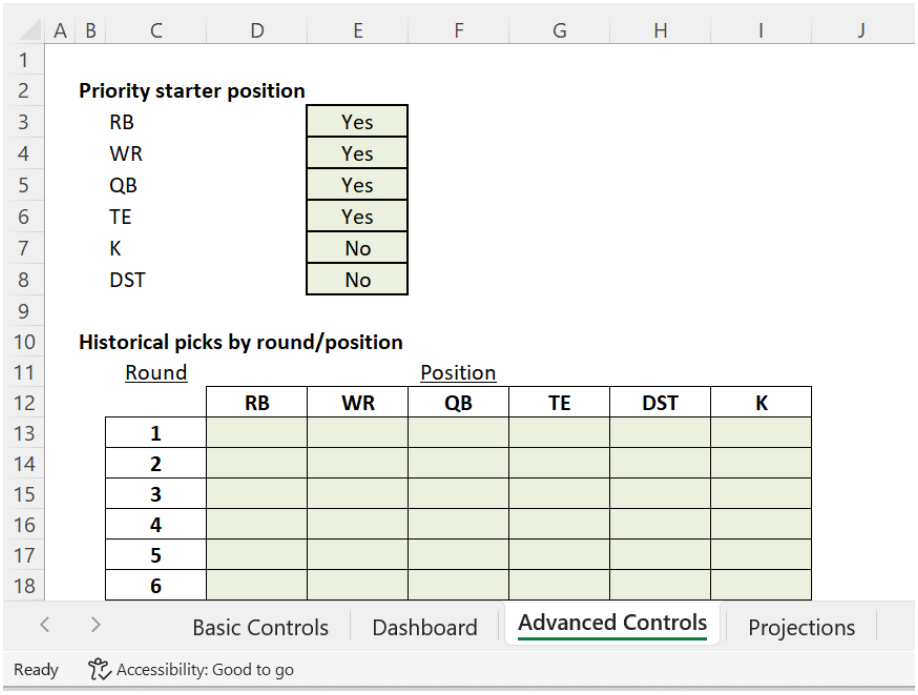
Add expected draft pick data

The model works by estimating how many players of each position will be drafted before your next pick, and then calculating the difference in expected points between who's available now and who will be available later in order to make a selection. It does this with a combination of historically expected number of picks for each position in each round, and the last few picks.

The ability to customize the historical data based on your league makes the model much more accurate in predicting which players will be picked each round, and therefore much better at recommending the best players. This is because people draft differently – e.g., your idiot buddy who always drafts [insert overhyped player here] in the first round.

The free model does not come with expected draft pick data already included. As I said before, the best way to do this is with last year's draft data for your league. You will need to download the draft results from your league in past years and analyze the percentage of picked players from each position in each round. If you don't have historical data from your league, you can download average draft position rankings (ADP), which show the average order players are picked, and calculate the percentage of picks.

When you have calculated the expected percentage of picks in each round, copy the data into the 'Advanced Controls' tab in cells D13 to I28.



Priority starter position

RB	Yes
WR	Yes
QB	Yes
TE	Yes
K	No
DST	No

Historical picks by round/position

Round	Position					
	RB	WR	QB	TE	DST	K
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						

If you don't want to do this analysis yourself (and I wouldn't blame you, getting the data into a spreadsheet is a PITA), you can get a model where this has already been done for you based on other leagues' historical draft data for $3 – click here for more information.

I can also make a custom model where I do the heavy lifting of calculating your league's expected draft pick (like I said, much more accurate) for $15. If you're interested in this, contact me at hello@draftblaze.com and share the details on your league. I'll make a fully set up and customized model for your draft within 24 hours and send you a link to purchase it.

Sounds a lot easier than trying to do all this yourself, right?

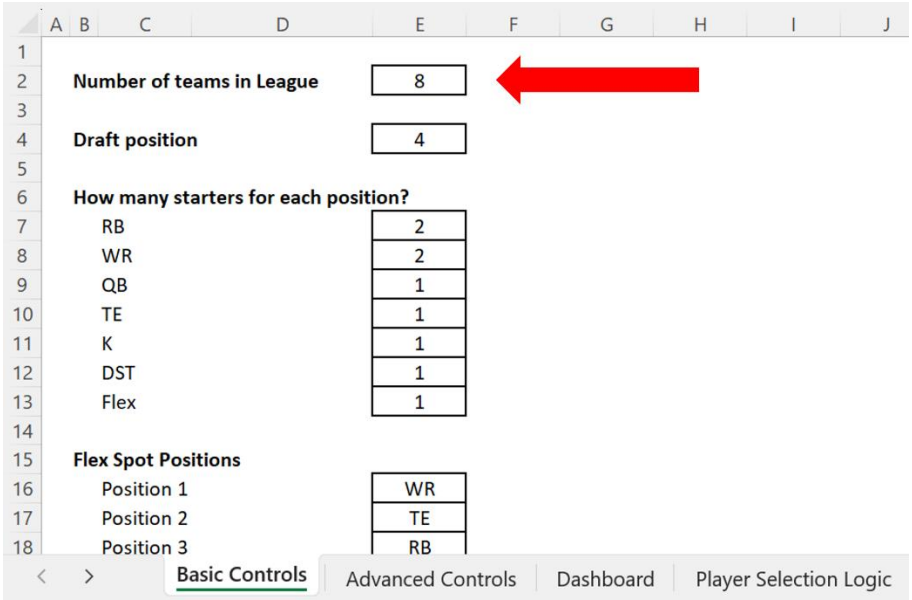
Basic Setup

The first step to using the model is to enter a bit of information about your league so the model will give you the correct recommendations. Don't worry, this should only take a few minutes.

To start the process, go to the "Basic Controls" tab, the first one. The enter some basic league/draft information:

Number of Teams in League

How many teams are there in your league? Use your arrow key or mouse to move your cursor to cell E2 and type in the number.

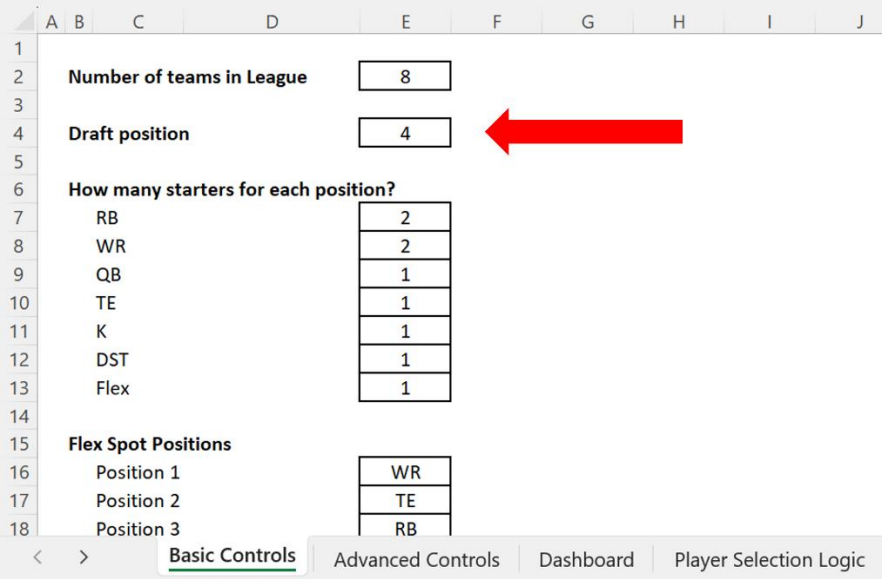


You can get this information in your league homepage on ESPN/Yahoo/Etc. Most leagues are 8, 10, or 12 teams, but the model can accept any (reasonable) number.

Draft Position

Where are you in the draft order? Meaning first, second, third, etc. Enter the number of your draft position in cell E4, also on the "Basic Controls" tab.

For example, if you are drafting fourth, you would enter as below.



	Number of teams in League	8
	Draft position	4
	How many starters for each position?	
	RB	2
	WR	2
	QB	1
	TE	1
	K	1
	DST	1
	Flex	1
	Flex Spot Positions	
	Position 1	WR
	Position 2	TE
	Position 3	RB

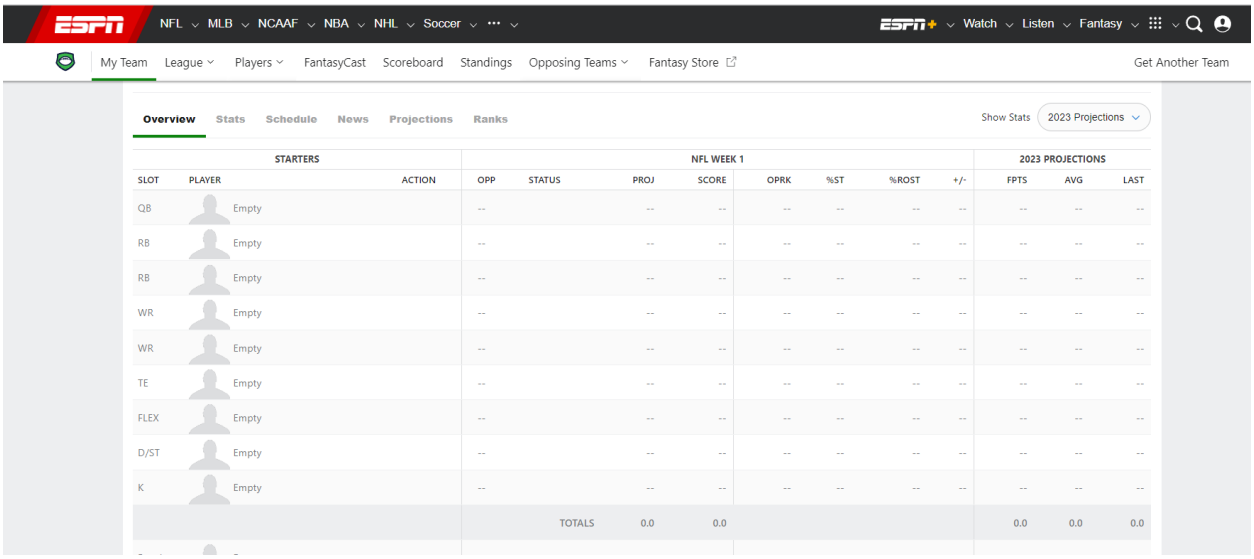
Basic Controls | Advanced Controls | Dashboard | Player Selection Logic

You can find this on your team's homepage in your fantasy site/platform. If you're confused, ask your league's Commissioner.

How many starters for each position?

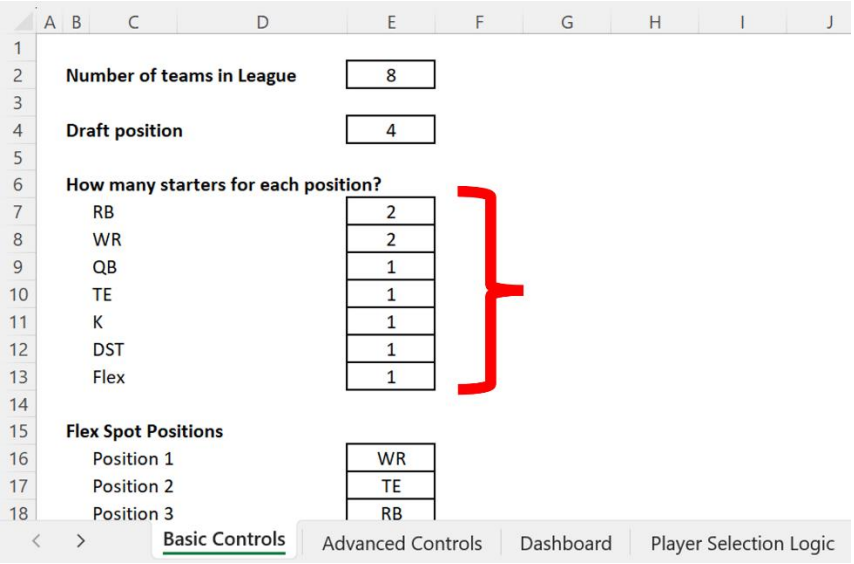
Just like a real team, you need a certain number of players of each position in the team that you play every week – your "starters".

To check these numbers, the easiest way is to check out your team's page in your fantasy platform. Even if you haven't drafted yet, it will show you which positions are starting, and you can check how many you need of each.



In this example, you'd need one Quarterbacks, 2 Running backs, 2 Wide receivers, 1 Tight end, one Flex, one Defense/Special Teams, and one Kicker.

Once you've gotten the numbers, fill them in in cells E7 to E13, still in the "basic controls" tab, as shown here.



What is the 'Flex' position?

A flex spot is a starting position that allows players from multiple positions. For example, it may be a spot where you can play either a wide receiver, tight end, or running back.

You can find the number of flex positions in the league homepage then enter it, as previously explained.

The model uses special logic to make picks when there are flex positions in play. When you are filling the flex spot, you need to maximize points rather than just drop off as different positions tend to score more or less. Don't worry, the model takes care of this logic for you.

Enter Flex Spot positions

This is where you tell the model which positions are eligible for the Flex spot. This varies from league to league depending on how your Commissioner/competitors decided to set up the league.

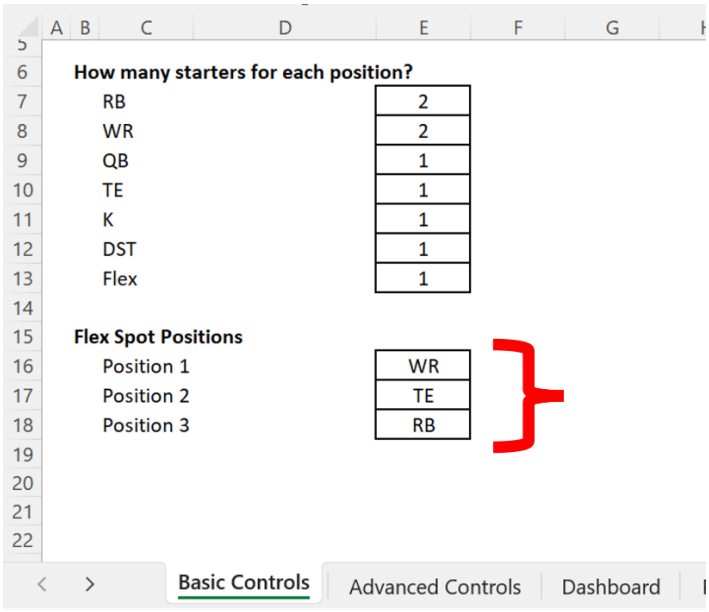
This information can be found on the settings page for your league. Here's a screenshot of an ESPN league settings page as an example (under the Roster section):

POSITION	STARTERS	MAXIMUMS
Quarterback (QB)	1	4
Team Quarterback (TQB)	0	No Limit
Running Back (RB)	2	8
Running Back/Wide Receiver (RB/WR)	0	N/A
Wide Receiver (WR)	2	8
Wide Receiver/Tight End (WR/TE)	0	N/A
Tight End (TE)	1	3
Flex (FLEX)	1	N/A
Offensive Player Utility (OP)	0	N/A
Defensive Tackle (DT)	0	0
Defensive End (DE)	0	0
Linebacker (LB)	0	0
Defensive Line (DL)	0	N/A
Cornerback (CB)	0	0
Safety (S)	0	0
Defensive Back (DB)	0	N/A
Defensive Player Utility (DP)	0	N/A
Team Defense/Special Teams (D/ST)	1	3
Place Kicker (K)	1	3
Punter (P)	0	0
Head Coach (HC)	0	0
Bench (BE)	7	N/A
Injured Reserve (IR)	1	N/A

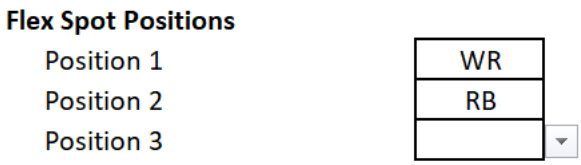
The row that says “Flex” in ESPN refers to a flexible option of wide receiver OR tight end OR running back. Other rows indicate other flex options – for example, if your league has 1 or more selected for the “Running back/Wide receiver” row, then that means you have flex spots that allow a running back OR wide receiver.

Enter the eligible positions in cells E16-E18. If only 2 positions are eligible, then leave the ‘Position 3’ spot (E18) blank.

First example: the league shown above has 1 FLEX spot, which for ESPN means a running back OR wide receiver OR tight end. In this case, you would enter it like this:



If instead your team had a spot for the “Running Back/Wide Receiver” row (the 4th row in the league settings screenshot above), you would enter it as:

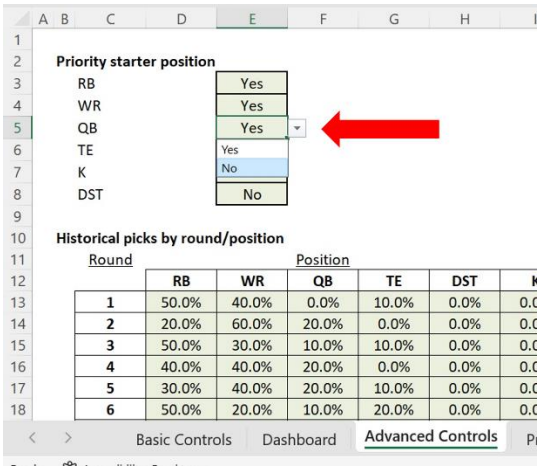


Priority Starter Positions (Advanced Controls tab)

The model is based on the idea that you draft your starters for key positions first, then backups and 2nd priority starters. By default, RB, WR, QB, and TE are assumed to be priority positions, while kickers and defense/special teams are drafted later. This is because the majority of folks in the know consider this the best strategy. In my (correct) opinion, K and D/ST are best suited for a ‘streaming’ strategy. This is where each week, you look for the players in this position expected to score the most points and pick them up off the waiver wire. The reason this strategy works the best is these positions have large variations in scores from week to week depending on who they’re playing. For example, even the best defense will probably have a horrible score if they’re playing the best offense in the league.

If you have a different view, for example you’re an advocate of streaming quarterbacks, you can adjust which positions are considered priority starters. These controls are in the ‘Advanced Controls’ tab in cells E3 to E8. These cells must be filled in with either “Yes” (priority starter position) or “No” (not a priority starter position).

Let’s say that you want to stream quarterbacks, or just generally don’t think they’re important. In this case, go to the “Advanced Controls” tab, and change the value in E5 from “Yes” to “No”, either by typing in “No” or using the dropdown as with the player name entry. This will tell the model to wait to draft a quarterback until all your other starting spots are filled.



Keeper Leagues

Keeper leagues are leagues where you’re allowed to keep some of your players from last year. Usually, there’s some kind of rules around which round of the draft you can take these ‘keeper’ players in.

If your league doesn't have keepers, you can skip ahead to the next section.

Setting up the model for keepers

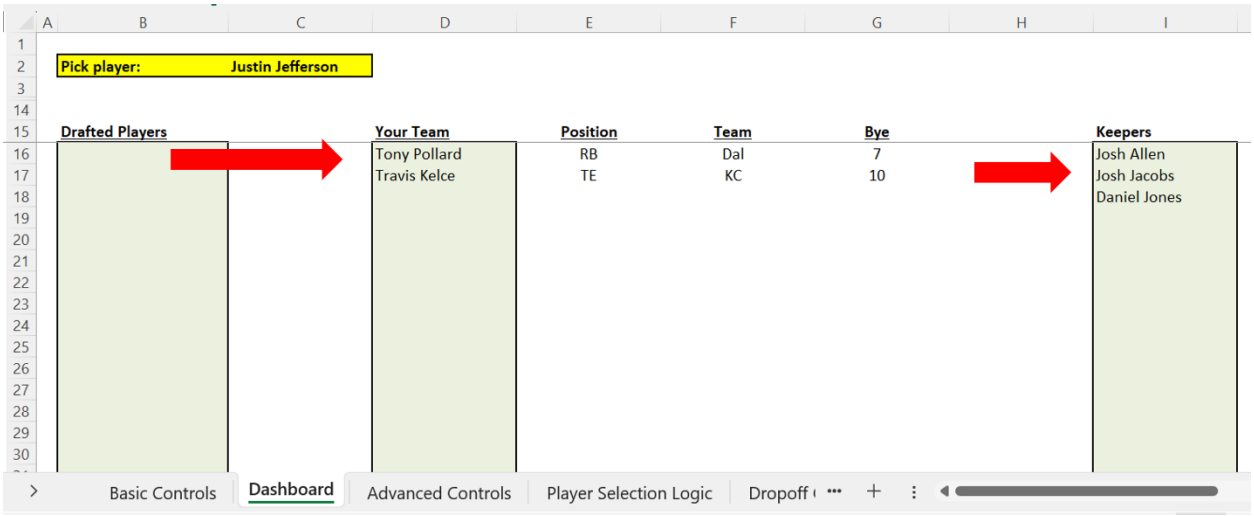
There are two steps to make sure your model is set up properly for Keeper leagues. The first one is to enter any keepers on your team, the second is to enter any keepers on other teams in your league.

Keepers are entered on the Dashboard tab (2nd one). To enter any keepers from your team, enter their names in the "My Team" area of the dashboard (cells D16 to D53).

Important: do not enter the keepers from your own team in the "Keepers" section! This will throw off the model's logic for which players need to be selected for your team.

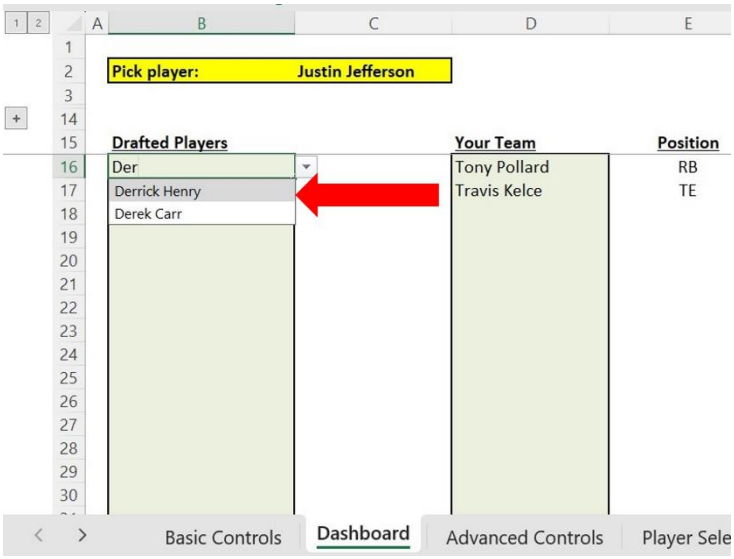
Next, enter any keepers from other teams in your league. These should be entered in the "Keepers" section of the dashboard (cells I16 to I79).

As an example, let's say your team has 2 keepers: Tony Pollard and Travis Kelce. Other people/teams in your league have selected 3 keepers, Josh Allen, Josh Jacobs, and Daniel Jones. The model would be set up as shown below:



Draft Day Instructions

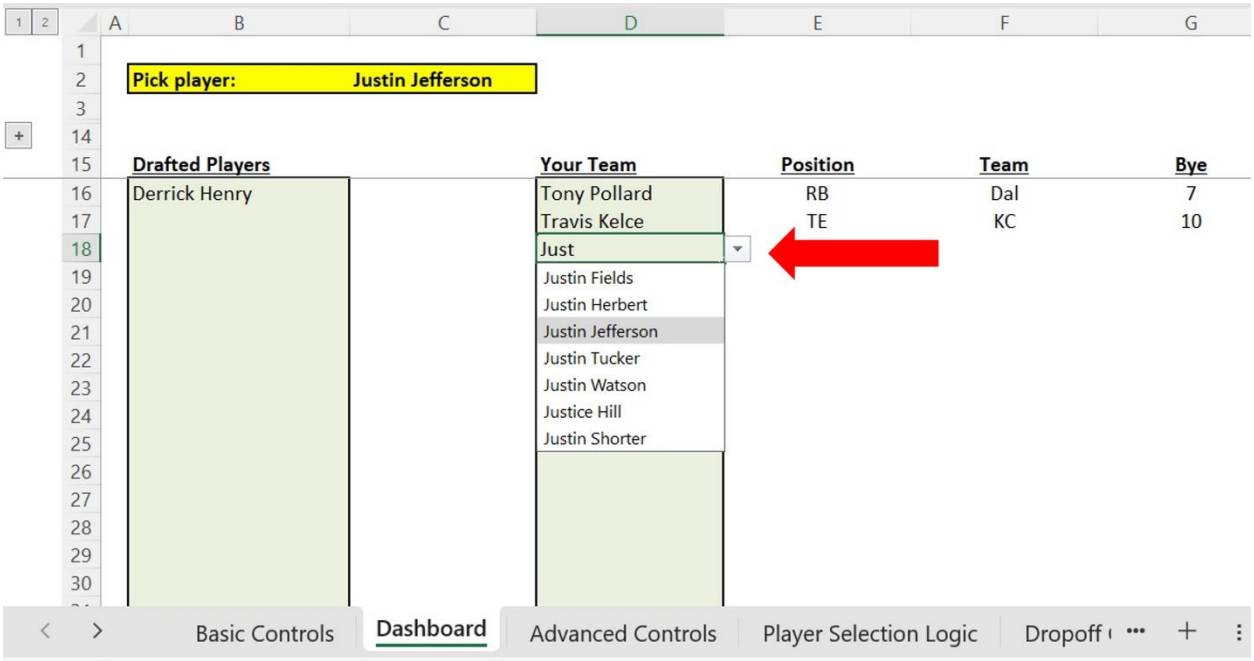
Whenever someone makes a pick, enter the player's name in the Drafted Players section. Player's names need to be spelled correctly, but no matter how bad you are at spelling you don't need to worry – the model literally will not let you make a mistake. Just start typing the player's name, and you'll see a list of players below. You can either tap your arrow keys to navigate to the correct player's name then press enter to automatically fill in the player name, or just click the name.



When it's your turn to draft, just select the player shown in the massive, bold, yellow section labeled 'Pick Player' (Cell C2, though hopefully I don't need to spell this out).

When you're done picking your player, add the player's name to the "Your Team" section. Just like with the "Drafted Players" section, you can just type the first couple of letters then select from the dropdown list.

So, let's assume you are drafting, and your order is second. The first player went and selected Derrick Henry, as shown before. Now, the model recommends you pick Justin Jefferson – so select Justin Jefferson in the ESPN/Yahoo/etc draft platform, then enter Mr. Jefferson's name in the Your Team section:

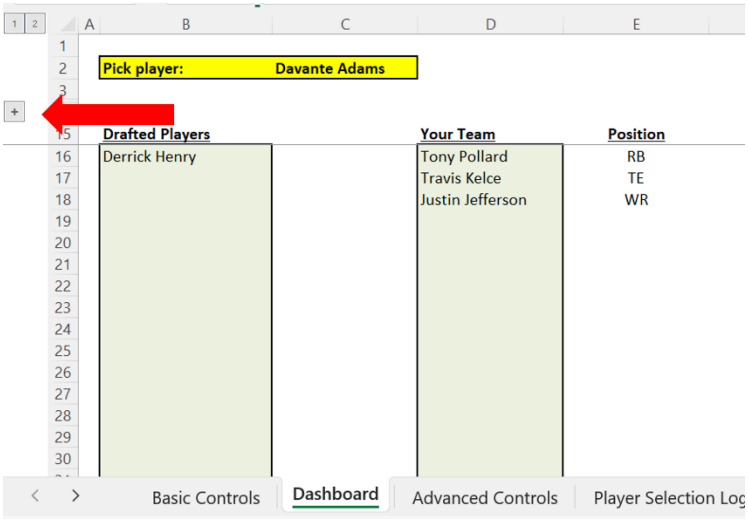


It's that easy – just keep going until the end of the draft. Afterwards, have a beverage of your choice and look at your lineup with a sense of smug superiority. Hopefully you bet some money on your league.

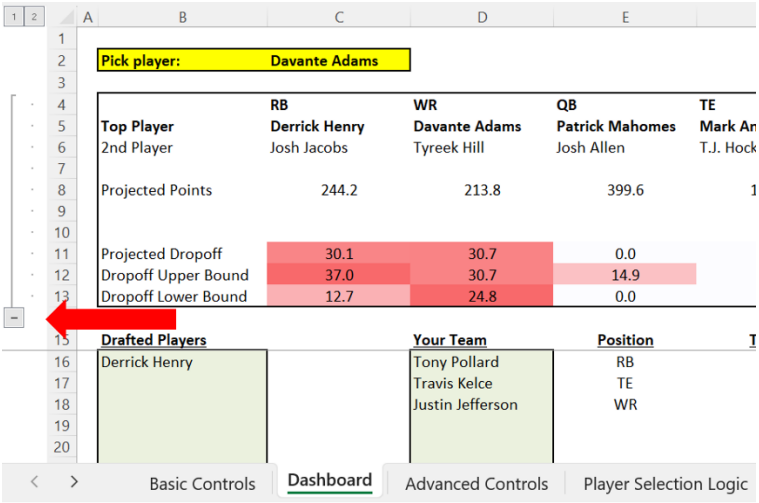
Additional Dashboard information (optional for the advanced users}

If you're a wise guy and like to keep an eye on what's going on behind the scenes, or you feel the need to second-guess a sophisticated model, fear not, as there's an optional data display for the dashboard to help you do that.

To toggle this additional data display, click the gray plus sign to the left of the row numbers:



If you've opened it and are shocked and awed by all the information and want to close it again, just press the minus sign in the same area:



This additional information section shows the 1st and 2nd highest-ranked players for each position, along with the projected points for the highest-ranked.

The 'Dropoff' section is a bit more complicated. If you read our FAQs on how the model works, you'll recall the model is basically estimating the 'dropoff' for each position between now and your next pick. Basically, this is the difference is in projected points between the best currently-available player in this

position and the one who's expected to be available next round. The model generally recommends the player with the highest dropoff, because this is the best strategy to optimize scored points for your drafted players (though in certain cases the model will select the player with the highest scored points, such as the flex positions, as mentioned before). Basically, this section shows the projected dropoff for each position. The 'Dropoff Upper Bound' row shows a kind of worst case scenario – basically, if the expected number of that player selected is wrong and an extra player or two gets selected, how much worse will this dropoff be? The 'Dropoff Lower Bound' is basically the opposite, and shows if the expected number of players selected is one or two lower than the model expects. This can give you some idea of what the risk is of selecting or not selecting the recommended player is, so if you'd like you can make and audible and pick another player. As I've said many times, I don't really recommend this as I've put a good amount of thought and effort into optimizing these selections, but if you feel like you've got a good grasp of the concept or absolutely hate the recommended player then this can give you some idea of who else to pick.

Another thing in this extra information section is that sometimes some of the positions will appear highlighted in gray. When this occurs, it's showing that the position is currently not considered open by the model. The model follows a certain selection strategy, selecting starters first, then making sure each starter has a backup, then rounding out the rest of the team. This has been found to be the optimal draft strategy. Again, this information is just presented in case you feel the need to second-guess the model and pick another player (which I don't recommend), but the information is there for you should you need it.

Outro

Thanks for reading, and happy drafting! If you have any questions or problems with the model, feel free to reach out at hello@draftblaze.com to get in touch. We love to hear from our customers (especially when you win your league).