

WEEKLY WINNERS 2025 — A FULL-FIELD STUDY

The Redundant Running Back

How the pick that looked like a mistake won a \$20,000 week — and what 186,832 entries say about drafting this contest.

The team that started the question

rd 1	RB	Saquon Barkley	FLEX	31.4	rd 10	WR	Michael Pittman Jr.	19.5
rd 2	RB	Bucky Irving		0.0	rd 11	WR	Christian Kirk	0.0
rd 3	RB	Jonathan Taylor		36.4	rd 12	QB	C.J. Stroud	22.7
rd 4	RB	James Cook		33.6	rd 13	TE	Jake Ferguson	0.0
rd 5	WR	George Pickens		11.3	rd 14	WR	Pat Bryant	11.0
rd 6	WR	Chris Olave		10.0	rd 15	RB	Chris Rodriguez	0.2
rd 7	WR	Jauan Jennings		6.5	rd 16	WR	Troy Franklin	23.9
rd 8	TE	Travis Kelce		18.9	rd 17	QB	Daniel Jones	23.2
rd 9	QB	Brock Purdy		0.0	rd 18	WR	Malik Washington	11.6

198.5

winning score — 3 of 4 early RBs started, Saquon in the FLEX

0.0

Bucky Irving — the 4th back made the zero free

QB3, rd 17

Daniel Jones (23.2) won the week over two earlier QBs

Take away the win — the process still printed

Anyone can spike one week. The credential isn't the \$20,000 — it's that a 150-entry max portfolio was profitable without it.

+13.7%

portfolio ROI with the \$20K week removed entirely
(field: -9%)

24.7%

of entries hit a top-1% week — 7th of 175 max-entry
drafters (avg: 16.4%)

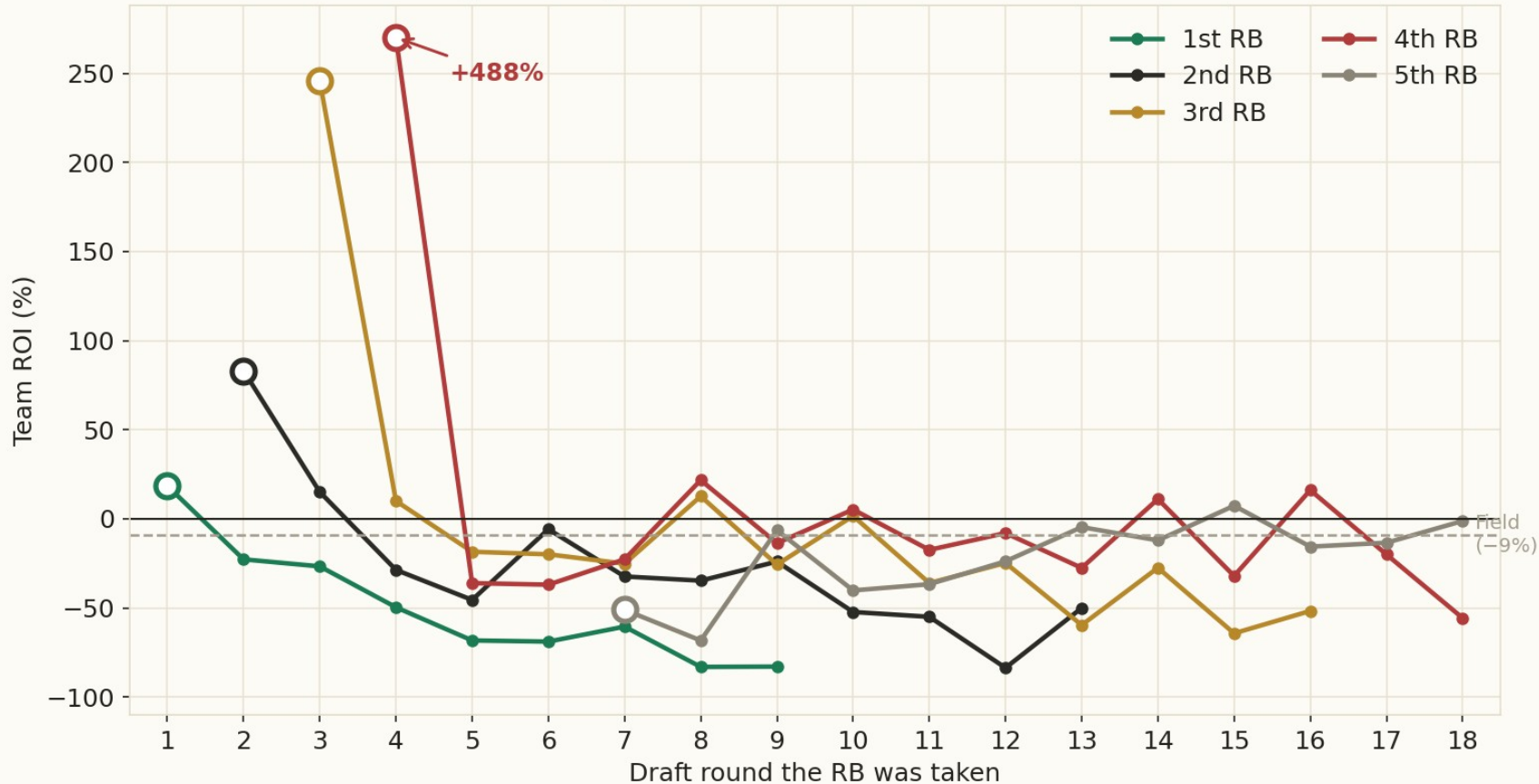
7 of 175

max-entry users profitable after removing their single
best week

Profitable all three years of the contest's existence (+3%, +6%, then 2025). Only 35 of 175 max-entry portfolios finished profitable in 2025 at all; strip each user's best team-week and it drops to seven. **The edge in this study is the same one that produced that floor: structure, not variance.**

Every RB slot pays most at its earliest possible round

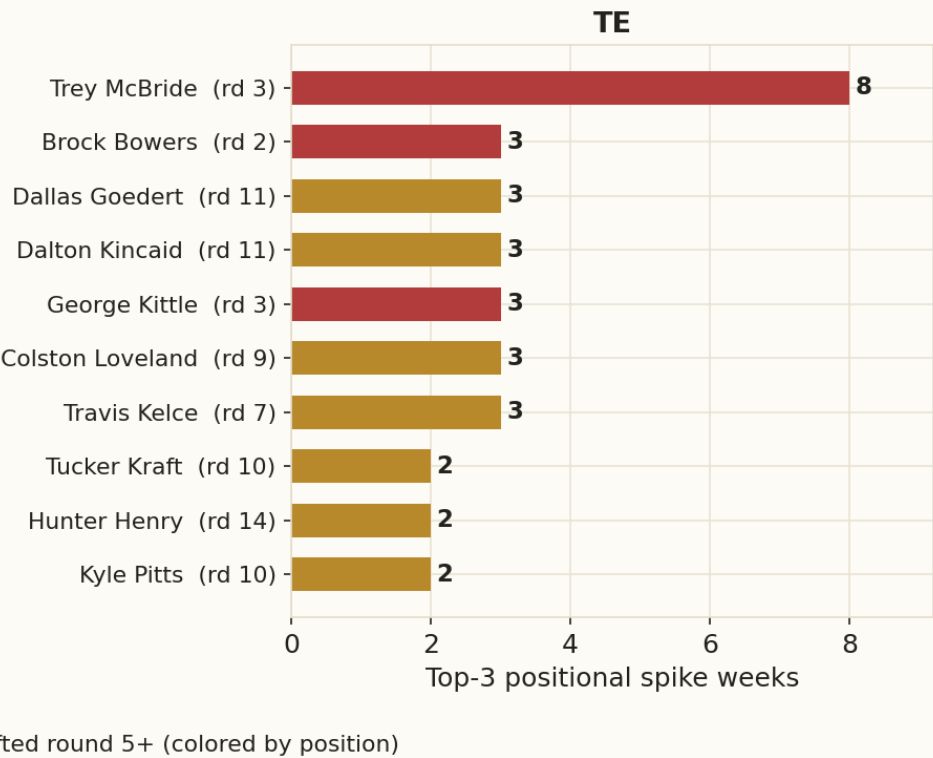
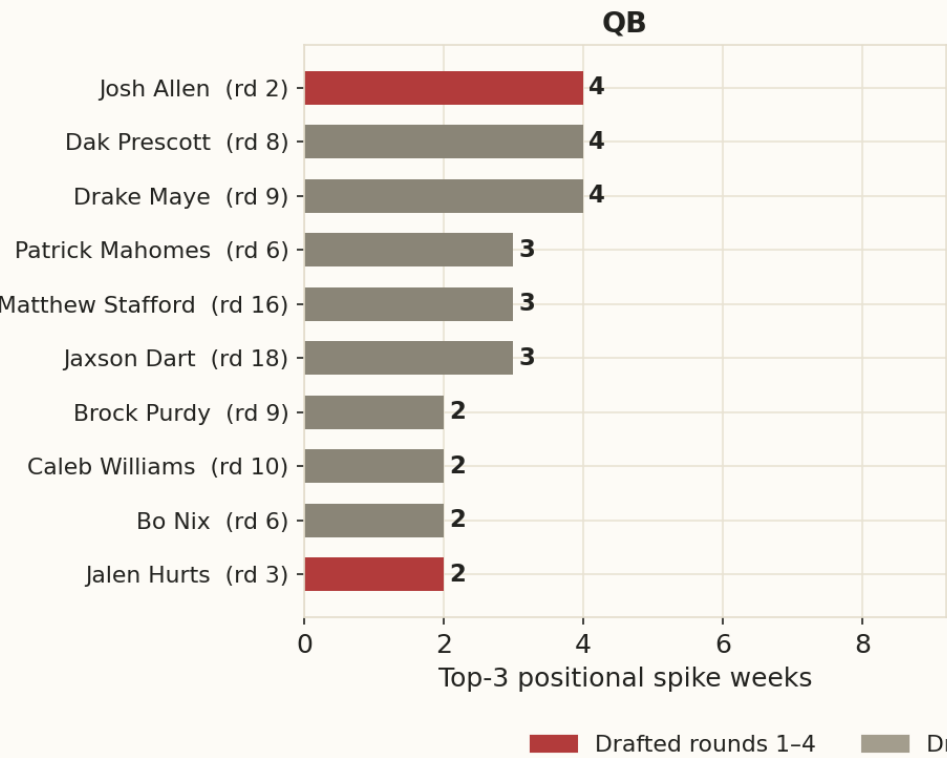
Team ROI by Round Each Running Back Was Drafted
Underdog Weekly Winners 2025 — cells with 400+ teams



- 1st RB in rd 1: +18.5% • 2nd in rd 2: +83% • 3rd in rd 3: +246% • 4th in rd 4: +488%
- Each line decays for 2–3 rounds, then flattens into field noise
- The 5th RB has no timing signal at any round — a roster has four RB-ceiling slots
- Cells under 400 teams masked; the trend, not the +488% tip, is the finding
- Jackpot-robust: cap every weekly payout at \$1k and it holds — 3rd RB in rd 3 still +34% (field -48%), cashing 48% vs 28%

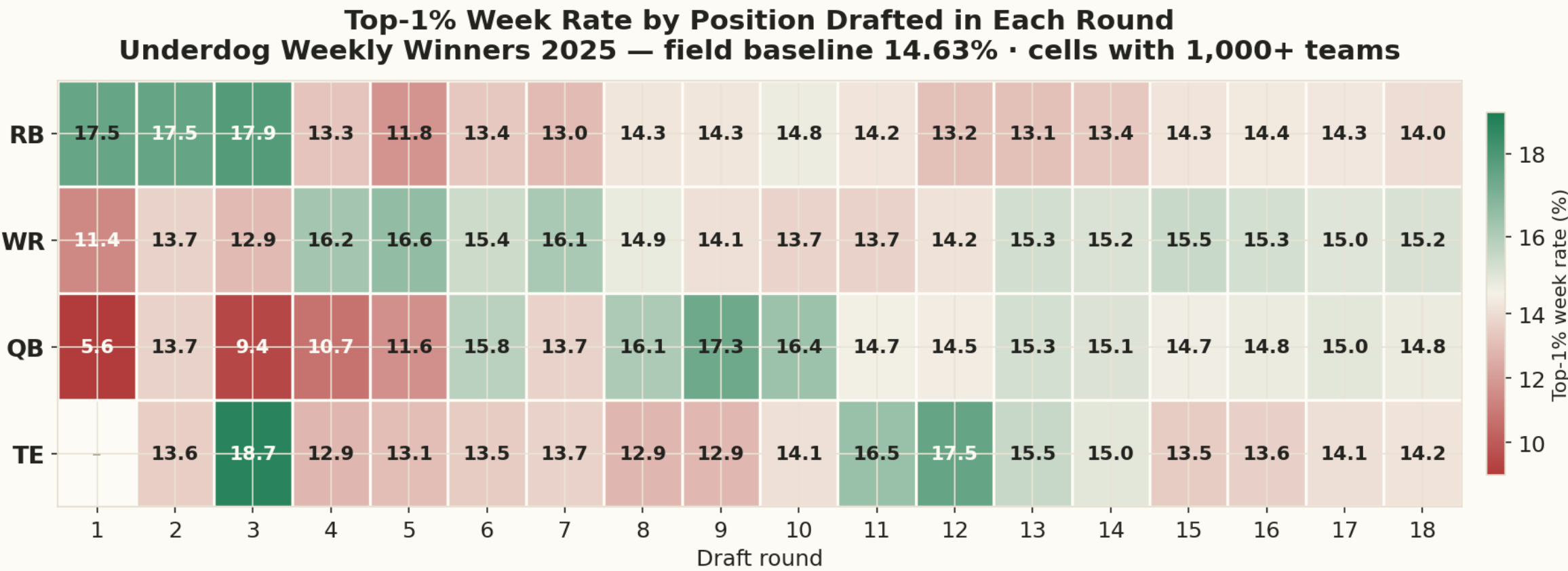
Who actually supplied the spike weeks

QB & TE Spike-Week Leaders — Top-3 Positional Weeks (17 Weeks)
Underdog Weekly Winners 2025



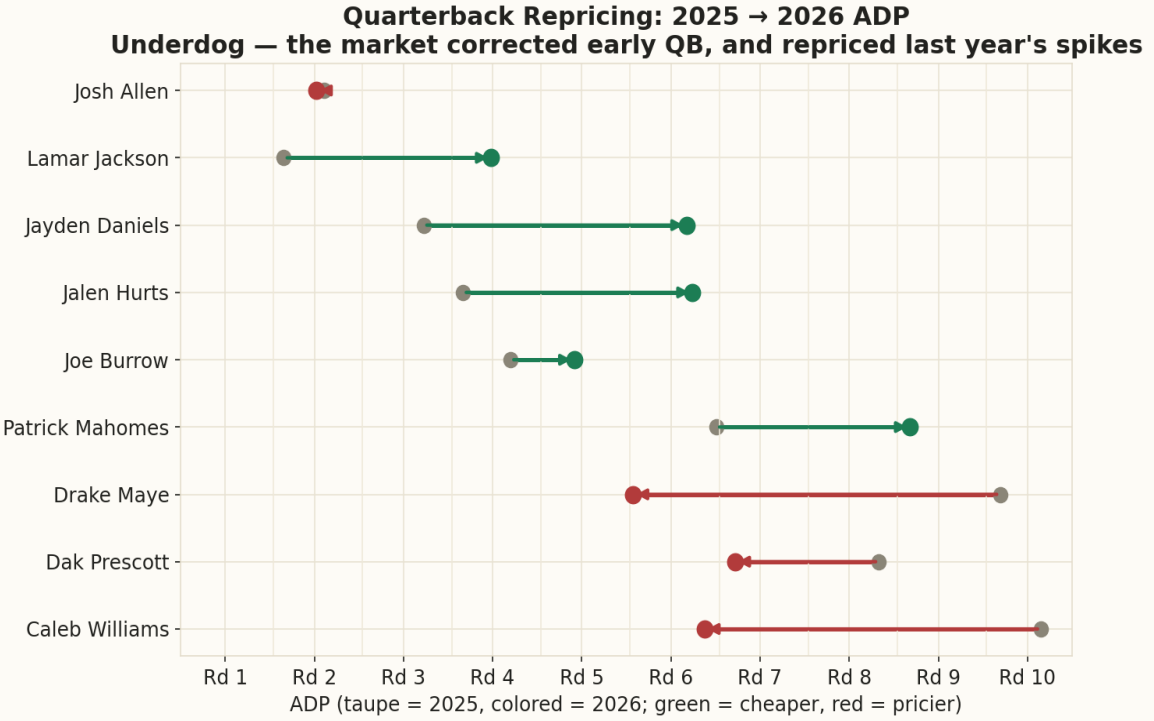
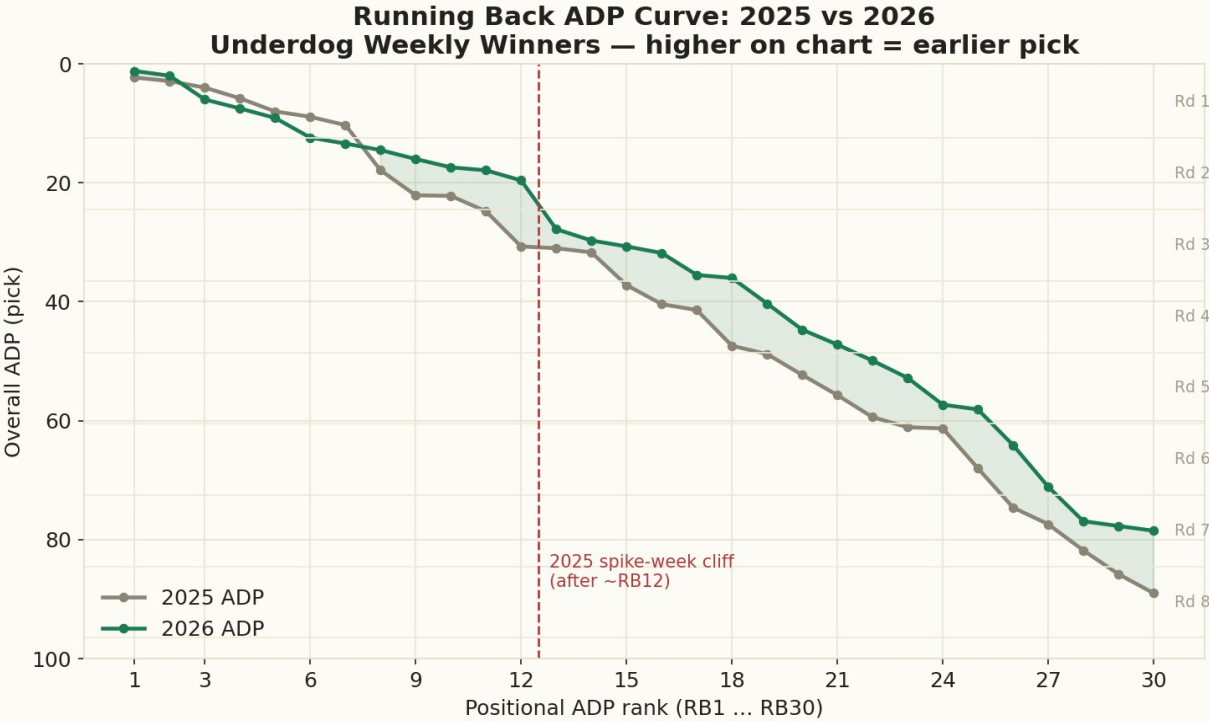
- QB podium: Allen (rd 2), Dak (rd 8), Maye (rd 9) — same spikes, very different prices
- McBride: 8 spike weeks; no other TE above 3
- Stafford rd 16 and rookie Dart rd 18 out-spiked most early QBs

Where each round's pick should go



Green pockets: RB rds 1–3 · WR rds 4–7 · QB rds 8–10 · TE rds 11–12 · WR rds 13–18. **Late rounds:** WR best and RB worst in every round from 13–18 — never a fifth back late.

The market half-learned the lesson



RB7-24 up 4-11 picks (~a full round); the entire 2025 ceiling tier now exits by end of rd 2. QB corrected hard — Lamar rd 2→4, Daniels & Hurts rd 3→6 — but the market also paid up for last year's spikes (Maye rd 9→5). **McBride, after 8 spike weeks: unchanged.**

THE BAR TO CLEAR

It takes ~200 to matter

Seventeen independent weekly tournaments, one target each: the score that pays. Roughly 25 points per lineup slot — a number only correlated spike weeks reach.

206

average winning score — range 183 (Wk 13) to 240 (Wk 15)

194

average 10th-place score — the weekly top-10 bar

178

average top-0.1% cutoff — the ceiling tier the build is aimed at

161

average top-1% cutoff — even min-relevance takes ~160+

Stack the byes, stack the quarterback

Weeks are independent and floor is worthless — so concentrate correlation: donate one week to byes on purpose, and draft your QB's pass catchers.

13.1% → 19.8%

top-1% rate from 3 players sharing a bye week to 8+ — monotonic at every step; top-0.1% roughly doubles

16 of 17

weekly winners rostered a QB stacked with a teammate pass catcher

11.5% → 16.4%

top-1% rate from 0 pass-catcher partners with your QBs to 3+ (ROI: -31% → +11%)

1 principle

byes and stacks travel together — same-team players share a bye. Concentrate correlation, raise ceiling

Same mechanism, earlier decision point

Rounds 1-2

Ceiling backs immediately — the top-12 RB tier is gone by pick 24. The turn (11-13) is the best seat on the board.

Round 3

The new fade: RB13-18 at ceiling prices with a 1.0-spike profile. Pivot to WR — or McBride, the one unrepriced elite.

Rounds 6-10

Harvest the QB value the correction created. Pay for the Dak profile, not last year's spike premiums.

Rounds 11-18

TE in 11-12, then WRs the rest of the way. Never a fifth RB — worst pick in every round from 13 on.

Structure beats uniqueness

96%+

of top-20 weekly starters were drafted in $\geq 50\%$ of drafts

6×

field top-10 rate when the 4th RB comes in rds 1–4

17

independent shots at one spike week — build for ceiling,
not floor

You don't win Weekly Winners by being weird. You win by stacking scarce ceiling — early running backs — and letting best ball's auto-optimizer cash the spike when it lands.

Appendix

Pull-up charts — not part of the talk track. Grab as the conversation demands.

Every entry, every pick, every week — not just the winners

Weekly Winners pays the best single week, 17 times. A team that finished 150,000th in December may have won a week in October — so any analysis filtered to “top teams” is broken by design. This study is the full field.

186,832

entries · \$10 each

3.36M

draft picks parsed

17

independent weekly tournaments

\$1.7M

total prize pool

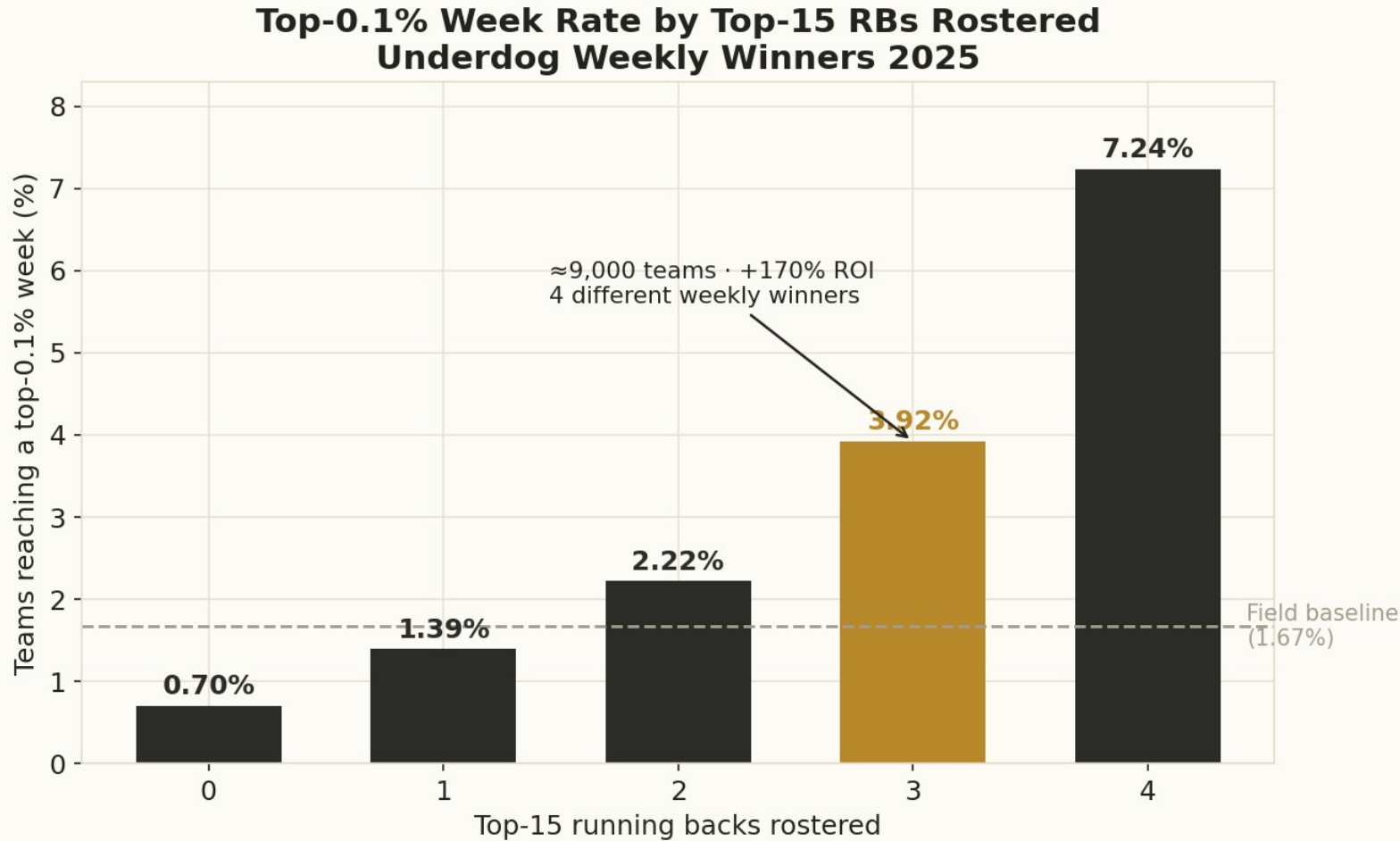
−9.0%

field ROI after rake

27.7%

of teams ever cashed a week

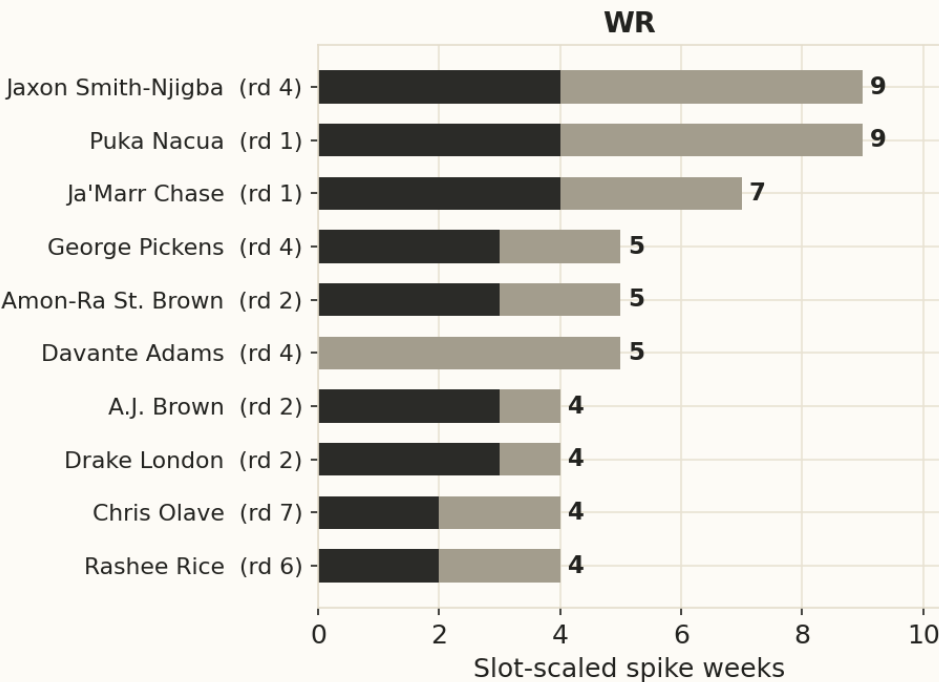
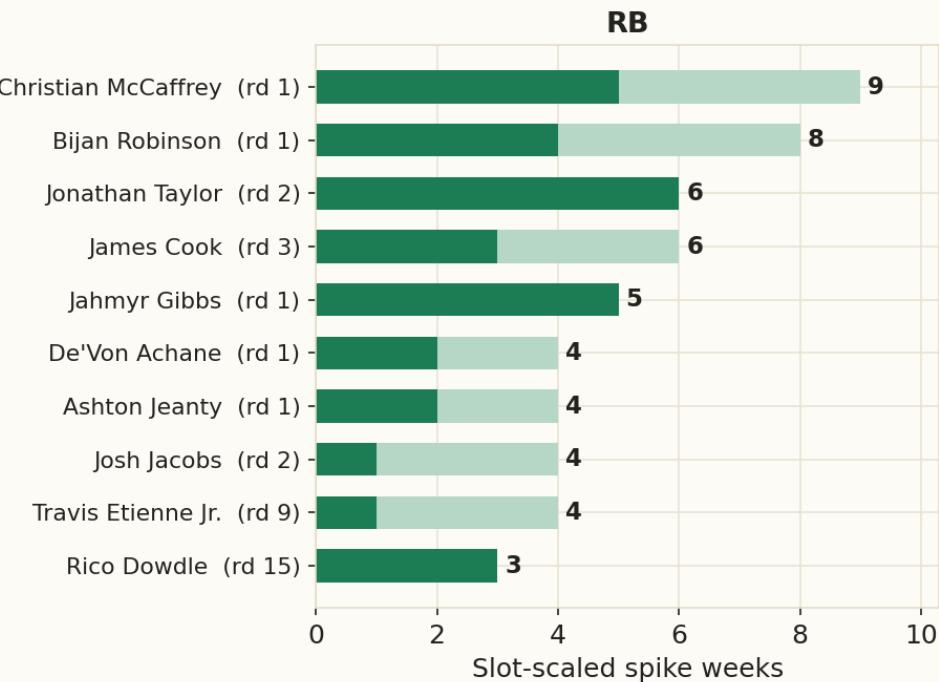
Best ball turns RB spike weeks into ceiling — automatically



- Auto-optimization: a spike week can never rot on your bench
- Stack top-15-ceiling backs and top-0.1% access climbs at every step
- The bankable core: ~9,000 teams with three top-15 RBs — +170% ROI, 2.35× the field, four different weekly winners
- The 4-RB build is the sharp tip; the 3-RB tier is the proof

RB and WR spikes, scaled to their lineup slots

RB & WR Spike-Week Leaders — Scaled to Lineup Slots (17 Weeks)
Underdog Weekly Winners 2025

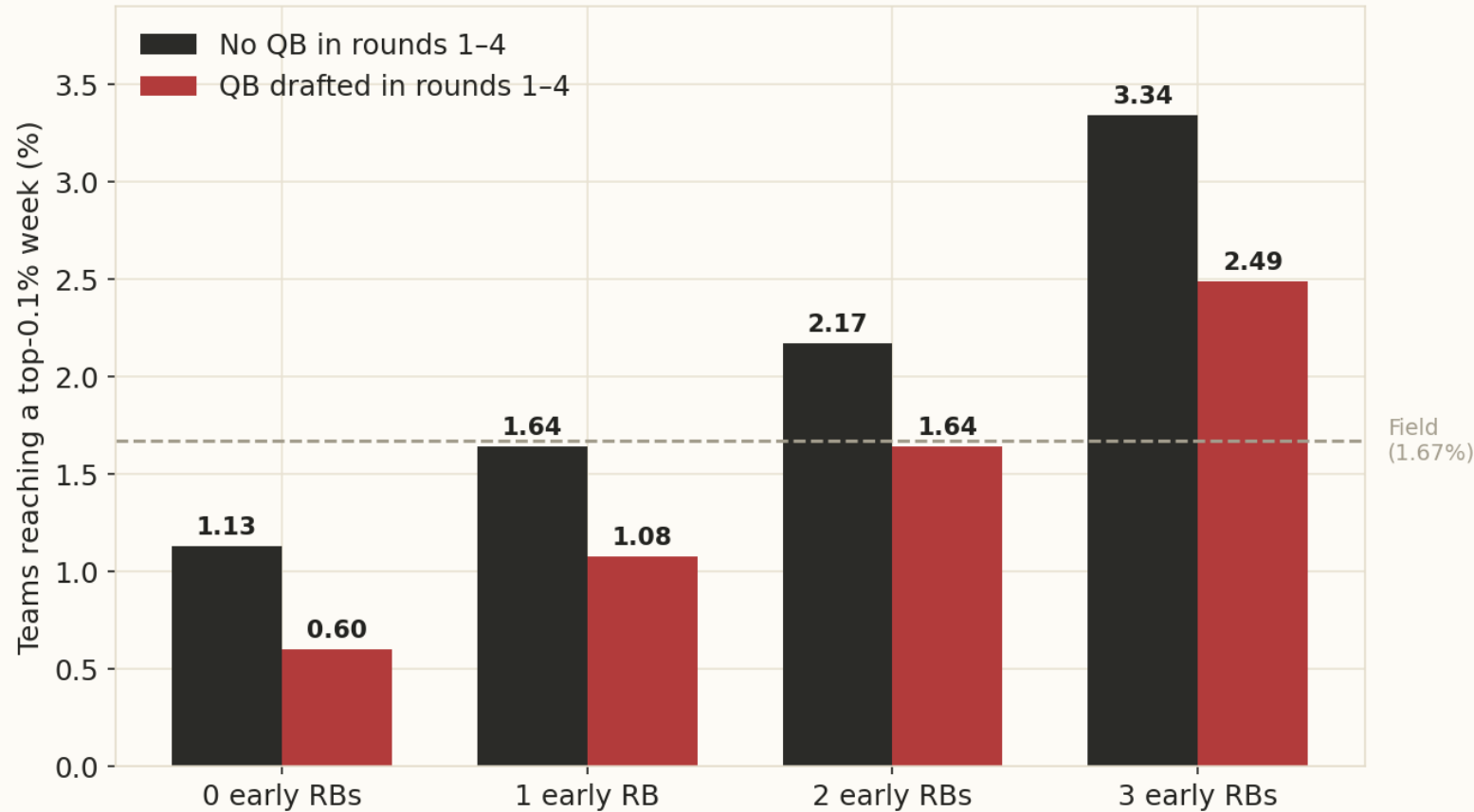


■ Weekly top-3 at position ■ Additional weeks inside the slot-scaled cutoff (RB top-6 · WR top-9)

- Spike bar scales with slots: RB counts weekly top-6 (two slots), WR top-9 (three), onesies top-3
- The RB podium is all rounds 1-3 — CMC in the top-6 in 9 of 17 weeks; Etienne (rd 9) and Dowdle (rd 15) are the only late exceptions
- WR spikes spread across rounds 1-7 — JSN (rd 4) tied Puka (rd 1); the rd 4-7 pocket supplied elite weeks at a discount

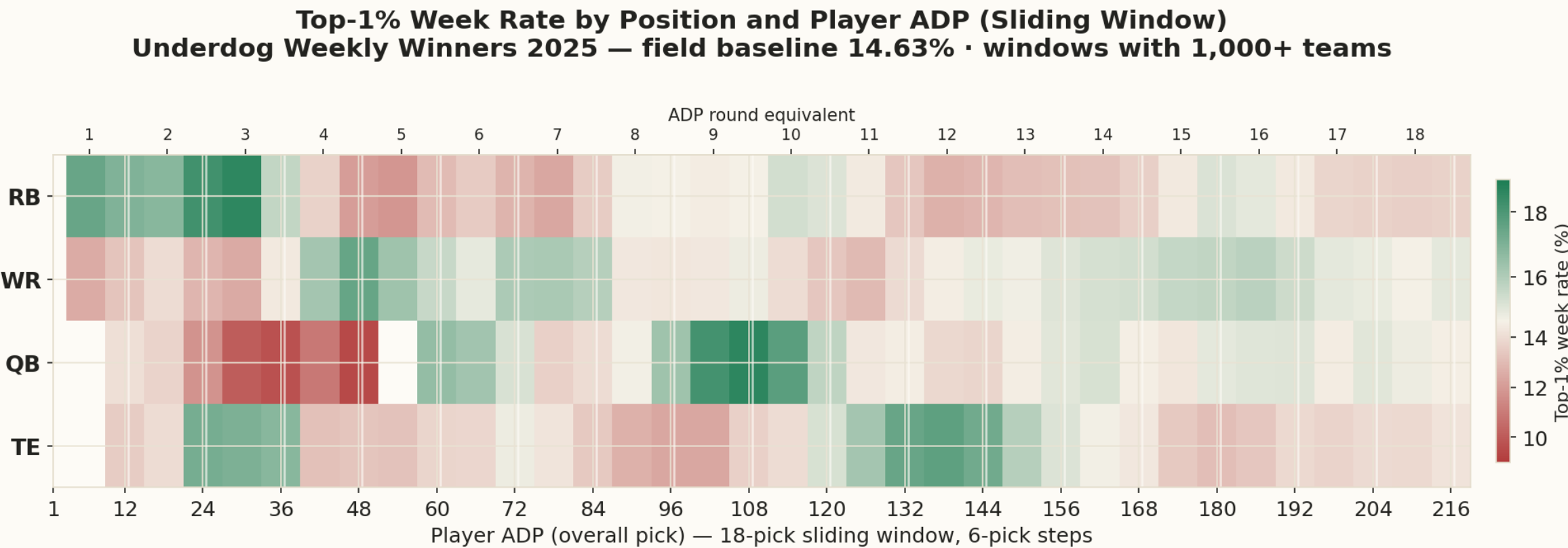
An early QB cuts your ceiling at every roster build

Early-QB Penalty at Every Roster Construction
Top-0.1% week rate, holding early-RB count fixed — Weekly Winners 2025



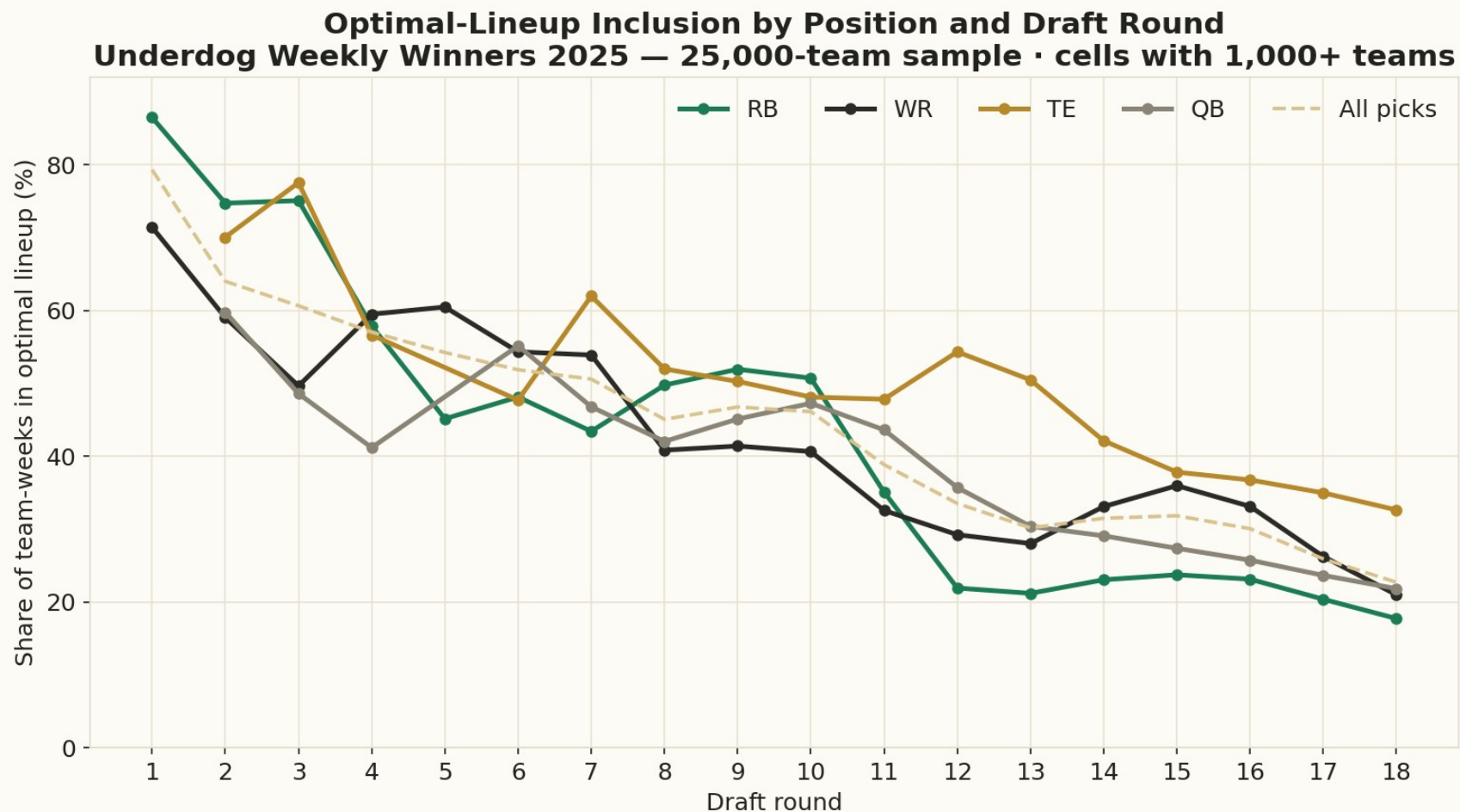
- Penalty survives holding early-RB count fixed — it isn't just a lost RB slot
- Exclude Josh Allen and it deepens: at 2 early RBs, 2.17% → 1.13%
- 4 of 5 round 1-4 QBs returned -31% to -65% ROI
- QB spike weeks are flat across ADP — you're paying scarcity prices for a non-scarce asset

The cliffs are prices, not rounds



Re-cut by player ADP (sliding 18-pick window): RB green ends at ~pick 30 (the top-12 boundary) · QB dead zone ADP 25–55, value band 55–120 · TE’s second hump at 125–150. **This is the version that translates to a new season’s board.**

Every pick plays — the question is which ones matter



- RB is the top line early (86% in rd 1) and the worst from rd 11 on — a 5th back is 5th in line for two slots plus flex
- TE flips to the top line late: the onesie slot must be filled, so a rd-15 TE only has to beat 1-2 teammates
- QB is nearly flat — a rd-2 QB starts barely more than a rd-9 QB; you pay 7 rounds for no added lineup presence
- Inclusion ≠ production: late-TE starts are often forced; WR is the only late position that wins on both this chart and the heatmap

Every weekly winner’s QB stack

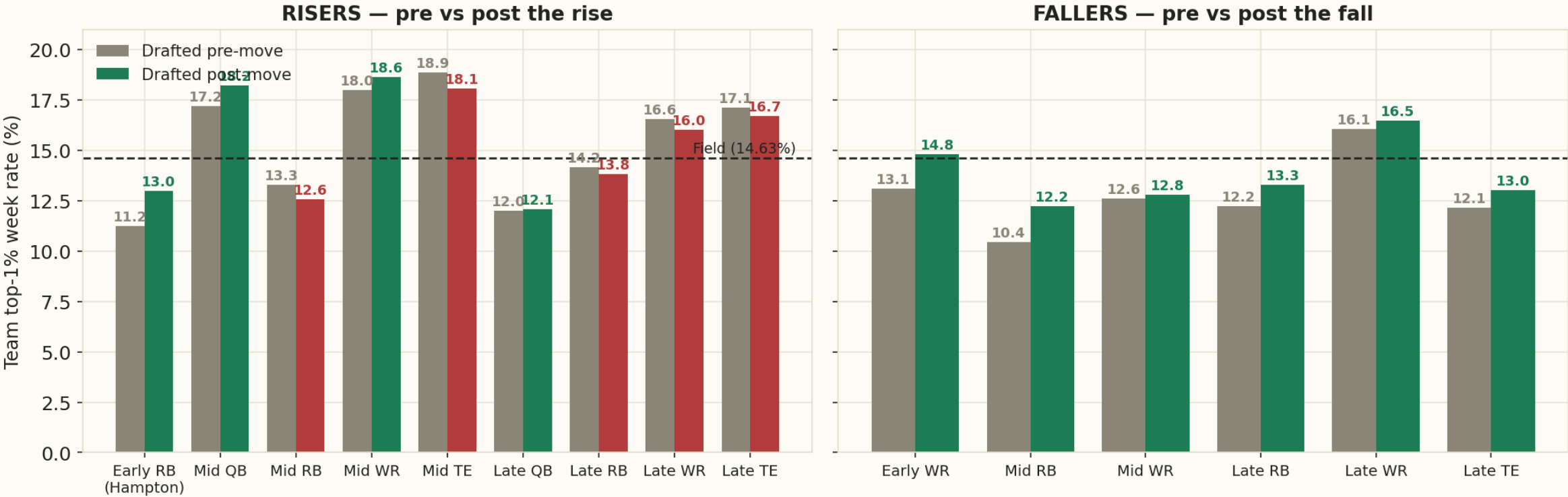
- Wk 1 JOEYBAGODONUTS Josh Allen 38.8 → Joshua Palmer 8.6, Keon Coleman 21.2, Khalil Shakir 9.4, James Cook (RB) 18.7
- Wk 2 DBANES Jared Goff 34.0 → Jameson Williams 17.8, Amon-Ra St. Brown 34.7
- Wk 3 LABIGDOG Geno Smith 26.1 → Tre Tucker 36.9
- Wk 4 VIKING76OG Patrick Mahomes 27.3 → Hollywood Brown 11.3, Travis Kelce 7.3
- Wk 5 DELFMAN Dak Prescott 28.3 → Jake Ferguson 20.4
- Wk 6 JIMIDYLAN Drake Maye 27.2 → DeMario Douglas 14.6, Stefon Diggs 4.3 | Jared Goff 16.8 → Jameson Williams 15.6 | Jayden Daniels 22.6 → Deebo Samuel 3.4
- Wk 7 MILEHIGHPRIDE Bo Nix 40.0 → Troy Franklin 11.4, Courtland Sutton 13.7
- Wk 8 LEE121503 Daniel Jones 23.2 → Michael Pittman Jr. 19.5, Jonathan Taylor (RB) 36.4 | C.J. Stroud 22.7 → Christian Kirk 0.0 | Brock Purdy 0.0 → Jauan Jennings 6.5
- Wk 9 JOERUETTIGER Caleb Williams 37.7 → Colston Loveland 26.8, Rome Odunze 0.0, D.J. Moore 21.0
- Wk 10 SPORTSFAN231 Anthony Richardson 0.0 → Tyler Warren 13.9, Jonathan Taylor (RB) 48.1 | Jordan Love 7.8 → Dontayvion Wicks 5.8, Jayden Reed 0.0 | J.J. McCarthy 16.7 → Jalen Nailor 20.9, Jordan Addison 5.0
- Wk 11 SNAILCHIPS Josh Allen 44.7 → Keon Coleman 0.0
- Wk 12 ATHANSKI Jalen Hurts 30.9 → Dallas Goedert 3.0, A.J. Brown 21.0
- Wk 13 JMORBES Jordan Love 25.8 → Dontayvion Wicks 25.0, Romeo Doubs 10.0
- Wk 14 THENERDLEADER NO STACK — Aaron Rodgers 21.0 · Matthew Stafford 23.2 · Josh Allen 37.8 (all naked)
- Wk 15 XMXF036 Trevor Lawrence 44.3 → Travis Etienne Jr. (RB) 30.0, Travis Hunter 0.0
- Wk 16 BILLYHOYLE1 Daniel Jones 0.0 → Josh Downs 9.3 | Trevor Lawrence 31.2 → Dyami Brown 0.0, Brenton Strange 12.4 | Lamar Jackson 4.7 → Justice Hill (RB) 0.0, DeAndre Hopkins 6.1, Zay Flowers 17.7
- Wk 17 WJONES4855 Drake Maye 32.4 → Rhamondre Stevenson (RB) 24.7, Stefon Diggs 19.1

Green = 20+ point stack-partner week. 16 of 17 winners stacked — and the one naked winner rostered Josh Allen (37.8), the QB who doesn’t need a partner.

ADP movers by position and band — direction-corrected

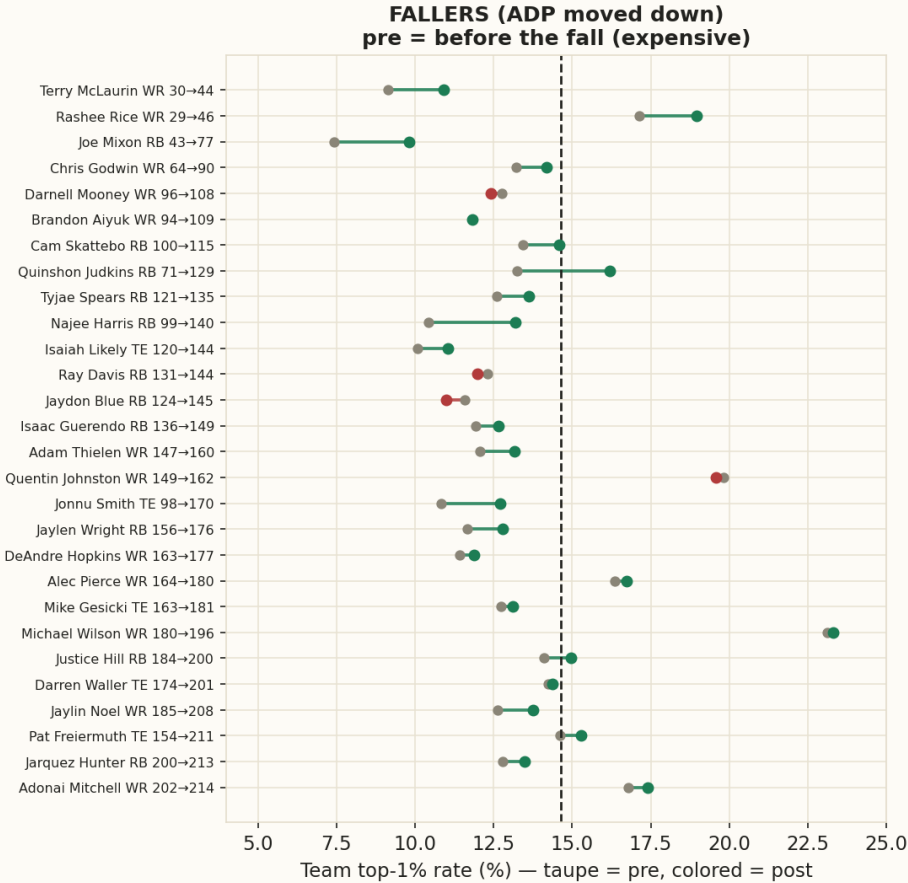
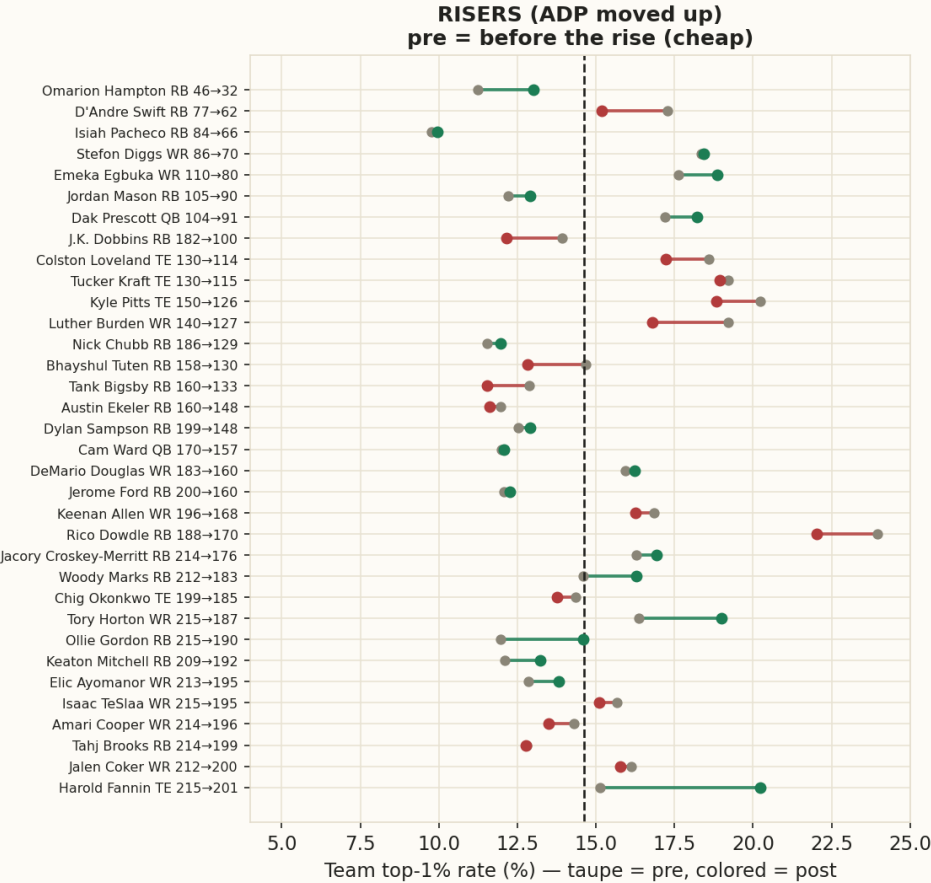
ADP Movers by Position and Destination Round Band — Direction-Corrected

Underdog Weekly Winners 2025 · cells with 6,000+ team-cohorts · green/red = post-move cohort vs pre-move



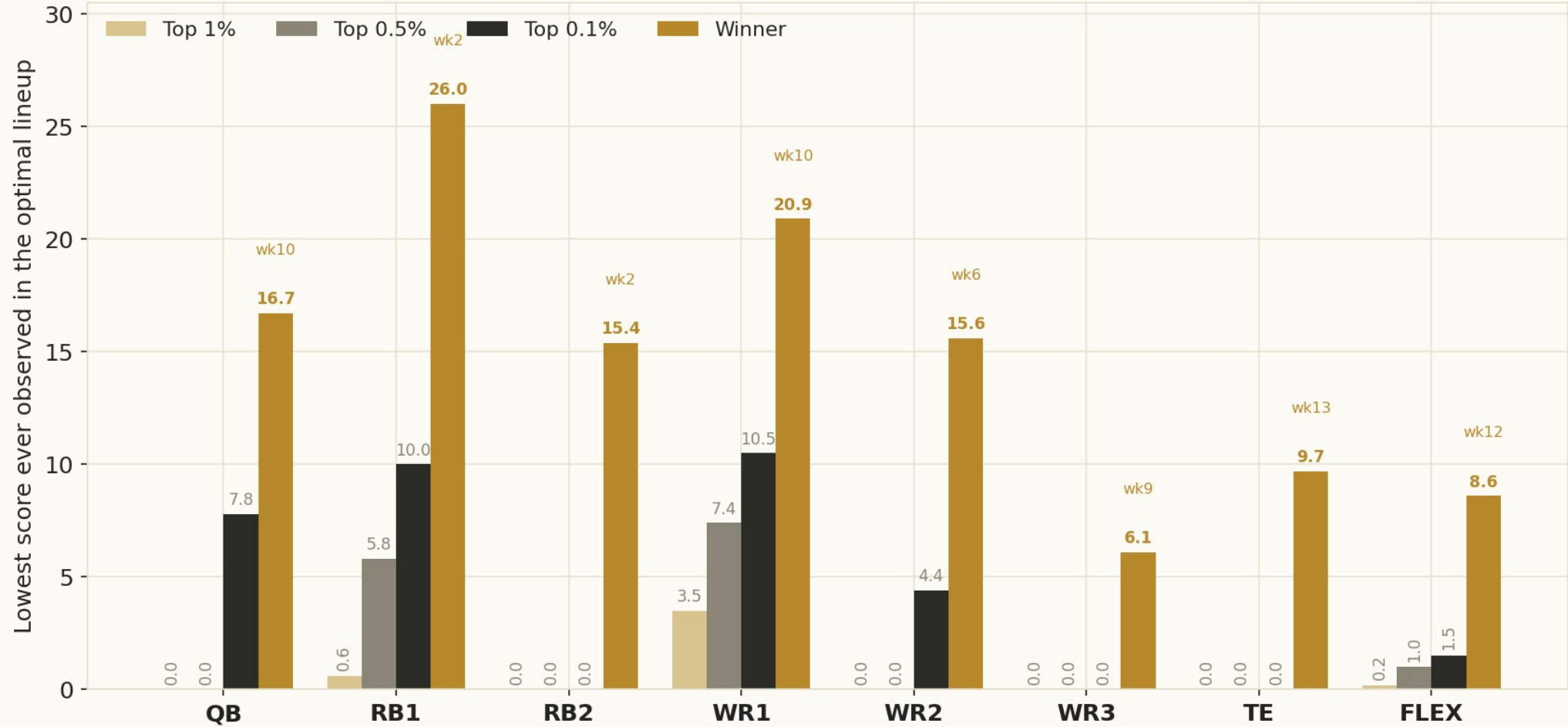
Every ADP mover: pre- vs post-move drafters

ADP Movers (≥ 1 -Round), Direction-Corrected: Pre-Move vs Post-Move Drafter Outcomes
Underdog Weekly Winners 2025 — dashed line = field 14.63%



The lowest score at every slot, by tier

The Floor at Every Lineup Slot, by Finishing Tier
Underdog Weekly Winners 2025 — minimum slot score across all qualifying team-weeks (17 weeks)



Weekly score distribution, median to winner

